Publish or perish? Innovative models for scholarly publishing in Zimbabwe

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Abstract
Innovative publishing models have emerged to meet the demands of the 'publish or perish' philosophy prevalent in academic and scholarly circles. Publishing models serve as the operational blueprint underpinning the value and supply chains of products in the publishing industry, aligning operational plans, design strategies, and production methodologies with the overarching goal of scholarly publishing. The duty of scholarly publishers to advance knowledge and disseminate it widely necessitates their role in supporting researchers to meet the expectations of the 'publish or perish' culture. This philosophy becomes even more critical in the endangered landscape of scholarly publishing in Africa, where scholarly publishing is evidently perishing, as researchers in the region face additional challenges in accessing reputable publishing outlets for their work. Zimbabwe has a low research publishing output, and although it ranks second in southern Africa, it lags behind South Africa by an astounding 65%. This intensifies the pressure to publish to maintain visibility and credibility within the global academic community. This paper thus examines the publishing models implemented in the publishing of scholarly works by scholarly publishers in Zimbabwe. Qualitative data were collected through the Delphi Technique design, with publishing experts over three rounds of interviews, and triangulated with data from document analysis. The key findings indicate open access, self-publishing, and collaborative publishing as effective market models for university presses. However, Zimbabwean universities are still lagging behind, as few have established university presses.

Introduction

In the rapidly evolving landscape of the information age, innovative publishing models have emerged to meet the demands of the 'publish or perish' philosophy, which is prevalent in academic circles. The publishing business, as described by Benghozi and Salvador (2016), encompasses a diverse array of models that facilitate the creation and dissemination of various scholarly publications. These models serve as the operational blueprint underpinning product value and supply chains in the publishing industry. Within the realm of scholarly publishing, which encompasses monographs, journals, research reports, articles, and conference proceedings, scholarly publishers operate within a network comprising researchers, authors, reviewers, printers, libraries, bookshops, and readers (Tian and Martin, 2009). Therefore, publishing models not only delineate the market dynamics within which they operate, but they

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also dictate the strategic positioning of stakeholders within the scholarly ecosystem. These innovative models serve as the linchpin of the scholarly publishing value and supply chain, aligning operational plans, design strategies, and production methodologies with the overarching goal of scholarly publishing (Oiestad and Bugge, 2014).

Publishing models that are innovative have been developed as a response to this publishing goal, which has been catalysed by the 'publish or perish' regime in academic and scholarly settings. The pressure to publish is immense, with the phrase 'publish or perish', coined by Harold Coolidge in 1932, now reflecting the harsh reality of scholarship (Rawat and Meena, 2014). The 'publish or perish' philosophy necessitates regular publishing by both the scholarly publishers and the scholars to showcase their academic abilities to their peers. Given this, the paper focuses on the philosophy of scholarly publishers, who are defined by Schonfeld (2016) as venerated producers of scholarly forms of information such as journals, newsletters, reports, research articles, papers, and the scholarly book. As a result, these publishers 'have one of the noblest duties to advance knowledge and diffuse it not merely among those who can attend daily lectures but far and wide' (Givler, 2007). Owing to this, international scholarly publishers publish up to over 150 titles annually (Leonard, 2011). However, this stands in stark contrast to the perilous state of scholarly publishing in Africa, where publishers appear to be in decline.

The duty of scholarly publishers to advance knowledge and disseminate it widely, as highlighted by Givler (2007), necessitates that they assume their role in supporting researchers in meeting the expectations of the 'publish or perish' culture. The high volumes of titles published annually by international scholarly publishers are evidence of the intense competition and demand for scholarly publications, reinforcing the urgency for publishers to publish for academics to stay relevant and contribute to the scholarly discourse. In the context of the endangered landscape of scholarly publishing in Africa, this philosophy becomes even more critical as researchers in the region face additional challenges in accessing reputable outlets for their work, thereby intensifying the pressure to publish in order to maintain visibility and credibility within the global academic community.

The 'publish or perish' philosophy implores scholarly publishers to publish for academics, or risk perishing due to several key reasons. Firstly, the 'publish or perish' culture within academia places immense pressure on researchers to continuously produce and disseminate their work in reputable scholarly outlets to secure funding, promotions, and tenure (Kwanya, 2018). As such, scholarly publishers play a crucial role in supporting academics in meeting these expectations by providing platforms for the publication of their research findings. Secondly, the reputation and credibility of scholarly publishers are directly tied to the quality and quantity of publications they produce (Link, 2015). In an environment where the impact factor of journals and the prestige of publishers are often used as metrics for evaluating the academic worth of researchers, publishers should consistently publish high-quality content to attract submissions from scholars (Tian and Martin, 2009) and maintain their standing in the academic community. Moreover, the competitive nature of the scholarly publishing industry points to the importance of continuously producing new content. With a vast number of publishers vying for authors' submissions, and readers' attention, those who fail to keep up with the demand for fresh, innovative research risk being overshadowed by competitors, and losing relevance in the field. Furthermore, the financial sustainability of scholarly publishers is contingent upon their ability to attract authors and readers (Esposito, 2011). Without a steady stream of publications, publishers may struggle to generate revenue through subscriptions, article processing charges, or other means (Lawson et al., 2016), which ultimately jeopardises their ability to continue operating in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Rawat and Meena (2014) noted that scholars who publish infrequently or focus on non-publishing activities, such as teaching undergraduates, may face challenges in securing teaching positions. This is against the backdrop that academic institutions often use an individual's publication record as a measure of their competence, with administrators increasingly prioritising this criterion in recruitment processes. In light of this, 'to perish' means that researchers face negative consequences for not publishing in high-impact journals or focusing too much on metrics, such as the loss of reputation, negative consequences for salary, allocation of more teaching hours, and thus less time for research, or failure of promotion or tenure, potentially with the extreme consequence of losing the job (Boomsma and O'Dwyer, 2019). Ultimately, 'to perish' for publishers could mean losing credibility and reputation in the academic community, facing

financial losses due to decreased subscriptions or advertising revenue, having to downsize or cut back on services, or even going out of business if they cannot adapt to the changing trends in scholarly publishing (Kun, 2018). Essentially, it signifies a decline or collapse of the publisher's standing and operations in the industry.

Moosa (2018) argues that the concept of 'measurement', through publishing, is fundamental to the field of science. However, numerous scholars have ironically reversed this principle in their daily practices, often gauging the value of their contributions solely based on quantifiable metrics (Moosa, 2018). In this context, a scholarly contribution is deemed truly scientific only if its influence can be quantified numerically. This indirectly qualifies the 'publish or perish' philosophy, which relies on publishing for metrics. Given this, successful publishing is dependent on the publishing models implemented by the publishers. These have been labelled by Benghozi and Salvador (2016) and Oiestad and Bugge (2014) as the business models of book publishing, which represent the operational architecture behind both the value and supply chains of scholarly publications. This paper thus examines the publishing models implemented in the publishing of scholarly works by scholarly publishers in Zimbabwe.

Problem statement

Scholarly publishing in Africa is evidently perishing. For example, university presses in Nigeria have distributed, on average, one (1) book title a year (Zell, 2021), while in Kenya, the University of Nairobi Press has produced an average of 1.3 titles a year (Luescher and van Schalkwyk, 2018). In Ethiopia, the Addis Ababa University Press has produced an average of two (2) titles a year in its 50 years of existence (van Schalkwyk and Luescher, 2017). South African university presses have been quite instrumental in producing scholarly works, such as scholarly books. The Witwatersrand University Press publishes between 15 and 20 titles a year (van Schalkwyk and Luescher, 2017), while the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Press also produces 20 or so scholarly books each year (Universities of South Africa (USAf) 2019). Drawing from the University of South Africa (UNISA) Press website, the press has produced a backlist of 152 scholarly books. Scholarly publishing in Zimbabwe is also in the red zone. These publishers are making efforts to produce scholarly books, but the output is meagre, and this paints a gloomy picture (Zell, 2021). Zimbabwe has a total of 19 universities, of which 68% are public. Given this number, one would expect the country to have a competitive edge in research output on the continent and in the southern African region (Masona-Tapfuma and Hoskins, 2021). However, the Web of Science shows that Zimbabwe has a research output of 12 472 documents, a staggering 65% lag, as it falls second to South Africa, which boasts a record output of 35 456 documents in southern Africa in 2019. The scholarly book publishing in the country is also in the red, as university presses in the country have also barely produced, on average, 0.4 scholarly book titles annually. These statistics show that the scholarly publishers in Zimbabwe are perishing. In order for them to be sound in their mandate and to serve the wider purpose of their existence, they should publish as many scholarly publications as possible. This is because 'those who cannot produce the required number of papers will be out of business' (Kun, 2018), and thus they 'perish'.

Zell (2021) highlights the gloomy picture of scholarly publishing in Africa, stating that, sadly, the picture today is anything but encouraging. The presses are mostly dormant, with very low visibility. Most have produced only a handful of new titles over the last decade or more, and several have published no new books at all. Similarly, a 2011 study by Ondari-Okemwa (2011) on the levels of knowledge production at institutions of higher learning in sub-Saharan Africa indicated a huge difference in the statistics of scholarly publishing between the US in only a year and in sub-Saharan Africa in ten years. Therefore, in the context of scholarly publishing for and by academics, Mamdani (2012) posits that,

> The starting point of any critique … in higher education is the recognition that a university is not a business but a place of scholarly pursuits… But if promoting scholarship is our core mission, we must be prepared to subordinate all other considerations … to the pursuit of scholarship.

To this end, knowledge, according to Masona-Tapfuma and Hoskins (2021), is now looked upon as a valued contribution to the world's information riches. However, the current state of scholarly publishing in Zimbabwe weakens the local knowledge base, which becomes meaningless and of little value; without it, the development of a knowledge economy is under threat. The lack of structure and space

hinders the full development and accommodation of ideas, meticulous annotations, and intricate scholarly arguments. Unfortunately, scholarly publishers will have to close down. As a result, business models have to change (USAf, 2019). Therefore, this study examines the models implemented in the publishing of scholarly works by scholarly publishers in Zimbabwe.

Literature review

The publishing business implements various publishing models that enable the production of books and various other publications. Benghozi and Salvador (2016) define publishing models as business models for the book publishing industry. According to Teece (2010), a business model defines how organisations create and deliver value to their clients. Oiestad and Bugge (2014) add that a business model represents the operational architecture behind both the value and supply chains of products. The products of scholarly publishing include monographs, journals, research reports, articles, and conference proceedings. Therefore, university presses are able to articulate the market in which they operate, and position themselves within a network of researchers, authors or scholars, reviewers, printers, libraries, bookshops, and consumers and readers. Publishing models as business models of the publishing business thus represent the value and supply chain of scholarly books and the operational plans, design, and style that enable the production of scholarly products.

Studies by Le Roux (2013, 2015) established that university presses apply the 'cathedral' scholarly mission model and the 'market' – business model, which she highlighted as presenting some inherent conflicts in priorities for the presses. However, van Schalkwyk and Luescher (2017) assert that institutional logics constrain university presses in Africa, preventing them from exploring innovative approaches. 'They are not yet making use of technological advances to reconfigure their production, distribution, and marketing processes, nor are they experimenting with new publishing models such as open access (OA)' (van Schalkwyk and Luescher, 2017). In light of this, university presses employ various publishing models to publish scholarly works, ensuring their survival for researchers, scholars, and authors alike. The cathedral model entails traditional publishing, hybrid or mixed publishing, as well as electronic and online publishing, whereas the market model includes OA.

Traditionally, publishers produced materials, and libraries provided stewardship (Marks and Bulock, 2016), and the key players in the production channel have been the authors, agents, publishers, and printers (Tian and Martin, 2009). These scholars further posit that the value proposition and capabilities of publishers in the traditional publishing model encompass:

(i) access to quality content,
(ii) access to leading authors, and
(iii) strong relationships with key stakeholders such as printers, libraries, distributors, and booksellers to achieve high-quality content creation, among other things.

Hoover (2022) states that,

The traditional scholarly publishing model is a cycle involving researchers, publishers, peer reviewers, editors, and libraries. First, the researchers conduct research and then report the research by submitting manuscripts to publishers. The publishers will review the manuscript to decide whether they go on to peer reviewers or will make editorial suggestions to the editors.

According to Withey et al. (2011), traditional publishing models face challenges from several fronts, including stagnant print book sales, the rising popularity of e-books, downward price pressure from e-book vendors, and the push for open access (OA). These factors jeopardise the efforts of traditional publishers as their position in the value and supply chain gradually weakens. These changes call attention to the role and position of traditional scholarly publishers, who, like general publishers, prioritise rigour, objectivity, and quality. Kaspar (2019) argues that university presses still rely on traditional models that struggle to sustain their efforts. However, technological advancements continuously supplement these models, offering more control over the supply and value chains of scholarly publishing.

Tian and Martin (2009) assert that technological advancements in book publishing primarily impact product innovation, allowing for the separation of content and carrier. Johannisson (2015) also notes that digitisation is crucial for the extensive expansion of scholarly publishing. Digitisation enhances access to scholarly publications, providing readers with tools to access a broader range of content than before. Publishers should strategically leverage digitalisation to adapt to the 'publish or perish' culture.

Tian and Martin (2009) explain that scholarly content can be disseminated through various electronic channels, expanding publication formats from print to electronic, accessible online and offline. While diversifying formats offers benefits, caution is warranted regarding future re-use and online payments to prevent copyright infringement and scams. Ultimately, this unbundling can create new value propositions (Tian and Martin, 2009) to survive in publishing.

Hybrid publishing models allow for the crossover of publications, recognising the narrow audience and specialisation of scholarly publications, resulting in low sales that cannot cover production and marketing costs (USAf, 2019). The USAf further emphasises that a purely scholarly ethos depends on external support to thrive. According to Hvvid et al. (2019), a publishing model is deemed 'hybrid' or 'mixed' if at least 25% of earnings come from multiple publishing routes. This suggests that publishing models are based not only on operational architecture but also on revenue sources. Tian and Martin's study (2009) highlights digitisation's impact, leading to the emergence of hybrid models alongside traditional versions adapting to digital potential. Despite the weakening of traditional models due to technological advancements, traditional players continue to operate familiar and profitable business models while embracing hybrids, accommodating additional players and digital technologies. Withey et al. (2011) posit that,

> The scholarly ecosystem will evolve, as our interconnected society discovers new ways of being connected, in ways we won't expect. We need to find the balance between sustaining the best fruits of the earlier print-driven ecosystem and allowing the wild and hybrid new species to flourish.

Van Schalkwyk and Luescher (2017) posit that there are some very good books out there that are reaching very small audiences through the 'tried and tested' commercial market model, and in such cases, 'the OA model has been a major shift in the market over the past decade and continues to impact planning at university presses'. According to Brinkley-Etzkorn et al. (2019), university presses have lagged behind in investing in electronic publishing, and they are even more restricted in their capacity to do so. Business models consequently have to change (USAf, 2019). The OA model encompasses well-established business models for book publishing, such as the Book Processing Charges (BPC) and embargo model, among others (Simmons University, 2020).

However, these models are relatively new to many publishers (Collins et al., 2015; Speicher et al., 2018).

The BPC model is used in OA publishing, where the book is freely accessible to readers without cost barriers (Collins et al., 2015). Authors or their funding bodies pay these charges, enabling publishers to make the book available open access. If a BPC is applied, its amount may depend on additional funding sources available to the publisher for subsidisation. Some publishers, such as university presses supported by endowments or grants, or scholar-led cooperatives utilising volunteer work (Speicher et al., 2018), may offer reduced or waived fees, especially for authors from low-income or lower-middle income countries, or those without funding. However, there is apprehension regarding the dependence on BPCs, which could result in excluding numerous authors while benefiting larger and more renowned presses (Snyder and Fathallah, 2023).

The embargo model involves delaying access to the full text of a scholarly book for a specified period after its publication. During the embargo period which is typically between six to 24 months, access might be restricted to subscribers or members of specific institutions, while after the embargo period expires, the book becomes openly accessible to the public (University of West London, 2017). Sutton (2013) argues that, however, recent events suggest a trend towards longer and more restrictive embargoes, heavily restrict authors' ability to deposit their manuscripts under OA policies, and represent a setback for OA. Longer and more restrictive embargoes undoubtedly delay public access to scholarship, which may lead authors to reconsider their publishing choices (Sutton, 2013).

Given the diverse nature of scholarly books and publishers, Speicher et al. (2018) argue that no single model can fully support OA book publishing alone. Therefore, different publishers are likely to continue employing various models, possibly offering multiple options because there is no universally superior business model; each has its own strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Collins et al., 2015). Since business models, including the infrastructure and workflows that underpin OA book publishing are currently less developed, particularly in the Arts and Humanities, numerous researchers and institutions have expressed concern about the policy; and despite their support for the goals and ethical principles of OA publishing, they are cautious due to these shortcomings (Fathallah, 2022).

More so, scholars such as Okune et al. (2021) posit that OA misses its point if scholarly publications exist

only to advance academic careers but should rather broaden and widen the reach of scholarly works beyond the institution. OA knowledge, if not met with proper knowledge absorption infrastructures, has limited usefulness in addressing knowledge production, access, and inequalities (Bodo et al., 2020). There is a need to set up proper absorption infrastructures that will enable OA to serve its purpose, which is to widen the reach of scholarly works beyond the university.

Le Roux (2013, 2015) further notes that the presses are usually 'caught between the cathedral and the market model' of scholarly publishing. Van Schalkwyk and Luescher (2017) make similar claims,

> Most presses in Africa are not making the shift to new publishing models such as OA, because they are restrained by institutional logics that cannot accommodate such models which are, however, a gateway to reconfigure their production of scholarly books.

The presses are still caught in the traditional publishing models, which struggle to sustain their operations (Kaspar, 2019). However, publishing models seem to go beyond the operational architecture and the value and supply chains in the scholarly communication network. Rather, the issue of sustainability is central to the publishing models used by the publishers. Scholars such as Kaspar (2019), Withey et al. (2011), and Tian and Martin (2009) allude to the sustainability of the publishing models, either individually or combined. African university presses must establish new business models (van Schalkwyk and Luescher, 2017).

Methodology

This study is part of a broader investigation into the components and mechanisms of scholarly book production at university presses in Zimbabwe. The researchers employed the ontology and epistemology research paradigms to guide their choice of research methodology, considering how they perceive reality (Takahashi and Araujo, 2020). The study utilised the qualitative research approach, which is inductive in nature (Creswell, 2014). This approach aimed to gain a deep understanding of the innovative models implemented in scholarly publishing to address the research problem effectively.

The researchers faced several challenges, primarily in accessing scholarly university presses. Of the three university presses that were approached, one did not respond, another took four months to grant an interview but provided data which focused on book printing rather than book production, and the third does not publish scholarly books. To overcome these issues, the researcher used the Delphi technique to engage experts regardless of their current press affiliation. The researchers adopted the Delphi Technique design, selecting a sample of three experts in scholarly publishing using the snowball sampling technique. This method was chosen due to the scarcity of scholarly book publishing experts in Zimbabwe owing to the limited number of operational scholarly presses and a lack of relevant literature. Similarly, a study by Creswell and Guetterman (2015) used a sample of three participants in a cross-case comparison assessment. The researchers in this study thus contacted known individuals with relevant experience who referred other experts. The researchers sought insights from these experts regarding innovative publishing models suitable for scholarly works. We selected the experts based on their knowledge and experience in the scholarly publishing industry, along with their willingness to participate in the study.

Data were collected through expert interviews, which yielded varied and detailed responses from the participants. The researchers prepared for the Delphi interviews by defining the research objectives and format, as outlined by Beiderbeck et al. (2021). Initial emails were sent to the participants, explaining the study topic, problem, objectives, and purpose, along with the broad question, 'What could be the underlying reasons for the low scholarly book production in Zimbabwe?' This ensured that the participants fully understood the problem to provide accurate responses. Three rounds of interviews were planned, and a pilot test was conducted with one participant to validate the interview schedule. Interviews with the remaining two participants were conducted, and responses from round one were analysed and shared with the participants for verification and consensus. The interview guide for round two was developed based on the evaluation of the initial responses, but the participants were unable to participate further due to time constraints. Due to the unavailability of participants for the second Delphi interview round, the researchers sought clarifications and consensus on the initial responses, and thus they conducted only one round of interviews. The termination of subsequent rounds was due to time, participant availability, and consensus considerations, as supported by Beiderbeck et al. (2021) and Diamond et al. (2014). The analysis of the

first-round interviews provided in-depth insights into the problem of low scholarly book production at university presses. Despite these challenges, persistence allowed for successful data collection and analysis.

The participants' responses were analysed by identifying key themes and patterns from the initial round of interviews. These findings were compiled into a summary report, highlighting areas of agreement and divergence among the experts. This report was presented to the participants for re-evaluation, allowing them to refine their responses, provide additional insights, and reach a consensus on contentious points. The process continued until a satisfactory level of agreement and depth of understanding was achieved, despite the participants not having the time to participate in the consequent rounds of the interviews.

Additionally, document analysis was employed to gather further data from the websites of two universities which house scholarly presses. The information that was collected from the universities' websites include the University Act, policy documents such as the scholarly communications guidelines, strategic plan, vision and mission. These documents provided insights into the publishing models for scholarly works. Thematic analysis, a method for deriving meaning from raw data and identifying implications, was used to analyse the findings (Saunders et al., 2012). This analysis involved systematically searching the dataset to identify, analyse, and report repeated patterns (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In conclusion, the study reported and discussed the findings.

The three experts in scholarly book production included one press director, one former press publisher, and one senior researcher, all chosen for their extensive experience in the field. The questions asked to the experts were designed to gather insights into scholarly book production in Zimbabwe. The questions focused on the participants' professional backgrounds, their contributions to the industry, and their perspectives on the innovative publishing models for scholarly book production.

P1, a female press director with 14 years in the industry, has set strategic visions for university publications, aligned them with university goals, and determined focus areas, genres, and thematic priorities for scholarly books. She has ensured high editorial and academic standards, overseen peer review processes, adhered to publishing ethics, and supported authors. Her innovations include exploring digital publishing and significantly enhancing the quality, visibility, and impact of scholarly books in Zimbabwe. Additionally, she has developed a publishing department to train personnel at the tertiary

education level. P2, a male former publisher with 11 years of experience, established a university press, provided guidance and resources for authors, and oversaw the publishing process, ensuring high content and editorial quality. He aligned scholarly books with the university's vision and mission and trained personnel at the intern level. P3, a female senior researcher and former press researcher and manager with 16 years in the industry, has expertise in acquisitions, editorial work, project management, and knowledge of the academic market. She has acquired high-impact scholarly works, developed innovative publishing strategies, established strong relationships with authors and academic institutions, and contributed to new publishing technologies and workflows that improved efficiency and quality in scholarly book production.

Findings

In terms of the scholarly mission of university presses, the participants believe that the hybrid model is effective in the production of scholarly books due to its flexibility, duality, diversity, and inclusivity. Participant 3 (P3) explains that the hybrid model combines traditional publishing with OA, which, according to the literature, is an element of the book publishing market model. P3 states that,

> The hybrid model is effective as it offers authors flexibility in choosing the publishing route for their works. The model combines elements of traditional publishing with open access options, and it enables authors to make informed decisions about how their work is disseminated. Authors have a choice to pay for open access to a traditionally published book, so the model balances the need for visibility with the support of traditional publishing processes.

The participants emphasised that OA, self-publishing, and collaborative publishing are effective market models for university presses. Both Participant 1 (P1) and Participant 2 (P2) indicated that OA unrestricts access and promotes visibility to scholarly works, thereby eliminating barriers to scholarly information by accelerating their dissemination.

According to P1,

> It's hybrid publishing that empowers authors to navigate the publishing landscape according to their preferences and funding availability. There is a diverse and inclusive production of scholarly books in this model.

The participant adds that,

Open access has demonstrated effectiveness by promoting the accessibility and visibility of scholarly works. Scholarly books are made freely available to a global audience, so it accelerates the dissemination of knowledge and enhances the societal impact of research.

Document analysis established U2's implementation of the OA model as an effective market model for producing scholarly works. The findings revealed that the following types of OA are adopted by the press:

(i) Gold OA – in this model, OA peer-reviewed scholarly works are accessible online at no cost, although some publishers may levy article processing charges.

(ii) Diamond OA – scholarly works are promptly accessible, and neither the author nor the reader incurs any fees for publishing or accessing the works.

(iii) Hybrid OA – this model combines subscription-based access with OA. In this system, researchers may be required to pay article processing charges for immediate OA.

Authors can leverage the power that this model offers over their content. From this perspective, Participant 3 (P3) suggests that university presses, as traditional publishers, are equally affected by the self-publishing model as other publishers. She notes that,

Self-publishing has proven to be effective for scholarly book production because it empowers authors to maintain control over their content and publication timelines. Authors can directly engage with their audience and tailor their works to specific niche areas or emerging research topics, so they can contribute to the diversity and accessibility of scholarly literature.

The participants also highlight collaborative publishing as a market model that is considered effective in producing scholarly books. P2 indicates the cooperation and knowledge-sharing functions of this model. He states that,

Collaborative publishing is important because it ensures cooperation and knowledge sharing among authors from all disciplines. Scholars from diverse fields combine their expertise and perspectives to write in-depth and impactful scholarly books that address a wide range of topics.

According to P3

Collaborative publishing represents another effective model as it pools expertise and resources to produce scholarly books that focus on several perspectives and innovative insights in combined fields.

Discussion

The hybrid model, as described by one participant, combines traditional publishing with OA options, aligning with the market model of book publishing. It represents a deliberate orientation towards meeting the evolving needs of authors, readers, and institutions in a dynamic publishing landscape. This model offers a blend of traditional and OA functions, addressing the demand for visibility and accessibility while benefiting from established publishing processes to ensure quality and merit. Integrating traditional and OA elements allows the industry responds to the growing demand for OA scholarly works while preserving aspects of the traditional publishing model. However, according to Hvvid et al. (2019), a publishing model is considered 'hybrid' or 'mixed' if at least 25% of the earnings come from more than one publishing route. Based on the findings from this study, the cathedral model is focused on the authors' preferences based on the availability of funding, rather than the publisher's preferences based on the earnings. According to the USAf (2019), hybrid publishing models allow the 'crossover' of publications, recognising that scholarly publications are narrow, and that their audience is specialised and small, hence the low sales which cannot recover the production and marketing costs.

The market model aims to balance the need for visibility with the support of traditional publishing processes, acknowledging diverse author preferences and funding availability. The hybrid model provides authors with flexibility in choosing the publishing route for their works, empowering them to navigate the publishing landscape according to their preferences and resources. Through this model, Teece (2010) and Le Roux (2013, 2015) note that publishing organisations create and deliver value to their clients, which is particularly important in the scholarly publishing business which is underpinned by value through quality. This inclusive approach to publishing scholarly works reflects a commitment to empowering authors and catering to their varying needs and resources across different academic disciplines and career stages.

The emphasis on diverse and inclusive publishing within the hybrid model accommodates varying author preferences, funding availability, and dissemination channels. It promotes equitable access to scholarly knowledge while acknowledging disciplinary conventions that shape scholarly book production. The balance struck between traditional publishing processes and OA within the hybrid model cultivates an innovative publishing landscape, where authors can select the most suitable route for publishing their works. This is supported by Withey et al. (2011), who advance that we need to find the balance between sustaining the best fruits of the earlier print-driven ecosystem, and allowing the wild and hybrid new species to flourish.

This adaptability to evolving industry trends reflects the hybrid model's innovative nature while upholding the integrity of traditional publishing. The flexibility and empowerment offered to authors represent a shift towards author-centric publishing practices that prioritise individual preferences, career trajectories, and research funding availability. Ultimately, this enhances author satisfaction, engagement, and ownership of their scholarly works, and thus contributing to a more dynamic and inclusive scholarly publishing ecosystem.

At one university, the traditional publishing model relies on faculty involvement in attracting proposals and manuscripts for scholarly works. This involvement demonstrates that faculty members are important stakeholders in shaping the content and scholarly direction of the press's publications, as well as contributing to the alignment of the published works with the university's research mission and priorities. Similarly, the Association of University Presses (2020) echoes that the university staff serve as local authorities for faculty and administrators, offering advice on intellectual property, scholarly communication, and the publishing process for press. The faculty's participation in attracting proposals and manuscripts indicates that the university leverages their expertise, networks, and scholarly influence to identify and nurture high-quality scholarly content. Faculty members thus play a crucial role in shaping the press's publishing portfolio, offering a collaborative and innovative approach to scholarly publishing.

The analysis of documents also revealed that the university's faculties influence or recruit acquisitions editors to submit most manuscripts, with only a few going unsolicited. The faculty involvement in manuscript acquisition processes within the traditional publishing model, as well as the reliance on faculty influence and recruitment by acquisitions editors, are an orientation towards building on established academic networks and expertise to source scholarly content for publication. The dominance of faculty-driven submissions prioritises works that are in line with the expertise, research focus, scholarly ethos, and academic reputation of the university's faculty members. Niles et al. (2020) and Blankstein and Wolff-Eisenberg (2019) echo the role of the faculty, stating that they frequently prioritise readership and peer visibility when choosing publication outlets, while also enriching the conversation about the influence of prestigious publication titles and citation metrics on their publishing decisions. Resultantly, this not only ensures a strong scholarly fit between published works and the university's intellectual community, but it also promotes the press's relationships with faculty authors. Given this, concerns arise about the scholarly publishing strategies, the parent institution's research mission, the scientific community, and the alignment of published works with institutional priorities. This is due to the fact that faculty involvement in attracting proposals and manuscripts in the traditional model presents an avenue to harness faculty expertise and networks to shape the press's publishing agenda, where the members can become active contributors to the press's publishing programme. This has the potential to strengthen the press's scholarly profile, expand its publication portfolio, and ensure institutional ownership and support for scholarly publishing.

The emergence of digitalisation has made self-publishing a feasible choice for authors, as they now have greater freedom and control over the final products and possibly even the pricing of their books. There are ongoing forecasts suggesting that the adoption of digital technologies may lead to the bypassing of traditional intermediaries in the book publishing value chain. Hvvid et al. (2019) note that prior to digitalisation, bypassing publishers through self-publishing would have been prohibitively expensive for authors, but the emergence of digitalisation has made self-publishing a feasible choice for authors. This is because authors could potentially take on all aspects of the publishing process, including content creation, marketing, and selling the final product, thus effectively becoming publishers themselves. In the same vein, Tian and Martin (2009) advance that,

> There are continued predictions that the uptake of digital technologies would result in the disintermediation of the value chain for book publishing, given that authors could, in effect, become publishers by potentially

performing all the roles involved, from creating the content to marketing, and selling the finished product.

Nevertheless, as time progresses, the value of the scholarly publisher is under scrutiny, potentially leading to a growing debate. However, Tian and Martin (2009) further posit that,

> In both the production and distribution channels, publishers serve as the centre of gravity, and continue to add a considerable amount of value to the book publishing business, and are not just another partner in the process. Rather, they are the major risk takers in what not infrequently can turn out to be marginal ventures. They are responsible for everything from commissioning the book, to its design and production, marketing, sales, and customer service.

OA publishing has emerged as an effective model for scholarly publishing due to its ability to provide unrestricted access to scholarly works. 'The OA model has been a major shift in the market over the past decade, and continues to impact planning at university presses' (Van Schalkwyk and Luescher, 2017). Accessing scholarly works online for free eliminates knowledge barriers and accelerates the dissemination of research findings. This accessibility is particularly noteworthy in reaching a wide and global audience, and thus transcending the geographical and financial constraints that may limit access to traditional print publications. The emphasis on the free availability of scholarly works on the global market is indicative of the effectiveness of OA publishing, which supports the ethos of democratising access to scholarly content. Similarly, making scholarly works freely available online through OA increases the potential for wider readership and citation rates, thereby heightening the demand for scholarly works. As a result, scholarly publishers must publish more, because increased visibility can foster knowledge exchange across academic and non-academic audiences. However, this draws attention to scholarly publishing strategies, publishing operations, and the scholarly communication ecosystem. It is worth noting that OA knowledge, if not met with proper knowledge absorption infrastructures, has limited usefulness in addressing knowledge production access and inequalities (Bodo et al., 2020). Through enhanced visibility, scholarly publishing within OA frameworks can contribute to advancing knowledge mobilisation, which has implications for publishers seeking to maximise the relevance and influence of their publishing programmes. Therefore, OA publishing models can be seen as facilitating the global circulation of scholarly ideas that contribute to a more inclusive scholarly landscape – a vehicle to publish rather than perish.

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper explored the innovative models implemented in the publishing of scholarly works by scholarly publishers in Zimbabwe. The importance of the 'publish or perish' culture in scholarly publishing is emphasised by demonstrating how technological advancements have revolutionised the scholarly publishing landscape through publishing models that have introduced a new way of producing and disseminating research findings. These innovative publishing models offer numerous rewards in scholarly publishing, particularly in response to the prevalent 'publish or perish' ethos. Essentially, this paradigm shift results in heightened opportunities for authors to publish their work more frequently, which drives productivity for scholarly publishers. These models have several benefits, including efficiency and control, flexibility and speed, accessibility and visibility, collaboration, and autonomy and authenticity. Through implementing a variety of publishing models and embracing new innovative approaches to producing and disseminating scholarly works, Zimbabwe's scholarly publishers are adapting to the changing landscape of scholarly publishing. We recommend that these publishers actively pursue collaborative publishing opportunities with other academic institutions, scholarly societies, and publishing partners. For example, this can be done through establishing partnerships to co-publish works and sharing resources and collective expertise to produce high-quality scholarly publications, or they risk perishing. The publishers can also play a role in educating scholars, students, and other stakeholders about the changing landscape of scholarly publishing to raise awareness about the different publishing models, OA principles, and the impact of digital technologies on scholarly communication. This is increasingly important given the need to publish rather than perishing and amidst the concerns and misconceptions that are associated with the 'publish or perish' regime, particularly in Africa.

The study encountered several limitations that directly influenced its scope and methodology, ultimately shaping the outcomes and interpretations of the findings. The primary methodological challenge stemmed from difficulties in accessing scholarly university

presses, which were initially identified as the targeted population for the research. The deviation from the intended population limited the depth of data related to the specific university presses as scholarly book publishers, hence narrowing the scope of inquiry and affecting the representativeness of the findings. The adaptation to the Delphi Technique helped to mitigate some of the initial limitations, but the absence of direct input from a fully operational scholarly press in Zimbabwe remained a significant limitation. While the Delphi Technique ensured that some level of agreement by the participants was achieved, it restricted the iterative refinement process that typically characterises Delphi studies, potentially limiting the depth of the consensus reached. However, this limitation was overcome by the use of document analysis, although the participants were unable to share internal documents due to confidentiality constraints and organisational ownership of the material. To compensate, the researcher turned to publicly available documents, such as the universities' strategic plans, University Acts, and other policy documents accessible on university websites, as well as the national regulations such as the Zimbabwe Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act [26:05]. While these documents provided valuable context, they could not entirely substitute for the detailed internal policies that would have offered deeper insights into the operational processes of the presses.

Future research could build on this foundation by exploring ways to engage a larger number of presses and experts, possibly extending the study to include international scholarly presses with ties to Zimbabwean academics. More so, investigating the potential for capacity building within Zimbabwe's university presses could provide valuable insights into how the country might strengthen its scholarly publishing infrastructure. Future studies could also benefit from employing longitudinal research methods to track the changes and developments in the publishing sector over time, particularly as digital technologies and OA models evolve. Expanding the geographic scope to include other African countries with similar scholarly publishing challenges may also enrich the comparative analysis and contribute to in-depth discussions on scholarly publishing in the Global South.

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