

**ONLINE PUBLISHING IN KENYA:
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SELF-PUBLISHING**

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By

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ABSTRACT

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Self-publishing is an emerging trend in the Kenyan publishing industry. Technological advancements particularly online publishing, e-book publishing services, and print-on-demand have enabled authors the opportunity to publish their books. However, there is a significant knowledge gap pertaining to self-publishing in Kenya. This research aims to examine factors influencing the self-publishing of books in Kenya, including how self-publishing enhances the autonomy of the Kenyan self-published authors, their challenges, and their proposed solutions. Using qualitative approach, ten Kenyan self-published authors participated in a one-on-one interview until a saturation level was reached. Overall, the study disclosed that various political economy factors faced by these self-published fiction book authors including the power of mainstream publishing, authors' freedom and autonomy over their self-published books, royalties, stocking at bookstores, affordable shipping, cost-effective printing and availability of independent publishers. Challenges faced by Kenyan self-published authors consisted of fatigue, lack of financial support, poor marketing, and rejection from both established bookstores and publishing companies.

Keywords: Online Publishing, Kenya, Self-published Authors, , Independent Publishers

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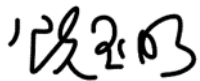
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APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation entitled “**ONLINE PUBLISHING IN KENYA: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SELF-PUBLISHING**” was prepared by **AYAN MOHAMED YUSUF** and submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Communication (Structure B) at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman.

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SUBMISSION OF DISSERTATION

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UTAR or other institutions.

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Date: 15th April 2022

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Publishing as it is known today involves writing, paper, printing, and the spread of literacy (Tucker et al, 2020). Publishing originated from the Latin word “*publish*”, meaning to make public or make generally known. Traditional publishing in this context refers to the book publishing processes which include writing, editing manuscript, proofreading, design and layout, and printing to make a sale. Traditional book publishing involves submitting a manuscript to an established publishing company, the in-house editor edits the manuscript, and the publishing company handles the entire process of the publication from designing, marketing, promoting, and distribution. Traditional book publishing companies are careful in choosing which books to publish and getting through the gatekeeping process is challenging hence why some writers opt for self-publishing (Writer's Digest, *n.d.*).

The World Wide Web became a medium for publishing in the 1990s commemorating the era of e-books, where authors began to self-publish their books online (Ross, 2019). A writer rejected by traditional publishers could alternatively find comfort in self-publishing. Some writers opted for self-publishing when rejected by certain publishers because their stories were against the societal norms (Roseman, 2017). Self-publishing refers to a publishing process where an author individually handles the entire publication process of written documents such as books, magazines, usually in the form of digital books or paperback books using print-on-demand or e-book publishing.

Self-publishing provides freedom and flexibility to writers. Self-published authors can write and publish according to their terms having total creative control, like hiring editors and designers of their choice. The royalties in traditional companies range from 7-25% while in self-publishing, it is closer to 70% (MasterClass, 2021) potentially making more money than in traditional publishing. Additionally, self-published authors personally manage the process of book publishing whether in e-book format or print and also the post-production stages, launching and marketing the book.

Before the invention of e-books and print-on-demand, self-published books were published through a vanity press. A vanity press, vanity publisher, or subsidy publisher is a publishing house in which authors pay to have their books published (Laquintano, 2013). Traditional publishing companies sieve through manuscripts with gatekeepers, but vanity publishers are more receptive or unselective in publishing any books or manuscripts that are too long. In self-publishing, the authors retain the copyrights to their books and have control over the expenses and royalties. Vanity press, on the other hand, claims exclusive rights to the rights of the book and the writer has to bear all the production expenses (IAPWE, 2019). However, vanity press's publication does not receive the same recognition or prestige as a commercial publication. But with the arrival of e-books, self-publishing has exploded, (Neary, 2012) and even bestseller writers, for example, Fifty Shades trilogy by E. L. James and The Martian by Andy Weir, were adapted into successful movies.

The publishing industry is changing fundamentally in the digital environment as new means of producing and distributing books are arising. Publishing a book, a manuscript or printed material involves writing, editing, designing, distributing, advertising, and marketing. In mainstream publishing companies, different individuals with expertise handle each task.

However, in self-publishing, the author is the writer and the editor, cover designer, and distributor of his or her book. If an author cannot do all that personally, hiring editors and designers is an option, but would incur more costs. Online publishing of books or e-book publishing allows the availability of various books unavailable at standard bookstores due to lack of demand. Therefore, the emergence of books' online publication made self-publishing easier for anyone interested in publishing a book and not wanting to go through traditional publishers (Kendall, 2013). It is also easier to sell books online for self-published authors that renowned publishing companies do not represent. Whilst traditional publishers have higher funds and better data, self-publishing e-books provides authors with freedom, control over their work, pricing and faster publishing (Hviid et al, 2019).

This study focuses on self-publishing in Kenya to examine the perceptions of ten self-published Kenyan authors who participated in the interviews. The book market in Kenya is flooded with academic books as traditional publishing companies focus on textbook publishing as it is lucrative. As a result, over 40 publishing houses publish textbooks in Kenya (Simam et al, 2012). The East African Literature Bureau was established in 1947, introducing The Kenya Literature Bureau Act 1980, which stipulated books should be published for Africans both for general reading and educational purposes, in both English and African languages, encourage African authorship, and develop books distributions (Chakava, 1989).

Today, Kenya is a multilingual country speaking the Bantu Swahili language and English, the latter being inherited from colonial rule. In 2003, the government of Kenya introduced free primary education for all, followed by free secondary education in 2008. As a result, nearly three million more students were enrolled in primary school in 2012 than in 2003 and the number of schools has increased by 7,000. The impact of the 2003 education for all

programs has been seen at the university level, where enrollment numbers have increased, more than doubling between 2012 and 2014 as the initial group of free primary school children have begun enrolling in university studies (Clark 2015). According to UNESCO's Institute of Statistics report (2012) enrolment rates of primary education in Kenya were 81.8% and 50% in secondary schools putting Kenya on the top of educational rankings among African countries.

According to the 2020 World Bank report (2020), the literacy level in Kenyan is at 82%. It is higher compared to other East African countries like Burundi which is 68%, Rwanda 73%, Uganda 77%, and Tanzania 78%. Therefore, with a high literacy rate in Kenyan society, it is clear that many people can read for leisure or for information when they wish. Kenyan publishing companies, however, mainly focus on publishing textbooks as there is a market for them. According to Gomez (2015) global publishing statistics report, Kenya released only 11 new titles per million whereas the U.S. published 1,043 and U.K published 2,710 per million inhabitants making them lead the market in revenue terms. The literacy levels in Kenya are high and online publishing services are available. Mainstream publishing is saturated with academic books making self-publishing the best option for authors. However, this study aims to understand what other factors influence Kenyan authors to self-publish e-books and print books.

Table 2 | Top publishing markets 2014–2015 by new titles produced, for which figures were available

COUNTRY	2014	2015	YOY CHANGE	NEW TITLES PER MILLION INHABITANTS (2015)	POPULATION* (2015)
China	448000	470000	4.91%	335	1401586609
USA		338986		1043	325127634
UK	220330	173000	-21.48%	2710	63843856
France	98306	106760	8.60%	1643	64982894
Germany	87134	89506	2.72%	1084	82562004
Brazil	92209	88685	-3.82%	435	203657210
Japan	76465	76445	-0.03%	603	126818019
Spain	78508	73233	-6.72%	1552	47199069
Italy	63922	65886	3.07%	1078	61142221
Republic of Korea	47589	45213	-4.99%	909	49750234
Argentina	28010	28966	3.41%	687	42154914
Netherlands	25793	23658	-8.28%	1405	16844195
Saudi Arabia	18745	22867	21.99%	765	29897741
Denmark	11340	13170	16.14%	2326	5661723
Switzerland	12711	12208	-3.96%	1482	8238610
Thailand	11684	11334	-3.00%	168	67400746
Philippines	7825	9480	21.15%	93	101802706
Sweden	6360	6739	5.96%	695	9693883
Norway	6521	6521	0.00%	1268	5142842
Belgium	4452	5130	15.23%	459	11183411
Georgia	2964	4173	40.79%	969	4304540
Finland	6643	3493	-47.42%	640	5460592
Bosnia and Herz	2479	2791	12.59%	731	3819684
Iceland	935	885	-5.35%	2628	336728
Kenya		491		11	46748617

*Source: United Nations

Figure 1. Top Publishing Markets 2014-2015 by new titles produced. (Gomez, 2015)

1.3 Problem Statement

Online publishing eliminates the costs of printing and distributing physical copies and makes books accessible globally. In Kenya, online self-publishing services such as Kindle Direct Publishing, Smashwords, and Lulu made print on demand are available to authors. Therefore, authors can have their books in e-book format and the publishing platform also provides the option of print on demand. The availability of these new means of producing and distributing books enabled authors to opt for self-publishing rather than traditional publishing. In traditional

book publishing companies, the author sells the rights of their manuscript to the book publisher (McLachlan, n.d.) giving the publisher full control over the book. While in self-publishing, all the rights belong to the author including the copyright and decision making.

Additionally, there is a new distribution system that did not exist before the World Wide Web. Self-published authors can now find an audience online (Harrison, 2012) by self-promoting themselves using social media platforms. As it is evident in the background, the Kenyan book market is populated by textbooks, because the publishing companies rely on them to make a profit. There are many schools so there is a market for these books. However, some authors have paved a way for themselves by self-publishing their books rather than depending on publishing companies (Harrison, 2012). But it is unsure whether self-published authors find self-publishing more affordable, cost-effective, and more manageable with the e-book market blooming and the availability of print-on-demand technology.

According to Statista Report (2020), the e-books segment in Kenya is projected to reach US\$9 million in 2021 and a market volume of US\$11 million by 2025. However, the average revenue per user is expected to amount to US\$2.30 compared to the United States which is US\$78.04 per person revenue. Though self-publishing is an ever-growing industry, and some growth is evident in the reports, the Kenyan self-publishing field is not as lucrative as the United States of America that generates the highest e-book revenue globally.

Aside from the identified factors that influence self-publishing such as, e-book market growth, online publishing services, and print-on-demand technology, this study aims to establish more factors that contribute to self-publishing e-books and print books in Kenya. There is also a lack of academic study on the self-publishing industry in Kenya which this study aims to fill in

the gap. The study also seeks to understand how self-publishing improves the independence of self-published authors since now they have total control over the publishing of their books. Even though self-published authors have autonomy over their books, the Kenyan market growth indicates an average revenue of just US\$2.30 per person (Clarke, 2015). The study also looks at the challenges faced by self-published authors and proposed solutions.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To examine factors influencing the self-publishing of books in Kenya
2. To study how self-publishing has enhanced self-published authors' autonomy
3. To explore the challenges faced by Kenyan self-published authors and their solutions, if any.

The first objective examines factors influencing self-publishing of books and the second objective aims to explore the ways self-publishing has enhanced the independence of self-published authors. The third objective focuses on the various challenges in terms of costing, editorial works, exhaustion, and bookshop outlet rejection.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the factors that influence the self-publishing of books in Kenya?
2. How does self-publishing enhance the autonomy of self-published authors?
3. What are the challenges Kenyan self-published authors face and their solutions?

The researcher developed the following research questions to answer to examine the issue in this study and provide answers. Research questions guide the researcher in staying focused and breaking down the project into manageable tasks.

1.6 Significance of Study

This study provides valuable insights into understanding the factors that contribute to self-publishing of non-academic (mostly fiction) books in Kenya. The results of the study can also be used to understand how self-publishing affects traditional publishing companies. Both traditional publishers and self-published authors can use the findings to benefit authors who opt for self-publishing rather than traditional publishing.

The results of this research can help potential future Kenyan self-published authors to understand what self-publishing entails. The study also adds knowledge on the existing gap about the self-publishing industry in Kenya. The challenges faced by Kenyan self-published authors are also discussed with solutions and preventive measures for authors interested in self-publishing their books.

1.7 Scope of the study

This study focuses on the emerging trend of online publishing in Kenya, to better understand the various personal, financial, and socio-economic factors that contributed to the self-publishing of books in the eastern part of the African Continent. This topic has been selected to explain this new trend of self-publishing from the viewpoints of the self-published authors. As discussed in the study background, self-publishing is rather a new concept that is growing popular, but it has

not spread widely in Kenya yet. Therefore, the researcher aims to discuss the determinants of self-publishing and why it is a rising concept.

The interview sessions were conducted in 2021 to explain the self-publishing trend that has been growing since 2010. This study used the purposive sampling method, where all respondents must fulfill the two criteria for selection:

1. Must be a Kenyan citizen residing in Kenya for the past 10 years
2. Must be a self-published author

The participants consist of both gender and are all located in Kenya. The interview process took place between April and August 2021. Each interview session was guided by a semi-structured question set that covered the following topics, i.e. the factors that influence self-publishing of books in Kenya, how self-publishing has improved the independence of self-published authors, and the challenges Kenyan self-published authors have faced.

One-on-one interviews were conducted via Zoom video call — due to geographical differences between researcher and participants, this was the only viable option. The interviews lasted between 37 minutes to 1h 30minutes depending on the respondent's speech pattern. The researcher followed the interview questions while also asking impromptu questions regarding whatever new information respondents shared. There were 10 respondents, 4 females and 6 males with experience in self-publishing ranging from 1 year to 20 years. English was the language used for the interview however some Swahili terms were also used but were translated in the transcription.

The first part of the interview questions asked about personal data, and their self-publishing journey. The second section looked at what influences book publishing, print on demand, online publishing services, the self-publishing process, and how self-publishing has enhanced their independence. The last section examined their personal experiences, book market, reading culture, challenges, and solutions.

1.8 Definition of Terms

1.8.1 Self-publishing

Publishing is defined as "the profession or business of producing and selling a book, magazine, or newspaper" (*Cambridge Dictionary*, n.d.) Publishing consists of seven processes that must be done right to publish well: editorial, design, production, distribution, marketing, promotion, and rights licensing (Ross, 2019). Self-publishing according to this study is when an author undertakes the book publication process individually handling the editing, marketing, design, distribution, and publicity by themselves.

1.8.2 E-book

An e-book or electronic book is a book published in a digital form consisting of text and images (Suarez, 2010) and is readable on electronic devices such as dedicated e-reading devices, computers, and smartphones. In this study, e-book refers to electronic books published via online publishing services that are readable on electronic devices and the readers can purchase them from online publishing platforms.

1.8.3 Online publishing services

Online publishing services are platforms authors use to publish their e-books online. They are of two different types, retailer, and aggregator (Bhardwaj et al, 2019). The retailer publishing companies sell books exclusively through their retail store while an aggregator publishes and provides a retailing platform for e-books, but also distributes them to other online retailers and libraries they are partnered with. Online publishing services according to this research means online platforms that specifically publish and distribute books online and physical libraries as well.

1.8.4 Print on demand

Print-on-demand refers to printing technology whereby a book or document is printed only when someone orders it (Kleper, 2000). In this study, print on demand refers to instant printing of paperback books as per buyers' requests.

1.8.5 Traditional publishing

Traditional publishing refers to book publishing by an established publishing house with professionals handling publishing processes which include editing, proofreading, book design, layout, printing and binding, marketing, sales, postage, and delivery. In this study, traditional publishing refers to any registered or established publishing company that pays the author agreed-upon royalties in exchange for copyrights and distribution of the book, resulting in a win-win situation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

According to Hart (1998), a literature review plays a role in discovering important variables relevant to the topic, gaining a new perspective, and distinguishing what has been done from what needs to be done. The literature review contains empirical information written to explain the topic from a certain viewpoint. In this chapter, the researcher will also discuss the history of book publishing, the growth of the e-book market, online publishing services, and print on demand. How these factors affect self-publishing will be elaborated and the impact self-publishing has on traditional publishing companies.

Before the emergence of the book publishing industry of today, book writing and printing technology had gone through different stages. Writing in the form of pictorial or graphic symbols such as letters that express some meaning was thought to have been first invented in Mesopotamia circa 3200 B.C. using the cuneiform script (Bagley, 2004) a system of counting and recording goods with clay tokens. The next step of writing was the invention of paper, which was largely associated with Cai Lun, a court official in China's Eastern Han Dynasty during 105 A.D. (Lityuga, 2014). Then came the major turn for communication with the invention of printing by the Chinese. The earliest known form of printing was woodblock printing and cloth printing dating back to China beyond 220 A.D. The first known woodblock printed book was the Diamond Sutra printed in China in 868 A.D. (Lambert, 2019). In 1041 A.D. Bi Sheng, a Chinese printer invented movable type printing technology.

In 1439, Johannes Gutenberg, a German inventor, printer, and publisher, introduced the printing press by improving the mechanical printing press with a moveable type (Atkinson & FitzGerald, 2014). The printing of the Gutenberg Bible in 1455 and its low costs, made printing famous in Europe and around the world. Thus, the technological advancement of the printing press made books less expensive to produce and widely accessible to ordinary people for the first time. Since the publishing of the Gutenberg Bible, the book industry went through changes. Digital technology revolutionized the publishing industry and expanded the definition of a book (Ramrattan, and Szenberg 2015). Printed (paperback or hardcover) books, e-books, self-publishing, books promoted by social media and uploaded into electronic book readers are all part of the current publishing industry.

2.2 History of Publishing

Traditional publishing started to flourish in Europe, the U.S.A., and other countries from the mid-1500s. Typically in traditional book publishing, the publishing house buys off the copyrights of an author's work, designs the book, prints, markets, promotes, distributes, and sells it (Mukundarajan, 2018). The publishers and the author negotiate a royalty deal, which is a certain percentage of the book's overall sales. There are two types of royalties: retail royalties paid to the author as a percentage of the book's retail price and royalties on net sales paid to the author after the discounts the publishers give to retail stores are assessed (Field, 2018). Advance payment is first given to the author depending on the contract agreement, which is an amount of money that estimates what the book will earn. The author will only receive royalty payment after the book sales have earned back all the advance payment.

The print media usually refers to printed books, magazines, newsletters, and brochures. However, in the digital era with online media, the Internet has enabled authorship and the right to post to the public domain for other people to read. Emails, chat groups, anything that is online can be considered published (Bastek, 2003). This includes scanning written documents and the act of producing books, magazines, and other content for the public. Any content, therefore, shared online for others reading it is considered online publishing. Online publishing or digital publishing started in 1970 when Michael Hart first made a digital copy of the USA Declaration of Independence calling it Project Gutenberg. By 1989, 10 documents were digitized by Michael and some volunteers (Hart,1992). However, as of 2021, Project Gutenberg is still active and hosts over 60,000 free e-books mostly older works for which U.S. copyright has expired.

In the 1990s, books in txt, Mobi, and doc formats came into the market ushering the e-book era (BizCommunity, 2013). The first milestone for digital publishing was the launching of Wikisource in 2003, providing digitized texts verified by volunteers. Its purpose is to host all forms of free text, in different languages, and translations. In the following year 2004, Sony released Sony Libre, an e-book reader that used electronic paper display (Pilato, 2004). Google also created google books in the same year, with a plan to digitise all the available books in the world. A decade later after making deals with Michigan, Harvard, Stanford, Oxford, the New York Public Library, and other library systems, they had scanned about 25 million books at an estimated cost of \$400 million (Somers, 2017). The following chart shows the evolution of e-books.

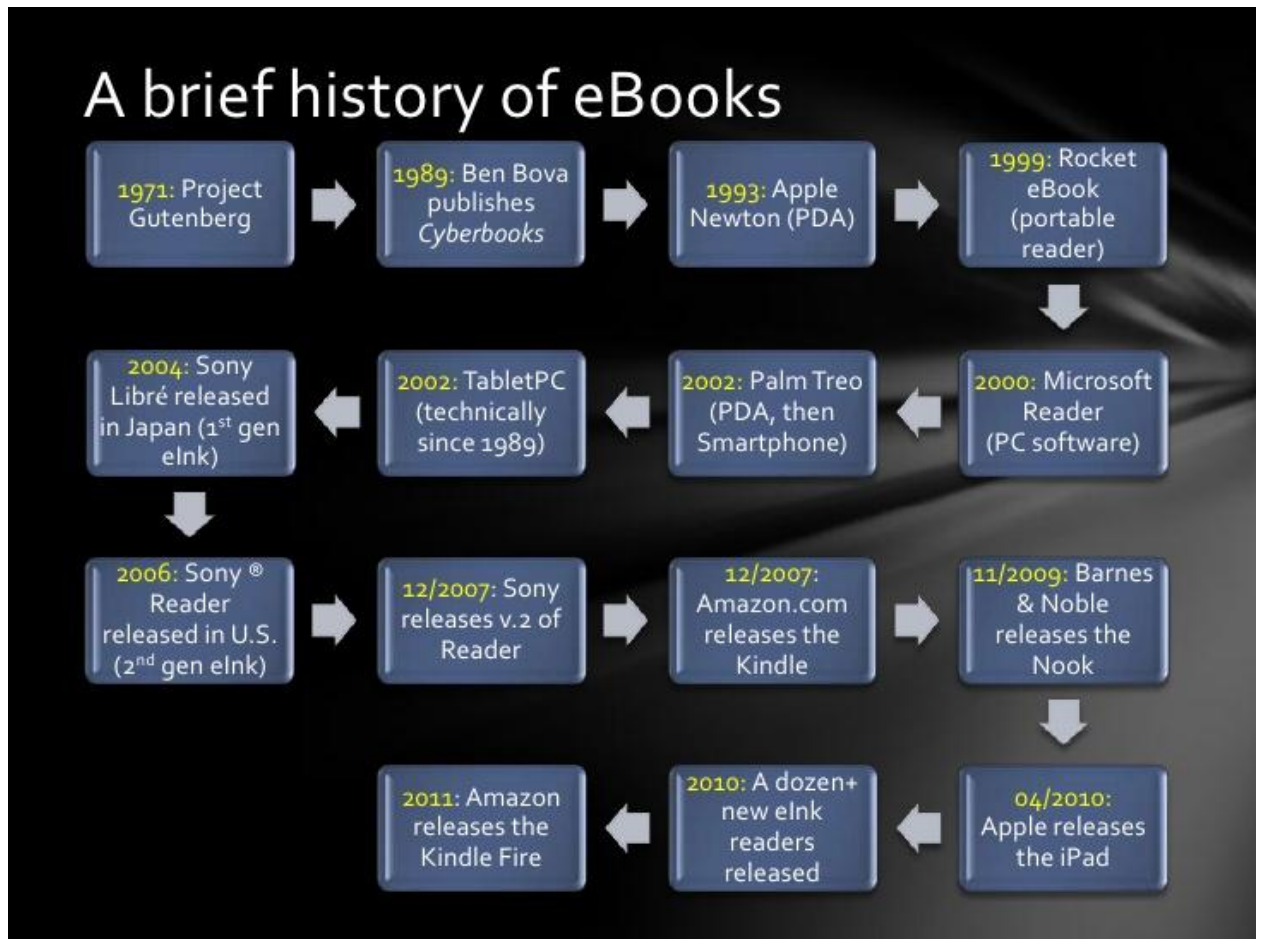


Figure 2. A brief history of e-books. (Sauers, 2011)

The beginning of the electronic book (e-book) played a role in the online publishing process in empowering authors to write and publish books in digital form rather than scanning printed books. Though e-books became popular in the 90s, the concept of an electronic book was first developed in 1930, around the same time that paperback books first appeared on the shelves. Writer Bob Brown first wrote of his idea of an e-reader that would allow readers to read books on a screen calling it “The Readies” (Wilber, 2020).

E-books are designed to be read from electronic devices like smartphones, e-readers, tablets, or personal computers. While e-books are the actual text and document being read, an e-reader is a device that is specifically meant to read e-books (Hardy, 2016). In 1997, E-Ink Corporation created a technology that would allow digital screens to reflect light just like ordinary paper without the need for a backlight. The Rocket e-book was the first commercial e-reader device to use this technology, and it was eventually used by several other manufacturers to create new e-reader devices, including Amazon Kindle which was released in 2007 (Wilber, 2020). E-books are usually shared on the internet as downloadable files that can be read offline, as live Web pages that must be read while online, or as Web pages that are stored by a Web browser to read offline (Atwell, 2019). The advent of e-books was accompanied by self-publishing due to its hassle-free nature compared to traditional publishing.

With readership for e-books on the rise, some authors prefer to publish their work online as e-books in Kindle due to the simplicity of the process. Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (K.D.P.) is well-received among readers as well as writers. Alternatively, authors can have their books self-published electronically and have them printed on demand (Mukundarajan, 2018). The sales of e-books published by traditional publishers declined by 11% from 2015 to 2016 (Alter, 2016) while on the other hand sales of self-published e-books have been increasing. Therefore, in the e-book area, self-publishers are excelling and can garner enough income to pay for self-publishing expenses while also making profits. Self-publishing can be costly if an author decides to hire editors, graphic designers, and marketers — or completely free if they decide to handle all the aspects of book publishing individually. Self-published authors get approximately 50-70% of royalties per book and in traditional publishing, the author ends up with only 10% - 12% royalties (Pope, 2020).

The internet has enabled a new way of book distribution eliminating the need for printing, delivering and storing books. Self-published authors now have access to online distributors and retailers, reaching wider audience cost effectively. In mainstream publishing companies, it is common for authors to sign contracts giving away their books' rights and receive 10% of the book's profits. The remaining 90% of the book profits are allocated to the publishing house, distributors, marketers, and retailers (Wischenbar, 2012). The simplicity of the e-book is that authors can upload the book to a publishing platform and from there, readers can buy and download on the same day.

First time authors or those rejected by publishing companies are enticed by this opportunity. Due to the lack of gatekeepers, authors are also able to reach the global market, produce content as fast as they want and share on a faster pace (Pope, 2021). Besides Amazon Kindle, authors can use other platforms like Lulu that has print-on-demand option, Smashwords which converts manuscripts into formats readable on iPads, Kindles, and other devices and also distributes books through digital bookstores, like Apple's iBookstore.

2.3 Publishing in Kenya

The arrival of European missionaries in Africa brought printed books for religious purposes and then was followed by colonialism. In 1960, as independence began to emerge across the continent, only 9% of the African population was literate (Bgoya and Jay, 2013). After the 1963 independence, the first legal instrument for education reform was The 1964 Ominde Commission. At the time of Kenya's independence, there was no commercial publisher dedicated to the objectives of the newly independent state.

The Ominde Commission's Report on education, recommended ending the segregation of schools by race, and starting a new curriculum that's suitable to the independent nation, and evaluating educational materials in use in Kenyan schools. It also recommended the establishment of a state publisher to publish, especially at the primary-school level, materials developed at the KIE (Kenya Institute of Education). Within two years of independence, Kenya had three state-supported publishers - the East African Literature Bureau which continued to publish textbooks in local languages, the Jomo Kenyatta Foundation published all books for Kenyan primary schools, and the East African Publishing House, which was to publish mainly academic books and fiction. In 1966, the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) was established to develop syllabuses and other educational materials, which were to be given to publishers for publication.

The Mackay Commission of 1981 led to the change of the education system from 7-4-2-3 (seven years in primary school, four years in secondary school, two in high school, and at least three in a university) to 8-4-4 (eight years in primary, four in secondary and at least four in university). The examinable subjects at primary school were increased from three to eleven and this shift created a need for new sets of textbooks for schools. However, despite the changes, there was no policy on how the publishing industry was to produce and distribute textbooks to schools. Some Kenyans started their own publishing houses and printed textbooks leading to rapid growth of new titles but failed development (Rotich, 2000). The Kenya School Equipment Scheme (KSES) was created to procure and distribute textbooks, but in 1988 the government stopped textbook procurement changing to a system of parents buying books for their children instead, to increase market liberalization.

As of 2021, 125 Publishers were registered as members of the Kenya Publishers' Association. Out of these, a few are private, with their shareholding restricted to family members (Kariuki, 2019). Some are foreign-owned but have changed their names and allowed Kenyan investors to integrate with the country and others are faith-based, publishing only religious books. Most of them pay the authors a 10% royalty based on the cover price while in some cases, authors can negotiate 12-15% royalties (Kariuki, 2019).

The government introduced the direct procurement of books from publishers in 2017 to remove distributors that were stifling the efforts to ensure a 1:1 student-to-book ratio in schools. The government became the wholesaler and publishers were only making between 3-4% profit from government bids (Muchunguh, 2021). Printing costs account for between 35-45% of the book production process. Other costs include 16% VAT, and 15-20% distribution. Publishers who win bids to supply books to the government are guaranteed millions of shillings from the direct bulk sales but do not receive immediate pays. Consequently, publishers struggle to pay printers, transporters, and other suppliers, and at times, book distribution is slow because publishers cannot pay transporters (Muchunguh, 2021). The government does not set the prices but only selects the lowest bid from the approved titles by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). Publishers set book prices so low to be selected but some of the prices are as low as 50ksh and 100ksh (\$0.05 and \$0.10) which does not even cover the cost of production. Authors of educational books struggle to receive royalties. Normally, most publishers pay authors 10% of the net sales as royalty, but under this new direct procurement method by the government, they are offering as low as 1%, making it even worse for books with multiple authors.

Muchunguh (2022) mentions government obtains books from publishers directly, eliminating distributors that charge a lot, which essentially reduces the cost of the book. This should make it possible for all students to afford textbooks, but the 16-percent value-added tax (VAT) charged on books increases the book price, resulting to lower class students being unable to afford books. The VAT also affects publishers, reducing their revenue, and leading to some of the leading publishers to close down (Abrams, 2016). Additionally, the VAT fosters piracy whereby phony publishers steal copyrighted books and publish them cheaply.

From an economic perspective, books are a commercial goods, and book publishing a profit-oriented business. Producing a book involves a series of stages from the author that writes, agents, editors, publishers, printers, distributing channels and booksellers before ending up in the hands of the reader. Every stage it follows adds a value to the book, increasing its economic value. Therefore, publishing companies are inherently capitalistic focusing only on the potential economic success of a book. Authors with no existing market or unestablished authors are subjected to rejection from traditional publishing companies, leading them to self-publish instead.

2.4 Online Publication in Kenya (e-book publishing)

Kenya is similar to other countries in the African continent when it comes to non-reading culture. The reading culture in developing societies such as Nigeria with a literacy level of 59.6%, Ethiopia 49.1%. Benin 38.4% is very low (C.I.A. World Factbook, 2015). In Nigeria, Zambia, South Africa, Uganda, Malawi, and Kenya, factors of poor reading culture have been identified and measures to combat these issues have been put in place (Sotiloye and Bobunde, 2018). Some

ascribe the poor reading culture predominant across African countries because Africa is considered an "oral society" (Jonsson and Olsson, 2008). Another reason for low reading culture is that students do not read for leisure but only for school. In Nigeria, for example, reading is associated with passing examinations and achieving academic success (Sotiloye and Bobunde, 2018). Educational books make up 90% of sales in the book market hence some Nigerian authors go for self-publishing in Nigeria (Independent, 2011). Research in the last decade shows a trend of low reading culture when it comes to non-academic books and authors gradually turning to self-publishing. According to Juma (2011), in Kenya, publishers face many challenges, including different local languages, poor authorship, poor marketing strategies, poor distribution channels, and a low export market, that threaten their survival. Educational publishing, on the other hand, faces fewer challenges.

The Ominde Commission recommended English to be used as the medium of instruction from Grade One. As a result, English has become the official language and all literate people can read it, depending on their literacy level. To reach more audiences, English is the language most used for books and educational books as well. Additionally, the increase in school enrollment presented a favorable environment for the growth in educational publishing.

However, given the challenges involving publishing, e-book publishing provides respite to authors. There are 21.75 million Internet users in Kenya putting internet penetration in Kenya at 40%. Online publishing services like Kindle Direct Publishing and Lulu are available in Kenya and authors can choose them to self-publish. Social media marketing is also one marketing strategy employed by self-published authors and with 20.2% of social media users in Kenya (Kemp, 2021), self-published authors in Kenya can utilize this marketing method. As it is easy for authors to self-publish e-books, readers prefer buying e-books for main reasons like

lower prices, increased comfort as they can buy from home or on the go with their smartphones, and a larger selection of titles (Bhardwaj et al, 2019). Besides having a variety of book titles, the readers can have hundreds of books in their online library and carry them anywhere.

Unlike printed books that take days to be delivered, e-books are downloaded instantly, and a reader can start the book within the same hour of buying it. If an individual needs certain information, they can quickly buy an e-book online and be able to access any information whenever they want. E-books are also environmentally friendly since no trees are destroyed to make the pages of the e-book. Electronic bookmarks also simplify referencing and allow readers to mark pages. These advantages give e-books an ever-increasing presence on the market. Although fiction and non-fiction books come in e-book formats, technical material is especially suited for e-book delivery because it is easier when searching for keywords online (Encyclopedia, n.d). According to the Mordor Intelligence Report (2020), the rising usage of smartphones and multilingual features of e-books is an advantage and drives the global demand for e-books. The increasing trend of retrieving information online for educational purposes also adds to the growth of e-books. Furthermore, according to the same report, the environmental protection campaigns from governments worldwide, especially for saving trees to reduce the use of paper, also increase the demand for e-books.

While all these are benefits of e-books, piracy is a drawback that is a widespread with people reaping off authors by selling their pirated e-books and PDF books. Options such as digital rights management, watermarking, restricted editing, password protection and copyrights are ways authors use to protect their e-books, but some books still get pirated. Large e-book pirating websites like Pirate Bay that can be accessed by anyone with internet are one of the major contributors of e-book piracy. Paperback book piracy is also easier due to new

technologies according to Nkiko (2014) whereby to reprint a book illegally, one only requires a copy of the original, a scanner, a computer with an optical recognition programme and a small rotary press. A pirated book can be produced within few days and it is difficult for anyone to notice it is pirated as they have exactly the same design, cover, colour and barcode of the original with the warning of “reproduction is forbidden”. Book piracy, both in e-book and paperback format affects the income of authors, especially self-published authors who incur personal expenses producing books and not earning back enough profits to break-even.

2.5 Online Self-Publishing Services

Online publishing services are platforms that support the digital production of books, newspapers, magazines, textbooks, and journals usually meant to be read on screens like an e-reader, smartphones and computers, like Amazon Kindle. Amazon introduced the Kindle device in 2007 which enables users to browse, buy and read e-books, newspapers, and other digital media. Together with the e-reading device, Amazon started Kindle Direct Publishing which offers a self-publishing model (Alsever, 2016). It is free and gives authors the right to price and publish their books whenever they want. Kindle Direct Publishing also gives authors access to the same distribution channels that traditional publishers use. The Amazon store accounts for 80% of e-book sales across English-language countries. It pays out a royalty of 70% on all Kindle titles priced between \$2.99 to \$9.99. For eBooks priced below \$2.99 and above \$9.99, Amazon pays out only 35% royalty (Bhardwaj et al, 2019). Aside from Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing, there are several other major online publishing platforms; Apple's iBooks Author which accounts for 10% of all e-book sales, Kobo Writing Life accounts for 2% of the e-book market, and Smashwords which allows authors to distribute their books to the many smaller e-

book retailers (Bhardwaj et al, 2019). The authors who want to sell their books in paperback form can use print-on-demand technology eliminating the shipping costs.

The invention of print on demand drastically changed the direction of self-publishing. Print-on-demand is the publishing of books by demand as opposed to bulk printing. It is affordable for self-published authors wanting to print high-quality books one at a time or in small groups, removing the need for a large number of prints and storage costs (Strauss, *n.d*). The author uploads their manuscript, chooses interior and cover design and the service turns the book into a digital file that can be printed instantaneously upon demand by the reader/buyer.

Though print on demand is useful, it is also an expensive process and books have to be priced higher to make a profit. This can be difficult for a novice author just breaking through the industry. This also reduces the bookshelf life, and the author might make a few dollars during its short-lived life. On the bright side, print-on-demand publishing gives authors independence, being able to market it anytime, the ability to revise content, and greater financial return per copy than royalties paid by traditional publishers (Hollatz, 2019). They receive all the royalties as opposed to traditional publishing companies that acquire some percentage of royalties. Self-publishing also allows authors to share their work globally without the approval of an established publishing company.

Nevertheless, online publishing is challenged by the existence of audiobooks which enable the listener to multitask. E-books are simple to produce and purchase, but they still require the reader to focus on the book. However, with audiobooks, an individual can focus on other tasks while listening to the book, making it the faster-growing format in the book industry. Some audiobook listeners prefer listening to an audiobook that is narrated by the author.

According to Stewart et al. (2020), the global audiobook market grew by 25 percent to US\$3.5 billion by 2020. In Kenya, however, the audiobook is not yet an emerging trend, and most self-published authors either publish in e-book, paperback, or both.

In summary, literature has shown that three contributing factors i.e., online publishing services, growth of the e-book market, and print on demand have reduced book production costs, and the availability of e-readers like smartphones, and tablets have streamlined the self-publishing route. Writers who opt for self-publishing retain their books' rights, set pricing for their books, and keep a large share of the sales (Finder, 2012). This study aims to find out other relevant factors that can fill the knowledge gap about self-publishing books in Kenya by interviewing self-published Kenyan authors. From 2010 to the present, how authors used online publishing services to self-publish their books and the experiences and challenges they faced when self-publishing in Kenya.

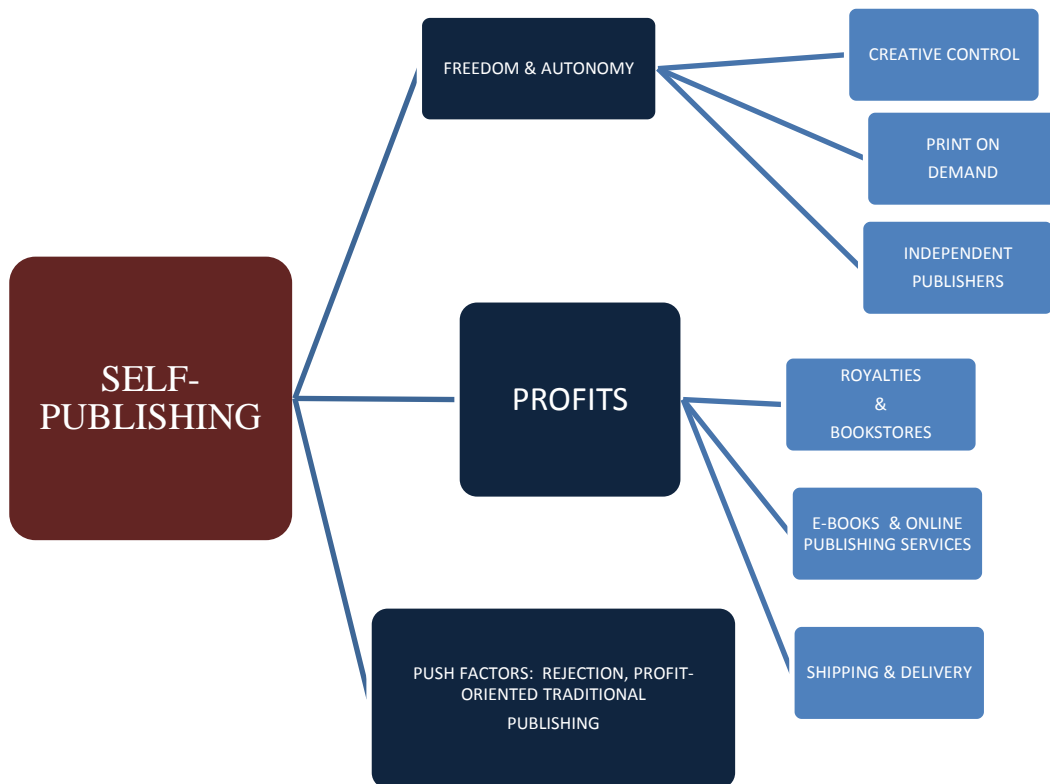
2.6 Conceptual Framework

According to Jabareen (2009), a conceptual framework is a network of interlinked concepts that together provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon by linking abstract concepts to empirical data. In this context, the conceptual framework is used to demonstrate how the variables of this study relate to each other and the results expected to be obtained at the end of the research. Akintoye (2015) suggests that the conceptual framework is mostly used by researchers when existing theories are not applicable or sufficient in creating a firm structure for the study.

The findings in the literature review indicate that self-publishing is influenced by factors such as the existence of online publishing services like Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing, print-on-demand which is also provided by online publishing services thus eliminating the need to outsource elsewhere to publish paperback books, and finally the growth of e-book market, the simplicity of publishing an e-book and its affordability for readers. The research questions for this study examine more factors that influence the self-publishing of books in Kenya, how they enhance the independence of self-published authors, and the challenges experienced by Kenyan self-published authors. Literature review found 3 factors influencing self-publishing but upon research and analysis, more factors were identified.

However, after data collection and analysis, more factors were found that influence self-publishing in Kenya, as demonstrated in the chart below.

Figure 3. Framework



One of the main factors that influence Kenyan self-published authors to choose self-publishing is freedom and autonomy over their work. They have creative control regarding their books, freedom to outsource and hire printing companies for both bulk printing and printing on demand, affirming the literature findings of print on demand as a main factor influencing self-publishing. Availability of independent publishers is also another contributing factor. They are like established traditional companies but more flexible and suit the needs of authors interested in self-publishing.

Compared to traditional publishing, there are more royalties from e-book self-publishing where the author receives 75-50% royalties from online publishing services, and for authors that stock their paperback books at bookstores receive 60-70% royalties. For local sales, the local delivery system is cheap, and the author does not lose profits from delivery costs, and for international sales, using online publishing services like Amazon and Lulu are more cost efficient. Thus the profits aspect of self-publishing influences authors to choose this method.

Lastly, push factors such as rejection from traditional companies and the profit-oriented nature of traditional companies make authors choose to self-publish instead. If an author lacks the fame to attract book buyers, then chances are, the traditional company will drop them. Also if their manuscript does not meet the company's standards, it also warrants rejection. Authors pushed away by traditional companies opt for self-publishing eventually.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research process. It provides information about the methods used and justification as to why said methods were employed for this research topic. This chapter also explains in detail the different stages of the research, including research method, sampling techniques, data collection procedures, and data analysis methods.

Research method refers to the structure of the research (Punch, 1998), the strategy used to execute the research, such as identifying how to study a phenomenon and collecting and analyzing data to produce reliable results. This research explores self-publishing in Kenya and the factors that influence self-publishing.

The qualitative research method was chosen as this approach can explain human behavior, needs, and personality characteristics (Madrigal and McClain, 2012) Qualitative research includes biography, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study. The approach that was used for this study is the phenomenological approach to expound the specifics, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the people in a situation (Moustakas, 1994).

The qualitative method provides answers to what, who, when, where, and how questions of the research problem. In general, it is based on the methodological pursuit of comprehending the ways that people see, approach, and experience situations and make meaning of their experiences (Erickson, 2011). This research method helps the researcher obtain information concerning the factors contributing to self-publishing and describing it. The qualitative method

was well suited in answering what factors influence self-publishing e-books in Kenya, how self-publishing enhanced the authors' autonomy, and what challenges these authors faced in self-publishing. The phenomenological approach was selected to explore the personal experiences of the participants.

This study aimed to understand factors that influence the self-publishing of e-books in Kenya, how self-publishing has enhanced the autonomy of authors, and the challenges they faced. Phenomenological research can show the presence of factors and their effects in individual cases, and their relation to the population the participants are drawn from (Creswell, 2013). An in-depth interview was used to collect data. The respondents' common responses were analyzed and culled for similar phrases and themes that were then grouped to form clusters of meaning. Through this process, the researcher was able to establish factors influencing self-publishing in Kenya and arrive at a more profound understanding of the phenomena.

3.2 Population and Sampling Methods

In research, a study population refers to a group of individuals possessing common characteristics related to the study (Reid, 2013). By definition, a population can be understood as a group of individuals selected by the researcher to study and produce answers to the research questions. Therefore, the population of this study was Kenyan self-published writers. The unlimited or unknown number of populations can be called an infinite population (Rafeedali, n.d) and in this case, the number of Kenyan self-published authors cannot all be accounted for, so it is an infinite population. However, using certain parameters (characteristics that are used to define a given population), participants were selected from the population and this group of individuals representing the population is referred to as a sample. The sampling technique used decides the accuracy of the representative group.

For this study, two sampling techniques were employed for accuracy purposes. Quota sampling and snowball sampling. Like convenience sampling, quota sampling is used to select research participants according to availability. But with quota sampling, the goal is to select participants with specific characteristics; 1) Must be a Kenyan citizen residing in Kenya for more than 10 years 2) Must be a self-published author. The first few participants were selected from YouTube channels, websites, and Facebook groups dedicated to self-publishing. Some self-published authors have their own YouTube channels and websites to share videos and articles about the self-publishing process with their audiences. Individuals possessing these qualities helped the researcher collect data to answer the research questions and produce accurate results. Snowball technique comes in handy when it is difficult to find participants. Once a participant was found, the researcher asked him/her to recommend their fellow self-published authors to participate in this research.

In a phenomenological study, a small sample size of between 6 and 20 individuals is considered sufficient provided the target community is not easily accessible and the data has achieved saturation. This approach allows interviewing of enough people to produce significant results without losing sight of the topic's essence (Ellis, 2016). In this study, the sample size was determined by the criterion of information redundancy or saturation level (Lincoln, 2007). This means data collection can be discontinued when no new information is gathered by interviewing more people. If all the respondents from a certain point keep sharing the same information, then the interview can be stopped.

3.3 Research Instrument

A research instrument is a tool used by a researcher to gather necessary data for the study. In qualitative, an interview is mostly used for data collection purposes. According to Brinkmann

and Kvale (2014), though other types of interviews can be used in qualitative research, the most commonly used for phenomenological studies are unstructured or semi-structured in-depth interviews. Using unstructured interviews enables the researcher to explore a phenomenon in-depth with the respondent by adjusting their questioning according to how the interview is going (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2014).

The one-on-one interview was carried out with one respondent at a time, in a conversational manner to encourage participants to be comfortable and express their answers in detail. Due to geographical differences between the target sample and the researcher, 10 interviews were conducted via zoom video call, and 1 was done via Facebook messenger. The use of an electronic device such as a computer or mobile phone for conducting in-depth interviews is supported by Schaefer and Dillman (1998) stating, "respondents find it easier to provide more detailed typed responses than writing by hand." An electronic interview is also convenient when participants are geographically dispersed.

A pilot study was conducted via zoom video call, lasting for an hour. The video was recorded and afterward, transcribed using Amber Transcription software. The first section of the interview looked at the background of the author, introducing themselves, how they ventured into self-publishing, and their perceptions and experiences in self-publishing books in Kenya. The second section of the interview aimed to answer the research questions, examining factors that influence self-publishing of e-books, how self-publishing has enhanced self-published authors' autonomy, and exploring the challenges faced by Kenyan self-published authors and their solutions if any. The findings of the pilot study were valuable in shaping and refining the research instrument i.e. interview questions accordingly to gather relevant data answering the research questions. Additional questions were included in the interview concerning independent

publishing, printing companies, local delivery, local transaction methods and bookstores. Furthermore, the pilot study findings were also monumental in identifying Kenyan self-published authors do not only rely on e-book publishing. Outsourcing to printing companies to print paperback books was a crucial stage in Kenyan self-publishing industry.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of interpreting the data gathered for the study. In qualitative, data exists in the form of interview audios, videos, transcripts, notes, and feelings and not in numbers (Drew et al, 2008). Data analysis allows the researcher to arrange what they have discovered and produce results answering the research questions. This is the stage that determines the outcome of the research as accurate results cannot be produced without establishing the right analysis procedure. According to Rubin (1995), the analysis stage involves using coding techniques to identify ideas in the data, grouping repeated information into categories, and relating ideas to one another.

After conducting the interview, the participants' responses were transcribed using Otter software. Data was then categorized into manageable sizes; the important points were filtered from the less important ones and a narrative of analysis was established. The interview was divided into three sections; examining factors that influence self-publishing of e-books, how self-publishing has enhanced authors' autonomy, and exploring the challenges faced by Kenyan self-published authors and their solutions if any. Recurring words, ideas, concepts, and themes under these categories and any new relevant information were organized. The researcher then analyzed and interpreted the information according to the objectives of the study.

To achieve validity, the researcher used intercoder agreement whereby the researcher and another coder analyzed the data and drafted the themes. To calculate the level of intercoder reliability, the percentage agreement technique was used. This technique relies on the proportion of agreement of coded units between two independent coders (Allen, 2017). The second coder identified 10 themes (royalties, freedom, issues with mainstream publishing, reading culture, social media marketing, shipping, challenges, bookshops, ISBN, print) out of the total 13 themes found by the researcher (the remaining 3 are, editors and designers, independent publishers and M-Pesa) resulting to a 77% inter-rater reliability. Even though coding involves a certain level of subjective judgment, intercoder reliability maintains judgment agreed by all coders.

Thematic analysis is a method used to identify what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about and to make sense of those commonalities (Braun and Clarke, 2012). Several patterns could be identified across the data that answer particular research questions. Braun and Clarke (2012) suggested the six steps of thematic analysis: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, naming themes, and writing up. An inductive approach was used to allow the data to determine the themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2012) inductive analysis is a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame or the researcher's analytic preconceptions. Therefore, this approach eliminates rigid preconceived notions making the researcher overlook new data.

The interview questions include the reasons for choosing publishing, personal experiences in the self-publishing industry, the process of self-publishing, how self-publishing has increased their autonomy as authors, and the challenges of self-publishing.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics refer to the principles or codes researchers abide by during the data collection process; and the acceptable norms for conduct that guide researchers on how to conduct their studies. In this research, the identity and, privacy of the authors interviewed were kept confidential, rightly quoted, and given credentials for any information they provided relevant to the research. Authors of both genders were interviewed to provide gender-balanced results for data analysis. Resnik (2020) also recommended that researchers give credit where it is due, protect confidential information, avoid bias in aspects of research such as data collection and analysis, avoid discrimination, and minimize harm and risks towards human subjects.

During the process of this research, participants' rights to privacy were respected. Before answering interview questions, the respondents signed informed consent agreeing to participate voluntarily. The participants were also given the right to withdraw from the research at any stage they wished. Their names and details were kept anonymous to respect their privacy. The researcher also received approved research clearance from the Institute of Postgraduate Studies and Research.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the use of data analysis procedure, categorization of themes, and answering of research questions. Thematic analysis was used as it helps the researcher to identify and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences of respondents (Braun and Clarke, 2012). The recurring issues all the respondents raised are grouped into a theme and discussed. Through thematic analysis, the researcher was able to relate themes with the research objectives and answer the research questions. Upon finishing transcribing the interviews, the researcher categorized all the themes under respective research questions. The factors influencing self-published authors to publish e-books are first discussed, followed by how self-publishing has enhanced the autonomy of authors, and lastly the challenges self-published authors face in Kenya. Respondents are directly quoted and use an abbreviation of the respondent (R-) to show which respondent is being quoted. The interviews were stopped at reaching a saturation level where no more new data was being added. According to Lincoln (2007), the sample size is determined by the criterion of saturation level, where no new information can be obtained.

Participants interviewed met the characteristics required; must be a Kenyan citizen residing in Kenya for more than 10 years and must be a self-published author. A semi-structured interview was used and was conducted via zoom video call, between March and July, at the time most preferably time to the respondents. Only interview 3 was done via Facebook messenger. The participants were 10 in total, 4 were females and 6 were males and all published novels. Respondent 3 is a student, respondents 2 and 5 are YouTubers by profession, respondent 6 is a

Marketing Agent in an IT company, respondents 3 and 10 have office jobs and pursue self-publishing as a side job and the remaining respondents are self-published authors by profession. Respondents 1, 2, and 4 are first-time self-published authors. Respondent 6 has the longest experience and self-published first in 2002. Respondent 7 self-published 1 book together with other authors, respondent 8 self-published 2 books, respondent 9 has 3 books, and respondent 10 has self-published 3 books. The interviews were later transcribed using the otter website and then exported into a Word document.

4.2 Factors Contributing to Self-publishing in Kenya

Both e-book self-publishing and print are influenced by similar factors. Choosing which version to self-publish the book is a personal preference but the general factors identified that influence authors to self-publish are similar.

Out of the 10 respondents, 5 have self-published e-books as well as print versions and 5 have published only print. The themes relating to e-book are quoted from these five respondents that have experience in e-book publishing. The main reasons why authors chose to self-publish include rejection from mainstream publishing, freedom to make creative decisions, availability of printing companies, independent publishers, high royalties, and social media marketing.

In self-publishing, the author has all the rights of their book whereas, in traditional companies, the company buys the rights and makes all the decisions. When the author retains all the rights to the book, they have autonomy over the direction of the book, the marketing process, distribution methods, royalties, and shipping.

Self-publishing divides into two parts; outsourcing and the do-it-yourself approach. Outsourcing is when the author hires an independent publishing company to handle the publishing process and the author remains with the rights of their book. For the latter approach, the author manages all the aspects of self-publishing on their own. The themes discovered under this category are freedom, independent publishers, editors and designers, ISBN, print, shipping, royalties, social media marketing, M-Pesa, and book shops. These enhance the autonomy of self-published authors and are advantageous to them.

4.2.1 Mainstream Publishing

All the respondents showed distrust of mainstream publishing houses, and this is one of the reasons why they chose to self-publish (both print and e-book). For example, respondent No. 9 got into self-publishing because she was driven by anger towards the traditional companies and their constant rejection, even though she was quite unfamiliar with self-publishing.

“But at first, I tried to go to publishing houses in Kenya. And every time I walked out, I get so angry and feel a bit unappreciated, because they would just tell me, okay, we'll look at it, you know, like, toss it aside, like, in my head, I thought, okay, they're never going to look at that. And the others would say stuff like, okay, we're gonna look at it but it's gonna take at least a year. And then I thought, okay, that's a bit rude. Now, I want to publish. I didn't even know anything about self-publishing.”

(R9)

Respondent No. 10 also mentioned bottlenecks and protocols of traditional companies swayed him into going through self-publishing.

“Why I got into self-publishing, I think it's because the mainstream publishers are a bit uptight. They have a lot of procedures, maybe protocols and bottlenecks for people that are trying to get into maybe writing, because writing is what got me into publishing.”

(R10)

From this response, the respondent implies that these strict gatekeeping procedures on writers to publish can be discouraging. Self-publishing is hence easier for beginners as it is most available.

It is established in the literature review chapter that traditional or mainstream publishing companies have a strict gatekeeping process. Some manuscripts are rejected, but it appears that even those that have managed to publish with mainstream companies demonstrate a negative attitude towards the company.

“I was feeling very frustrated in that arrangement. And I realized when a publisher has your book, you have no power over it. There are no decisions, you cannot make even one single decision. So, when she (manager) surpassed the agreed time when she was supposed to give me accounting for what she sold and she didn't, I pointed out to her that she had violated the contract, and I would like my book back. So, I got my book back, changed the cover, self-published it.”

(R1)

The lack of power to make decisions concerning the book when published with the mainstream is a reoccurring concern among the respondents. When an author's manuscript is accepted, the company buys the rights of the book and, in turn, prints, publishes, and sells the book through booksellers and retailers. Essentially, the company makes all the final decisions.

“On the other traditional one (traditional company), the publisher is the one who drives the whole concept.”

(R4)

“If people want something, for example, a derivative product, they want to make a film, you talk to the publisher, not the author, you'd be surprised some of these authors don't know what the hell is going on.”

(R7)

The mainstream publishing companies focus on academic books because there is a market for them, and the respondents confirmed what was established in the literature review chapter.

“You know, there was a change of curriculum in Kenya, publishers are more concentrating on the academic books, and aligning these academic books to what we call the competency-based framework that has been introduced in the country. So, they are not so much keen on creative works, which is my area.”

(R4)

The Kenyan curriculum determines which academic books are relevant and the set books that will be studied for each academic year. Thus, traditional companies' book production is influenced by the Kenyan curriculum and essentially the book market in general.

“I feel like with the book industry, in Kenya, it's more of a business than really giving people opportunities and a voice to speak. So obviously, I will understand why they will go the academic route because education is something that goes on forever. But for like a fictional book, the market is still not solid. I feel like someone will prefer something that is moving because it's a business again, compared to fiction where you know, probably no one will buy.”

(R5)

But even before the recent curriculum change, traditional companies focused on academic books. Respondent No. 6, who was the first self-published author in Kenya struggled to get through the gatekeeping process of traditional companies 20 years ago. Respondent No. 10 also explained the challenges of publishing with traditional companies since they concentrate on educational content.

“I went through the late 90s, looking for publishers. And they were just like five, and all of them were dealing in, in textbooks, which is common

in this part of the world because the school market is their biggest market by far.”

(R6)

“But I studied the publishing and book trade myself. So, I was aware of the challenges in traditional publishing. And I knew that the publishing industry in Kenya is largely geared towards educational publishing, which means that the content should be something based on the curriculum.”

(R10)

After the independence, the number of schools increased, more students joined, and this increased the market for educational books. The educational publishing sector boomed the more education became easily accessible to the masses. The book market thereof is saturated with academic books, and the reading culture in Kenya is affected as a result. People read for school, and rarely for leisure. Hence, self-published authors opt for an e-book because they feel like mainstream companies will not publish their works if it is not related to the school curriculum.

“So, during the Kibaki's administration, the government started procuring books for students. So that market is school market became very lucrative because the government, it was the biggest buyer of our books to this day. So, publishers focus on that because that's the biggest market.”

(R6)

In primary and secondary schools, students have to read set books in language classes, both English and Swahili. Set books are books that the school requires the students to study and thus are part of the curriculum. Because most set books tend to be written by native writers, students tend to relate Kenyan writers with academia.

“Yeah, the Kenyans think reading a Kenyan book is when you're reading a set book. So even today, we still have to fight with people who say, all Kenyan writers are so boring, which I don't think they are because people like Ngũgĩ wa

Thiong'o, I don't think he's boring. But they still have this thing of Kenyans, write like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, yeah. And we don't come up with stories, I guess, like the Nigerians and the South Africans.”

(R9)

Respondent 9 believes people's perception of Kenyan authors is not positive and as a result affects the reading culture.

“It's pretty good. It's very, very good. People I know, people say it is low because it is lower compared to the developed countries. But it is, I think it's good enough. It's good as it can be. Most people read newspapers and sports. But it's still good. It's just a matter of our writers, writing and promoting, just finding a way of letting people know. It takes time.”

(R10)

However, respondent No. 10 has a positive outlook towards the reading culture and believes it all depends on the ability of the authors to promote their work. The reading culture is good and Kenyan writers need to be able to expose their works to more people. So, according to respondent eleven, creative books (non-academic) can thrive in Kenya with the correct promotional method. In general, the respondents demonstrated a negative attitude towards mainstream publishing which influenced them to self-publish instead.

4.2.2 Freedom

The respondents stated that self-publishing gives them freedom and control over their work. This is the most mentioned theme among all the respondents; having the independence to do whatever they want with their book. Respondent No. 4 explained that with self-publishing, the author has autonomy over the book, compared to when publishing with mainstream companies. Respondent

No. 1 also confirms that with self-publishing, the author has the liberty in all aspects of publishing.

“First of all, you're independent, you have the freedom to just go by your terms. The payment, you know, it's cheap, again, it's affordable to go to the self-publishing route. So compared to the publishing, you know, with the companies, and I feel like you have a lot of control with the self-publishing of your books, other than using somebody else to publish your book, so like, you have more control of your books, right. So, you don't have to pay them some permission or yeah.”

(R4)

“However, self-publishing gives you some freedom. You know, in terms of finances, in terms of what you do in your book, you have that freedom.”

(R1)

Respondent No. 2 said self-publishing gives her control over the work by working alongside editors to produce work the author wants. The self-publishing journey is engaging and creates a sense of ownership in the author.

“But when you are doing self-publishing, one thing I've realized is that, first, you maintain control of your story. You're in charge of your story. And then you get deep down into the story because this is a journey that you're going to walk, you're going to walk with the reviewers, people who are going to review the story, people who are going to edit your story, you're going to walk with them. So, it is quite an engaging journey. But it's a journey that strengthens the sense of ownership to the story.”

(R2)

Having creativity control also means the authors are at liberty to hire their editors and designers, they have the freedom to work on the story as long s they want, with no time limits. After writing the manuscript, the most important next step is the editing followed by the designing and lastly the printing. Every respondent insisted on the significance of editors and designers and hiring them was a matter of fact.

“And then you get, that's the process you get, you get editor, editor approves the book, you get beta readers, beta readers approve the book.”

(R5)

“Editors are very important. I've also learned that having, guinea pigs are also very important. Like right now I'm working on another story. And what I did was, was, like, give out the first, the first two chapters to 10 of my readers, and I told them, like, give me a feedback.”

(R9)

Some respondents used only editors and others used both editors and beta readers. Respondents No. 5 and 9 described how important it was for them to use beta readers during the editing stage of their works. Though beta readers can be identified as an independent theme, it still falls under the editing umbrella.

Another sub-theme under freedom is online platforms that self-published authors use to hire editors and designers and market their books.

“So, I did speak to an editor from Fiverr because I needed to get an opinion of somebody who's not Kenyan who's in the industry, but who's not Kenyan because I sort of wanted my target audience to be International.”

(R1)

“So, the designing of the cover book, I got a graphic designer on Instagram. She's talented. I felt like I gave her a chance. And I felt like she did a very good job. So going forward, I'll probably use her, in my second book, on my other book.”

(R4)

Respondent No. 1 consulted an editor via Fiverr, an online platform for freelancers, to get an outsider's opinion. Respondent No. 4 hired a designer via Instagram. Online platforms whether social media or others provide authors with the opportunity to find editors and designers on their own. This gives them the freedom to choose what is best for their book publishing process.

Social media is prevalently used by everyone making it the simplest and cost-effective way of reaching potential buyers, communicating with existing followers, and creating a personal brand. Marketing is essential in publishing to increase sales and put the author on the radar of more readers.

“I display my Instagram, my Twitter, I have an Instagram and Twitter and a Facebook page specifically for marketing. And I also have a blog and a podcast. All of them are just ways of reaching a wider audience to bring awareness to my books.”

(R1)

“So, normally, I have an audience, I have a ready audience, from my YouTube channel, so I normally advertise on my social media, I'm using these other platforms to advertise my book.”

(R4)

“I tried to push on YouTube way before I started the whole thing, because I wanted at least you know, by the time you're publishing, at least two or three people are reading your books, right?”

(R1)

Respondent No. 1 mentioned she uses Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook for marketing. Accompanied by blogging and podcasts. Both respondents No. 4 and No. 1 are YouTubers and used their already existing audience to promote their books.

Some other marketing methods mentioned by respondents No. 8 and 9 are a word of mouth, newspapers, television, and websites. These respondents, however, use social media as their main marketing tool.

“Our major marketing tools, are our social networks and word of mouth from people that have read from us before.”

(R8)

“My main one is social media, Facebook specifically, because that's what I use most. I would say about 85% of my sales I've moved them on Facebook. I would say maybe another 15% because I was featured in the newspapers or TV or some websites and maybe the other five is word of mouth. But social media is my main marketplace.”

(R9)

Social media gives self-published authors the space to promote and market their books without the help of an established publishing house. Technological improvements over the years have created an environment where independent creatives and artists can create, produce and sell their content. With freedom and control over their work, self-published authors can hire editors and designers of their preference and utilize social media for marketing.

4.2.3 Royalties

Royalties refer to the amount of money an author receives from selling their books. Royalties from e-books are divided between the author and the online publishing service. Royalties in traditional publishing are paid to the author by the company.

Recently, the court ordered Longhorn Publishers to pay two authors Sh35 million for books the government bought in bulk from the company, which then they refused to pay royalties to the two authors (Wasuna, 2021). The authors wrote teacher's guidebooks which Longhorn Publishers sold to the government for Sh350 million through the Education Ministry, in 2018 and 2019. Under this context, royalties from e-books and online publishing services are discussed, and also expenses of publishing e-book compared to print.

“Okay, the thing about Amazon is that let me give you an example. If your book is \$10, okay, if it's \$10, if you're self-publishing, you'll get \$10. If it is

on Amazon, you'll probably get maybe \$2, or two points or maybe 1.78. Okay, so the amount of money you get from Amazon is very, very little. And so, with Amazon for it to work, we need to be talking 1000s or hundreds of 1000s of sales to make any sense. So, amazon is just for giving you maybe the presence of an international platform.”

(R10)

Respondent No. 10 explains that with amazon, the royalties are minimal even though you are self-publishing. But with self-publishing where the author does not use any publishing services, the royalties all belong to them. For an author to earn good returns, then the author needs to make a high number of sales in Amazon.

“So, I can't say it's easy to sell on Amazon, it's all in the effort you put in it, because honestly, I feel like if it were not for Fiverr, and if it were not for my connections to other businesses, I wouldn't generate sales as much on Amazon.”

(R1)

Respondent No. 1 states that generating sales on amazon is difficult and requires a lot of marketing and effort. She explains that if it were not for her career as a freelance writer in Fiverr (freelance website), then she would not have generated a large number of buyers.

“Also, if you're an author, and you put up an e-book on a system like Amazon, or in your other e-book seller, you get a much higher royalty, usually 50%, sometimes as high as 75%. If you've published traditionally, you'll be lucky to get 10%. If you're a really big author, they might negotiate up to maybe 10-12-13%. I think the highest I've ever had was 15%. But sometimes it's as low as 7%. So, mainstream publishing has been a nightmare for local authors.”

(R6)

However, respondent No. 6 explains that Amazon's royalties are much higher than traditional companies. Where R10 explained that for an author to make sales on Amazon, they have to sell a lot of books; R6 explains only the royalty take. From these two explanations, it is evident that royalties can be high in self-publishing, but if the author is not making any sales, then they do not receive the return of their investment.

“You know, with the printing, you need to go and print, and that costs money. But with self-publishing and e-book set up, it's cheaper because what you need is the internet and then upload.”

(R4)

Basically, I can do everything for an e-book on my computer. Like, you can write the book, get it edited, get a cover, put it up for sale. In the next 1 hour or have a manuscript. Publishing an e-book, It's not just easier, it's cheaper.”

(R1)

Another advantage of e-book publishing overprint is the cost-effectiveness. The e-book does not require investment in producing it. Respondent No. 4 explains printing paperback books are more costly than e-book publishing. Respondent No. 1 explains that another positive trait of self-publishing an e-book is the ease of the process whereby it can be done from the comfort of one's home.

Though the royalties earned from online publishing services are higher than what traditional companies have to offer, the authors still need to market and promote their books to break even. Without sales on amazon, high royalties do not mean much if the expenses incurred cannot be covered. The editors and designers cost much for those wanting quality outcomes.

For printed books, royalties are the profits gained after subtracting the production expenses.

“Now, when you go self-publishing, royalties are 100%, they go 100% to you, of course, you will factor in the cost of production. So, cost of production and then you determine your pricing and then whatever is left after you have deducted the cost of production and maybe the cost of running your business.”

(R8)

“Yeah, 100% is mine. But of course, I have to come in, you know, a point where I break even because I would say the book costs are about half the cost of the book. printing a book is about half the cost of the book. But

then you haven't considered all the other costs like transport, even the internet even late nights and all that. But yeah, your margin is way larger than when you go through bookshops, but then when at least it takes away the worry to sell many books.”

(R9)

Respondents No. 8 and 9 affirm that the royalties in self-publishing 100% belong to the author. But of course, factoring in the expenses of the book production. Another method of earning royalties is via book shops. For authors that manage to shelf their books in bookshops, they earn a certain percentage of royalties.

4.2.4 Bookshops

Stocking books on bookshops give authors more exposure. It is where their target audience shop and so, having a book at an established bookshop means getting more readers. Some book shops do not stock self-published authors and others are specifically meant for self-published authors, like Writer's Guild bookshop.

Respondent No. 9 managed to stock her books in three bookshops starting with Comrade bookhouse, which is a relatively new book shop that specializes in nurturing and promoting African writers and literature. Prestige Bookshop is one of the popular established bookstores in Kenya and the Writers Guild caters to self-published authors.

“But with the latest book, I have books in Prestige bookshop. I have a book at, it's called Comrade Book-house. Comrade stocks African writers. So, it's a new concept. And it's, it's awesome. And then I have books at Writers Guild. They have a bookshop now. So yeah, three, three is quite good. Coming from nothing to three. That is, it's thrilling, I'm thrilled.”

(R9)

The percentage division of the royalties is 75%-25%, with the author receiving the 75%. Respondent No.5 seemed comfortable with the royalties and the exposure she received from stocking her books at an established bookstore.

“And then they told me they were interested in distributing my book if I was interested. So, we get it, I sell my books at around 800ksh (\$8). The first one was 800. So, they get like, 200-160. What percentage is that? For every distribution that they make, okay.”

(R5)

Respondent No. 3 utilized Book First, an established Kenyan bookstore operating over 20 years. They sell books within East African countries and also ship them internationally. It is easier for self-published authors when they sell their books to international audiences via established bookstores than to do it personally.

“Now what I've done, in fact, sorry, sorry, I didn't say that. One of the other means I've done a distribution channel is to have ahh... We have these companies that sell online. Like now we have a company that is called Book First. I have someone who ordered the book from Australia was able to pay and they have decided for delivery of two copies, so it is there, but it can be able to sell the book anywhere.”

(R3)

Some respondents experienced a challenge with stocking their books in established bookstores. Respondent five was told her book would not be stocked until it is reviewed and there are 2000 books ahead of her on the list. These kinds of regulations restrict self-published authors from breaking into the market.

“I went to this particular bookshop it's a very, you know, a very huge bookshop in Kenya. And I felt like there will be more exposure if I put my books there. So, I approached them, I asked them, what is the process, and I was given a contact reaction call. And I called and they told me, well, yeah, we can review your book. But your book is like what he said, like 2000, and something number 2000 and something. So, before I get reviewed, the other books that are in between before mine gets reviewed.”

So, it's a whole process. So, I felt like, why wait for all that long? Like you're putting control of your book with somebody else?"

(R3)

"The challenge you experience with established workshops is that they may be a bit unreasonable for people that are starting because probably the entire cut from the sale would go anything about 50%, sometimes up to 65% of the copy. So, if you're selling the book at 1000 shillings, for example, and they're taking 65%, that would mean 650 Kenyan shillings. Now that only leaves you with 350 which is more or less the cost of printing per copy."

(R3)

Respondent No. 10 explained that established bookstores are costly and take a larger percentage of the royalties. For a self-published author, who incurs all the expenses of the production of the book, receiving only 35% of their royalties is a loss. Even though getting to stock their book in these major bookstores is liberating for some, it can be daunting to others.

"And I think that the bookshops don't buy the books outright. I thought they buy the books outright from you. They usually don't, they have what is called a sale or return agreement. So, what that means is you give them a number of copies, maybe like five, or 10 copies. And then if they sell, when the books sell, that's when they pay you if the books don't sell, you can come back and collect them. So that's how bookshops do."

(R6)

Respondent No. 6 explained his experience with bookshops whereby they only pay the author if their books are sold, otherwise, they unstock the books and refund them to the author.

4.2.5 Shipping

Publishing an e-book with online publishing services means the host company provides international shipping of print-on-demand books and also purchasing e-book is much easier. The company, for example, Lulu, plays the middleman. Once a purchase is made, they hold the

money until the book is delivered to the buyer then release the payment to the author/seller. Even though their books exist in the e-book version, the option of print on demand is quite suitable to the respondents. Providing their buyers with the opportunity to get the e-book or the print version, helps them make more sales.

“My books are on lulu.com. I joined Lulu because at the very least theirs was print on demand. They do e-books. But you can also do print on demand. So, what that means is if you go on to Lulu, even when they didn't have paperbacks if you went on to Lulu and you saw an e-book of mine, but you prefer hardcopy you could order even one copy just one, you pay in advance, Lulu will manufacture the book and ship it to you wherever you are in the world.”

(R6)

Selling an e-book does not require shipping and the shipping costs are not factored into the self-publishing expenses. International shipping becomes a necessity when the author's books exist in e-book but also want to sell them to those that prefer print books. Hence, print on demand as an alternative becomes very important.

“Okay, so an e-book, everything is online, it's electronic. So, there is no printing, there is no charge for shipping. It's just you, whether you're buying it, or you're selling it, it's easier. So, even the price, you can put the price much lower for an e-book than a printed book.”

(R1)

“So that Amazon makes sense for a writer who has like a big audience, and they can't handle the distribution themselves.”

(R5)

Most buyers of respondent No. 4's books are international and for respondent No. 1, print books sell more on Amazon, indicating the significance of international shipping in online self-publishing.

“Yeah, so far. The number of people that I have had, you know, in the diaspora who have bought my book are like, what, like maybe 200 to 300 sales so far.”

And the book I'm getting to maybe 150 so more on the e-books than the physical book.”

(R4)

“No, prints actually, (selling more). Funny enough prints in Amazon. I'm using print on demand in Amazon.”

(R1)

When shipping within the city, the respondents mentioned using *boda-boda* which is a motorbike for commuting and making deliveries. Respondent No. 5 said that the buyers cover the delivery expenses. This is beneficial to the authors as they receive royalties for their work and do not incur further expenses after the publishing of the book. All expenses incurred by self-published authors happen during the production of the book.

“So, I sent it through Bolts or Uber Boda. So, I just send it to them. I think yeah, that's the easiest route because it's cheaper. whenever they want. I told them the price. They handle the pricing of delivery.”

(R5)

Shipping abroad on the other hand can be costly due to the steps the parcel has to go through from country of origin, transit to the delivery location. There are many factors involving international shipping, making it more expensive than domestic deliveries. Respondent No. 8 stated that when shipping abroad, shipping fees tend to be double or triple the costs of domestic delivery. When factored in the international shipping fee, the price of the book increases.

“I sell physical copies, which is becoming a concern because the shipping fee tends to be four or three times more than the cost of the book. So, if a book costs, say 1000 Kenyan shillings, the shipping fee would be anything from 3000 to say, 4000 Kenyan shillings via international courier services.”

(R8)

“Yeah, so normally I can use boda-boda, I use buses, and then I also use the post office and also I deliver myself many times. Like when the sales are many I just drive around Nairobi, in my car with the books, and then drive them to various destinations. Yeah.”

(R10)

Respondents No. 10 uses boda-boda and also self-delivery when the sales are high. Self-published authors are very involved in the entire process of book publishing. Having the power to make decisions concerning the direction of their book, working alongside editors, and delivering the books personally proves how self-published authors have complete autonomy over their work.

For payments, the respondents utilize M-Pesa, mobile money services. M-Pesa (m refers to “mobile”, *pesa* refers to “money”), literally meaning mobile money is a phone-based money transfer service, provided by Safaricom, the largest mobile network operator in Kenya. They also have M-Pesa global which enables M-Pesa registered customers to send and receive money globally.

“Luckily right now, our main source of funds transfer is M-Pesa. And there is M-Pesa global so I can receive money from whatever account from whichever country right into my phone without much hassle.”

(R8)

“Within Kenya, it depends, they can use the a till number for M-Pesa.”

(R7)

“They send me through M-Pesa.”

(R5)

“Yes, they make the payment first through M-Pesa.”

(R10)

The respondents mentioned M-Pesa to be their main source of receiving payments. This is easier for both parties since it is user-friendly, and everybody uses it. When it comes to online publishing services like Amazon and Lulu, the platform plays the middleman between the author and the reader. When a reader purchases a book, the money is not transferred to the author until

the book is delivered then the money is released. Outside online publishing platforms, the authors and the buyers agree with no binding contracts. There is trust between them and this helps strengthen the positive image of self-published authors need.

4.2.6 Print

Printing is the process of transferring text into paper and producing a paperback book. The printing and binding of the book are done by a printing company. There are companies with printing presses that specialize in printing books and depending on the number of copies an author needs to print, the costs differ. For individuals interested in publishing many books, in bulk, will receive a discount but it is also much more costly. Those that want to print fewer books will not receive that much discount.

The respondents differ on the method they used. Respondent No. 8 stated that he puts into consideration his demographic, their income levels, the starting or end of the month, and the spending habits of the readers. During the mid-month, he prints on demand. The buyer requests for the book and only then is the book printed. But during the end/beginning of the following month, he will print in bulk because most people are paid a salary during that time and can afford to spend money on books.

“But of course, looking at factors, economic factors, the spending habits for your readers, and probably that other determinant factors like how people earn maybe their salaries end month, we experience an avalanche of sales. So, yes, we do both, we print in bulk, and also, we print on demand. So, depending on the times, mid-month, I'll print on demand, end month I'll print in bulk.”

(R8)

Respondent No. 7 prefers printing on demand because he receives orders. Print on demand can be in the form of one book per print or printing more than 100. Even though this can essentially be considered printing in bulk, it is also printing on demand because of the pre-orders made.

“For me, I opted to go for print on demand. Because for the first time I printed the first book, I had 200 orders within the first one week.”

(R7)

Respondent No. 3 also confirmed that printing on demand, when it is few numbers, can be costly compared to printing in bulk. Respondent No. 1 explained that when printing one book, it costs 500ksh but when printing in bulk, it costs 240ksh, a discount of 260ksh per book. So, this discount allows most authors to opt for printing in bulk.

“Now, what happens if you print on demand is that at times it can be slightly expensive. You see in printing, the more the number of copies you print the lesser the cost.”

(R3)

“So, when I printed the sample copies, I was printing at 500 a copy. But when I eventually printed the whole batch, I printed at around 240 shillings per book. So, you see that difference? So, if I was printing on order, it would be very expensive. But when I print many, then it's cheaper.”

(R1)

“I prefer to print in bulk because it's cheaper, cheaper, because the more books you print, the less a copy will cost. And then you can still do your original price. So, if I print 1000 books is for instance it will cost me about 70 shillings less than if I had printed 500 so you can still sell the book cheaper and make your money.”

(R9)

Respondent No. 9 also affirms the affordability of printing in bulk. However, it depends on the printing company one uses and the discounts they offer. The availability of printing companies that offer book printing and binding allows authors to once again not rely on traditional publishing. Hence, printing enhances the independence of self-published authors.

But with printed books, authors have to obtain ISBNs to be able to shelf their books on bookshops.

International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is used to identify book titles and is unique to each title. An ISBN is assigned to a single edition, therefore, an author must get an ISBN for each book title, even if it is in a series. These identification numbers are bought from an affiliate of the International ISBN Agency in respective countries and the method of assigning an ISBN depends on each country.

In Kenya, the ISBN is given by the Kenya National Library Services. Those interested in obtaining ISBN, as an individual or as an entity, will place their orders, pay for it via online payment and receive their ISBN after an order has been reviewed. The process is easy and less bureaucratic, as supported by the respondents.

“Now, you can get them from the National Library, and you can get them whether your publisher but for, well, it's a very small fee, because it's \$15 US dollars, but for one if you buy in bulk, you get discounts, which is what publishers do. Publishers buy in such bulk that the individual cost is almost zero.”

(R6)

“So, I got the ISBN, and I got the copyrights, which you have to go through the legal system, you go to a lawyer, and then you take the documents to the copyright guys, and then it's stamped and then now you're authorized to use it.

(R1)

“And then, of course, you need to get in touch with the Kenyan National Library Services, because they need, they're also a source of information on stuff you need when you want to self-publish. And that's like ISBN anyway. So, once they give me ISBN, then I go a printer, then I printed, and then the book is out.”

(R9)

Even though legally, it is not a rule for individual publishers to have ISBN on their books, the respondents showed concern about the importance of having an ISBN. It makes their books stand out and can be easier to stock them in libraries.

4.2.7 Independent Publishers

Independent publisher refers to a publishing company that provides editing, designing, printing, and sometimes promotions for authors. They differ from mainstream publishing companies though they do everything mainstream companies do. The difference is the author pays the independent publisher while the mainstream publishing company pays the author.

Some respondents first-time self-publishing, they outsourced and used independent publishers. Respondent No. 2 stated that the publishers did the bulk of the work, except for marketing which the author has to do.

“I went straight to self-publishing. I contracted a self-publishing company called the Writers Pen Publishers they did the bulk of the work. But the first step is having your manuscript done. They handled everything. Save marketing. Marketing is solely the responsibility of the author when you self-publish.”

(R2)

Respondent No. 3 also used an independent company and explained that it is a professional working with them on the process. This shows trust in the publisher especially for authors that are new to this route and want to have that support.

“Now, the process for self-publishing with an independent publisher, the first thing that you do is that you submit your manuscript, and this is a professional publisher, who now is working with you on the journey of self-publishing.”

(R3)

But for respondent No. 4, even though she tried it, the cost was too high. Being a first-time author, it is uncertain whether the book will garner sales or not. To respondent No. 4, that seemed like a huge risk, especially when the do-it-yourself option is available.

“So, in other cases of you know, private publishers, it was really expensive like I honestly couldn't afford for a book especially that I'm not sure that it will sell. So, why spend like what, like half a million Kenyan shillings, yet you're not reassured of your book sales and stuff, especially with now like with the internet, the books, the reading, like it's a huge risk.”

(R4)

Respondent No. 5 has tried independent publishers for her first book which she earned 80% of the royalties as opposed to the usual 100%. This was a trial test only this respondent experienced under independent publishing. The company contributed 50% to the publishing expenses and received 20% of the royalties. She explained the deal was good but in her second book, she chose to self-publish on her own because of the freedom of making all the decisions.

“So I was, I was the only one they beta tested it with, I think, I don't know if they've done it with someone else. But for me, we contributed for the money, the publishing money 50-50. And they got 20%. They contributed more. And then I got 80% of the royalties, they got 20%. So, I think I'm the only one who's done that with them. Because usually, normally they do the whole, either you self-publish, you pay everything, and they handle everything. And if you self-publish it and you get 100%. They have the traditional option. The 50-50.”

(R5)

The respondents that have published with independent publishing companies retain the rights to their books but also receive the support of an established publishing company. This as a result helps them maintain their autonomy as self-published authors. But also, those who cannot afford or are distrustful of any established publishing company, self-publish on their own.

“Scams, they are scammers. They don't do much. They'll want money from you. And, one rule of writing, and if one day you write, you should never pay anybody who calls themselves a publisher, you don't need to pay anybody. So, what you will find is that they ask writers to pay them. They'll ask you to pay for publicity, for editing, and so on. But they don't do anything. They'll put your books on Amazon. And you look at the books, they still have typing errors.”

(R10)

“They won't take responsibility for the work, all the rights come back to you. All they do is offer self-publishing services like I do. So, what they do is they take the manuscript, and they hire those people on your behalf. They hire the editor on your behalf, the illustrator, get the ISBNs for you, they can get your cover done for you.”

(R6)

Respondent No. 10 thinks these companies are scams and do not do much. The author can find an editor, designer, printer and publish their books. Therefore, independent publishers do not hold any significance in the self-publishing journey.

The respondents who published with independent publishers mentioned no restrictive measures put upon them by these companies. They all stated that they work side by side with the editors and they are very involved with the process of the book, as opposed to traditional companies where there is minimal involvement from the writer.

4.3 Challenges and Proposed Solutions

Although self-publishing gives authors autonomy, freedom, control over the production process, and access to all the royalties of the book, they still identified challenges they face. In almost every theme discussed in the previous research questions, the respondents have mentioned challenges they faced under it.

4.3.1 Fatigue

The general challenge is the burden of self-publishing and being responsible for everything involving the book. Respondents No. 4 and 8 found the marketing aspect difficult because it is hard to convince people to buy their books, especially as unknown authors. Respondent No. 8 explained that handling the load of the work alone can be tiring. Rejection is also inevitable, especially for new authors trying to market and sell their new books.

“Because once you have gone the self-publishing way, the whole load of work, rests on your shoulders, you have to be the one marketing the book, sometimes you're the one distributing the book.”

(R8)

“I think marketing a book is also really difficult. I think, throughout this process, nothing is easy like every step is just difficult.”

(R4)

“The marketing, handling the marketing when you are on your own that's hard. Marketing is always the hardest part, even if you're conversant with, even if it's something that you do, you've done. like for years, it's still hard to convince people to buy something from you.”

(R5)

“Now getting to the market as a new writer, that was kind of difficult, because one, writers get rejected.”

(R7)

Proposed Solutions

Respondent No. 10 proposed that self-published authors need to learn the business aspect of publishing, marketing, promotion, and communicating with their audience to maximize profits.

“So, you need to do the business, the business of promoting, you need to be a good communicator, you need to be able to, to create a splash for your book, and let people know that it is there. And you have to develop skills, about selling and rejection and marketing and so on.”

(R10)

4.3.2 Expensive

When publishing with traditional companies, the company foots the expenses but for self-published authors, they have to pay for it all personally. Respondent 1 found the whole process very expensive and her biggest challenge in the self-publishing process was the financial aspect.

“I knew the financial bit was going to be a little bit expensive. To be honest, the whole process is quite expensive.”

(R1)

“You have to work and on the other side, you have to write therefore, your writing cannot be on a very strong trajectory in terms of growth, because there is work and there is writing. Imagine, then someone else whose time and effort are on writing, they will be able to research, they will be able to do a lot because they can be able to earn through writing, and therefore they can make it better.”

(R3)

Respondent No. 3 finds balancing work and writing a challenge. Because his time and effort are divided, his writing career is not growing compared to someone that dedicates their entire time to writing.

The very limited number of readers in online and in-person book purchases is another challenge. Respondent No. 2 explained that not having people buy and read your book is no different from a personal diary. To reach more audiences, the authors have to undertake vigorous marketing, which is also a challenge. The expenses of self-publishing can also be costly, especially to a first-time self-published author that has not profited from previous royalties.

“First, I lacked, and still lack an audience. There's no difference between a book and a personal diary or a child's sketches until someone reads your book. Another challenge was getting money for publishing my book.”

(R2)

International shipping is also another expensive step in self-publishing because a book costing \$10 will cost \$50 when purchased by an international buyer. Respondent No. 10 found the international shipping costs a major problem. For a self-published author, having a presence in abroad markets is advantageous but these high costs can discourage potential foreign buyers from buying the books.

“The biggest challenge is when I'm sending to places like Germany, or Australia or the US, because we use registered mail, and it's expensive. They charge so much for like, three books it's probably 800 grams. Courier is about 5000 shillings (\$50). So, if someone is buying three books, instead of paying 3000 (\$30) they pay 8000 shillings (\$80). So that's a major, major problem.”

(R10)

Proposed Solutions

Respondent No. 2 solved the financial strain challenge by working as a book reviewer and acquiring a loan to support his self-publishing journey. He also suggested scheduling oneself when writing the manuscript can ease the burden.

“As for the financial constraint, I worked as a book reviewer and saved the money. I also secured a loan that helped me when I was short of finances. A problem that most authors face too is completing their manuscripts or even never starting. I suggest they take "writing holidays or vacation," say of two weeks to a month and focus on nothing but writing the first draft of their manuscript. Once the first draft is done, the remaining processes become easy.”

(R2)

“So, my thing is you have to spend money on like the entire process, the editing process. That was why it was really important for me to spend

money on the cover. Because people always judge a book by its cover. So, for me, I needed the cover to be perfect, because I knew my quantity with the quality of my work was good enough for people to be attracted to it, and to spend money on it and to be like, this was what they purchased. So, you have to spend money.”

(R5)

Respondent No. 5 explained that though the process of self-publishing is expensive, it is important to spend money on book production, editing, and book cover design to attract buyers.

“So, what I did with the Savannah is I got people I dared to ask people to pre-order and pay for, for the book. And I did very well, the number of people who pre-ordered and paid for the book was enough to get me to print bulk.”

(R9)

Respondent No. 9 utilized the pre-order strategy and used the money to cover the print of the books while also retaining a profit.

“So, if the government would have a printing press that is open to the general public, that would be a thing, the same we have public schools, public hospitals, and public everything would maybe have a public print publisher, or a public printing press, maintaining the same high quality, but also at subsidized prices.”

(R8)

Respondent No. 8 suggested the government create public printing press like other public services to help authors that want to self-publish but cannot afford to.

4.3.3 Bookshop Outlet Rejection

Bookshop placement is lucrative and provides self-published authors with publicity, but it is quite tough to get accepted by established bookshops. They seek well-known authors that already have an audience because such authors generate revenue compared to brand new ones.

Respondents No. 3 and 7 both agreed that the established bookstores in Kenya practice gatekeeping regulations like the traditional companies, not wanting to take a chance on the new authors, only stocking books with high demand.

“One of the challenges we have in Kenya is that book shops, again, they want to stock books that are already been demanded. So, they don't want to stock books that are not being demanded.”

(R3)

“Most of the book shops, they want renowned authors. So, if you're not a well-known author, definitely they won't buy your book, they won't stock your book out.”

(R7)

A related challenge is the preference of foreign books over local ones by readers and most book shops. Local authors are only valued in the academic sector but when it comes to creative works, the majority prefer foreign books and renowned authors. This narrows down the market for self-published authors and makes it difficult for independent authors to penetrate.

“They tend to have more trust in western creative books or western creative writers. So, you'll go and find someone with a Sidney Sheldon book with Dan Brown book, preferring them more than their local creative books. So that poses a big challenge, and especially to someone who wants to embark on creative writing.”

(R3)

Proposed Solutions

Respondent No. 3 suggested the intervention of the government as a solution. The government can promote local authors and create a market for local books instead of foreign books. He also proposed the government can introduce programs that can motivate people to write and protect their royalties.

“And maybe also have programs that are geared towards making people better, and also, the aspect of even the royalty. You know you can bring in mechanisms that can motivate people so that they can get even good royalty when you write. And that royalty is guarded.”

(R3)

“There’s plenty the government can do, and not just for Self-Publishers, but physical books in general. Now, mainstream publishers have tried to lobby the government, in particular, concerning the VAT that’s placed on books, because there was a time when books were 0 rated. But now they’re being taxed at a rate of 60%. And publishers have complained about that because they’re saying you should not tax knowledge. If you’re in a developing country, you should not tax knowledge, you should help people get an education. It’s to make getting an education as easy as possible.”

(R6)

Respondent No. 6 also suggested government intervention and not only for self-published authors but also traditional publishing. The tax rate on books is high, and taxing books discourages the pursuit of knowledge. As a developing country, knowledge should be encouraged and not taxed.

4.3.4 Editorial

Lastly, the other challenge faced by the respondents is the bad editing experience. Editing is the most important part of writing a book, as it is what their readers would notice first. Poorly edited books portray the author to be an amateur. Respondent No. 5 experienced biasedness from the

editor of the independent publishing company. The editor would remove parts of the story that contradicted their religious beliefs which are essentially censoring of the author.

“Another problem that I had with the Writers Guild was because of my first book, there were things because it's a Christian publishing house, there were things maybe my editor didn't feel comfortable to have in my book. And then she would like, cut most of them during the editing process, you know, so maybe like a lot of intimate scenes that she wasn't okay with. So, that's something that I didn't like, because it's my book, it's my words.”

(R5)

“The other challenge was also definitely editorial, that there were errors that made me cringe. So, I am learning to invest in a good editor, which is hard because the editors also end up sometimes end up missing the same things you missed.”

(R9)

“My God, these editors, who did not tell me that my first book she's using, she's editing for the first time, so it was challenging for me. And I learned my lessons because it wasn't easy working with her.”

(R4)

“I also didn't get good editors, editors, also pretty expensive, to have good editors, you need good money. And then it just, I think it just, it takes a lot of your time, because you need to get the editors you negotiate, you need to get a printer you negotiate. So, it is costly, time-consuming and, as an author, it takes you away from the writing work.”

(R10)

Respondents No. 9 and 4 have had a negative experience with editors, whereby respondent 9 had even self-published her first book without going through an editor. She explained the mistakes were blatant and as a result, she learned the importance of editing. Respondent No. 10 explained the editorial challenge he faced the first time he self-published, affirming that editing is important and the whole self-publishing process is costly and time-consuming.

Proposed Solutions

Concerning the editorial challenges, respondent 4 stated that she will get qualified local editors in the future in order not to experience the same challenge she had with her first self-published book.

“I feel like, I think in the future, I’ll probably look for an editor who is qualified. I’d opt for a local editor compared to a foreign editor because there are those options on Kindle, where you can employ someone to edit your book.”

(R4)

4.4 Conclusion

The interviews carried out for this study have provided enough data to answer the research questions. The themes under research questions 1 and 2 are closely related, therefore the researcher discussed them together to avoid repetition. However, in chapter 5, they are discussed separately. Factors that influence the self-publishing of e-books include issues with mainstream publishing companies because of their strict gatekeeping process, paying a low percentage of royalties, and rejecting authors with no social media presence. The reading culture also pushes authors to choose self-publishing because the local readers associate local authors with academic books and prefer foreign books. Publishing an e-book gives authors a bigger audience and wider reach. Other factors are international shipping which does not cost anything in e-books, and higher royalties from online publishing services. E-books are cheaper and easier to produce than paperbacks and the royalties obtained are higher than those offered by traditional companies. Furthermore, online publishing services like Lulu and Amazon provide international shipping options for readers that want the paperback version of the e-book.

Under the second research question, how self-publishing enhances the autonomy of the author has been discussed. Authors taking the self-publishing route can choose independent publishing companies that handle the bulk of the production process, but some respondents chose to do it on their own because of their distrust of any established publishing house, whether independent or traditional. Additional factors include having freedom and control over their work, all royalties belonging to them, bookshops as a means of distribution, social media marketing which is a cheap and easiest marketing option, printing companies that bind and print quality books, and M-Pesa, the most available and secure money transfer services. All these have enhanced the independence of self-published authors while also making the publishing procedure simpler.

The third research question explained the challenges self-published authors face and the proposed solutions. The themes discovered under this category include fatigue, high expenses, rejection from bookshops, and editorial mishaps. The respondents explained that the self-publishing process requires a lot of effort and as independent authors, they do all the work alone which can be burdening. The expenses of the production process; editing, cover design, binding, and printing are all costly and for a first-time author, it is challenging to cover the funds. Bookshops are hesitant to stock unknown self-published authors and most respondents asserted that they have been rejected by established bookshops. Under the editorial theme, the respondents expressed the importance of editing in publishing a book and how challenging it is to find a good editor. The good ones are expensive, and some authors even published their first books without editing while others have been delayed from publishing because the editor worked slow. The respondents proposed government intervention as a solution through tax reduction from books,

creating incentives to encourage creative writing, improving reading culture, and creating public service printing presses for authors that want to self-publish but cannot afford to.

In the literature review, the identified factors include print on demand, e-book market, and availability of online publishing services. This study discovered issues backed up by the literature review such as self-published authors choosing e-book publishing for purposes of retaining their books' rights, setting pricing for their books, and keeping a large share of the sales (Finder, 2012). Though print on demand was mentioned in the literature, this study discovered that self-published authors prefer printing in bulk and only print on demand via online publishing services. The use of M-Pesa as a means of payment is also a new finding, the significance of independent publishers, use of boda-boda as a means of shipping within the country, printing companies that do not stipulate regulations on self-published authors, and obtaining ISBN via the Kenya National Library. According to Hollatz (2019), print on demand gives authors independence, being able to market it anytime, the ability to revise content, and greater financial return per copy than royalties paid by traditional publishers. This was supported by the respondents who stated self-publishing, in general, gives them control and freedom over their work and additionally, printing both in bulk and on-demand gives more royalties compared to traditional companies.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study, limitations the researcher faced during the research process, implications for practice, recommendations for further studies concerning this topic, and conclusion.

5.2 Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study were analyzed using thematic analysis with the aim of determining factors that influence self-publishing of books in Kenya. The main contribution of this study is that the findings answer all the research questions proposed earlier in the study. The first research question was to examine factors, influencing self-publishing of e-books in Kenya.

Literature has shown that the reading culture in Kenya influences self-publishing of e-books for the book market is saturated with academic books, local authors well known books tend to be set books and the Kenyan readers associate Kenyan authors with educational content. The respondents expressed that Kenyan literature is synonymous with textbooks, therefore local readers are rarely interested in their books. The respondents also agreed that Kenyan traditional companies rely on academic books because they are easy to market and thus have an impact on the reading culture. This study rightly proves Juma (2011) that the publishing industry in Kenya consists mainly of textbooks. This is backed up by the respondents' shared views on traditional publishing and their heavy reliance on textbooks.

This study aims to find out why some of these Kenyan authors choose to publish e-books. Data analysis shows that most Kenyan self-published authors chose this route because of issues they might encounter if they were to publish their books in traditional companies. For example, authors who want their books get published must go through very stringent selection process or strict gatekeeping, underpaid royalties, rejection due to focus on academic books and authors who lack an online presence. Respondents who self-published printed books by themselves also shared the same point of view as the others, citing reasons such as gatekeeping, specializing in textbooks, low royalties, censorship via editorial, and losing rights over their books.

They choose to self-publish in e-book in order to reach international audience at a cost-effective method. On similar note, the publishing of e-book is cheap, easier, and online publishing services also provide print on demand option. According to Bhardwaj et al (2019), it is easy for authors to self-publish e-books, and readers prefer buying e-books for main reasons like lower prices, increased comfort as they can buy from home or on the go with their smartphones and a larger selection of titles. The respondents explained they preferred how simple the self-publishing of an e-book is and not incurring shipping costs. The lack of shipping costs is another factor contributing to authors opting for e-book publishing. Readers purchase the book and download it hence there are no shipping expenses.

The royalties received from Amazon are 70%-30% depending on the option the author chooses. Some respondents cited receiving 70% royalties is an advantage of e-book publishing when you consider the small cost of producing and publishing an e-book. Others agreed the royalties are higher compared to traditional companies but claimed that it is difficult to make sales in Amazon especially for new self-published authors.

The second research question examined how self-publishing enhances the autonomy of authors and the themes discovered under this question include the freedom and control self-published authors possess over their books. They make decisions at every stage of the book production as opposed to traditional publishing whereby the author's involvement is minimal. Printing companies that are open to all and do not have strict policies enable authors to print their books in high quality. The editors and designers are also an important aspect of the self-publishing process, but the respondents have explained the ease of hiring them. Some disclosed the challenges they faced by not hiring the right editors, but they all agreed editors and designers are significant and social media enables them to find an array of editors and designers. The respondents use social media for hiring editors and designers, marketing their books, promoting books, and reaching out to audiences. Social media plays a key role in the self-publishing journey where the author is responsible for every task. For authors new to self-publishing, they publish via independent publishers because they handle the bulk of the work. Independent publishers are like traditional companies, but the author pays them to publish the book and the author remains with the book rights and royalties. Some respondents, however, said they did not 100% trust the independent publishers and established traditional publishing companies.

M-Pesa, mobile money services provided by Safaricom is the main payment method the respondents use. For e-books, the online publishing service like Amazon or Lulu process the payment but for paperback books, it is all based on a trust between the author and the buyer. The buyers send the money via M-Pesa and once the payment is received, the author sends the book via boda-boda (motorbike) courier services. The buyers cover the delivery fee, however, for international shipping, it is quite expensive. If the book costs \$10, the shipping will cost \$20 hence increasing the cost of the book. The respondents said they sell more local books and few

international paperbacks. For others, they use online publishing services to sell paperback books internationally because of their affordable print on demand option.

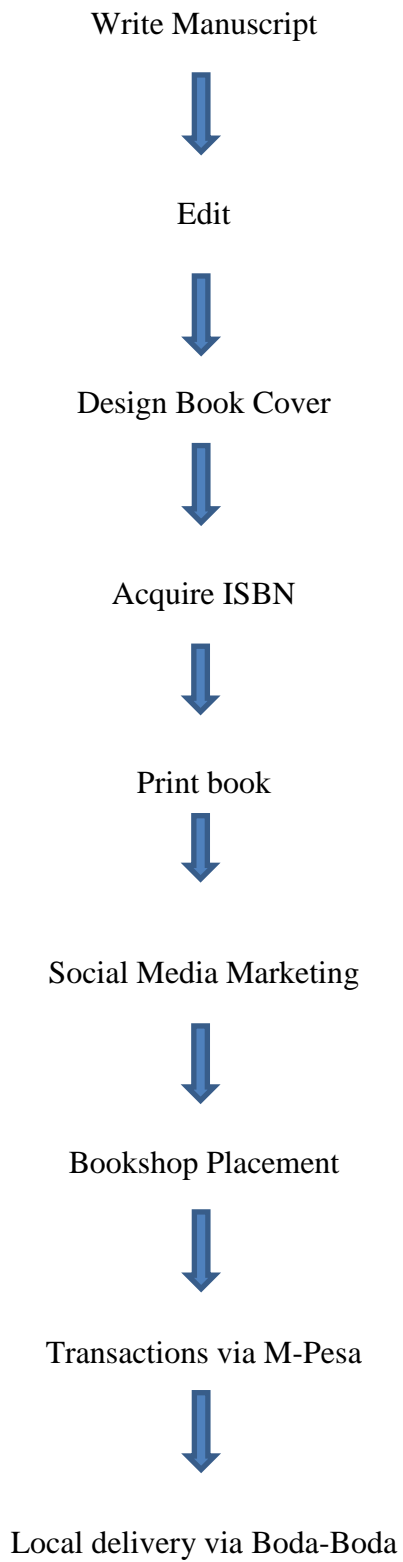
All respondents who self-published their paperback books obtained ISBN from the Kenya National Library services. Having an ISBN legitimizes their books and makes it easier to stock them in bookshops. The Kenya National Library also takes two books from the author to stock them in the library for record keeping. For e-books, Amazon provides an ISBN or if the author has their own ISBN, then they can enter. Once received the ISBN, the respondents stated their preference to stock their books on established libraries in order to receive more exposure. However, some respondents have been rejected by renowned bookshops because they are new authors. Independent publishing company Writers Guild Kenya have a library and most self-published authors have been able to stock their books there. The respondents have also mentioned royalties as another factor that enhances their autonomy as independent authors. The royalties they receive as self-published author is higher than what traditional companies pay them. After factoring in production expenses, 100% of the profits all go to the author. Nevertheless, royalties from book shops are divided into 60%-40%, the author receives 60% and the bookshop receives 40%. The respondents had different opinion on the royalties obtained from bookshops, some received 80% and others 70% depending on the bookshop.

The objective of this research was achieved as data showed how self-publishing enhances the autonomy of the authors. Based on the data collected, there were many other newly discovered factors such as independent publishing, high royalties; authors' autonomy, freedom and control over their work; the use of M-Pesa; affordable and easy shipping within the country, social media marketing, easily accessible ISBN, practices of the printing companies and bookshops. The literature review mentioned online publishing services, print on demand and

growth of e-book market as factors contributing to self-publishing. This study supports the first two as contributing factors, but the growth of e-book market does not have any impact. Furthermore, the new findings mentioned above have not been discussed in the literature review and therefore are an additional information.

The last research question illustrates the challenges Kenyan self-published authors face and they mentioned fatigue from doing everything alone, costly production, rejection from bookshops and editorial challenges. As discussed previously, in self-publishing the author does everything involving the book production; writing the manuscript, hiring editors, designers, negotiating with printing company, marketing the book, launching, and promoting, some respondents even personally deliver the books and stocking the books in library. In traditional publishing, the company assigns personnel for each task but in self-publishing, the author handles all of it. The expenses of publishing are high and respondents who were self-publishing for the first time found it very challenging. Finding the right editor was also a challenge considering editing is the most important part of the book. Good editors are expensive, and some editors did not perform their job well. The respondents shared their solutions to these problems they faced proposing government intervention such as providing public printing services so that people can easily self-publish their books. Tax reduction on books to encourage publishing and selling of books and giving people incentives to promote creative writing. For the issue of expenses, budgeting and acquiring loan were some ways they solved the issue. The objective of this research question was to explore the challenges in self-publishing and through the study it has been discovered that self-published authors tire from handling the whole procedure individually while also being unable to obtain the funds and being rejection from book shops denies them the opportunity for their book to be discovered by new readers.

Self-Publishing Process



Challenges and Proposed Solutions

	Challenge	Proposed Solutions
1	Fatigue	Scheduling, and learning business aspect of publishing
2	Expensive	Seeking financial assistance, and paying in installments for printing
3	Strict gatekeeping	Government intervention, promoting local authors, and reducing book taxes

5.3 Implications for Practice

This study contributes to existing knowledge about self-publishing while also filling in the gap. As an emerging phenomenon, studies have been conducted to understand self-publishing, but this study looks at factors influencing the self-publishing of e-books in Kenya and also examines how self-publishing enhances authors' autonomy and the challenges Kenyan self-published authors face. The new findings are therefore additional information.

This study can be utilized by self-published authors to educate themselves about the advantages and challenges of self-publishing in Kenya. The new findings of how self-publishing enhances the autonomy of independent authors can be used by future authors, for instance, identifying which method best fits them, whether it is through independent publishing companies or self-publishing individually. Through the challenges and recommendations shared by the respondents, policymakers can consider creating regulations that encourage self-publishing, creative writing and promote local authors. Organizations supporting the writing community can

also employ this study in educating novice self-published authors or use it to grow the reading culture in Kenya.

5.4 Limitations

The researcher has encountered several limitations throughout the course of conducting this study. The first challenge was finding respondents that meet the criteria of the sampling; be Kenyan, live in Kenya and be a self-published author. Once the researcher found appropriate participants, they rejected to participate in this research, and some said they were too occupied. For the participants that agreed to partake in this study, due to time difference, most interviews had to be conducted between 10:00 pm – 2:00 am Kuala Lumpur time (5:00 pm – 9:00 pm Nairobi time). Internet connectivity issues were another problem whereby some interviews had to end abruptly and rescheduled. This extended the data collection time for the researcher.

The second challenge had to do with the interview transcription. Once the interviews reached a saturation level, the researcher did not see the need to interview more respondents. However, transcribing the interviews manually was challenging because the interviews were long, and again, this extended the time spent on the data collection stage. Otter website was then used to speed up the transcription period but also due to the heavy accent of some respondents and some with a stammer, it was difficult to transcribe some words. When the researcher was interviewing the respondents with a stammer, their words came out clear however, they sounded different on the recording.

Aside from the data collection process, the researcher found it difficult to obtain previous studies about self-publishing or publishing in Kenya. There were few journals about publishing in Kenya, but they were older than 5 years.

Because thematic analysis is such a flexible approach, there are different ways of interpreting the data. The researcher found it difficult to identify which data is or isn't important to interpret. Moreover, since thematic analysis focuses on commonalities, the experiences of single participants can be overlooked. To avoid biasedness, the researcher used a second coder and the themes agreed upon were considered for this data. According to Lombard et al (2002), intercoder reliability is a critical component of content analysis and when it is not established, the data and interpretations of the data cannot be considered valid.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

For future researchers aiming to expand on this study, the perspective of independent publishing companies in Kenya can be considered. This should be done to understand the role they play in self-publishing and how it impacts self-publishing. Also, to examine the difference between self-publishing via independent companies and the do-it-yourself route. This will provide richer data on self-publishing when all aspects are looked at.

Another aspect for expansion by researchers in the future would be to study traditional publishing, independent publishing, and self-publishing personally by the author using the triangulation method. This will answer the existing gaps in this study about the perspective of a traditional company and independent companies. Studying all three can shed light on unexamined parts of publishing in general.

5.6 Conclusion

This study aims to examine factors influencing the self-publishing of e-books in Kenya. How self-publishing enhances the autonomy of authors and the challenges they go through have also been studied. The objective of this research is to understand self-publishing in Kenya and add

new knowledge to existing studies. In the literature review, the researcher found that online publishing services, e-book growth, and print-on-demand are factors that influence self-publishing. Using quota and snowball sampling, the researcher recruited 11 participants who are all Kenyan self-published authors, residing in Kenya. The one-on-one interview was used for purposes of allowing each respondent to elaborate their experience as each one has unique experiences. The interview was semi-structured, and the researcher adjusted the questions depending on what the respondent was sharing while also sticking to the fundamental questions; how they got into self-publishing, their experience, the process of self-publishing, how self-publishing has enhanced their independence as authors, the challenges they faced, how they solved the problems and what they would like to see changed in self-publishing. The interviews were stopped at reaching saturation level and then transcribed using the otter website. The data was then analyzed using thematic analysis and similar responses were grouped under themes.

Upon analysis, new information came to light that was not found in the literature review. The respondents stated factors such as rejection from traditional publishing, high royalties, print on demand and no shipping fees influenced them to self-publish e-books. However, they also published paperback books and they stated that the availability of unregulated printing companies, bookshops to stock their books, social media marketing, use of M-Pesa, use of a *boda-boda*, and inexpensive shipping fees within the country have enriched their independence as self-published authors. They can hire editors and designers online, market and promote their books using social media, print in bulk and deliver the books all on their own. The challenges they faced are the costly production process, fatigue from doing everything individually, not being able to stock their books in established bookshops because they are self-published or unknown authors and struggling to find affordable good editors. As solutions, the respondents

explained getting a loan to fund the process is one way of overcoming the cost challenge and they also recommended government intervention. The government can provide public services like printing presses and tax reductions on books to encourage more creative writing and self-publishing.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Can you tell me about yourself? (Background information, age, name)
2. What are your thoughts on publishing in Kenya?
3. What made you go into publishing?
 - a) What is your understanding of publishing?
 - b) How did you come across self-publishing?
 - c) Were you always interested in books?
 - d) Is it a hobby or work?
 - e) Do you enjoy it?
 - f) What do you enjoy about it or do you not enjoy it?
 - g) How long have you been in the industry?

THEMATIC QUESTIONS

1. What made you choose to self-publish?
 - a) How much does it cost to self-publish?
 - b) When do you start earning income?
 - c) Have you attempted to go through traditional publishing first? If not, why?
 - d) How has self-publishing enhanced your autonomy as a self-published author?
2. Does the e-book market affect how many books you sell? (i.e. self-published e-books)
 - a) How has the e-book market influenced your self-publishing process?
 - b) What made you choose to sell your books via e-book?
 - c) What difficulties have you faced in the e-book market?
 - d) Do you sell more e-books or printed books?
3. Which online publishing service have you used to self-publish and why?
 - a) What are the expenses of using online publishing services?
 - b) How have online publishing services influenced your self-publishing journey?
 - c) What distribution channels have you used?
 - d) How has online publishing given you autonomy over your books?
 - e) What are the challenges you face when it comes to online publishing services?
4. How has print on demand influenced your self-publishing journey?
 - a) When do you use print-on-demand technology?
 - b) Has print on demand increased or decreased your book sales?
 - c) What are the expenses of using print-on-demand technology?

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. How do you distribute your books? What payment method do you use to sell books?
2. What is the book shipping process? How do you market your books?
3. Do you think aspiring authors should first try out traditional publishing or self-publishing?

4. What is your opinion about the book market in Kenya?
5. What do you think of the reading culture in Kenya?
6. Does the low/high reading culture influence the book market?
7. Do your books sell more globally or locally?
8. What are the challenges of self-publishing?
9. How did you overcome the challenges if you were able to?
10. What would you recommend the government to do for the self-publishing industry?

Appendix 2

PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION NOTICE

Please be informed that in accordance with Personal Data Protection Act 2010 (“PDPA”) which came into force on 15 November 2013, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (“UTAR”) is hereby bound to make notice and require consent in relation to collection, recording, storage, usage, and retention of personal information.

1. Personal data refers to any information which may directly or indirectly identify a Person, which could include sensitive personal data and expression of opinion. Among others it includes:

- a) Name
- b) Identity card
- c) Place of Birth
- d) Address
- e) Education History
- f) Employment History
- g) Medical History
- h) Blood type
- i) Race
- j) Religion
- k) Photo
- l) Personal Information and Associated Research Data

2. The purposes for which your personal data may be used are inclusive but not limited to:

- a) For assessment of any application to UTAR
- b) For processing any benefits and services
- c) For communication purposes
- d) For advertorial and news
- e) For general administration and record purposes
- f) For enhancing the value of education
- g) For educational and related purposes consequential to UTAR
- h) For replying any responds to complaints and enquiries
- i) For the purpose of our corporate governance
- j) For the purposes of conducting research/ collaboration

3. Your personal data may be transferred and/or disclosed to third party and/or UTAR collaborative partners including but not limited to the respective and appointed outsourcing agents for purpose of fulfilling our obligations to you in respect of the purposes and all such other purposes that are related to the purposes and also in providing integrated services, maintaining and storing records. Your data may be shared when required by laws and when disclosure is necessary to comply with applicable laws.

4. Any personal information retained by UTAR shall be destroyed and/or deleted in accordance with our retention policy applicable for us in the event such information is no longer required.

5. UTAR is committed in ensuring the confidentiality, protection, security, and accuracy of your personal information made available to us and it has been our ongoing strict policy to ensure that your personal information is accurate, complete, not misleading and updated. UTAR would also ensure that your personal data shall not be used for political and commercial purposes.

Consent:

6. By submitting or providing your personal data to UTAR, you had consented and agreed for your personal data to be used in accordance to the terms and conditions in the Notice and our relevant policy.

7. If you do not consent or subsequently withdraw your consent to the processing and disclosure of your personal data, UTAR will not be able to fulfill our obligations or to contact you or to assist you in respect of the purposes and/or for any other purposes related to the purpose.

8. You may access and update your personal data by writing to us at .

Acknowledgment of Notice

I have been notified and that I hereby understood, consented and agreed per UTAR above notice.

I disagree, my personal data will not be processed.

.....

Name:

Date:

