

**PUBLISHING AND DISTRIBUTION
OF EDUCATIONAL BOOKS IN
KENYA: A STUDY OF MARKET
LIBERALISATION AND BOOK
CONSUMPTION**

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ABSTRACT

An investigation into the publishing and distribution of educational books in Kenya under market liberalisation that outlines the historical background and describes how the industry has moved from import orientation to government control and on towards becoming an industry of private commercial publishers. The study set out to investigate the growth, market opportunities, and factors affecting the distribution and publishing of educational books. The political implications that educational policies have on textbook provision are explored.

Fieldwork was carried out in Machakos and Uasin Gishu districts and in the Nairobi area where 29 schools (both primary and secondary) were visited. The areas where fieldwork was carried out represented rural, semi-urban and urban areas of Kenya illustrating a range of socio-economic influences. There were 252 respondents comprising teachers and parents who were interviewed using a structured interview process. Other respondents were publishers, booksellers, government officials and librarians who were interviewed using a semi-structured interview process. Information was also obtained from unpublished government sources and from publishing houses' archives. Data collected were analysed thematically and coded responses were processed using SPSS.

Developmental advances and shortcomings of the publishing industry in general and of the education sector in particular are identified. The market liberalisation and globalisation of the Kenyan economy has diminished the purchasing power of the population, which has led to negative growth in the publishing industry. The government's early control and active involvement in the educational publishing industry may have contributed to current under-development.

Recommendations are made as to how the government and the publishing industry can co-operate in order to improve and boost the development of educational publishing. Those who need to invest in distribution of educational materials in rural areas should be helped to acquire venture capital. An assessment should be made of the government's social dimension programme so as to ascertain its impact on educational publishing in Kenya.