

PUBLISHING AND FOLKLORE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: CONTENT OF KANO
MARKET LITERATURE

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Abstract

The paper examined the development of Kano market literature and folklore in Northern Nigeria, with special references to content of Kano market literature. The paper analyzed and discusses the bibliographical features of one hundred and fifty (150) novels or books of Kano market literature as sample of the study. The Kano market literature is one exhibit to the intellectual capabilities of the people of Northern Nigeria, used as means of highlighting relevance issues affecting the society. Understanding bibliographical features of an information resource is ultimate to its access, retrieval, use and preservation for future use in life. The study recommends among others as prospects for overcoming the challenges affecting folklore and folklife in the 21st Century in Nigeria, that the authors of Kano market literature should try and intensify their effort by taking their works for editing, using standard printing materials, register their works with the relevant authorities for International Standard Book Number (ISBN).

Introduction

Writing is one of the most appropriate channel and style of communicating messages and ideas within communities and societies. The art of creative writings within the societies is the exhibit of their intellectual capabilities, organizations and concerns over highlighting relevant issues affecting society. Putman (1964), describes folklore to include the traditional elements of the way of life of a group of people and creative expressions developing naturally as part of their life. Folklore is common to all people; It is a body that expresses culture within a particular society comprising the traditions of that culture. Generally, it includes the beliefs held by the members of society, groups and their activities as it affects their beliefs.

Nevertheless Aderonke, (2017) remarks that folklores are cultural heritages and assertions like proverbs, charts, satire symbolism, ballads, among others. While folk can be referred to any group of people who share at least common factor, which could be a common occupation, language or religion. Oral lore and oral tradition are cultural materials and traditions transmitted from generation to generation and they are as old as creation of man and considered the bulk of the human experience.

Nigerian writers of literatures no doubt write a lot of history in the oral tradition and folklore through what they obtained from the verbal art of civilization which served as a medium of preservation of culture and history of the ancient past and experiences. The relevance and importance of folklore in our society cannot be over emphasized, as it occupies a special position in our languages, cultures and beliefs. Thus, the folklore is one of the major means of transmitting the cumulative wisdom, knowledge, skills of almost all the people's languages and cultures in Nigerian. It is in realization of the importance of folklore that some concerns members in the society of Kano and around the city emerged as the writers of popular culture

otherwise Kano Market literature, the dialogue between modern culture and modernity. However, the main objective of this paper is to assess the characteristics of these popular culture literatures as to their bibliographical contents as it affects the general management of information resources. This ultimately determined and appreciates the quality, integrity, longevity, availability, access and retrieval of the literatures right from their publication to the hand of the intended users. As it reflects in the theme of the conference the problem of poor recording or documentation of our folklife and good management to the information resources is a great challenge to the preservation and transmission of our bulk knowledge and ideas in form of folklore for the future generations.

The Kano Market Literature

Folklore is of group of people that share common occupation, northern Nigeria is the home of people with diverse backgrounds who have been welded together by all pervading influence of Hausa culture. The Kano market literature are those literature coined after the Onitsha market literature, the literary works of literature produced in Hausa language. They cover all the three genre of literature prose, poetry and play. These literatures are considered as the popular culture, a popular culture is an urban phenomenon, and it is able of the modern and traditional product which is give to a 'surrounding' audience (Suleiman 2013).

The Kano market literature are more of prose having almost the same features of love, hence also called 'Soyayya' (Romantic) novels. The popular literatures are also known as those writings that are intended for the message and those that find fairer with large audience. The primary objective of this kind of literature is to entertain it audience.

The rise of Kano market literature is traceable to and associated with federal radio Nigeria Kaduna's programme tagged *shafa labari shuni* in the 80's the programme receives and readout

creative writings in form of short and long stories from various interested writers on different subject and theme on societal issues with the objective of informing, educating and more importantly encouraging for materials of reading. Sani and Ibrahim (1997) viewed that there has been an upsurge of popular writing in Hausa by men and women novelists who based in and around industrial city of Kano. These novelists were organized and managed by about ten voluntary writings clubs. Harris (2008) remarked that these looks are mostly written in the local language of Hausa. As to their content or theme, they are having the values of true love based on feelings, rather than family or other social pressures and some of these books carry anti drug messages. Furmiss at el (2004) claims that the theme of this literature circle around perennial issues of crimes, violence, money, power status, love and marriage which are all about modernity and tradition.

The Content of Kano Market Literature

The content of Kano market literature here relates to the general feature or characteristics that made up the media of Kano market literature, which referred in form of a book and what it contained as to its intellectual content or theme. From the information management perspective, understanding the bibliographical features of any information resources is ultimate to its access, retrieval, use and preservation for future use in life. However, it is worthwhile to know the process of determining and assessing or analyzing the format of any information media of communication is not a recent phenomenon in the field of information management otherwise library and information science. As it enables selecting qualitative materials (books) in terms of their typeface, which is accessory for the eligibility for use of any printed or written information by its users and to determine the extent of its preservation for future use.

The study observed that majority if not all the media through which Kano market communicate are generally with poor typeface, used of substandard paper, problem of orthography, absence of basic bibliographical details among others. It was reported by Furniss et al (2004) that in the early development of the Hausa popular literature there was the intervention of university academics, whereby you find many acknowledgements in the Kano literature books providing fulsome thanks to the academic staff who clearly provided encouragement proof – reading and other advice in the production of the literature.

Being in the in the 21st century and with the development of writing and printing and with the advent of Information and Communication Technologies it is an issue of concern by authors, publishers, scholars in literature, and the information managers to provide an impetus to the problem of absence of formal publishing process in the production of the Kano Market Literature. This is with the aim of improvement over the quality, integrity, longevity, availability, access, retrieval and preservation of the literature.

Content Analysis of Kano Market Literature

The purpose of this paper one hundred and fifty novels of Kano Market literature were analyzed in order to identify its various characteristics such as author, title, genre, theme, publisher, year of publication, number of pages, illustration type of cover page and type of news print used in printing the novels.

The Genre in the Kano Market Literature

Genre is the category of literary composition which could be determined by the literary technique or literary content of a given literature. The major forms of genre are prose, play and poetry. Understanding, the genres of Kano Market literature is significant to the understanding of the message that the author intend to communicate to its audience. The research conducted

shows that one hundred and fifty 150 novels 75(50%) are prose, 50 (33%) are play and 25 (17%) are poetry respectively. This finding revealed that Kano Market Literature are written on prose genre because the main theme of the Kano market literature is to convey messages on romantic, adventure, education among others. The implication of this finding is that the Kano market literature are more on issues that relate to romantic because in almost all the themes be it on religion, education, criticism and courage none of it that did not discussed issues of love or marriage in its content.

The of Authors of Kano Market Literature

Data collected from the analysis made from 150 novels selected and the interview with some authors of Kano Market Literature, the research discovered found that the authors of these novels are made up of males and females. However, out of the 150 novels covered 89 (59%) were authored by women while 61(41%) authored by men and generally their age range is between 35 – 55 years. This finding is so interesting that unlike dominance of male authorship in English literature, the Hausa Kano market literature is dominated by female. This could be as a result of the impact of Girl – Child education promotion of reading sensitization and campaigns by the governments in North Nigeria and various non governmental agencies.

The study also found that the majority of Kano Market Literature authors are Diploma and NCE holders University graduates. While the majority of the female authors are married women, the literature is dominated by single authorship. In term of the age of the authors, both the male and females authors are between 35 to 55 years of age.

By profession the authors of Kano Market literature comprised of public civil servants, house wives and business men and women.

The Major themes with the Kano Market Literature

The Paper presents the themes, which stands as the subject matter of Kano Market Literature from the analysis made to one hundred and fifty novels. The finding here is to find out the various themes covered by the Kano Market Literature and secondly to confirm whether they are indeed as they are termed Soyayya (Romantic) novels.

The table below presents analysis of some major themes with the Kano Market Literature as to their subject coverage.

Major themes of the Kano Market Literature

S/No	Theme	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Adventure	12	8
2.	Courage	4	3
3.	Criticism	5	3
4.	Education	4	3
5.	Religion	18	12
6.	Romantic	107	71
	Total	150	100

The table above revealed that Kano Market literature has actually answered its name as soyayya novel because 107(71%) out of the 150 novels analyzed are directly on romantic. Although Kano Market Literature covered other themes such as adventure as indicated, education, religion e.t.c,

the paper found that even in these themes, romantic is indirectly covered in their themes. For example the book authored by Halima Muhammad, titled “*Sama da Nisa*, 2016” which is under adventure as to its subject matter, but the happenings and the characters in the book are all related to issues that have to do with marriage and romantic

Bibliographic Features of Communication with the Kano Market Literature

Bibliographical features of communication are those characteristics that content information possesses. They are the basic and integral components of the content which serve as clue or guide towards the understanding, access and retrieval of information. They include: authors, formats, typeface, size, and date of publication place of publication, publisher, pagination, illustrations, International Serial Book Number (ISBN), physical outlook of the book among others.

On the bibliographical features of communication with the Kano Market literature, it was found that most samples selected as a sample were published in Kano, with a very few in Kaduna, Jos and Zaria. It was unfortunate, that most of these novels are published by just printers, or what is called road side publishers; none of the literature analyzed was published by renowned Publishers such as Macmillan, Heinemann, etc.

To prove that due process was not followed in publishing of Kano Market Literature, none of the novel studied had ISBN. Majority of the novels are found to be short with pages ranging from 50 – 173 without any form of illustration, which would have made readers to perceived more and understand the message conveying by the novels. The novels though, were written in simple Hausa, majority of the novels have not undergone editing, hence a lot of misspellings, wrong sentence construction and none adoption of standard essaying style. The study also revealed poor

finishing of most of the novels; the paper used is (soft) with poor binding, lack of good and attractive cover page design and the use of low quality newsprint materials.

Conclusion

The paper confirmed that the Kano market literature are generally lacking enough bibliographical as future of communication in understanding the intellectual content of the novels. This make it obvious difficult for their access, retrieval and use. This has become a problem for their preservation for future use, as is pose today it very difficult to retrieve many of the previous copies of these novels neither from their publishers no from any designated information centre such as libraries and bookshops. It is also a problem to their access, retrieval since the physical outlook of the novels was found to be of substandard and most of the novels were found to be short of pages as conventional novels, with missing spellings, wrong sentences and constructions and wrong adaptations of standard essaying among others. These can also be seen as one of the many problems that badly affects literary production in Northern Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made as prospects for overcoming the challenges of folklore and folklife through production of our literary inputs inform of writing:

1. The authors of Kano market literature should try as much as possible to take their works for vetting to the professional on the various field of knowledge of their writings.
2. A periodic seminar, workshops and training should be organized by the association of Kano market literature on how to improve their profession.
3. The authors of Kano market literature should endeavour to register their works for international standard book number (ISBN) through the national library of Nigeria.

4. The Nigeria Folklore Society should come up with a blue print of activities as a mechanism to revisit the issues of Kano writers clubs and other related associations for further development Hausa and other literature in Nigeria.
5. Governments in the northern Nigeria should intervene for support to the authors of Kano market literature as sources of information that would benefits pupils in primary and secondary schools in term of reading habit and understanding their society.

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