



**GHANA BOOK DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
(GBDC)**

**REPORT ON SURVEY ON QUALITY OF BOOKS
ON THE GHANAIAN MARKET**

2021

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Executive Summary

Books play a very vital role in everyday lives-education, leisure and lifelong learning. To ensure that published books are of standard quality, there are international and national standards to guide the production of books. Books that are published and made accessible to the public must meet these standards. In view of this, the Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC), a national agency that coordinates the development of the book industry in Ghana, embarked on this survey in 2021 to assess the quality of books on the Ghanaian market.

The main objective of the survey was to assess the extent to which books on the Ghanaian market conform to the Ghana Book Standards, which prescribe minimum technical guidelines or requirements for books in the country.

Assessors, after going through an intensive book assessment training, used two months (July and August 2021) to embark on the survey, across eleven regions of Ghana. Different genre of books, such as textbooks, story books, trade/professional books, etc, were randomly sampled from bookshops, libraries, hawkers, and other places. A questionnaire, as a data collection instrument, was designed to capture all the relevant data. A total of three thousand, five hundred and four (3,504) books were sampled. The data was captured and analysed using the Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) software.

In assessing if the sampled books conform to acceptable book production standards, three main assessment criteria were employed. These were assessment of physical feature; assessment of technical feature; and assessment of matrix of other features. The physical feature criterion comprised required elements that are expected to be on a book cover, whereas the assessment of technical features criterion covered elements required to be on the book spine and some relevant preliminary pages such as full title page and copyright page. The assessment of matrix of other features considered the consistency, clarity, suitability, balance, and appropriateness of some relevant aspects of the main text of a book.

Out of the 3,504 books assessed, 65.9% and 62.9% met the standards set for the physical features and technical features respectively. For the matrix of other features, 65.3% of the total books assessed met the expected standards. For the overall assessment of the books, 11.3% of the books did not meet any of the three main assessment criteria. The study also revealed that 50.3% of the

assessed books met one or two assessment criteria, while only 38.4% met all the three assessment criteria.

Although a majority of the books relatively performed well regarding some individual aspects or components of a book, the overall assessment is not encouraging. Hence, there is the need to continue training practitioners and intensely advocate the adoption of the Ghana Book Standards, in order to improve the quality of books on the Ghanaian market.

1 Introduction

1.0 Background

A book, as defined by the Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC), is “a collection of sheets bound together in a cover (soft or hard), to be read or written in. It could also be in an electronic form (script or audio)”. (Ghana Book Standards, 2018, page 5).

Books are important sources of information and knowledge; as a result, they serve as effective tools for education, human capital development, entertainment and the general development of a country.

Books have existed in the country since the colonial era. GBDC was established in 1975 as the national agency to coordinate the development of the book industry in Ghana; and manage the activities of all groups and individuals involved in book development in the country, as contained in the Gazette No. 65 of 1975. GBDC is also to carry out comprehensive studies and research programmes essential for the development of the book industry.

Among others, GBDC has in collaboration with the book industry associations, developed the Ghana Book Standards to guide the production of books in the country. “The need for standards in the book industry cannot be over-emphasised. It is against this backdrop, that the GBDC, following stakeholder consultations, published the Ghana Book Standards in 2018 for both general (printed) books and e-books.

There was also the need for empirical data on the state of books on the Ghanaian market for informed decision making and planning. The study was therefore commissioned in 2021 to bridge this information gap and guide policy.

1.1 Objective

The main objective of this study is to ascertain the number of books on the Ghanaian market or accessible to readers that conform to the Ghana Book Standards.

1.2 Research problem/question

The book industry is dynamic and complex. More so, book production mainly involves practitioners such as writers, publishers, and printers. When these books are produced, they end

up on the market through book sellers or distributors and other distribution channels. However, there is a general lack of information about the quality of books on the market. The research therefore seeks to address the following questions:

- What is the state of books on the book market?
- Do books on the market conform to the Ghana Book Standards?
- Which standard(s) are being met by books on the market?
- Which standard(s) have not been met by books on the market?

This research, among others, will generate the empirical data needed to answer the above questions. The answers to these questions will not only facilitate the planning, coordination and management functions of the GBDC, but will also enhance the development of training programmes for building the capacity of the various practitioners of the book industry.

This study also aims at enhancing quality assurance in the production of books, since these books end up in the Ghanaian market. Once the books reach the market or user, not much can be done about the quality. Hence, emphasis must be placed on the production process (practitioners) to ensure that the book standards are adhered to during the book production stage.

2 Methodology

The evaluation of quality can be considered from various perspectives. Some of these perspectives have been discussed below.

2.1 Perspective One: Evaluative and Criterion-referenced Approach of Assessment

This approach focuses on the quality of the information provided in the book. From this perspective, the overall quality of a book can be assessed using the following criteria: the reputation of the publisher, the reliability of sources cited by the author, the scientific rigour of the author's arguments, the verifiability of the author's claims as well as the creativity of the author.

However, in this study, the assessment of the quality of a book focuses on the presentation of the content and structure of the book. Content, in this context, does not refer to the creativity of the author but rather, the presentation of the idea to suit the end user (reader). The structure of the book deals with the physical features and technical aspects of the book. Hence, the criteria for quality assessment broadly covers the presentation of the idea to suit the end user, as well as the physical features and technical aspects of the book. Efforts were therefore made to comprehensively evaluate these attributes of a book.

2.2 Perspective Two: The Quality of a System versus the Quality of the Output

One other way of assessing quality is to consider, examine and evaluate the various processes involved in book production.

However, another way to assess quality is to scrutinize and assess the outputs (books) of the production process. The reason is that activities undertaken as well as decisions and choices made at the production stage will manifest in the final product (output). A careful examination of the output will give an indication of what transpired at the production stage. In other words, a careful assessment of the output will give an indication of the status of the processes which occurred during the production phase.

The study used the latter approach to assess the quality of the books on the Ghanaian market. By assessing the output (book), information about the production process is also obtained. An assessment of a book is an indirect assessment of the production process.

Hence, effort was made to assess the quality of the output (book), which in turn, gives a general evaluation of the book production process.

In order to achieve this, books on the local market were randomly identified, collected and assessed in order to determine if they meet the acceptable quality standards.

The book market refers to books that are sold in the bookshops and by other means, such as hawkers(roadside). Nonetheless, the study broadened the scope to include all entities that stock assorted books that are made accessible to the public (readers).

Entities having a stock of assorted books that are accessible to public were considered eligible for the study. In this light, the entities considered for the study include bookshops, hawkers (book), bookfairs and libraries. All these entities had a stock (genres) of assorted books which were assessed.

2.3 Sampling

The study employed a two-stage sampling procedure. The first stage of sampling involved the selection of the entities which satisfy the above conditions, i.e., bookshops, hawkers (roadside) and libraries.

Having selected these entities, the next stage of sampling involved a random selection of books for quality assessment.

The second stage of sampling culminated in the random selection of 3,504 assorted books for assessment.

Strata (sub-groups) were also identified in the population. The strata in the population are the geographical regions (eleven regions of Ghana). Each region generally has different socio-economic conditions, ethnic groups, culture, different languages, demographic characteristics, literacy rate, prevalent occupation (economic activity), population, etc. The different conditions in these regions will have different ramifications on the variables under consideration.

Hence, in order to improve the representativeness of the sample, the two-stage sampling approach was carried out in each stratum (region).

2.4 Data Collection Instrument

The random sampling procedure eventually generated the list of books eligible for quality assessment. However, another important step was to ascertain or determine the criteria for quality assessment.

The criteria for quality assessment were captured in a questionnaire developed and designed for the study. Also, the criteria for quality assessment were generated from the Ghana Book Standards published by the Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC) in 2018. The questionnaire collected data on the general characteristics and background information of each book.

The questionnaire had both open-ended questions and closed-ended questions. The open-ended questions were however, in the minority.

The levels of measurement also vary in the questionnaire. Some questions had a nominal level of measurement. The data requested was basically categorical in nature. Some questions in the questionnaire had a rating scale. In this case, the data required was the ordinal level of measurement.

2.5 Training of Assessors

The questionnaire was quite technical. An appreciable level of technical knowledge is required to complete the questionnaire and carry-out a proper assessment of each book.

As a result, some staff of GBDC were trained on the general characteristics of a typical book as well as useful procedures for evaluating the quality criteria. The training was to further enhance their technical knowledge and appreciation of the features of a book.

The training workshop which spanned two days (June 10 and 11, 2021), had about 14 participants on the first day and 17 participants on the second day. However, about 8 participants embarked on the survey and served as assessors.

2.6 Data Entry

After the data collection phase, the completed questionnaires were captured using the Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) software. The data entry phase was carried out by staff of GBDC.

It took about two months to capture all the completed questionnaires into SPSS.

After the data entry, data validation, data checks and data cleaning were carried out. By virtue of the nature of problems identified in some questionnaires, they could not be used for further analysis. The questionnaires in this group were however in the minority. As a result, the sample size reduced to 3,504.

2.7 Data Analysis

The data analysis phase commenced in November 2021. Two software were used for data analysis: SPSS and Excel. The initial phase of the analysis involved the generation of frequency Tables (percentages), general descriptive and charts.

3 Findings and Discussion

General analysis of the responses to each question on the questionnaire is presented and discussed in this section. This section has been divided into two main parts: General Information and Technical Information.

3.1 General Information

This part of the questionnaire required information on the town, location of book, title of the book, target audience of book, genre of the book and place of publication.

3.1.1 Town

Assessors were required to indicate the town in which each book was identified. Books were identified and assessed in various towns in eleven regions of Ghana. Hence, all the eleven regions were covered in this study.

The towns were further organized into regions in order to facilitate the interpretation of the data. The results show that majority of the books (39.07%) were identified and assessed in the Greater Accra Region. This finding may suggest that there is a preponderance of booksellers and libraries in the Greater Accra Region. This has implications on the accessibility of books in the region.

Not only is the profession of bookselling well-established in the region, but the above may also suggest that the booksellers and libraries have a sizeable stock of books which are accessible to the public (consumers and readers). Figure 1 shows the number of books assessed in eleven regions of Ghana.

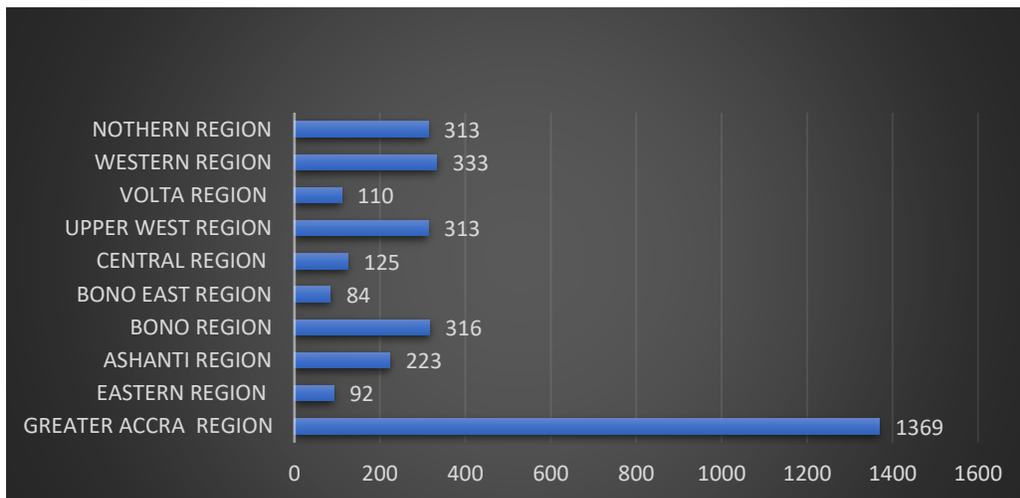


Figure 1: Number of books assessed per region

3.1.2 Location of book

This question required information on the type of entity (facility) in which the book was found. In other words, where the book was found, whether in a bookshop, library, hawker(roadside) or any other places. The results show that majority of the books were identified in bookshops (63.22%). Hawkers however had the lowest percentage (2.3%) of books sampled. Hence, the number of bookshops visited was quite high.

The ‘other (specify)’ option refers to books which were not found in bookshops, libraries, or hawkers (roadside). These books were found at a bookfair that was held at the National Theatre (Accra) during the period of the survey. The number of books assessed for each location has been shown in the Figure 2.

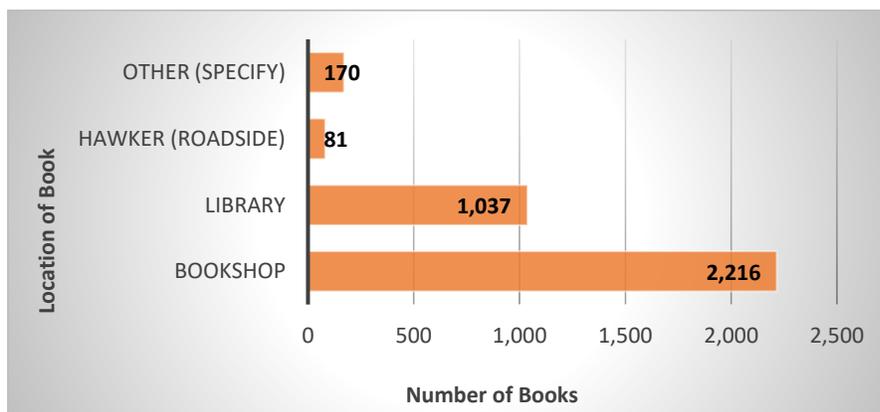


Figure 2: Number of books assessed by location

3.1.3 Target audience of the books

Every published book has a target group or audience. This question was to specify the target group for each book assessed.

In the past, the production of children’s books was generally neglected in African countries (Osa, 1985). However, the results of the study show that the situation is improving. Modern trends and recent developments have propelled an increase in the production of books for children. The study shows that majority of books (54.2%) on the Ghanaian market target children. Children’s books have not just received attention in recent times but have also become the most dominant book on the market. The “other” category refers to those in the adolescent stage (ie. textbooks for students in the Senior High level, as well as books that categorically stated the target), recording a total of 339 (9.7%). The number of books assessed by target audience is presented in Figure 3.

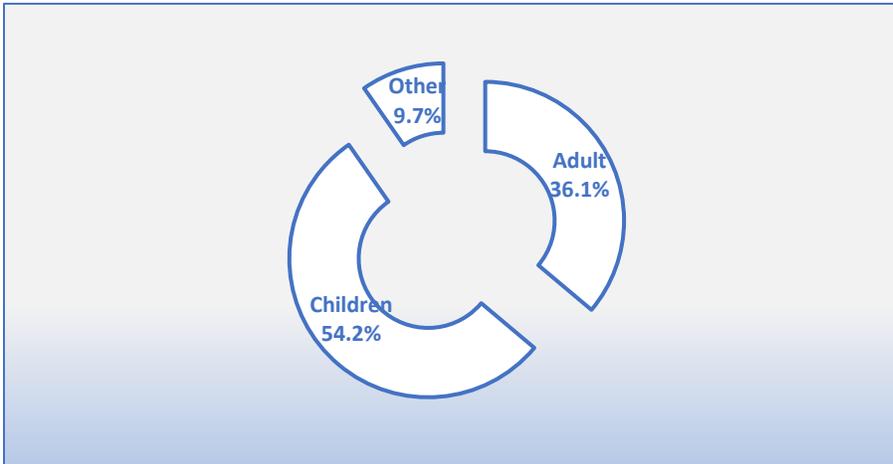


Figure 3: Number of books assessed by target audience

3.1.4 Genre of the books

This question required information on the type of book. That is, if the book is a textbook, storybook or trade/professional book.

A study by United Nations Economic and Social Council & Economic Commission for Africa (1971) found that book production in Africa focuses predominantly on textbook development to the neglect of other genres. The results of the study show that even though textbooks are still dominant on the Ghanaian market, they have been over-taken by another genre (storybook) in recent times. Currently, storybook is the most dominant and popular genre on the market. This could be due to the fact that Ghana had recently adopted a competency-based curriculum (changing from a standard-based curriculum) and hence the new textbooks are now being developed (the old textbooks being out of demand). Almost half of the books on the market were storybooks (48.4%). The “other” category comprises religious/inspirational books, how-to books, dictionaries, among others. The percentage of books assessed for each genre is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Genre of books

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | Textbook | 960 | 27.4 |
| | Storybook | 1696 | 48.4 |
| | Trade/Professional | 471 | 13.4 |
| | Other (Specify) | 377 | 10.8 |
| | Total | 3504 | 100.0 |

3.1.5 Place of publication

Assessors were required to indicate the places where the books were published (name of the city where the publisher of the book is located).

In a paper presented at a forum organised by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and African Publishers Network (APNET), Kolawole (2019) identified a number of challenges facing book development in Africa. One of these problems was the dependence on imported books. The results of the study show that, even though books are still being imported into the country, the dominance of imported books on the market has reduced slightly. Moreover, the percentage of books published in Ghana now, as per the survey, exceeds the percentage of books imported from other countries. In other words, the majority of the books on the market were published in Ghana. This implies that the local book industry has experienced a significant growth. Also, the local book industry has seen some infrastructural development over the years and a lot of local publishers are in operation.

The results of the study show that almost half of the books identified (49.9%) were published in Ghana. This is a good sign not only for the domestic book industry, but also for the economy at large. Only 41.7% of the books were imported from other countries. However, for 8.4% of the books, the place of publication was not specified. Hence, the domestic book industry is quite dominant, controlling a chunk of the market. The figure below shows the number of books published locally (Ghana) and internationally.

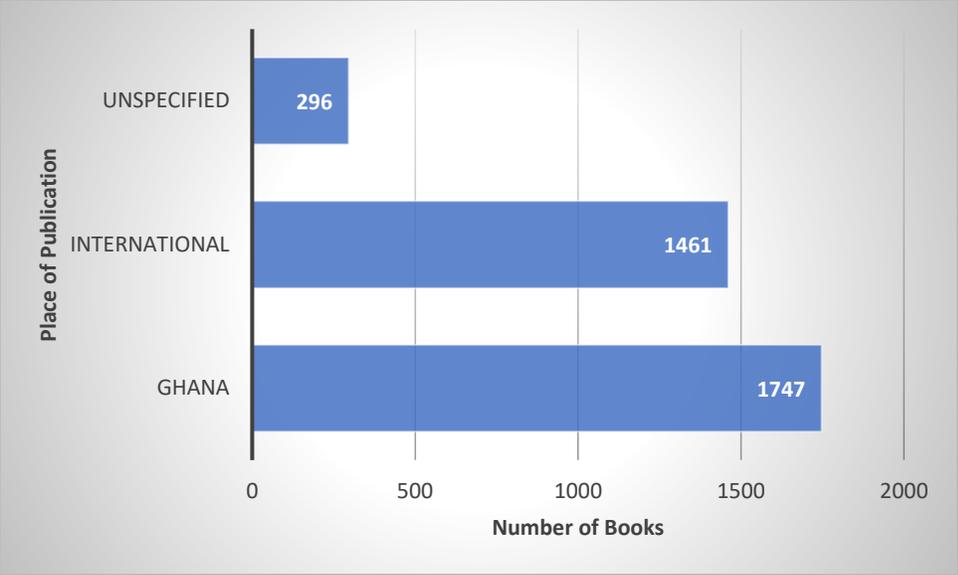


Figure 4: Number of books by place of publication (Ghana and International)

The books on the Ghanaian market were published in different continents. The results of the study showed that more than half of the books (55.08%) were published in Africa. North America and Europe are also important sources of book imports into the country. However, Europe is slightly ahead. The number of books for the various places of publication (continent) has been shown in the Figure 5 below.

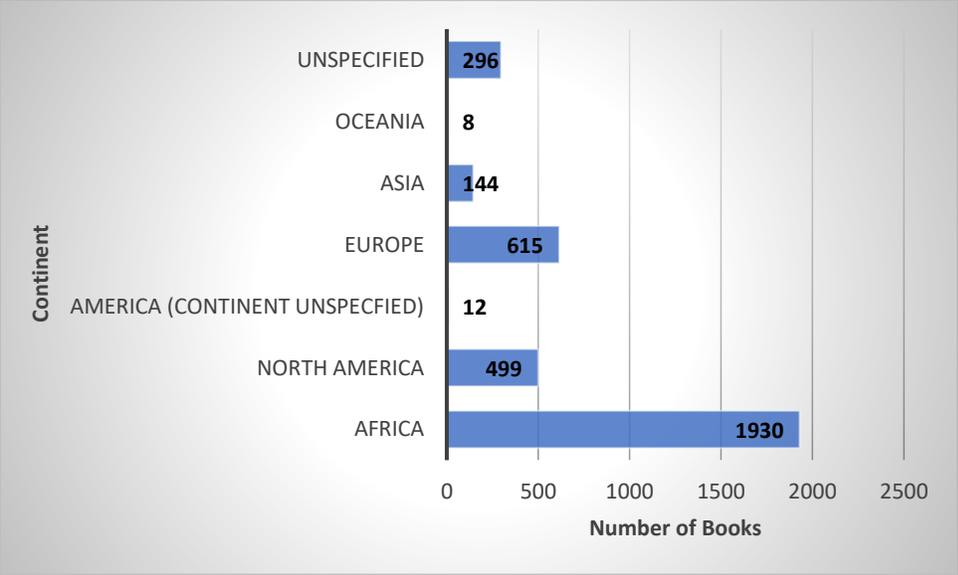


Figure 5: Number of books by place of publication (continent)

Of the total book assessed, the results also seemed to suggest that none of the books were imported from South America.

Some of the books on the market and in libraries were published in Africa. The books published in Africa were sourced from about seven (7) main countries. Ghana has the highest proportion of this market. The results show that Ghana alone accounts for 90.52% of the total African published books that were assessed. This also indicates that, less books are imported from other African countries. Nigeria, however, recorded a few books on the Ghanaian market.

Regarding books imported from North America, the books usually come from about two main countries. The United States of America has the highest proportion of this market. The results of the study show that the United States of America alone accounts for 93.59% of all books imported from North America. Hence, most of the books imported from North America were actually published in the United States of America. Canada is also an important source of books imported from North America.

The study show that books imported from Europe usually come from about seven (7) countries. The United Kingdom alone controls the highest proportion of the books on the market. The results of the study show that the United Kingdom accounts for 89.59% of all books imported from Europe. Hence, most of the books imported from Europe were published in the United Kingdom. Among others, this finding suggests that Ghana still maintains important ties the United Kingdom. Scotland and Germany are other sources of books imported from Europe.

The study revealed that some books are also imported from Asia. India and China control the highest proportion of this market. The results of the study show that India and China together account for 90.28% of all books imported from Asia, although India is ranked first on the books imported from Asia.

With regard to Oceania, the survey recorded books imported from Australia and New Zealand. Books under the category “America (Unspecified)” are books that had America as the place of publication, that is, these books couldn’t be categorized under North America or South America.

As noted earlier, the local book industry controls the highest proportion of books on the Ghanaian market. This implies that the local book industry has made great strides over the years. The results of the study show that majority of the books (77.10%) were published in the Greater Accra Region.

This also implies that most of the publishing houses are located in the Greater Accra Region. Not only is the production of books high in the region, but also it has a larger number of booksellers. Among others, this finding may also suggest that the book industry in the Greater Accra Region is relatively developed than other regions. The number of books published in Ghana as per region have been shown in the Figure 6 below.

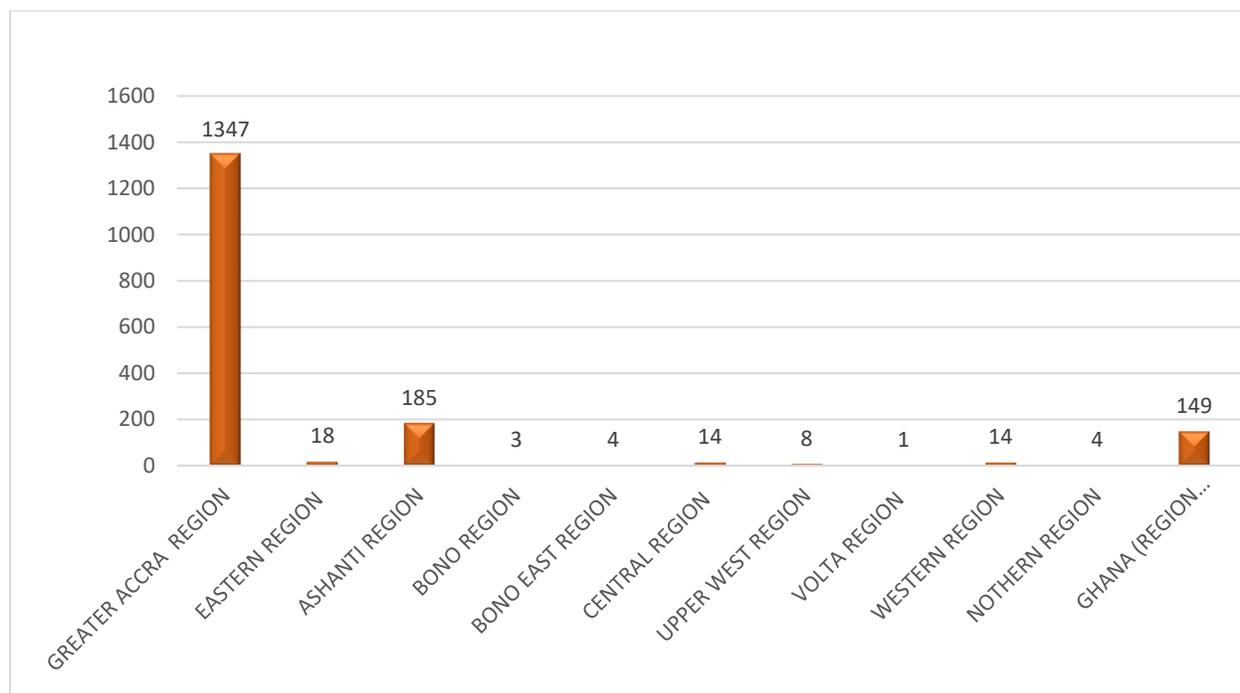


Figure 6: Number of books published in Ghana by region

The survey revealed that books were published in all the sampled regions except the Upper East Region. However, books were identified and assessed in the Upper East Region. This finding may suggest that book development activities are low in that Region. A total of 149 books out of 1,747 books published in Ghana were not specific with the town or region of the publication.

3.2 Technical Information

This part of the questionnaire required information on the technical aspects or features of the books.

3.2.1 The type of cover used

There are two main types of book covers, namely hard cover and soft cover. Assessors were required to indicate the type of cover used for the books sampled. The results revealed that majority

of the books assessed had soft covers (88.6%), while books with hard covers were relatively few as shown in Figure 7.

Hard cover books are more durable, but it may add to the cost of production. Hence, hard cover books are relatively more expensive than soft cover books. All other things being equal, demand for soft cover books will be higher. Booksellers who understand consumer behaviour and purchasing pattern of consumers are likely to present more soft cover book in order to attract more buyers and increase sales.

Publishers usually go in for more soft cover books because the cost of production is relatively low. By virtue of these reasons, there are more soft cover books on the local market compared to hard cover books.

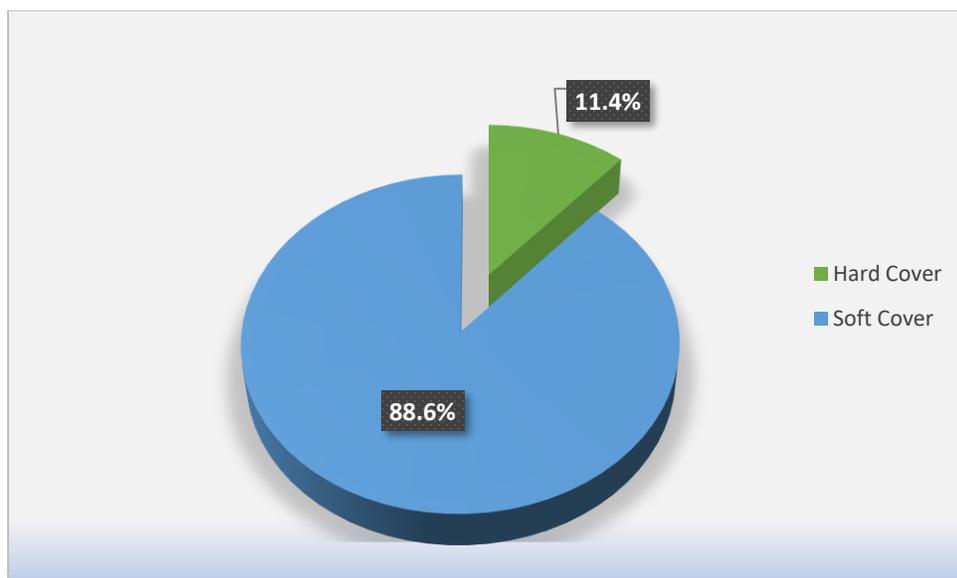


Figure 7: Number of books assessed by type of book cover

3.2.2 Assessing of the book cover

The books were assessed to determine if the book cover had the required elements. The Ghana Book Standards stipulate that the front cover should have a main title (and sub-title, if any) and the name of the author (or editor). All books assessed had a main title. The Standard also requires that the back cover of a book should consist of a blurb, extracts or commendation, ISBN, barcode/scan code and publisher's name or logo.

3.2.2.1 Name of author/editor

The assessors were required to determine if the front cover of the book had the name of the author/editor. It was revealed that 94.4% of the books had the name of the author/editor on the front cover. Only 5.5% of the books did not have the name of the author/editor on the front cover.

The number of books which had or did not have the name of the author/editor on the book cover have been shown in the Table 2 below.

Table 2: Number of books with names of authors/editors

| | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Yes | 3309 | 94.4 |
| No | 194 | 5.5 |
| Not Applicable | 1 | .0 |
| Total | 3504 | 100.0 |

3.2.2.2 Blurb

Blurb refers to information on the back of a book written to attract a buyer or a reader. The assessors were required to determine if the back cover had a blurb. As presented in the figure below, 2,845 books, representing 81.2% had blurbs. Only 18.8% of the books did not have blurbs.

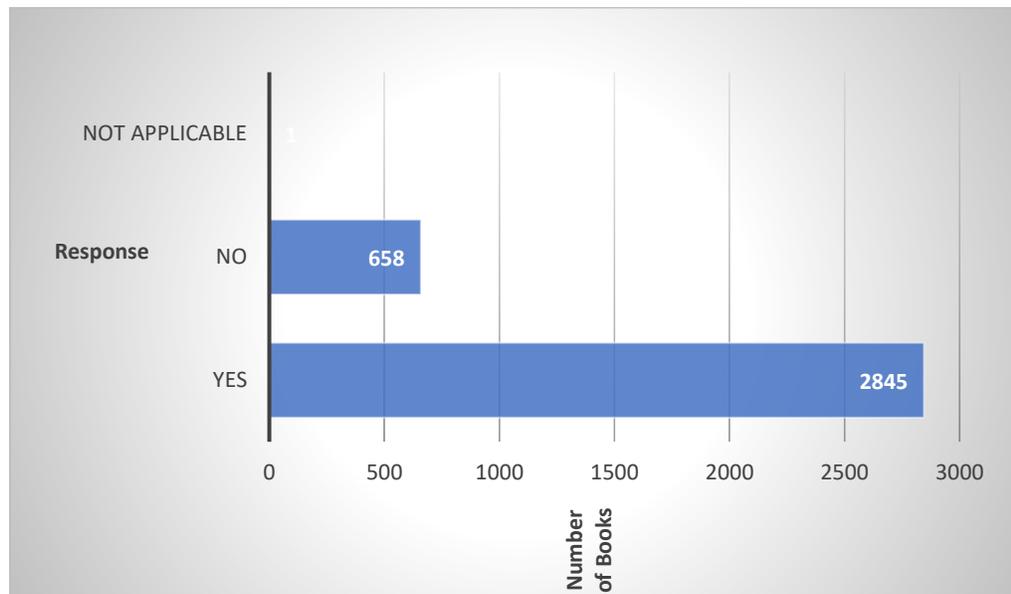


Figure 8: Number of books with blurb

3.2.2.3 ISBN

ISBN refers to the International Standard Book Number. The ISBN comprises peculiar numbers separated by a space or a hyphen. Each version of a book shall have its unique ISBN. The assessors were required to determine if the books had an ISBN. The study revealed that 90.0% of the books had ISBNs. However, 10.0% of the books did not have ISBN.

The number of books which had or did not have ISBN have been shown in the figure below.

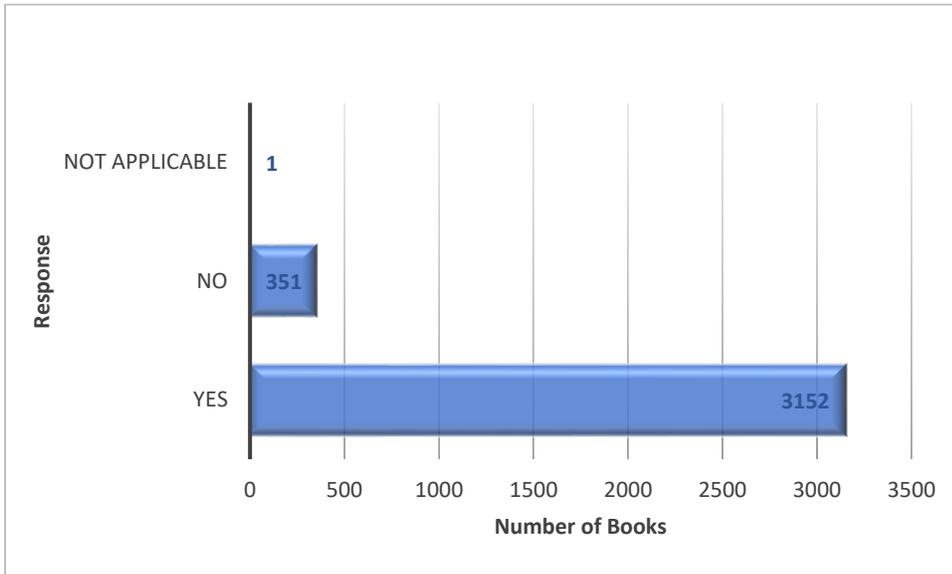


Figure 9: Books with ISBN

3.2.2.4 Barcode/Scan Code

A barcode is the small image of lines (bars) and spaces that is affixed to goods (items) for the purpose of identification. It provides a method to track and store information about goods.

The assessors were required to determine if the back cover of the books had barcodes/scan codes. The results show that 84.8% of the books had a barcodes/scan codes at their back covers. The rest of the books did not have barcodes/scan codes.

The number of books which had or did not have a barcode/scan code on the book cover have been shown in the Table 3.

Table 3: Number of books with barcode/scan code

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-----|-----------|---------|
| Valid | Yes | 2971 | 84.8 |
| | No | 533 | 15.2 |
| Total | | 3504 | 100.0 |

3.2.2.5 Publisher name/logo

The assessors checked if the book covers had the name or logo of publishers.

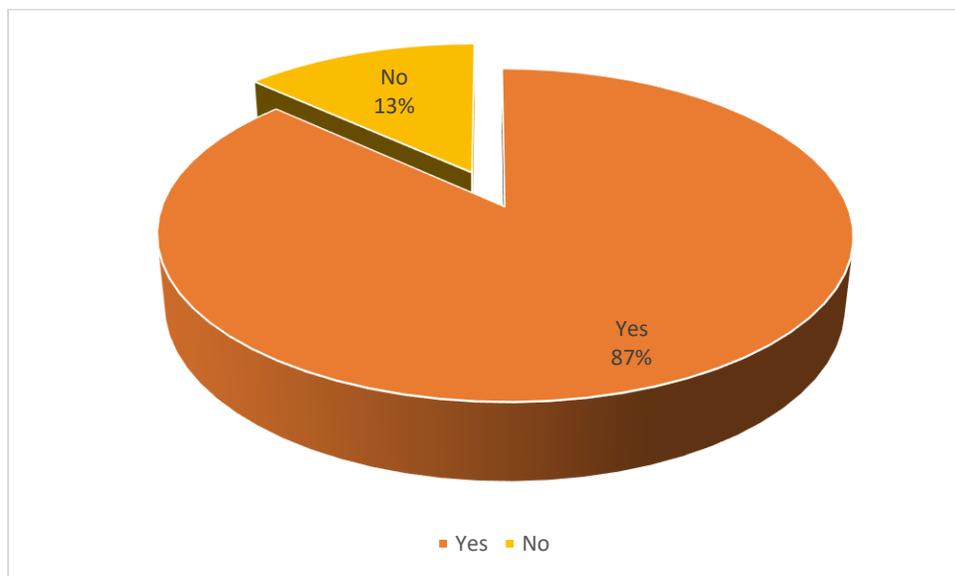


Figure 10: Books with publishers' name/logo on the cover

As indicated in the Figure 10 above, 86.8% of the books had the publisher's name or logo on the book cover.

3.2.2.6 Summary: Assessment of physical features

In most cases, a high percentage of the books had the required items on the book cover. The books with the required items on the book cover exceed 50% in each case.

3.2.3 Style of binding used

Book binding is the process of physically fastening the leaves of a book together within a cover. The assessors were required to determine the style of binding used for the books. The results show that, of the total books assessed, 768 (21.9%) were saddle stitched, 2,411 (68.8%) were perfect bound, 318 (9.1%) were case bound, and 7 (0.2%) were other types of binding (such as spiral binding). Hence, the majority of the books used perfect binding.

Figure below presents the results on the number of books assessed for each style (type) of binding.

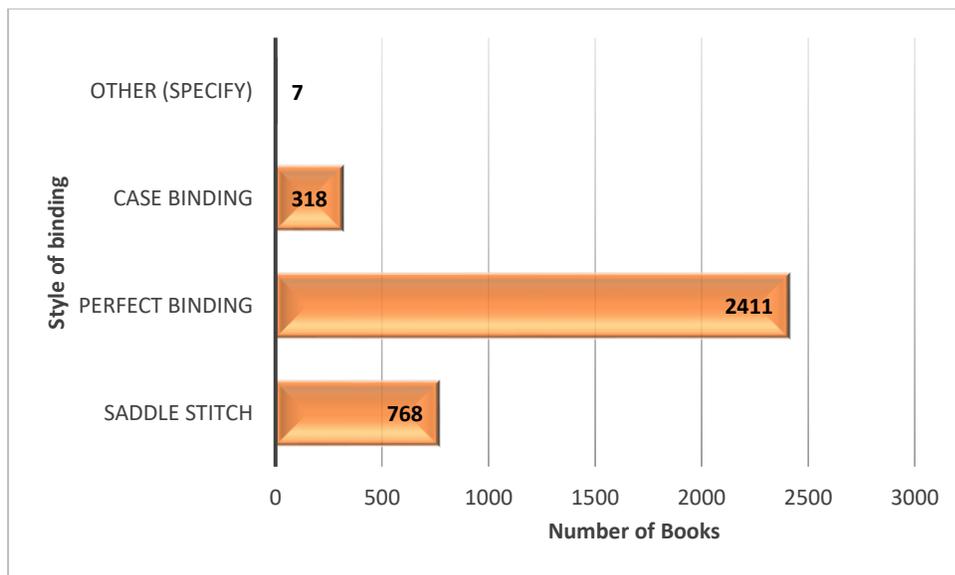


Figure 11: Number of books assessed by style of binding

3.2.4 Assessing other features

3.2.4.1 The spine of the book

The spine refers to the edge of a book where all the pages are bound together. Limp/soft and case bound books have a spine. The recommended elements which should appear on the spine are: main title, author and publisher's name or logo.

The assessors were required to determine if the books with spine had all the recommended elements, i.e., the main title, author and publisher's name or logo.

A question sought to determine if the book had a spine. The results of the study revealed that 77.9% of the books had spines. The rest of the books did not have a spine. Hence, most of the

books had a spine. The number of books which had or did not have a spine has been shown in the Table 4 below.

Table 4: Number of books with spine

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | Yes | 2729 | 77.9 |
| | No | 775 | 22.1 |
| | Total | 3504 | 100.0 |

Table 5: Books with spine that have all spine elements

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-------|-----------|---------|
| | Yes | 1555 | 57.0 |
| | No | 1174 | 43.0 |
| | Total | 2729 | 100.0 |

A follow up question sought to determine if the spine had all the required items. Hence, As presented in Table 5 above, of the percentage of book that have spine (77.9%), 57% had all the required element of a book spine. This indicates that although majority of the book assessed had spines, more than 40% did not have either a spine element or any of the element required.

3.2.4.2 Half title page

The half title page is a page that carries only the main title of the book. The results of the study show that a total of 831 books representing 23.7% had a half title page. Out of the number of books with a half title page, 91.1% (757 books) had the exact element.

The number of books which had or did not have a half title page has been shown in Figure 12.

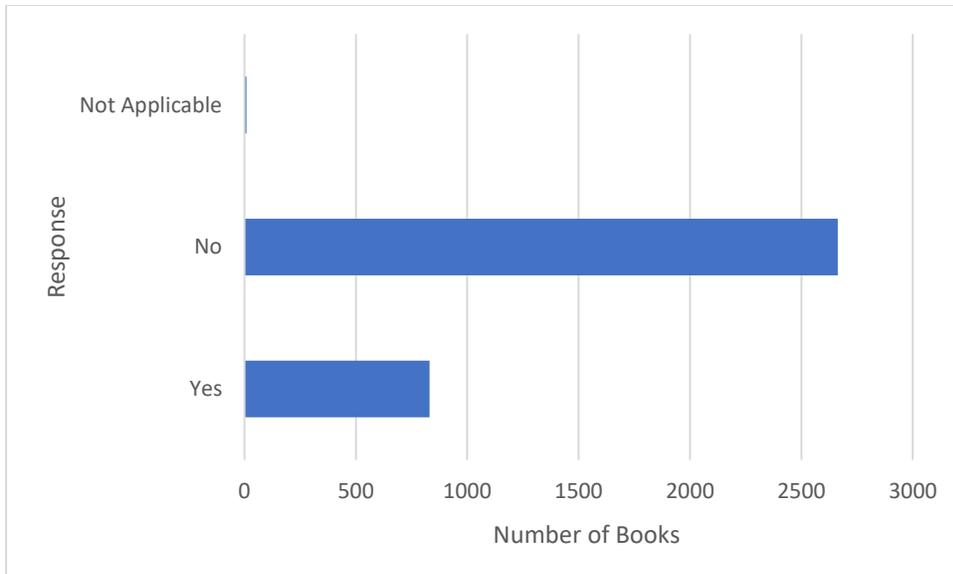


Figure 12: Books with half title page

3.2.4.3 Full title page

The full title page should present the following: the main title, sub-title (if available), author and translator (if available), editor (if available), illustrator and publisher.

The results revealed that, of the total books assessed, 3,154 books (90.0%) had a full title page, implying that majority of the books had a full title page. However, when asked if books with full title pages have all required elements, it was revealed that 85.0% of the 3,154 books had met the standard, with 15% not having all the required items on the full title page.

Figure 13 below presents books with the full title page.

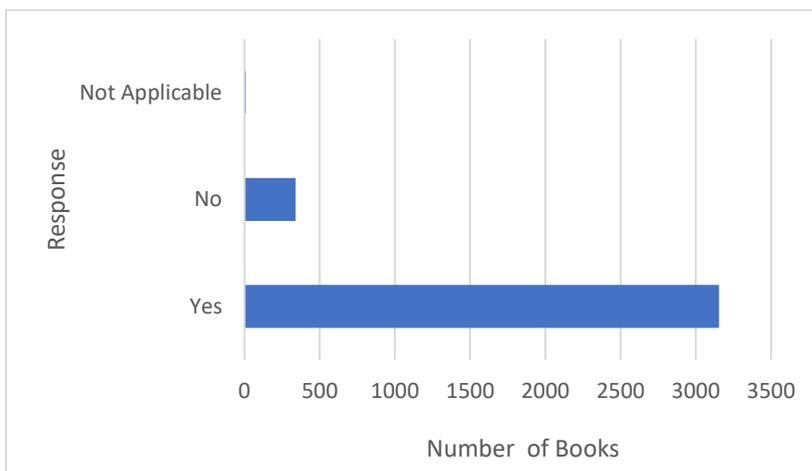


Figure 13: Books with full title page

3.2.4.4 Copyright page

The copyright page should have the following: the copyright symbol, year of first publication, copyright owner, the term “All Rights Reserved”, year of subsequent editions, printing history, publisher’s details, name of the publishing house and supporting agencies, postal address, ISBN and country of publication.

The study revealed that the majority (91.1%) of the books assessed had a copyright page (see Figure 14). Of the percentage of books with a copyright page, 2660 books representing 83.3% had all the requirement of a copyright page (see Table 6).

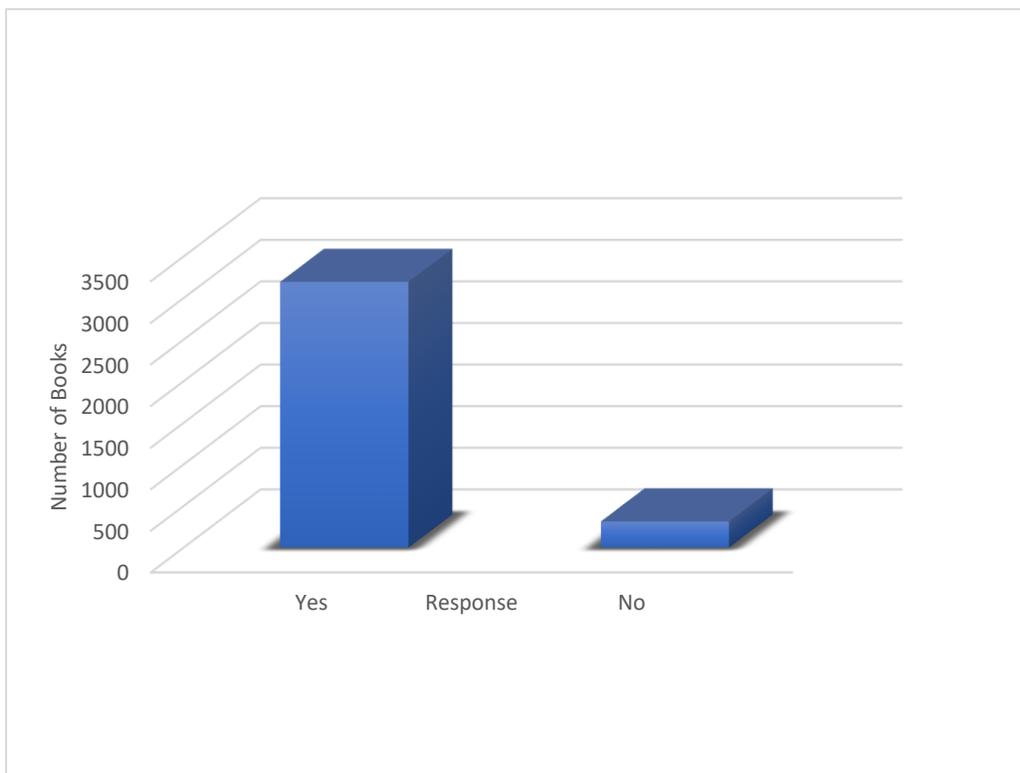


Figure 14: Book with copyright page

Table 6: Books with copyright pages that have all required items

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|
| Yes | 2660 | 83.3 |
| No | 532 | 16.7 |
| Total | 3192 | 100.0 |

3.2.4.5 Table of content

Table of content is often used for non-fiction books that contain parts or chapters along with their relevant page numbers. In this case however, there was only one question for the table of content. The question sought to determine if a book has a table of content.

The results of the study show that 57.3% of the books had tables of content (see Figure 15). More than half of the books had a table of content. Although it is not compulsory for fictional books to have table of content, a percentage of such books (storybooks) had tables of content since the total number of books with table of content (2007 books) is more than the non-fictional books recorded (see Table 10, ie. textbooks and professional books). Of the total non-fictional books recorded (1,431 books), 1,161 books representing 81.1% had tables of content, while 270 books representing 18.9% did not have table of content.

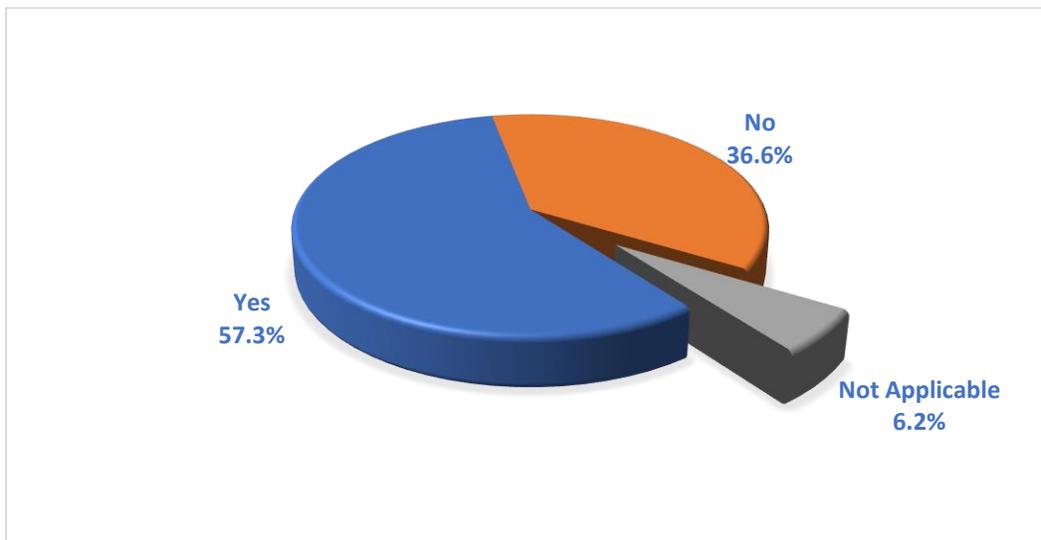


Figure 15: Books with table of content

3.2.4.6 Summary: Assessment of technical features

Performance of some components, as far as the assessment of the spine and front matter of the book is concerned, need to be looked at in terms of training.

- Of the books which had a spine, more than 40% did not meet the expected standard of a book spine.
- Only 23.7% of the books had a half title page. In other words, the majority of the books on the market did not have a half title page.

However, the performance in other areas was quite encouraging. The majority of the books had all elements of the spine and front matter. Also, most of the books met all the requirements of the other components of the spine and front matter.

3.2.5 Assessment of matrix of other features

The assessors evaluated the appropriateness, suitability and effectiveness of the other features or characteristics of the books. Statements covering various features of the book were presented in this section and the assessors were required to rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5 (1=very poor to 5=very good). Therefore, the assessment covered various technical aspects of a book. The responses for each statement are presented and discussed in this section.

3.2.5.1 Strength and suitability of binding

Book binding is the process of physically fastening the leaves of a book together within a cover. The assessor was required to evaluate the suitability and strength of the binding. As presented in the figure below, 1,419 (40.5%) and 1,773 (50.6%) of the books were rated good and very good respectively for the strength and suitability of the binding. This implies that, for 91.1% of the books, the strength and suitability of the binding was at least good (good or very good). In other words, the binding for a majority of the books was strong and suitable.

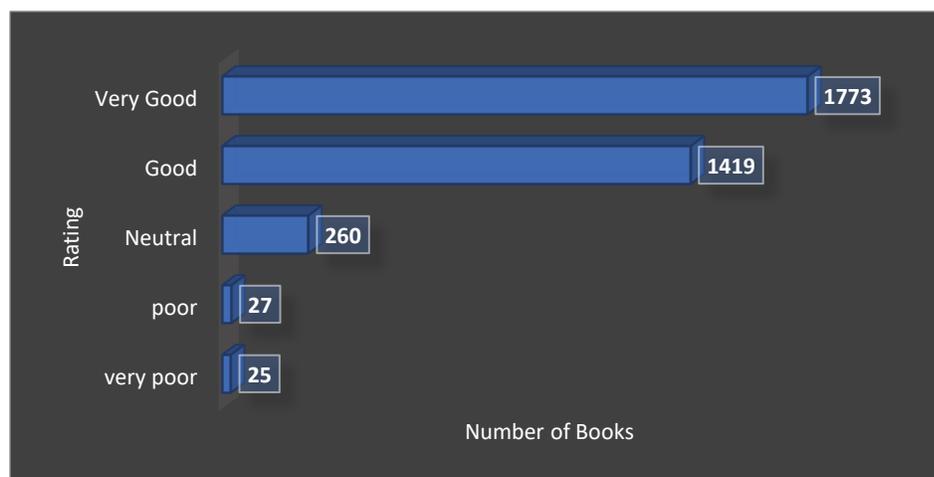


Figure 16: Strength and suitability of the binding

3.2.5.1 The binding allows the book to open flat

This statement relates to the binding of the book. The assessors were required to determine if the binding allows the book to open flat. If the binding is good the book will open with ease. The

results of the study show that, for 46.4% and 48.5% of the books, the rating was good and very good respectively. Hence, for a majority of the books (94.9%), the binding allows the book to open flat.

The rating for this statement has been shown in the figure below.

Table 7: Binding allowing books to open flat

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | very poor | 7 | .2 |
| | poor | 17 | .5 |
| | Neutral | 155 | 4.4 |
| | Good | 1625 | 46.4 |
| | Very Good | 1699 | 48.5 |
| | Not Applicable | 1 | .0 |
| | Total | 3504 | 100.0 |

3.2.5.3 The binding not hiding text in the gutter

This statement also relates to the binding of the book. The assessors were required to determine if the binding does not hide text in the gutter. If the binding is good, it will not obscure or conceal text in the gutter. The results of the study show that, for 36.6% and 56.0% of the books, the rating for this statement was good and very good respectively. Hence, the binding of majority of the books (92.6%) does not hide text in the gutter (see Figure 17).

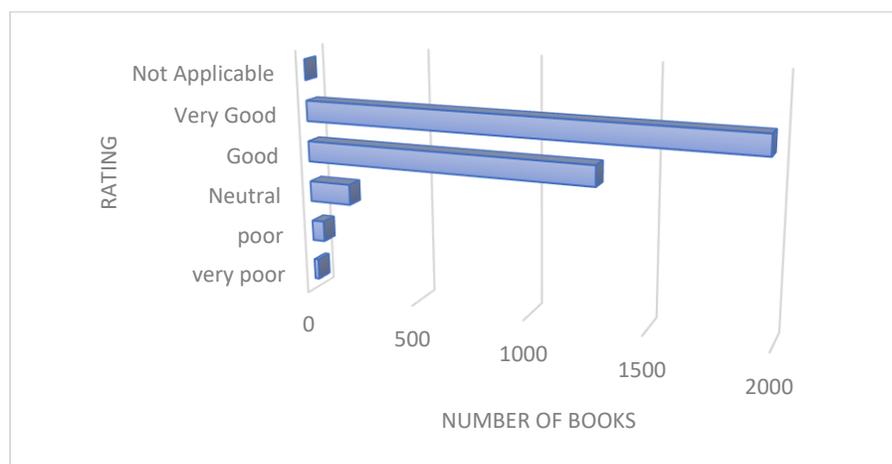


Figure 17: Binding not hiding text in the gutter

3.2.5.4 Appropriateness of cover card

This statement pertains to the kind of paper (card) used for the cover of the book. The minimum recommended specifications for a cover are: 200gsm single-sided (Art card), with grain direction being parallel to the spine, and should be 25-micron laminate/UV coating. For case binding, chip/grey/straw boards above 1,100gsm should be used for the cover.

The assessors were therefore required to determine if the cover card of the book is appropriate. The results show that, for 39.4% and 52.6% of the books, the rating for the appropriateness of the cover card was good and very good respectively (Figure 18). Hence, for a majority of the books (92%), the cover card was appropriate.

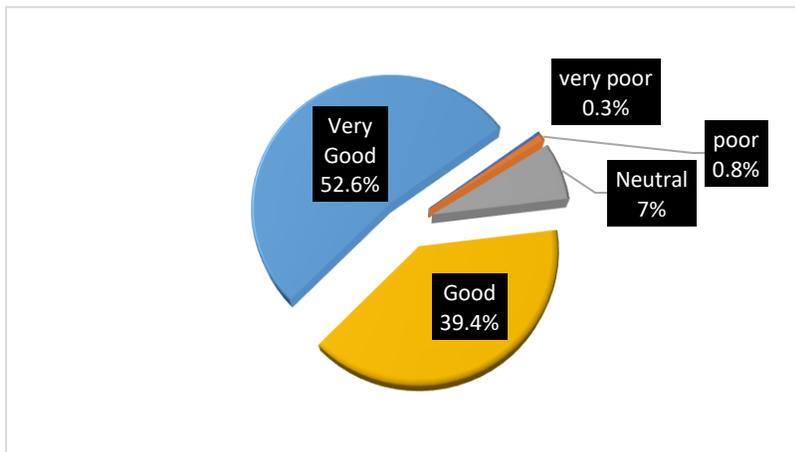


Figure 18: Appropriateness of cover card

3.2.5.5 Appropriateness of paper used for the text

The choice of paper affects the aesthetic value of the book. When choosing paper, the weight, thickness, colour, look and readership shall be considered. The minimum recommended paper stock for the main text should be 70grams machine-finished wood-free paper, with 90% opacity except for tracing paper. Furthermore, the colour of paper for printing books typically should be white, off-white or cream-coloured.

The assessors were required to determine if the quality of paper used for the text is appropriate. The results as shown in Table 8 indicates that, for 40.3% and 53.4% of the books, the rating for the appropriateness of the paper used for the text was good and very good respectively. Hence, for a majority of the books (93.7%), the paper used for the text was appropriate.

Table 8: Appropriateness of paper used for the text

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | very poor | 10 | .3 |
| | poor | 16 | .5 |
| | Neutral | 194 | 5.5 |
| | Good | 1411 | 40.3 |
| | Very Good | 1871 | 53.4 |
| | Not Applicable | 2 | .1 |
| | Total | 3504 | 100.0 |

3.2.5.6 *Appropriate placement of front matter (verso/recto)*

The front matter precedes the main text of a book. The front matter should be arranged in a particular order as applicable on a particular page (verso or recto). The front matter is to be arranged in the following order: half title page; full title page; copyright page; dedication; table of contents; list of illustration; preface; acknowledgements; introduction; list of abbreviation/acronyms/terms; and list of contributors (where applicable).

The assessors were required to determine if any items of the front matter are at the appropriate placed in a book. The results of the study show that, for 37.1% and 52.3% of the books, the rating for the front matter placement was good and very good respectively. Hence, for a majority of the books (89.4%), the items of the front matter were at the appropriate pages. This is presented in Figure 19.

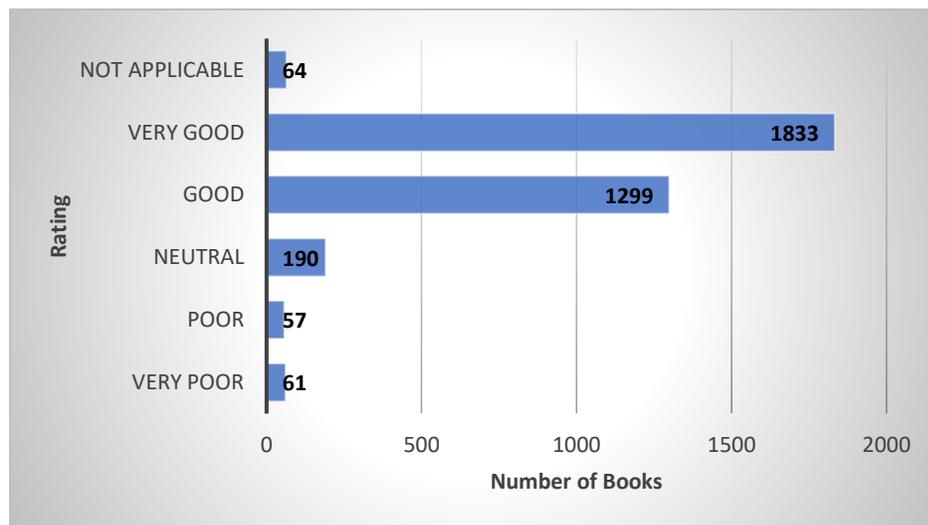


Figure 19: Appropriate placement of front matter (verso/recto)

3.2.5.7 Clarity and consistency of page numbers

The page numbers are to be put at the top or bottom of a page. Again, there should be consistency in the placement and size of the numbers. The page numbers are supposed to be legible.

With regard to the clarity and consistency of page numbers, the results show that, 34.6% of the books were good, while 58.8% recorded very good, as shown in Figure 20. Hence, for a majority of the books (93.4%), the page numbers were clear and consistent.

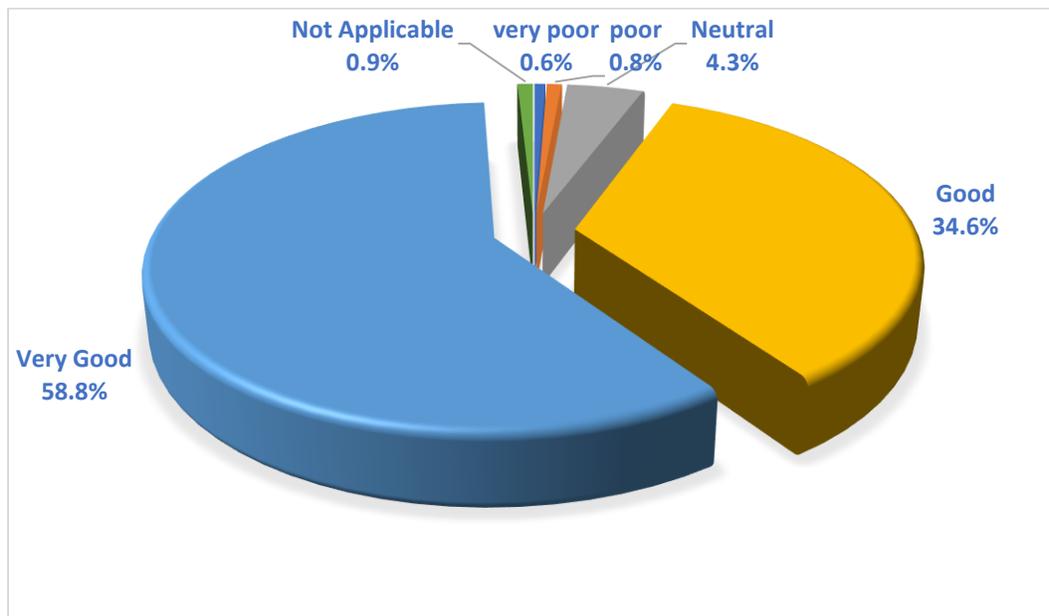


Figure 20: Clarity and consistency of page numbers

3.2.5.8 Margin around the text

The gutter (inside margin) on bound books must be smaller than the outer margin. However, this should be guided by the binding style. Similarly, the top margin should be smaller than the bottom margin.

The assessors were required to determine if the margin around the text is good enough. The results revealed that, for 34.4% and 60.0% of the books, the margin around the text was good and very good respectively. Therefore, for a majority of the books (94.4%), there was a good margin around the text. This is presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Margin around the text

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | very poor | 12 | .3 |
| | poor | 36 | 1.0 |
| | Neutral | 144 | 4.1 |
| | Good | 1204 | 34.4 |
| | Very Good | 2104 | 60.0 |
| | Not Applicable | 4 | .1 |
| | Total | 3504 | 100.0 |

3.2.5.9 Suitability of language to target audience



Figure 21: Suitability of language to target audience

Figure 21 presents results on suitability of language to the target audience of a book. The results show that, 1,150 (32.8%) and 2,254 (64.3%) of the books, were rated good and very good respectively, regarding the suitability of language to the target audience. This shows that the level of language used for the majority (97.1%) of the books assessed was suitable.

3.2.5.10 Grammatical accuracy

The assessors were required to check the correct usage of grammar and spellings. The results show that, 33.4% and 64.4% of the books were good and very good respectively, regarding grammatical accuracy. This implies that grammar usage was accurate with the majority of the books (97.8%).

The rating for this statement has been shown in Figure 22.

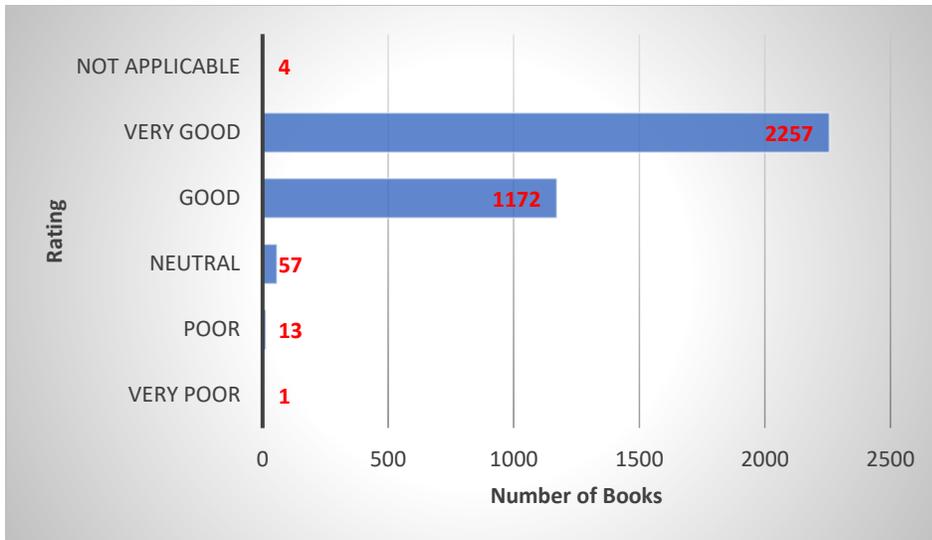


Figure 22: Grammatical Accuracy

3.2.5.11 Consistency of language usage (British/American English)

The assessors were required to assess the consistency in the use of British or American English. A form of spelling must be used consistently throughout the book. The results revealed that, regarding consistency in the usage of British and American English, 1,259 representing 35.9% and 2,189 (62.5%) books were good and very good respectively (see Figure 23).

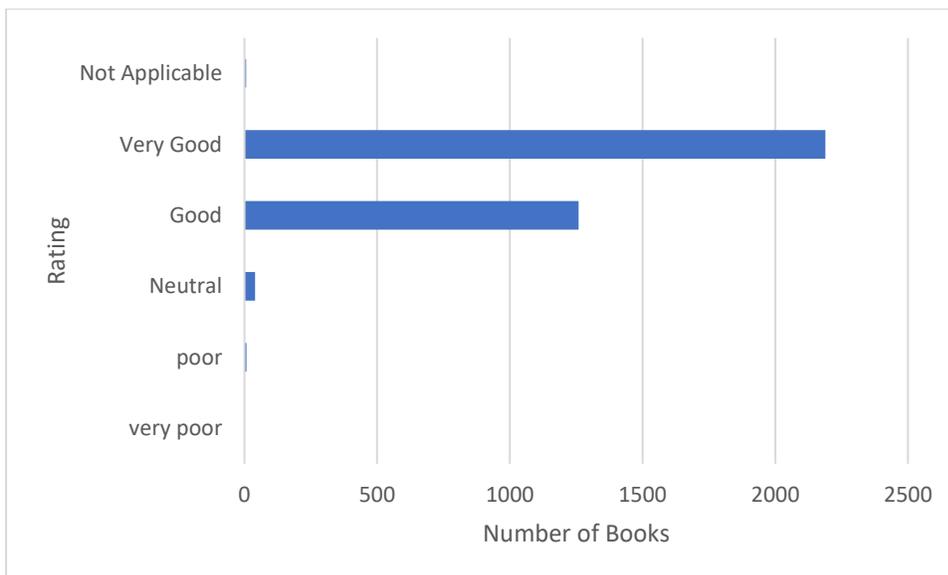


Figure 23: Consistency of language usage (British/American English)

3.2.5.12 Suitability of type/font and font size for the target user

The relevant choice of font and font size depend on the target audience (readership). For children’s books, the font size should be bigger but be marginally reduced as the reader advances. From nursery to primary 2, the recommended font is 18 points, while for primary 3 and primary 4, the recommended font size is 16 points. For primary 5 and primary 6, the recommended font size is 14 points, while for junior high school, the recommended font size is 12 points. For the post-basic levels, the recommended font size is 12 points.

Regarding the choice of font, children at primary 6 and below, it is recommended that choice of font must be “sans serif” using an open and simplified ‘O’ and ‘G’. Recommended fonts may include Gill Sans Infant, Century Gothic, Helvetica Infant, Comic Sans, Sassoon Primary and New House Infant. These fonts are particularly suitable for Nursery, Kindergarten and Primary because of good and simplified letter forms. For Junior High School upwards, the font may be “sans serif” or “serif” according to the discretion of the publisher. Examples of acceptable serif fonts are New Century School Book, Garamond, Palatino, Time New Roman, etc.

The assessors were required to check the suitability of font and font size for the target user of the books. As presented in Figure 24, 37.4% and 59.4% of the books were good and very good respectively, with regard to suitability of font and font size for their target users.

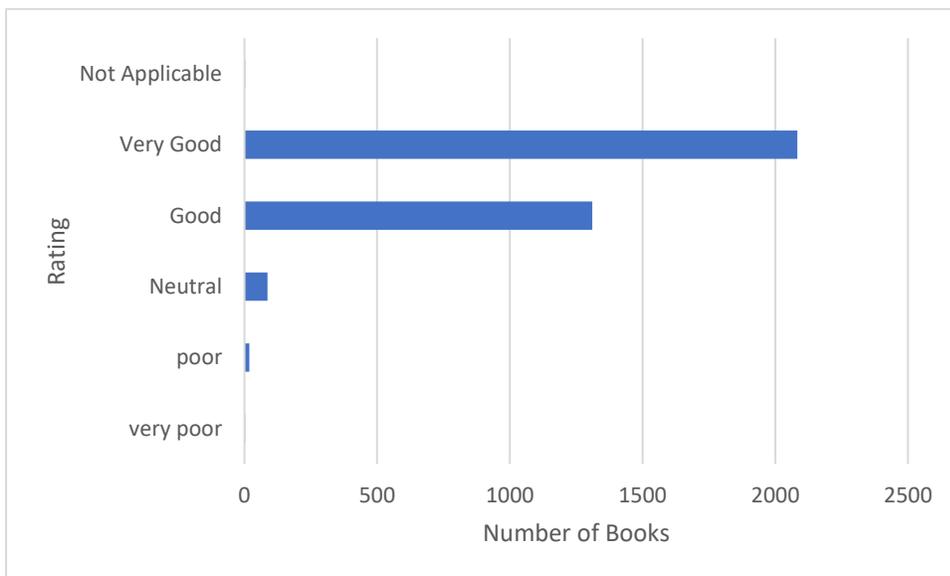


Figure 24: Suitability of type/font and font size for the target user

3.2.5.13 Legibility and readability of text

In respect of text legibility and readability, the results show that, of the total books assessed, 36.4% and 60.0% of the books rated good and very good respectively. This implies that texts of a majority of the books (96.4%) were legible and readable (see Table10).

Table 10: Legibility and readability of text

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | very poor | 3 | .1 |
| | poor | 23 | .7 |
| | Neutral | 96 | 2.7 |
| | Good | 1277 | 36.4 |
| | Very Good | 2102 | 60.0 |
| | Not Applicable | 3 | .1 |
| | Total | 3504 | 100.0 |

3.2.5.14 Appropriateness of leading of text

The leading of text refers to the line spacing of texts, and it is measured in points. Leading should be reasonable and should not be less than 2 points. The assessors were required to assess if the leading of texts of the book are appropriate. The results, as shown in Figure 25, revealed that majority of the books (96.7%) had good and very good leading of texts.

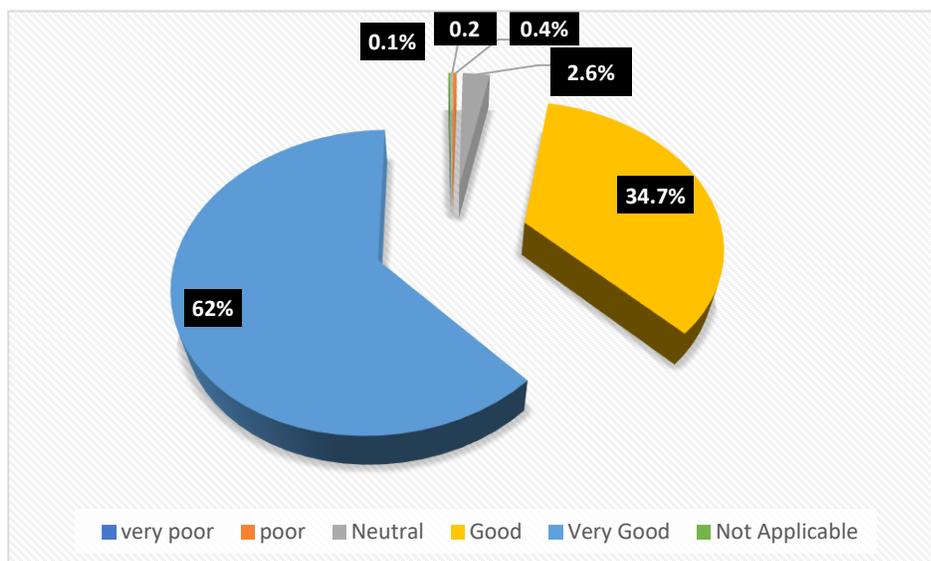


Figure 25: Appropriateness of leading of text

3.2.5.15 Quality, attractiveness, and clarity of labels of illustrations

Book illustrations are a form of art used to create pictures and images for books. Examples are line drawing, paintings, photographs, charts, graphs, maps etc. They usually help add or enhance the story or text. Illustrations are more commonly found in children’s books. Illustrations must be relevant, effective and realistic. They must also be set within the appropriate Ghanaian cultural environment and be placed as close to the related text as possible.

The assessors were required to determine if the illustrations are of good quality, attractive and with clear labels. The results of the study show that, for 29.7% and 28.3% of the books, the rating for the quality, attractiveness and labelling of illustrations were good and very good respectively. Hence, a majority of the books (58%), had illustrations that are of good quality, attractive and clearly labelled. However, books without illustrations recorded 1,285 (36.7%) as presented in Figure 26.

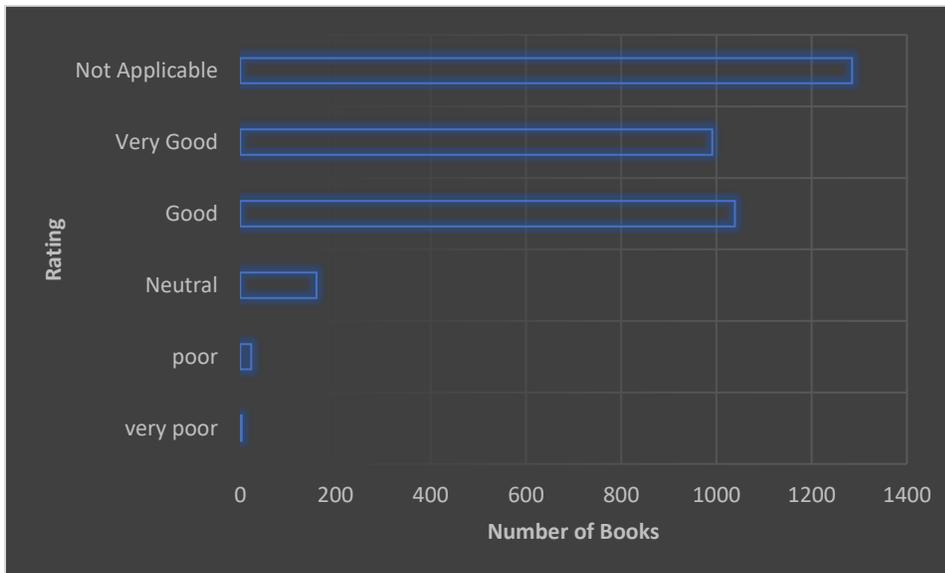


Figure 26: Quality, attractiveness, and clarity of labels of illustrations

3.2.5.16 Suitability of illustration to text

The assessors were required to evaluate the suitability of the illustrations to the text. The results revealed that the majority (59.8%) of the books were rated good and very good regarding suitability of illustrations to text as seen in Table 11.

Table 11: Suitability of illustration to text

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|---------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | very poor | 1 | .0 |
| | poor | 6 | .2 |
| | Neutral | 102 | 2.9 |
| | Good | 1012 | 28.9 |
| | Very Good | 1083 | 30.9 |
| | Not Applicable | 1297 | 37.0 |
| | Total | 3501 | 99.9 |
| Missing | System | 3 | .1 |
| Total | | 3504 | 100.0 |

3.2.5.17 Crowdedness of elements on a page

This statement relates to the organization of elements (text, illustration, tables, etc.) on a page. The assessors were required to evaluate whether the elements on a page were crowded or well-organized. The results of the study show that, for 31.3% and 44.1% of the books, the rating for the crowdedness of elements on a page was good and very good respectively.

The rating for this statement is shown in Figure 27 below.

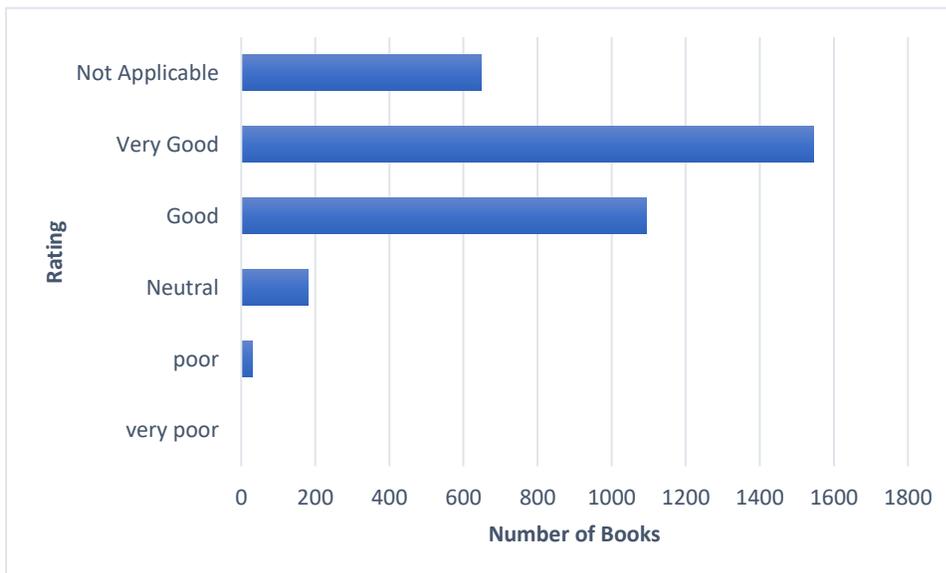


Figure 27: Crowdedness of elements on a page

3.2.5.18 Average words per line not exceeding 12

For optimum readability, it is recommended to limit the number of words per line to between 9 and 12. Therefore, it is generally expected that the average word per line should not exceed 12.

Assessors were required to determine if the average word per line does not exceed 12. As shown in Figure 28, the study revealed that, of the total books assessed, 1,493 (42.6%) and 1,816 (51.8%) books were rated good and very good respectively with regard to average words per line was. Hence, for a majority of the books (94.4%), the average word per line did not exceed 12, as it has been recommended.

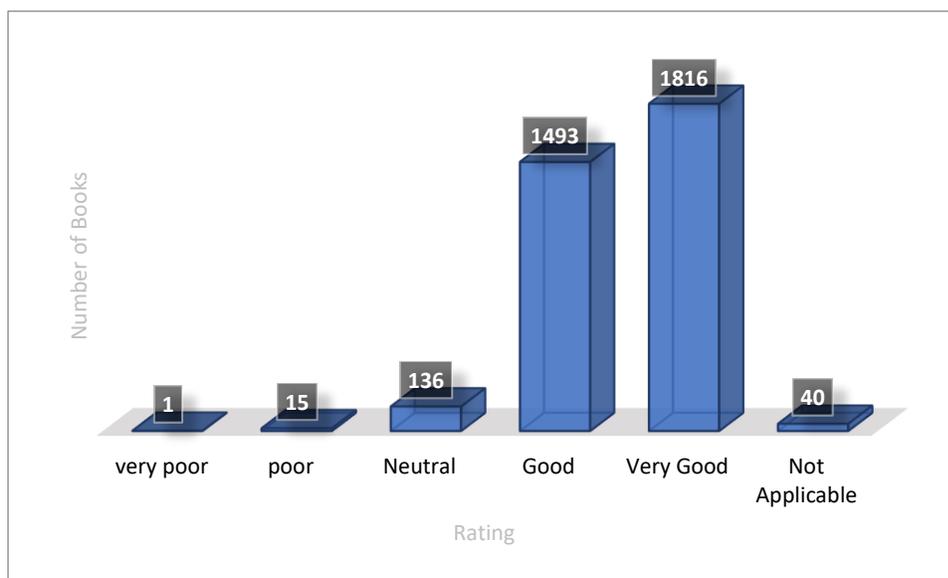


Figure 28: Average word per line not exceeding 12

3.2.5.19 Balanced text and illustrations

As indicated in Figure 29, the results show that a majority of the books (59.3%) were good and very good regarding the balancing of text and illustrations. However, 37% of the books were not applicable since they did not have illustrations.

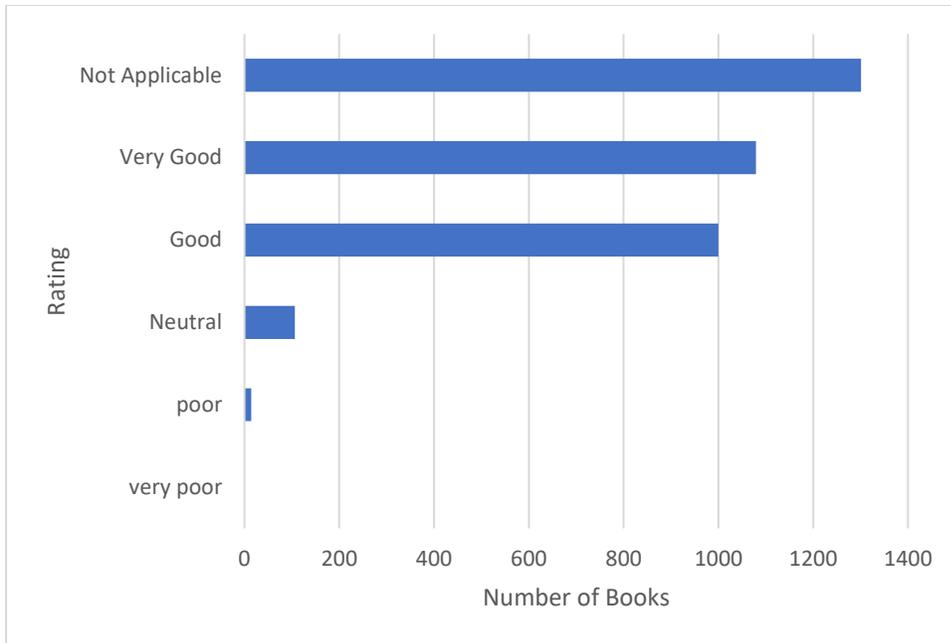


Figure 29: Balanced texts and illustrations

3.2.5.20 Appropriateness of space between running heads and main text

Running heads are placed at the top of the page to inform the reader of the location in the book. Therefore, it is expected that there is adequate space between the running heads and main text. Assessing the spaces between running heads and main texts, the result show that, 746 (21.3%) and 1,144 (32.6%) books were good and very good respectively as presented in Figure 30. However, 1,524 (43.5%) of the books, were not applicable. This is because these books did not have running heads.

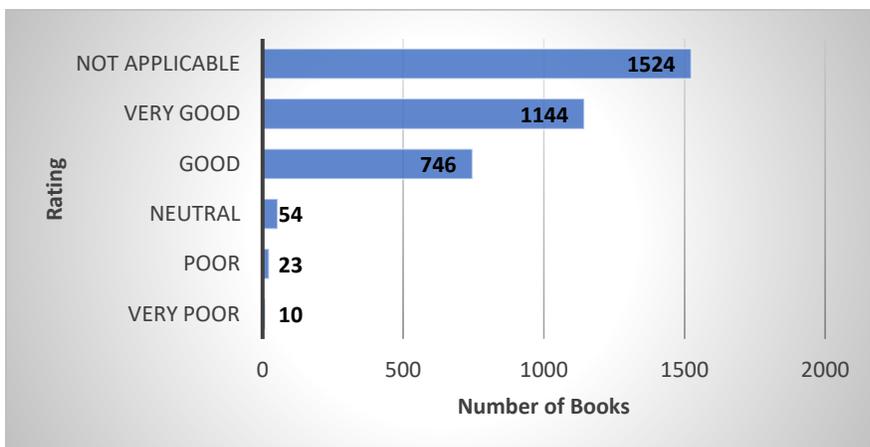


Figure 30: Appropriateness of space between running heads and main text

3.2.5.21 No “widows” and “orphans”

In book publishing, a “widow” occurs when the last line of a paragraph is not able to fit at the bottom of a page or column. Instead, it sits at the top of the next page, looking out of place. On the other hand, an “orphan” is the exact opposite of a widow. An orphan occurs when the first line of a paragraph sits at the bottom of a page by itself. This breaks up the flow of the text and tends to distract the reader. It is therefore expected that a book should not have “widows” or “orphans”.

Rating books with no “widows” or “orphans”, the results as indicated in Figure 31 shows that 44.5% and 44.2% were good and very good respectively. Hence, for a majority of the books (88.7%) there were generally no “widows” and “orphans”, or “widows” and “orphans” were rare.

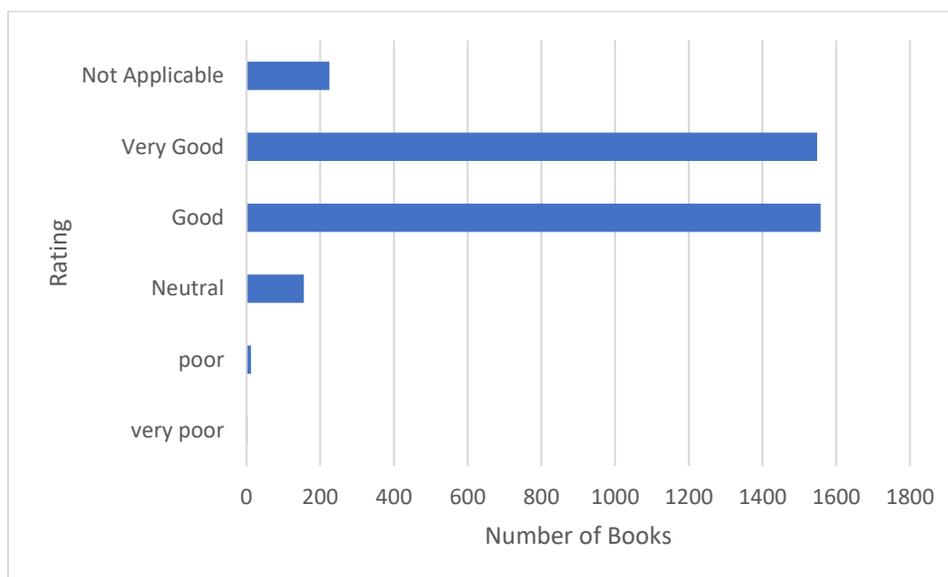


Figure 31: No "widows" and "orphans"

3.2.5.22 Consistency of presentation (book formatting)

Format refers to the general appearance of a book, i.e., shape, size and presentation. The choice of the format must take into consideration the readership, illustrations and content. The assessors were required to evaluate the consistency of presentation (book formatting). The results of the study show that, for 32.7% and 62.6% of the books, the rating for the consistency of presentation (book formatting) was good and very good respectively (see Figure 32). Hence, for a majority of the books (95.3%), there is consistency of presentation (book formatting). The rating for this statement has been shown in Figure 32.

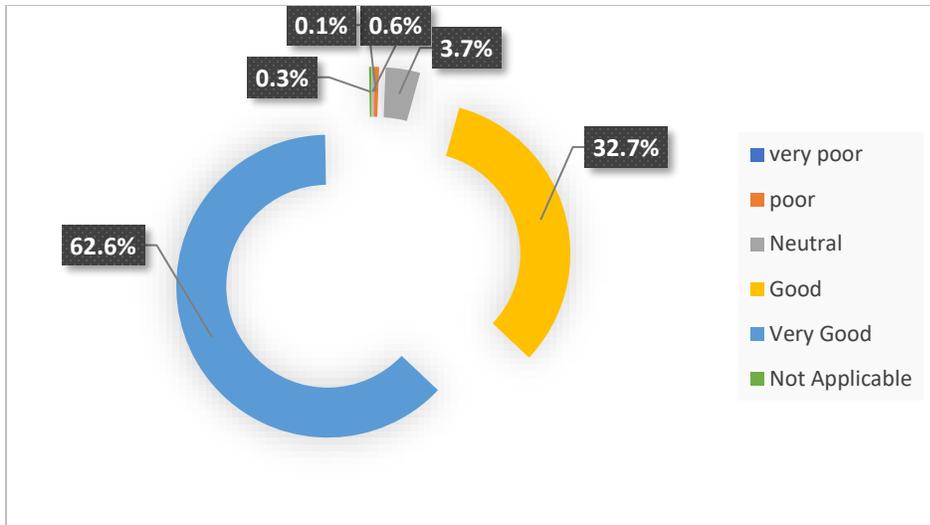


Figure 32: Consistency of presentation (book formatting)

3.2.5.23 Consistency ink density of books

It is necessary to use ink whose viscosity and oxidation, among other properties, will ensure good readability. Care must be taken to use ink which will make the text or image sit on the page comfortably. In order to ensure ink consistency, the ink and water/solvent balance must be checked regularly during the printing process.

The assessors were required to evaluate the consistency of the ink density throughout a book. The results, as presented in Figure 33, show that for 30.4% and 61.6% of the books, the consistency of ink density throughout the books were good and very good respectively. Hence, for a majority of the books (92%), ink density was consistent.

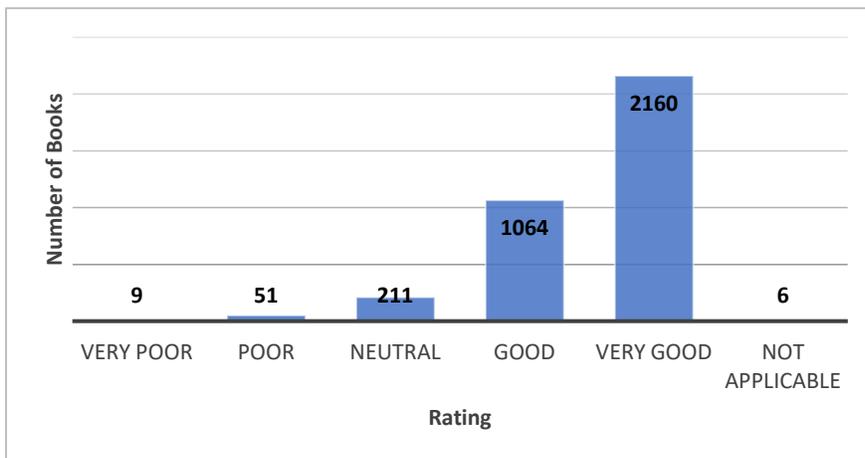


Figure 33: Consistency of ink density of books

3.2.5.24 Trimming of the book

Trimming is the process of cutting off excess edges of a book. Crop marks, indicating where to cut, are printed at the edges of the paper that are then trimmed off after printing. If the trimming is done well, the edges of the book will be level and smooth.

The assessors evaluated the trimming of the book. The results of the study show that, for 27.4% and 69.3% of the books, the rating for the trimming of the book was good and very good respectively. Hence, for a majority of the books (96.7%), the trimming of the book was efficient and perfect (see Figure 34).

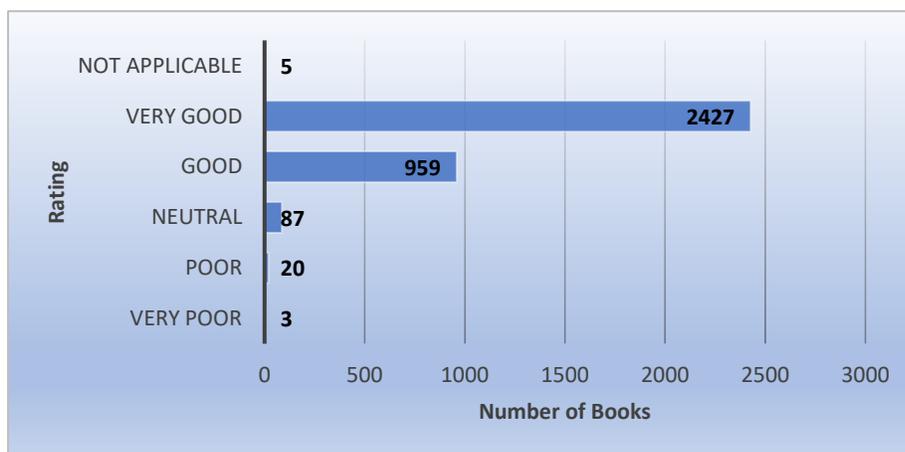


Figure 34: Trimming of the book

3.3 Overall Assessment

As indicated earlier, the criteria for assessing the books, as enumerated in the questionnaire, were generated from the Ghana Book Standards. The criteria in the questionnaire was divided into three main parts:

These are:

- Assessment of physical features
- Assessment of technical feature
- Assessment of matrix of other features

3.3.1 Assessment of physical features

This criterion mainly focuses on the book covers. The responses provided for questions under this section were therefore used as basis to determine if book covers meet the acceptable standards

(have all the required items/elements). Out of the 3,504 books assessed, 2,308 (65.9%) books met the standards set for this section, while 1,196 (34.1%) books did not meet the required standard.

3.3.2 Assessment of technical features

The objective of this section was to assess the spine and front matter of the books. The responses provided under this section were used as a basis to determine if the spines and front matters of the books meet the acceptable standards. Generally, two categories of questions were asked about a specific feature of the book. The first question sought to establish the existence of a given feature of the books. The second was a follow-up question which sought to determine if the feature or characteristic in question met all the requirements. Out of the total books assessed, 2,203 books representing 62.9% met all requirements under this section, while 1,301 (37.1%) books did not meet the required standard.

3.3.3 Assessment of matrix of other features

The purpose of this section was to assess other features of the books. A rating scale was used in this section of the questionnaire to judge, assess or evaluate the appropriateness, suitability, effectiveness or efficiency of various characteristics, features and aspects of the books. Hence, the rating for each statement was used as a basis to determine if the standard, in question, was met or not. Under this section, a total of 2,289 (65.3%) book met the required standards, while 1,215 (34.7%) did not meet all required standards.

3.3.4 Overall Quality Assessment of the book

The overall quality assessment of each book depends on the performance of the book in each of the three broad areas of assessment. Each book must satisfy the criteria for each area (sub-group) in order to perform creditably in the overall assessment. Books that satisfied each sub-criteria are the ones that met acceptable standards.

However, there were instances where some books satisfied only one sub-criteria, while others satisfied only two sub-criteria. There were also instances where some books did not meet any sub-criteria.

An assessment is akin to a test or examination; as a result, ‘Pass’ and ‘Fail’ dichotomy was used to describe books that either met or failed to satisfy individual assessment criterion.

Table 12 shows the number of books which passed (met) the criteria of at least one of the three assessment areas. It also shows the number of books which did not pass the criteria for any of the three areas.

As noted earlier, the overall standard assessment has been divided into three sub-criteria. Only books which met, satisfied or passed all the three sub-criteria were deemed to have met the overall standards.

Table 12: Number of books that passed any of the sub-criteria

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|--------|-------------|--------------|
| Valid | Nil | 396 | 11.3 |
| | Only 1 | 762 | 21.7 |
| | Only 2 | 1000 | 28.5 |
| | All 3 | 1346 | 38.4 |
| Total | | 3504 | 100.0 |

Of the 3,504 books assessed, 1,346 books representing 38.4% met all the required and prescribed standards. The rest of the books (2,158), as presented in Figure 35, could not meet all the required standards, but at least one sub-criteria (1,762 books) or none (396 books).

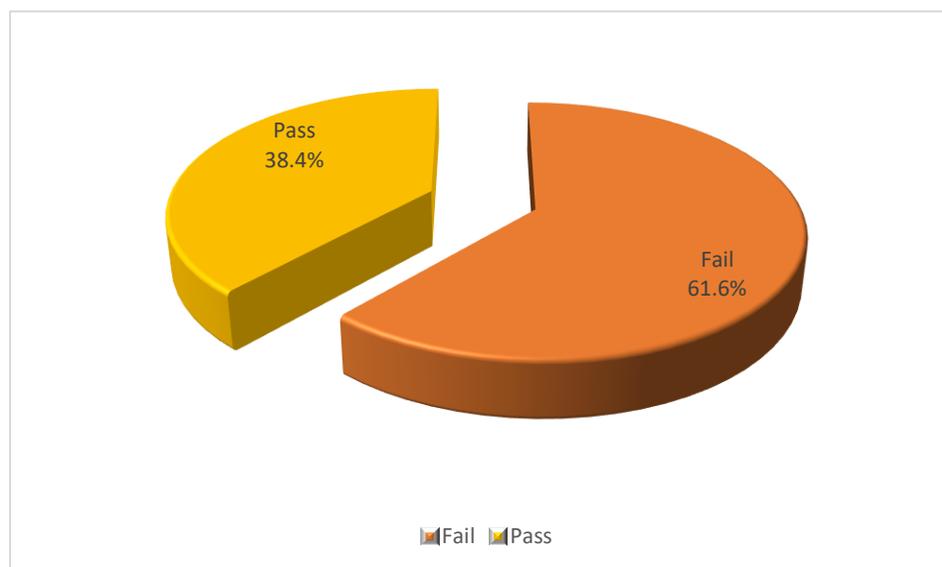


Figure 35: Percentage of books that conform with acceptable standards

3.4 Limitation of the study

The study had some limitations. The study did not collect information on the date of publication of a book. Hence, it was not possible to determine when exactly the books were published. Given the fact that many of the books were sampled from bookshops (and book fairs), it may be legitimate to assume that most of the books were recent publications. Ordinarily, books in bookshops and book fairs are relatively more recent than books in libraries.

4 Conclusion

This report provides findings on a survey that assessed books on the Ghanaian market. The purpose of the survey is to ascertain if books that are accessible to buyers and readers meet internationally accepted book production standards. A total of 3,504 books, comprising textbooks, storybooks, trade or professional books, religious books, among others, were assessed. The books were sampled from bookshops, libraries, hawkers, and an international book fair. The books assessed were sampled across eleven regions of Ghana. Of the total books sampled, a total of 1,747 (49.9%) were published in Ghana.

The books were assessed under three main criteria, namely the book cover, front matter and the general features of the main text. The book cover comprises acceptable items that are required to be on a book cover such as, title of the book, name of author/editor, blurb, ISBN, publisher name/logo and barcode/scan code. The front matter, as part of the assessment criteria, comprises items that are required to be on some relevant preliminary pages of a book, such as full title page and copyright page. The general features of the main text also dealt with consistency, clarity, suitability and appropriateness of some aspects of a book.

Of the total books assessed, 3,108 books representing 88.7% met at least one sub-criteria used to assess the rating of the books against acceptable standards. This implies that a majority of books on the market adhere to some level or aspect of internationally accepted standards in book production. However, since only a total of 1,346 (38.4%) books out of the 3,504 books assessed met all the assessment criteria, it raises a concern about the quality of books on the Ghanaian market. With this outcome, there is the need to intensify training of book practitioners on the use of the Ghana Book Standards.

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