

Did the Romanian Book Publishing Industry and Its Management Change Within a Decade?

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Abstract.

In the last decade, the publishing industry has had to face special challenges, generated by the extremely rapid evolution of technology specific to the field, the unprecedented development of the Internet, global communications and social networks, which have produced profound changes in the book publishing value chain, but especially in the way of consumption and transformation of the preferences and requirements of the readers.

The authors present some significant aspects of their research work-in-progress (Stănciulescu & Scarlat, 2019, 2020; Stănciulescu *et al.* 2019a,b,c) regarding the changes that the Romanian book publishing industry has undergone in the last decade in both publishing and other components of the book value chain, as well as their influence on the sector profitability.

Paper focus. The analysis focuses first of all on the evolution of the industry, determined by the interdependence with digital technology, and secondly on the mutations produced on the Romanian book market, a “small” market but with specific characteristics, difficult to predict for a longer period of time. The paper provides a brief overview of the evolution of the main indicators that characterize the book market in the last decade, as well as an overview of the dynamic and even disruptive factors facing the book industry: the level of competition, important customers and suppliers, substitute products for the written book, etc. Therefore, the object of the analysis regarding the evolution of the publishing field in the last decade is to clarify the development trends of the book industry in the next period (next decade), as well as the extent of the influence on book consumption by readers, both as an essential support (element) of knowledge and education, as well as a high way of leisure.

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The research methodology involves both secondary and primary research, through the study of the specialized literature and database search in the period 2010-2020, as well as through recent interviews with the current leaders of some Romanian publishing houses.

The method of investigation was SWOT-type analysis (Hill & Jones, 1995; Hill & Westbrook, 1997; Kaplan & Norton, 2001; Humphrey, 2005), yet judging its limitations (Chermack & Bernadette, 2007; Scarlat, 2015). The data currently collected (first semester of this year) were compared to the data collected about a decade ago (Grigore, 2013; 2014).

The analysis of the publishing industry is not exhaustive (complete) due to the lack of transparency within the sector, the very small number of studies and in-depth research, but it tries to delimit certain directions to which the field is forced to evolve. In addition, the upsetting coronavirus pandemic made the process of data collection more difficult.

The *results* of this longitudinal analysis outline the entire publishing industry through the essential vectors of the book market, with major influence in the structural transformations of the field. These include the specific problems, opportunities and threats facing the publishing sector in this period of accelerated globalization and extremely rapid technological evolution, as well as those generated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the process of ownership and management succession (which has reached critical phase), all together leading to massive adjustments and restructuring – in order to allow continuing operations in the market.

Highlighting these aspects, as well as predicting possible directions for the evolution of the book publishing industry and its management in the next decade are among the notable *contributions* of this paper that sketch the contemporary Romanian publishing landscape.

The conclusions of this article seek to convince all those interested in the field of book publishing that its evolution is a positive one, the book remaining for a long time the main means of fixing and transmitting culture and knowledge, but the ways of existence and information support is at the beginning of a clear process of change. This process will lead to essential transformations in school education in the first place, in culture, information and leisure.

Keywords: Romanian book publishing industry, book printing technology, digital challenges, ownership and management succession, SWOT-type analysis, book publishing evolution

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