

## SUMMARY

Doctoral theses with the title

# The book market during and after the Covid 19 pandemic, challenges, trends and new business models in the book industry

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**Key words:**

Book industry, pandemic, book market, business models

**Abstract**

The book, whether on papyrus or paper, audio-book or e-book, has been present throughout the history of human civilization, as a storehouse and transmitter of information, for educational or therapeutic purposes, as a method of relaxation, as a form of manipulation or, even imposition of government. The Romanian book market, connected to the European and world market through translations, is in a visible growth and diversification in the last ten years (Contributors, 2015), gradually recovering after the economic crisis of 2008-2012. A major break in this trend was the moment of the violent impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, shortly after the start of this research, with consequences that will be analyzed. The main objectives were to determine a set of strategies specific to the book market in Romania, by evaluating the consumption practices of customers of Romanian and foreign cultural products, in the context of the evolution of electronic commerce; creating a barometer of book consumption by product type – paper book and e-book, as well as by distribution type: physical bookstores in national chains, independent physical bookstores, online bookstores, book fairs; the identification of new business models in the Romanian book industry. A series of secondary, theoretical and practical objectives will be added: the realization of typologies of the book consumer, as well as the product selection criteria; identifying trends in the development of self-publishing commercial processes and new format models: e-book and audio-book.

The current economic context, in which customer consumption practices have lagged far behind the new commercial procedures against the background of the rapid application of new technologies, determines a widening of the palette of strategies in setting and marketing the prices of all products offered in the online environment. The new technological paradigm has replaced the classic methods of book marketing, from physical bookstores to the massive emergence and market dominance of online bookstores. The Romanian book market is at a crossroads because although there are more than 12,000 registered publishing houses, less than 1,000 of them are present on the market with at least one new title per year and less than 500 participate in major book fairs (Hrib, 2018, 146). The lack of studies on the efficiency of commercial activity in publishing houses, through the application of specific performance indicators according to the Marketing-Controlling model (Pelău, 2009, 56), as well as the extremely small size of the market which might not justify the application of such methods have generated a market chaotic, unpredictable, subject to all decisions according to Western models, most of the time difficult and risky in the Romanian market.

We have identified the approaches to the book market in Romania, in a European context, taking into account the specificities of the Romanian market and, at the same time, the lack of in-depth and coherent studies that can analyze the trends of the Romanian market, as well as the development trends of these practices connected to the market world book. The Romanian book market needs a structured development framework in the short and medium term, as part of a world economic system in rapid transformation. Considering the speed with which

Artificial Intelligence is being integrated into most economic sectors, it is inevitable to expect major changes in the consumption habits of the reading public.

Because the subject is constantly evolving, which can partially hinder the process, the approach includes the classic stages of a scientific research: identifying and formulating the problems; identifying and formulating premises and hypotheses; establishing objectives; establishing the type of research; establishing research methods; establishing research techniques through documentation and data collection; evaluation of collected data; articulating the conclusions. I have in mind the combination between theoretical, qualitative, narrative research and quantitative, interpretive research. Quantitative research will be carried out by collecting data from readers, by carrying out a questionnaire. The qualitative research will be carried out through interviews with responsible persons from publishing houses, bookstores and by inviting representatives of new media (influencers, cultural bloggers, book bloggers, etc.)

**Chapter 2** presents theoretical aspects related to the motivation of the act of reading, as well as the presentation of some general, historical aspects of the evolution of the book as an object and concept, as well as the materials used, the business models in the book industry, the channels and the main distribution strategies, which are the main players in the book market.

**Chapter 3** focuses on the new book forms – ebooks and audio-books, implicitly on the role of digitization in the book industry worldwide, but with a focus on Romania. **Chapter 4** contains research on the profile of the book consumer (buyer and/or reader) in the 21st century. The researches were of two types: a quantitative one through the creation of a questionnaire that defined the tastes of the respondents related to the type of book consumed, the ideal bookstore, matters regarding the facilities for purchasing both in physical and electronic format. The quantitative research comprised 509 responses to questionnaires applied between Nov 2022 and Jan 2023, and the three quantitative researches contained sets of interviews applied to the same actors of the book market, in March 2020 and January 2024. **Chapter 5** deals with the effects of the pandemic on the industry of book. The effects were analyzed from the two qualitative researches carried out in March 2020 and January 2024. **Chapter 6** analyzes the performances and perspectives of the new business models, their transformations in the post-pandemic context and the increasingly acute presence of AI in the area of cultural and creative industries. This chapter defines and explains how the book industry works and will evolve in the immediate future with an emphasis on the book industry in Romania and by comparison with that of Great Britain and the USA. In this way, the processes that involve innovation, sustained digitization, but also elements that continue to strengthen the conservative component of the book market in Romania will be analyzed: human resources elements, the lack of horizontal collaboration with other industries in the creative area, for example film or tourism, elements of a psychological nature and the level of education. **Chapter 7** presents the conclusions of the research, regarding the book consumer in Romania and the new market development strategies, at the same time it identifies the limits of the present research and proposes several topics for future discussion through possible new interdisciplinary research. The **general conclusion** can generate two development directions of the field: one regarding the increase in the level of education which would have a positive impact on the book market in Romania, the other regarding the increase in the general standard of living which would allow the financial closeness of Romanian consumers of

products-vitally needed. I believe that the book market in Romania can also open up research in the fields of sociology, social assistance, psychology, educational sciences, economic sciences or communication sciences, political and philological sciences.