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Article

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Innovation in the Book Market Retail. Preferences Among Romanian Readers

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Abstract: Today's dynamic business environment forces companies to differentiate more than ever and focus on gaining long-term competitive advantages through innovation. The book market faces new challenges, mainly related to the shifting behaviour of readers. Innovation might be perceived as a path towards differentiation, attaining competitive advantage, and market success. Understanding the preferences of the readers and knowing the retail innovation trends could help all the decision-making actors of the book market adapt better to the dynamics of contemporary society and the business environment. The present paper aims at identifying the preferences of Romanian readers regarding the innovations employed in the book market retail. To gather the data, we applied an online questionnaire to a sample of 486 respondents from Romania. The main conclusion of the study underlines that the consumers are not necessarily sensitive to technological innovation or an innovative format of the stores but are highly sensitive to the atmosphere in the bookstores and to the special offers of the bookstores.

Keywords: book industry; book market retail; innovation; readers' preferences; Romanian readers.

Introduction

Innovation helps companies to increase their competitive advantage, allows them to develop a better value proposition for their products and services, establish process innovation, and perhaps to even advance an innovative business model, that would better preserve their competitive advantages in the long term. Consumers themselves offer important reasons for companies to innovate, as they shop smart (compare prices online, read reviews, or even buy from sellers all over the world) This becomes even more important today, as the markets tend nowadays to be crowded and at times very fragmented, offering an abundance of products and services. Innovation is thus an important source of competitive advantages that assure the success of an organization and that is why those who invest significant resources in fostering innovation are the winners of the new business reality (Cho & Pucik, 2005; Hult et al., 2004; Iyer & Davenport, 2008; Kanter, 2006).

Maravelakis et al. (2006) affirm that innovation can take place at a product, process, management, or service level. Innovation must be viewed systemically in the hypercompetitive and dynamic business environment, which implies its integration into the daily activities of the organization by building a culture, a structure, and processes (Săniuță, 2021, p. 16).

Retail innovation has a major impact on the entire value chain, from manufacturers to the sales force, from franchisors to international distributors, from internet promoters to end

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consumers. Global expansion, the desire of consumers to live shopping experiences, and the explosion of e-commerce have transformed retail and will continue to do so in the coming decade. Innovation has often been studied in the context of companies in the field of production and less in the field of services and even less in the book market retail. Investigating the market, one observes that innovation in retail comes in form of retail format, customer experience, omnichannel innovation, digital innovation, process innovation, and innovation of marketing mix elements. Through the present study, we aim to better understand the innovative approaches of bookstores from the readers perspective.

This is an exploratory study since scarce knowledge on the Romanian bookstore market is available. As presented before, the Romanian market is small, which makes the competition strong. As in the case of other markets, in Romania, both bookstores and publishers face huge pressure to innovate to attract more customers, in an increasingly competitive market, with increasingly more titles fighting for large sales and with decreasing numbers of readers. Thompson (2012), documenting mainly the evolution of the publishing industry in the UK, stresses that most changes to grow the market had been considered for the marketing strategies of publishers. Considering the increasing impact of the internet after 2000, most marketing budgets went online. The strategy also shifted – from large mass media, towards influencers and stimulating word-of-mouth, both before and after the launch of a title. A key aspect is attracting the attention of the bookstore, which is a process that costs publishers significant budgets (Thompson, 2012, pp. 258-263).

The knowledge we have of the Romanian book market or readers is very limited. The Cultural consumption barometer developed in Romania for 2019, the year previous to the pandemic, shows only reading frequency, not the quantity or types of books preferred by the Romanians (Croitoru & Becut-Marinescu, 2020, pp. 60-64). The last barometer, developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, shows that the percentage of people reading at least weekly books increased significantly in 2020 – it was 19% in 2018, 22% in 2019, and 34% in 2020 (Croitoru & Becut-Marinescu, 2021, p. 54). There are no clear and recent statistics on the number of books read by Romanians. In 2011, a study representative at the national level revealed that among the Romanian readers, a quarter would buy at most one book per year, a quarter would buy up to 5 books, and a bit more than 1 in 5 would buy more than 10 books (IRES, 2011, p. 49). Generally, the profile of the Romanian reader is defined by low reading and buying book levels (Zbuchea & Hrib, 2019). The few existing data on the Romanian readers tend to be contradictory and show some evolution in time but this is difficult to grasp. And many of the surveys are empirical, journalistic, and subjective, reflecting the authors' wishes rather than market realities (Contemporanul, 2016).

Therefore, much investigation is needed to understand the Romanian book market. The present paper aims at unravelling the preferences of Romanian readers related to the adoption of innovations in the book market retail. Understanding the preferences of the readers and knowing the retail innovation trends could help all the decision-making actors of the book market adapt better to the dynamics of contemporary society and the business environment. As the literature review related to the bookstores' innovation is poor, the authors will investigate the literature about the innovation in retail and emphasize those examples that could be a benchmark for the book market too. The second part of the analysis comprises a quantitative investigation. Results are relevant for representatives of the book market, especially for bookstore managers, who would be able, consequently, to design their offers to be more appealing to the readers. Also, the paper is important as it contributes to the Romanian studies about the book market alongside those of Grigore (2014), Stănciulescu and Scarlat (2020) and Stănciulescu, Scarlat, Grigore and Niculescu (2020).

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Literature review

One of the drivers of a knowledge-based society is innovation. It comes in addition to creativity and novelty-seeking; it is important in strengthening a company's competitive advantage, influencing consumers, and creating a favourable image of the company and its brands, products, and services (Dabija, Pop, & Săniuță, 2017). The fundamentals of the knowledge-based society as it is defined by the World Science Forum (2003) are innovation and long-life learning it is formed by scientists, researchers, engineers, networks, and hi-tech companies and it develops a national system of creating innovation.

Technology and organizational development, according to Neef et al. (1998), play an important role in the economic progress: in a knowledge-based economy, the source of growth is the production of ideas rather than goods, and the reason we are living through a tech revolution is that it allows ideas - in the form of techniques, research results, graphics, project plans, chemical formulas, and marketing models - to be disseminated instantly and coherently anywhere in the world. In the new, knowledge-based economy, retailers mainly provide sets of services valued by consumers (Gauri et. al, 2020), and many of these services are provided with the help of technology. This is used also to assess the needs of the consumers or to offer personalized services/products. This is possible thanks to Big Data, which allows the analysis of structured and unstructured data (Săniuță et al., 2013) and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Usage of AI leads to an almost 60% increase in profits due to a more efficient allocation of resources, enhancement of productivity, acceleration of the innovation, improved customer experience, and augmentation of the human workforce (Săniuță & Filip, 2021). Ebelhoft Group (2014) identifies five aspects to be taken into consideration when it comes to innovation in retail: local orientation, experiences through services, use of technology, personalization & crowdfunding, and retailvention. These characteristics can also be considered by those owning businesses in the book market retail.

Local orientation refers to focusing on the local environment which could bring a competitive advantage to small businesses (Campbell & Park, 2017). This involves innovations that highlight the local offer as well the contribution to the development of the well-being of the local community. Ensuring *experiences through services* is tightly connected to the new trends in marketing and branding (De Oliveira et al., 2020; Hossain et al., 2021). The swift evolution of the online segment leads to the necessity to create real shopping experiences and to establish an empathic connection with customers; in this case, the innovation represents the way by which experience can be gained through services. The approach leading to innovative better experiences is human-centred design thinking, which helps bookstores diversify and even strive (Huang & Hands, 2020). *Technology itself is not a retail innovation*, but the way it is used to add value to customers could be innovative. Some approaches are characterized by accessing products 24 hours a day, obtaining detailed information by simply scanning a QR code (coded, encrypted data representation), personalizing the offers, or - in the case of retailers - good logistic management. Another approach is based on *personalization and crowdfunding* (financing obtained from third parties). The role of customers in defining and determining the assortment becomes important. Consumers are no longer just recipients of what retailers think a customer would want; customers receive more and more control in the creation of the assortment or even in the development of the product/service. In the case of *retailvention,* one of the big challenges is to revive mature business models so that they remain relevant to consumers. Innovation contributes significantly to reinvention and can take many forms: from process innovation to marketing, to product/service innovation.

Considering the factors that lead to changes in retail and that physical stores are in a constant struggle with online stores to gain a proper position in the minds of consumers, it becomes necessary to think outside the box, redesign the shopping environment, adapt the marketing strategy and providing a personalized experience for customers through innovations, Săniuță (2021, pp. 90-91) provides an overview of innovative tools that are already considered by retail, as detailed below, also presenting a few of the pioneering initiatives in the field. These innovations could be adapted easily by the bookstores to gain insights about the customers, to co-create with customers and publishers' new books that fit readers' preferences or develop innovative loyalty programs.

The window that sells is associated with Shoppertrak, a company that collects and analyses information about pedestrian traffic in stores and has developed a software that allows retailers to monitor the number of people passing in front of their stores through mobile-based technology. A bookstore investing in such software will be able to design more attractive shop windows and a better experience to attract visitors inside its premises. *Smart wallet* refers to mobile payment that is still a hot topic for retailers very attentive to any innovation in this field. Among the first retailers introducing mobile payment is Homeplus, owned by Tesco in the Korean market, the Smart Wallet payment option has been enthusiastically received by shoppers. This option allows to pass on promotional data to the company's customers, who pay using their mobile phones. Since data on bookstore customers is still scarce, such approaches would bring added value for shops.

Gamification means to integrate games in business processes, such as using them as a marketing tool. The Home Shopping Network has taken a step forward regarding online games (different from those on Facebook or retailers' sites) in the sense that customers can earn products from the retailer by accessing the games inserted in the daily newsletters; Hsu and Chen (2018) studied 242 online bookshop customers in a study looking at the correlations between gamification marketing activities (GMA) experience, value, satisfaction, brand love, and desirable consumer behaviours. They observed that GMAs' experience has a strong and favourable effect on the hedonic value and utilitarian value. The data also show that hedonic and utilitarian values have a substantial impact on brand satisfaction and love. Another approach would be to ensure that *products 'invented' by customers could be found on the shelves*. Large chain stores often consult consumers about the products they want to launch, but some of them have further developed this practice. For example, Walmart, the world's largest retailer, selected products from its 1,000 consumer offerings in an initiative called Get on the Shelf. *Video cameras inserted in mannequins and displays* could also contribute to a better understanding of customers. Recently, clothing stores have begun to use mannequins that have built-in video cameras capable of capturing valuable consumer data. Mannequin manufacturer Almax's EyeSee uses recognition software that can identify the age, gender, and race of buyers. *Body scan to determine measurements* might also be used in the clothing industry. Bodymetrics has launched an innovative technology for clothing retail helping customers to the establishment of body measures for the purchase of jeans. The inside of the device looks like a fitting room equipped with sensors designed to perform measurements that are then displayed on an iPad screen. In addition to the saved time on shopping and the unique experience, customers can easily buy from the online store of the clothing retailer in which they were made the measurements. The data can also be stored on the customer's gadget, so the reimbursement rate of the goods and the costs of this service decrease.

Original digital *customer loyalty applications and programs* could also contribute to competitive advantage. Applications for customer loyalty, such as Shopkick, are tools used by retailers to create a personalized shopping experience by awarding bonus points when potential customers arrive at the store while providing them with product and promotion information. Through the Something Extra loyalty program, Raley's Family of Fine Stores supermarket chain offers customers who share opinions and product recommendations exclusive access to new offerings. *Interactive in-store displays* can be used in many ways to attract consumers. The LEGO store in Chicago uses a display that turns consumers into video game characters. Such displays become real information networks and can be used to create information kiosks, as in the case of Macy's where consumers can receive recommendations for the cosmetics to use. *Robots as sales consultants* are also a way bookstore can introduce innovation in their services. Seattle's Hointer men's clothing store has a sales team consisting almost exclusively of robots. Starting from the fact that men don't like to spend a lot of time shopping, Hointer has developed an application that scans a QR code on a pair of jeans, for example, enters the measure, and the information

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is transmitted to a robot that will carry the desired apparel item at the fitting room. *A product catalogue made on the principles of augmented reality* is offering new insights to customers, in an attractive way, having the ability to stimulate young customers. The IKEA retailer found that 14% of its customers buy furniture that does not fit the size of the space they want to furnish. With augmented reality, the Swedish retailer's customers can try to select their products at home using the catalogue, the mobile application (downloaded from the AppStore or Google Play), and a smartphone or tablet.

Huang (2020) asserts, when it comes to the book market retail innovation, that unlike traditional bookstores that merely sell books, the "new type" of bookstores presents various innovations. When the reader walks into a "new kind" bookstore, the first thing he/she notices is a branded outfit, not a book. The customers can do several things in the "new type" bookstore, such as get a cup of coffee when you're thirsty, see an exhibition, or buy some aesthetic goods to give as gifts to friends. This is a "new type" bookstore that may also be described as a sophisticated cultural and creative environment. Nguyen et al. (2019) investigated the Chinese bookstore-café, arguing that the bookstore-café represents the emergence of a new lifestyle in China's big cities. Based on the concept of "third place," which was first coined by sociologist Ray Oldenburg to describe places that are neither home nor workplace, the authors argue that the bookstore-café represents the emergence of a new lifestyle. As a result, we decided to see if the experience provided by such a location is something that Romanian readers enjoy.

A study developed by Săniuță, Hrib and Zbuchea (2021) about the business models of the Romanian bookstore chains shows that to succeed, especially the brick and mortar ones, have to nurture entertaining experiences, offer well-curated selections of books, office supplies and other products that can make customers feeling good when they enter a place that sells books, the events they organize are playing also an important role to enhance the retail experience. Preference for online seems to be pecuniary for Romanian readers. Omnichannel retail is nowadays a must more than ever, as the research highlights that youngsters tend more to browse books in bookstores, and more respondents evaluate online buying as convenient as far as the online price is cheaper (Hrib, Săniuță, & Zbuchea, 2022). When it comes to segmentation the results show that those who earned a university degree and the post-graduates read more books. Interesting is that women are more attached to brick-and-mortar bookstores than men, an explanation could be that men tend to be more technically and adopt earlier tech products and services (Hrib, Săniuță, & Zbuchea, 2022). These results and those of the present paper are valuable for the decision-makers acting in the book business for developing innovations, no matter if there are products, formats, processes, services, or marketing innovations.

When it comes to innovative bookstore formats the authors selected five types to test also within the Romanian readers' preferences, presented below. The results of the study can be a base for decision makers in the book market to use this format to foster innovation also in the way they are selling books. *Pop-up Bookstore* – a bookstore opened in an unconventional space for a limited period and/or that changes the location regularly. The pop-up bookstore concept is derived from the pop-store concept, which is defined (Hutter, 2013) as a temporary store concept that displays products in an unusual way to catch customers' attention. *Rental bookstores* – the customer rents books paying per rented book or paying a subscription (monthly, quarterly, etc.). The rental bookshop business model is based on Bookster, an innovative company founded by a Romanian entrepreneur that rents books to employees working in organizations, the subscription fee is paid by the employer (Coșman, 2017). *Concept Bookstore* – besides books the consumers can buy interior design products, food & beverages (such as wine, coffee, tea, chocolate), toys, jewellery, and mostly products that are complementary to the books and can easily be combined for a gift.

When we proposed the idea of a concept bookstore the starting point was the following statement: a concept store is a divergence from conventional experiential retail types in terms of format. It is not totally experiential in the sense that it is not solely concerned with marketing messaging, nor is it concerned with sales or profit. Its goal is to be an accessible touch point that lowers friction on a varied customer journey. Its value to the retail portfolio is that it attracts new and latent customers, mitigates existing hindering factors, and drives them to additional touch points (Wyer et al., 2021). *Showroom Bookstore* – the book consumer can shuffle the books in the bookstore, and he/she will buy them online or will place an order in the bookstore. So Ankosko (2012) showrooming is a relatively recent buying practice in which customers go to businesses to look at things but then use a smartphone or other mobile device to check pricing and occasionally place orders with competing online retailers before leaving the store. *Vending Machine Bookstore* – facilitates buying of books from a vending machine, especially of the novelties, as the limited space does not permit a wide selection of products. Vending machines are self-service machines that offer items such as food, beverages, lottery tickets, and other items (Ratnasri & Sharmilan, 2021).

Methodology

The present study aims to understand to what extent innovation in bookstores influences the buying behaviour of customers. Three main objectives have been considered under this framework:
O1: Identifying the preferences of the Romanian customers for specific innovative approaches in bookstores, considering two lines of investigation: in-store innovation and business model innovation;
O2: Exploring the criteria considered by the Romanian customers for selecting a bookstore;
O3: Profiling the customers who appreciate the most innovation in bookstores.

To have sound empirical evidence on the Romanian market, a quantitative study based on a questionnaire has been considered. It is explorative research considering the lack of transparency of the book market in Romania and that only a few relevant studies have been developed previously.

The practices in the Romanian market are not as well designed and implemented as in the case of larger and more dynamic markets. Some innovative approaches are observable, as presented previously in the paper. To cover realistic approaches, in the context of the present research, innovation in a bookstore has been investigated considering the following dimensions: the use of technologies in bookstores (either online or at the physical location), the innovative interior design, innovation in the offer of books and services, innovative customer experience. The second line of investigating innovative dimensions of bookstores focused on innovative business models: pop-up bookstore, rental bookstore, concept bookstore, showroom, and book vending machine. To measure these items, a 5-point Likert scale has been considered to reflect the preferences of the Romanian readers.

The criteria to choose a bookstore are very diverse, as studies on other markets have revealed (Addis, 2016; Laing & Royle, 2013). Considering those studies developed on other book markets, the aims of this research, and the specific context of the Romanian bookstores, we have selected the following aspects to explore: bookstore atmosphere; interaction with bookstore staff; existing bookstore technology (access to an electronic catalogue, touch screens, etc.); the existence of reading spaces; other services offered, such as cafes, co-working spaces; events organized inside the bookstore; interior design (furniture, space arrangement, etc.); the process of exploring, discovering special books/objects. A 5-point Likert scale has been used to show the importance of each criterion, from the readers' perspective.

The profile of a bookstore customer has been investigated following more aspects. One item considered was the behaviour of discovering books in the store (I like to rummage through books on the shelves to discover promising titles). Another aspect investigated is

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the attachment to the idea of entering bookstores (I am very attached to the idea of visiting the bookstore). Also, the relationship with online bookstores has been investigated (I prefer to buy books online). The reading profile has been considered through three aspects: How attached is the respondent to the idea of reading (Reading is an important part of my personality), the type of books preferred (fiction, academic books, personal development, etc.), and the number of books read in the past 12 months. All these dimensions describe the bookstore customer both as buyer and reader.

The survey aimed at both the general public, especially frequent readers that are the most relevant customer segment for bookstores, and industry professionals: writers, editors, bookstore employees, librarians, book bloggers, etc. For a more accurate understanding of the respondents' positions, we will investigate separately the opinions and attitudes of the general public, writers, and the professionals of the book industry, using ANOVA tests in IBM SPSS Statistics 20.

The questionnaire was applied online, via Google forms, in March 2022. First, it was tested on a sample of 11 persons, resulting in some minor clarifications. A snowball technique has been used, encouraging respondents to invite other respondents that might be interested in the topic.

Respondents

The sample consists of 486 respondents from Romania. The youngest respondent is 17 years old; the oldest is 75 years old. The average age of the sample is 39 years old. Most respondents are women (76%), living in a large city, with more than 300.000 inhabitants. A more detailed presentation of the residency is offered in Figure 1.

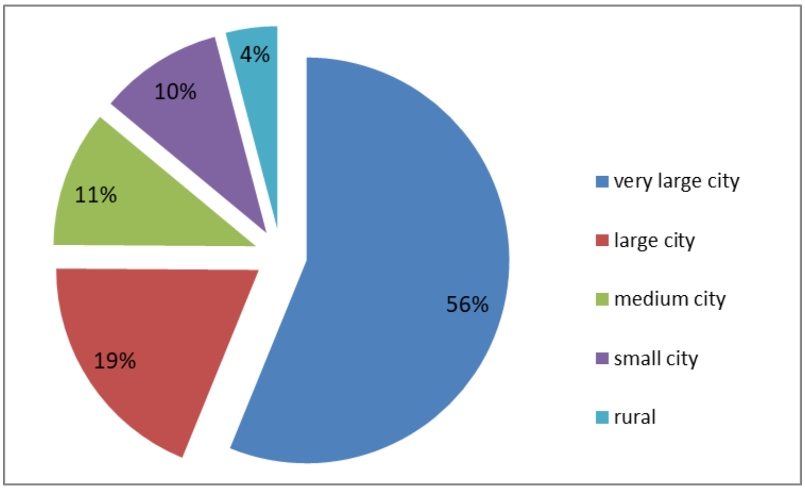

Figure 1. Sample. Geographic distribution

More than half of the respondents are from Bucharest. This city has also the largest book market (TopFirme, 2018) and presents the widest number and typology of bookstores. Only 14% of the respondents come from places with less than 100.000 inhabitants. With rare exceptions, such places in Romania do not have bookstores. In an interview given to a national TV station a director of one of the most important publishing houses in Romania argues that many cities have lost their bookstores, almost any city with a population of between 30 and 50,000 people. In Romania are fewer than 300 bookstores throughout the country, with roughly 80 located in Bucharest (the capital and the biggest city in the country), there are no bookstores in Romanian villages (Digi24, 2016).

In terms of educational profile, the respondents are highly educated (56% are post-graduates, while less than 4% have no university diploma). The sample is diverse in terms of professional status (see Figure 2). Almost 20% are students, some of them working. Most of the respondents are employees (62%).

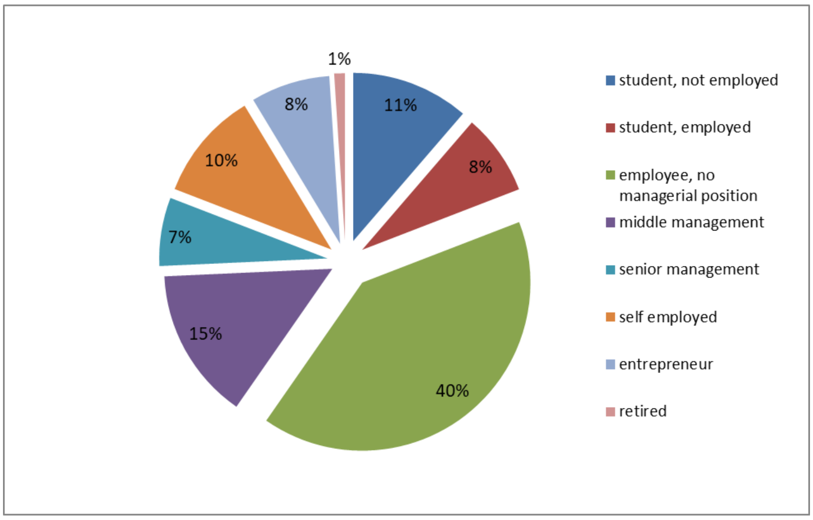

Figure 2. Sample. Professional status

In terms of the industry in which respondents are active, Figure 3 shows a wide coverage. As expected, the best-represented sectors are culture and education, still, from this perspective, we might consider the sample to be relevant due to the large variety of sectors.

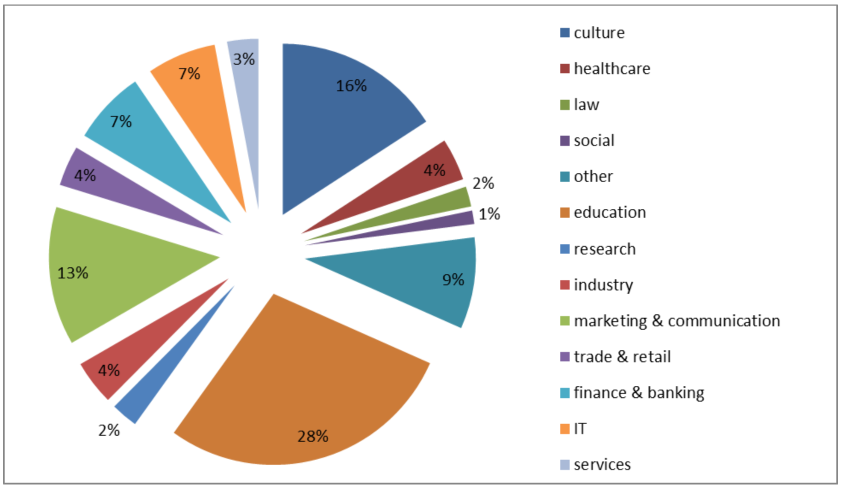

Figure 3. Sample. Industry

The incomes of the respondents are presented in Figure 4. The average monthly income in Romania is around 500 euros. Our sample consists of persons above this figure (79%).

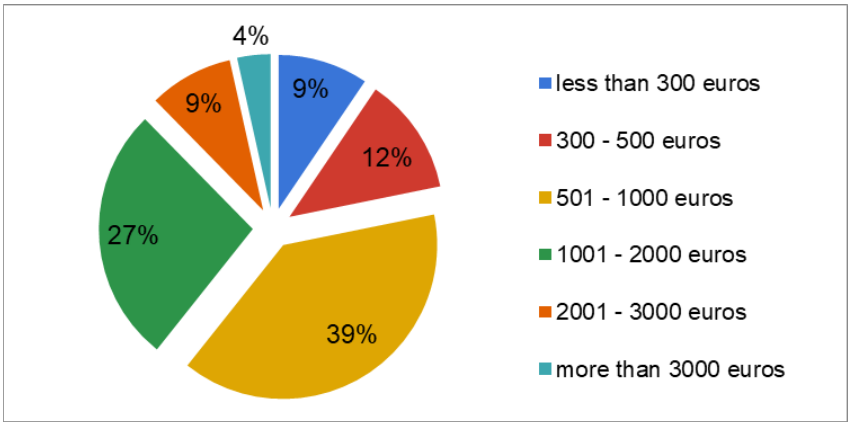

Figure 4. Sample. Income

Considering that the relationship with books might have an impact on buying behaviour and book preferences, we also investigated the professional status linked to the book industry. We identified three distinct segments: writers, book industry professionals (librarians, bookstore assistants, book bloggers, editors, translators, etc.), and the general public (the readers). Figure 5 shows that most respondents are common readers, but the book industry professionals are also represented.

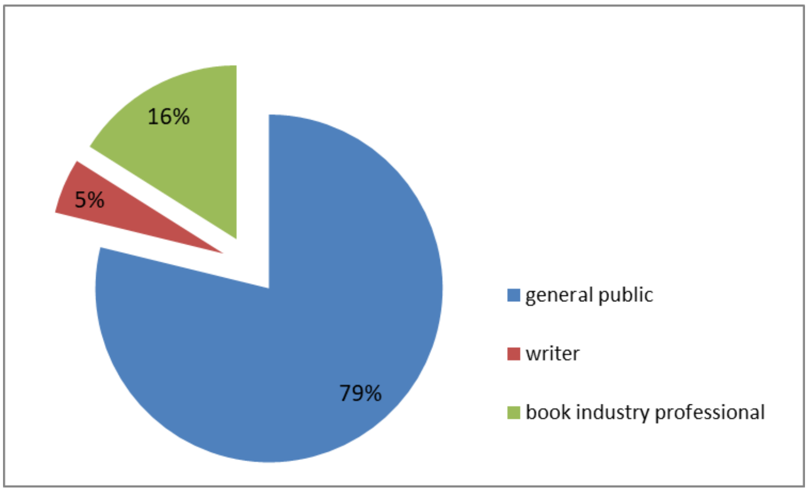

Figure 5. Sample. Segmentation considering the book-related status

All respondents consider themselves passionate readers. Overall, they consider that reading is an important part of their personality (the average obtained is 4.4 out of a maximum of 5). They are also to a large degree attached to the idea of visiting bookstores (with an average of 4 out of 5).

The respondents were also asked about how many books they have bought and read in the previous 12 months. The average figures obtained are 25 books bought and 23 books read, but the actual figures vary a lot. Some respondents have bought and/or read hundreds of books, while others only a few. Also, some respondents specified various aspects: book bloggers buy few books since they receive most of the books they read from publishing houses, a few have various plans for online book repositories or libraries, and a few are mainly borrowing. We underline that the figures referring to book acquisitions and reading are not representatives of the Romanian population (for representative figures, see IRES, 2011, p.49).

Findings analysis

The preference of customers for innovative approaches in bookstores

The two lines of investigation followed refer to in-store innovation and business model innovation. The in-store innovation was evaluated as a preference for bookstores that are innovative in the usage of technology, interior design & space management, product & services portfolio, and buying experience. Table 1 shows that the general public tends to score higher for these aspects, but the average preference is not very high. Portfolio innovation and customer experience innovation registered the highest scores, of around 4 (out of 5) for the entire sample. The lowest evaluation registered for technological innovation, of a global 2.9 (out of 5).

Table 1. One-way ANOVA test: In-store innovation and type of respondents

1.1. Descriptives									
		N	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error**	**95% Confidence Interval for Mean**		**Min.**	**Max.**
						Lower Bound	**Upper Bound**		
InovTech	General public	383	2.94	1.144	.058	2.83	3.05	1	5
	Writer	25	2.36	.995	.199	1.95	2.77	1	4
	Book industry professional	78	2.90	1.112	.126	2.65	3.15	1	5
	Total	486	2.90	1.137	.052	2.80	3.00	1	5
InovDesign	General public	383	3.80	.901	.046	3.71	3.89	1	5
	Writer	25	3.00	.816	.163	2.66	3.34	1	4
	Book industry professional	78	3.82	.894	.101	3.62	4.02	1	5
	Total	486	3.77	.912	.041	3.68	3.85	1	5
InovOffer	General public	383	4.05	.814	.042	3.97	4.13	1	5
	Writer	25	3.84	.688	.138	3.56	4.12	3	5
	Book industry professional	78	4.14	.893	.101	3.94	4.34	2	5
	Total	486	4.05	.822	.037	3.98	4.12	1	5
InovExp	General public	383	3.98	.918	.047	3.89	4.08	1	5
	Writer	25	3.56	.870	.174	3.20	3.92	2	5
	Book industry professional	78	3.90	.799	.090	3.72	4.08	2	5
	Total	486	3.95	.901	.041	3.87	4.03	1	5

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1.2. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
InovTech	.020	2	483	.981
InovDesign	.974	2	483	.378
InovOffer	2.308	2	483	.101
InovExp	.794	2	483	.453

1.3. ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
InovTech	Between Groups	7.896	2	3.948	3.083	.047
	Within Groups	618.558	483	1.281		
	Total	626.455	485			
InovDesign	Between Groups	15.459	2	7.729	9.627	.000
	Within Groups	387.800	483	.803		
	Total	403.259	485			
InovOffer	Between Groups	1.751	2	.876	1.297	.274
	Within Groups	325.963	483	.675		
	Total	327.714	485			
InovExp	Between Groups	4.468	2	2.234	2.772	.064
	Within Groups	389.245	483	.806		
	Total	393.714	485			

The ANOVA test presented in Table 1 shows that there are statistical differences between the attitudes of the three groups of respondents with reference to innovation in interior design and space management, as well as innovation based on technology. Post Hoc Test Scheffe (significance level of 0.05) shows that there is a significant difference between writers and the general public, but not between the general public and professionals of the book industry related to Technological innovation and Interior design and space management, as well as between writers and the other industry professionals in terms of Innovation in interior design (see Figure 6).

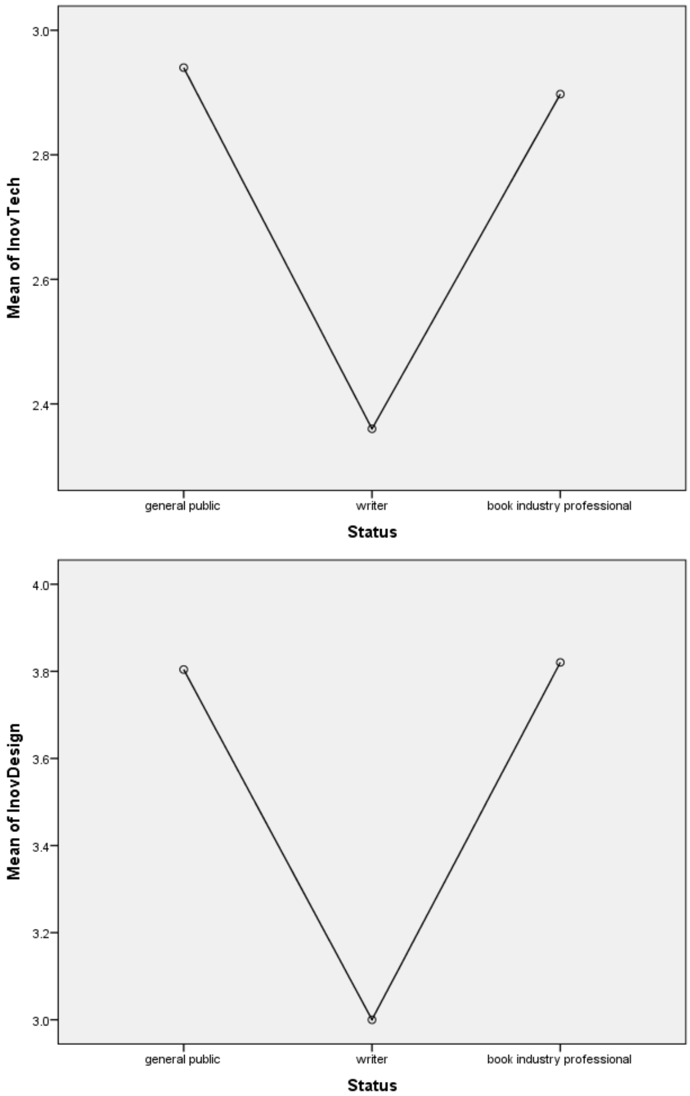

Figure 6. Means Plot

Further analysis of data revealed that there are significant differences between respondents considering their gender in the case of Portfolio innovation and Innovation in customer experience (Table 2). Women tend to be more influenced by these two aspects than men.

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Table 2. T-Test: In-store innovation and Gender

2.1. Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
InovTech	Woman	371	2.93	1.133	.059
	Man	114	2.82	1.154	.108
InovDesign	Woman	371	3.81	.899	.047
	Man	114	3.62	.944	.088
InovOffer	Woman	371	4.11	.776	.040
	Man	114	3.89	.938	.088
InovExp	Woman	371	4.02	.874	.045
	Man	114	3.73	.953	.089

2.2. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
InovTech	Equal variances assumed	.606	.437	.842	483	.400	.103	.122	-.137	.342
	Equal variances not assumed			.834	184.907	.405	.103	.123	-.140	.345
InovDesign	Equal variances assumed	1.066	.302	1.935	483	.054	.189	.097	-.003	.380
	Equal variances not assumed			1.885	180.363	.061	.189	.100	-.009	.386
InovOffer	Equal variances assumed	5.042	.025	2.505	483	.013	.219	.087	.047	.391
	Equal variances not assumed			2.267	163.293	.025	.219	.097	.028	.410
InovExp	Equal variances assumed	6.212	.013	3.040	483	.002	.291	.096	.103	.479
	Equal variances not assumed			2.905	175.469	.004	.291	.100	.093	.488

Another aspect we investigate is the correlation between age and preferences. There is a significant, but weak negative correlation between Interior design and space management innovation and Experience innovation (InovDesign: -.139** significant at the 0.01 level, InovExp: -.110* significant at the 0.05 level). In other words, the younger the respondents, the more appreciates the two approaches.

The last correlation we checked is among the four dimensions of in-store innovation to see if and how they support each other. Table 3 presents the strongest positive correlations between Portfolio innovation and Experience innovation, as well as Design innovation and Experience innovation. Other significant correlations have been identified between Portfolio innovation and Design innovation. The weakest correlation is between Technology innovation and Experience innovation. This suggests that technological innovation is not so much associated with Experience innovation.

Table 3. Correlations between in-store innovative approaches

		InovTech	InovDesign	InovOffer	InovExp
InovTech	Pearson Correlation	1	.320**	.317**	.231**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	486	486	486	486
InovDesign	Pearson Correlation	.320**	1	.500**	.545**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	486	486	486	486
InovOffer	Pearson Correlation	.317**	.500**	1	.546**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	486	486	486	486
InovExp	Pearson Correlation	.231**	.545**	.546**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	486	486	486	486

The second dimension – the preference for certain innovative business models compared to "classical" bookstores – has been investigated for 5 types of modes: Pop-up bookstore, Rental bookstore, Concept bookstore, Showroom, and Vending machine. The preferences identified are not high - the Showroom and the Concept bookstore models were the only models which received a score a little bit higher than 3. Therefore, there is not much appeal in these new business models, bookstores might be looking for even more innovative approaches.

The impact of the various innovative business model on bookstore preference has been measured for each of the three segments, using ANOVA Test. Table 4 shows that only two of the proposed innovative business models are significant: Pop-Up Bookstore and Rental Bookstore.

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Table 4. Oneway ANOVA test: Business model innovation and type of respondents

4.1. Descriptives

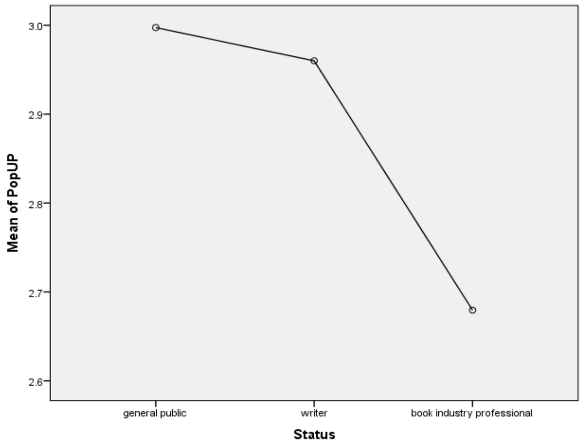
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
PopUP	General public	383	3.00	1.025	.052	2.89	3.10	1	5
	Writer	25	2.96	.889	.178	2.59	3.33	1	5
	Book industry professional	78	2.68	.974	.110	2.46	2.90	1	5
	Total	486	2.94	1.015	.046	2.85	3.03	1	5
RentBook	General public	383	2.45	1.260	.064	2.32	2.58	1	5
	Writer	25	2.20	.957	.191	1.80	2.60	1	4
	Book industry professional	78	1.97	1.116	.126	1.72	2.23	1	5
	Total	486	2.36	1.235	.056	2.25	2.47	1	5
ConceptBook	General public	383	3.11	1.184	.060	2.99	3.23	1	5
	Writer	25	2.80	1.000	.200	2.39	3.21	1	5
	Book industry professional	78	3.09	1.009	.114	2.86	3.32	1	5
	Total	486	3.09	1.149	.052	2.99	3.19	1	5
Showroom	General public	383	3.27	1.209	.062	3.15	3.40	1	5
	Writer	25	3.20	1.080	.216	2.75	3.65	2	5
	Book industry professional	78	3.14	1.028	.116	2.91	3.37	1	5
	Total	486	3.25	1.174	.053	3.14	3.35	1	5
VendMa	General public	383	2.57	1.221	.062	2.45	2.70	1	5
	Writer	25	2.28	1.100	.220	1.83	2.73	1	5
	Book industry professional	78	2.36	1.162	.132	2.10	2.62	1	5
	Total	486	2.52	1.208	.055	2.42	2.63	1	5

4.2. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PopUP	.607	2	483	.545
RentBook	5.953	2	483	.003
ConceptBook	4.206	2	483	.015
Showroom	4.286	2	483	.014
VendMa	1.522	2	483	.219

4.3. ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
PopUP	Between Groups	6.555	2	3.278	3.212	.041
	Within Groups	492.945	483	1.021		
	Total	499.500	485			
RentBook	Between Groups	15.280	2	7.640	5.092	.006
	Within Groups	724.706	483	1.500		
	Total	739.986	485			
ConceptBook	Between Groups	2.250	2	1.125	.852	.427
	Within Groups	637.766	483	1.320		
	Total	640.016	485			
Showroom	Between Groups	1.212	2	.606	.438	.645
	Within Groups	667.663	483	1.382		
	Total	668.874	485			
VendMa	Between Groups	4.586	2	2.293	1.576	.208
	Within Groups	702.618	483	1.455		
	Total	707.204	485			

The Post Hoc Tests show that the mean difference is significant for the general public – book industry professionals both in the case of Pop-up Bookstore and even more for Rental Bookstore business models. Figure 7 presents these means.



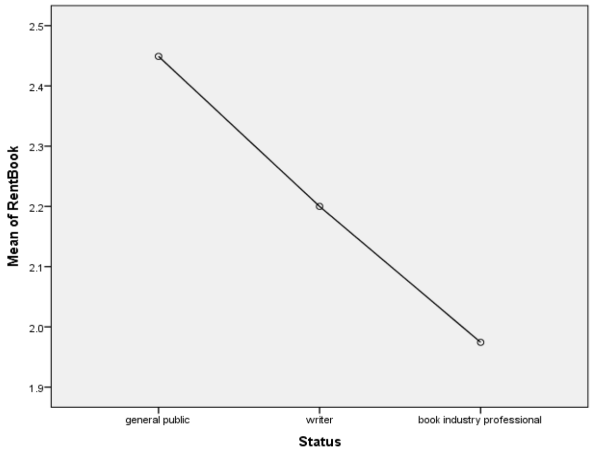


Figure 7. Means Plot

As for the correlations with age and gender, the tests reveal a few aspects. There is a strong correlation with gender in the case of the Rental Bookstore model (T-test, F=11.798, sig.=0.001), women appreciate this model more than men. Pearson correlation shows that for all innovative business models but the Pop-up Bookstore there is a negative correlation with age. The older the respondents, the less they prefer – in order – Showroom bookstores (-.151**), Rental bookstores (-.202**), Concept bookstores (-243**), and Vending Machines (-.281**). Also, we identified rather weak correlations between preferences for all types of innovative business models investigate (see Table 5).

Table 5. Correlations between innovative business model preferences

		PopUP	Rent Book	Concept Book	Showroom	VendMa
PopUP	Pearson Correlation	1	.278**	.224**	.174**	.259**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	486	486	486	486	486
Rent Book	Pearson Correlation	.278**	1	.327**	.241**	.242**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	486	486	486	486	486
Concept Book	Pearson Correlation	.224**	.327**	1	.321**	.209**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	486	486	486	486	486
Showroom	Pearson Correlation	.174**	.241**	.321**	1	.332**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	486	486	486	486	486
VendMa	Pearson Correlation	.259**	.242**	.209**	.332**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	486	486	486	486	486

Criteria for selecting a bookstore

There are many criterions influencing how people choose a bookstore, and it would be very hard to test all of them. Therefore, we chose only eight such items, connected with ensuring a better customer experience (bookstore atmosphere, interaction with bookstore staff, interior design) or an improved offer (reading spaces, events, process of exploring the book collection). Additionally, two items related to innovation in existing bookstore models have been considered: other services offered such as a cafeteria or co-working spaces (still very rarely considered in Romanian bookstores) and existing bookstore technology (access to an electronic catalogue, touch screens, etc.).

The means reflecting the importance attributed by respondents to these items are presented in Table 6, grouped by the status of the respondents. The most relevant items for customers are the possibility to explore books, the atmosphere in the bookstore, and the interior design & space organization. The least important are the additional services offered (which are very scarce in Romanian bookshops), technology, and organizing various events. When considering innovative approaches, the present data suggest that investing in technology is currently not very appealing. At the same time, the public positively appreciates interior design – therefore, innovating adequately in this area would add consistently to attracting the readers.

We underline that the present survey does not measure the attitude and opinions of those who rarely enter libraries and are not so experienced readers. Maybe, innovating in technology or areas that for our respondents (experienced readers) are not so important might attract the non-readers.

The ANOVA test shows that there are no significant differences between the three groups of respondents, except for organizing events and interior design. The Post Hoc Tests show that writers are significantly different both from the general public and the other professionals of the book industry in relation to the interior design of bookshops. When considering the events organized, the general public's attitude is significantly different from that of the book industry professionals. Figure 8 presents these means for comparison.

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Table 6. One-way ANOVA test: Criteria influencing bookstore selection and type of respondents

6.1. Descriptives

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Atm	General public	383	4.05	.926	.047	3.96	4.15	1	5
	Writer	25	3.76	1.012	.202	3.34	4.18	1	5
	Book industry professional	78	4.17	.796	.090	3.99	4.35	2	5
	Total	486	4.06	.913	.041	3.98	4.14	1	5
Int	General public	383	3.89	.936	.048	3.80	3.99	1	5
	Writer	25	3.84	1.028	.206	3.42	4.26	2	5
	Book industry professional	78	4.00	.897	.102	3.80	4.20	1	5
	Total	486	3.91	.934	.042	3.82	3.99	1	5
Tech	General public	383	3.26	1.203	.061	3.14	3.38	1	5
	Writer	25	3.00	1.041	.208	2.57	3.43	1	5
	Book industry professional	78	3.35	1.042	.118	3.11	3.58	1	5
	Total	486	3.26	1.171	.053	3.15	3.36	1	5
ReadSp	General public	383	3.94	1.019	.052	3.83	4.04	1	5
	Writer	25	3.52	1.229	.246	3.01	4.03	1	5
	Book industry professional	78	3.76	1.071	.121	3.51	4.00	1	5
	Total	486	3.89	1.042	.047	3.79	3.98	1	5
Serv	General public	383	3.14	1.156	.059	3.02	3.26	1	5
	Writer	25	2.84	1.068	.214	2.40	3.28	1	4
	Book industry professional	78	3.06	.958	.108	2.85	3.28	1	5
	Total	486	3.11	1.122	.051	3.01	3.21	1	5
Events	General public	383	3.34	1.163	.059	3.23	3.46	1	5
	Writer	25	3.60	.957	.191	3.20	4.00	1	5
	Book industry professional	78	3.69	.930	.105	3.48	3.90	2	5
	Total	486	3.41	1.125	.051	3.31	3.51	1	5
Design	General public	383	4.02	.856	.044	3.93	4.10	1	5
	Writer	25	3.52	1.122	.224	3.06	3.98	1	5
	Book industry professional	78	4.05	.896	.101	3.85	4.25	2	5
	Total	486	4.00	.883	.040	3.92	4.07	1	5
Expl	General public	383	4.09	.822	.042	4.00	4.17	1	5

	Writer	25	3.80	1.155	.231	3.32	4.28	1	5
	Book industry professional	78	4.09	.759	.086	3.92	4.26	2	5
	Total	486	4.07	.833	.038	4.00	4.15	1	5

6.2. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Atm	.508	2	483	.602
Int	.254	2	483	.776
Tech	2.565	2	483	.078
ReadSp	2.409	2	483	.091
Serv	4.941	2	483	.008
Events	5.129	2	483	.006
Design	3.489	2	483	.031
Expl	5.173	2	483	.006

6.3 ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Atm	Between Groups	3.145	2	1.572	1.893	.152
	Within Groups	401.242	483	.831		
	Total	404.387	485			
Int	Between Groups	.862	2	.431	.494	.611
	Within Groups	421.971	483	.874		
	Total	422.833	485			
Tech	Between Groups	2.272	2	1.136	.828	.438
	Within Groups	662.578	483	1.372		
	Total	664.850	485			
ReadSp	Between Groups	5.668	2	2.834	2.627	.073
	Within Groups	521.108	483	1.079		
	Total	526.776	485			
Serv	Between Groups	2.350	2	1.175	.933	.394
	Within Groups	608.426	483	1.260		
	Total	610.776	485			
Events	Between Groups	8.748	2	4.374	3.491	.031
	Within Groups	605.122	483	1.253		

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	Total	613.870	485			
Design	Between Groups	6.051	2	3.025	3.929	.020
	Within Groups	371.941	483	.770		
	Total	377.992	485			
Expl	Between Groups	1.951	2	.975	1.408	.246
	Within Groups	334.528	483	.693		
	Total	336.479	485			

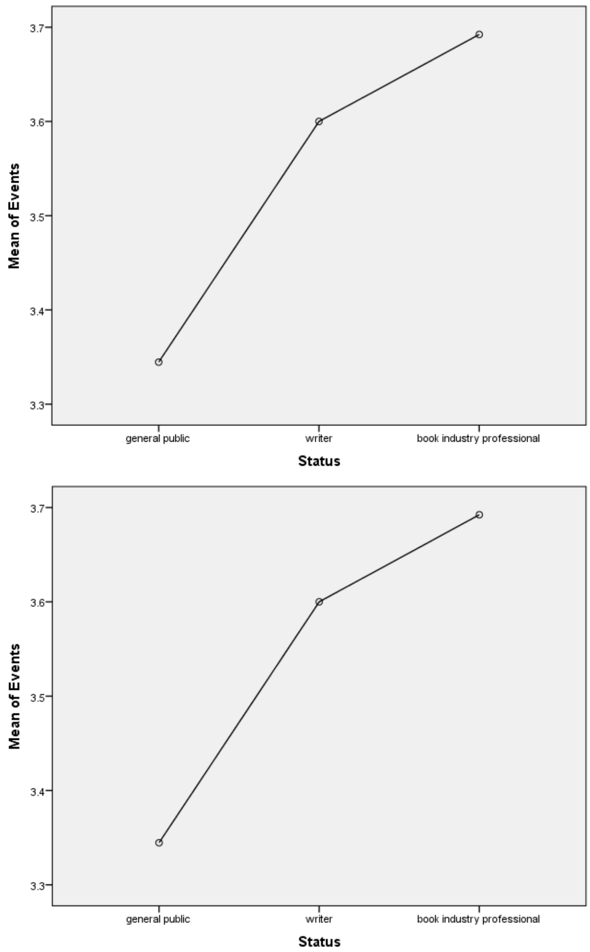

Figure 8. Means Plots

We also tested the criteria considering the age and gender of the respondents. Pearson correlation shows age weakly correlates positively with events and weakly negatively with design, at a 0.05 level of significance. In other words, there is a low tendency for the sample to appreciate increasingly more the events proposed by bookstores, as they get older. Also, a low tendency to decrease the appreciation of the interior design with the advancement in age is observable for the entire sample.

Pearson correlation also shows that all the criteria considered correlate with all others but not to a wide extent. Medium correlations exist between the following criteria: additional services and reading spaces (.515**), interior design and atmosphere (.438**), additional services and events (.433**), additional services and technology (.408*), interior design, and events (.386**), and interior design and services (.323**).

Bookstore customers who appreciate innovation the most

From the previous analysis of the database, we observe that none of the three groups is highly appreciating any form of innovation in bookstores, except the one improving the existing business model, by ensuring a comfortable and stimulating atmosphere, through interior design and space management, to allow them to explore the bookstore to find interesting titles.

Identifying relevant clusters was the first step to select the respondents most attached to the innovative approaches in bookstores, either considering the in-store innovation or the innovation of bookstore business models. Therefore, we performed a K-means algorithm. We have chosen 3 clusters, to have three groups: those with high preferences for innovative approaches, those with low preferences, and the medium/neutral segment. We have considered both innovation categories: in-store innovation with 4 items and business model innovation with 5 items. The resulting 3 clusters are significant according to the ANOVA test and are structured as presented in Figure 9.

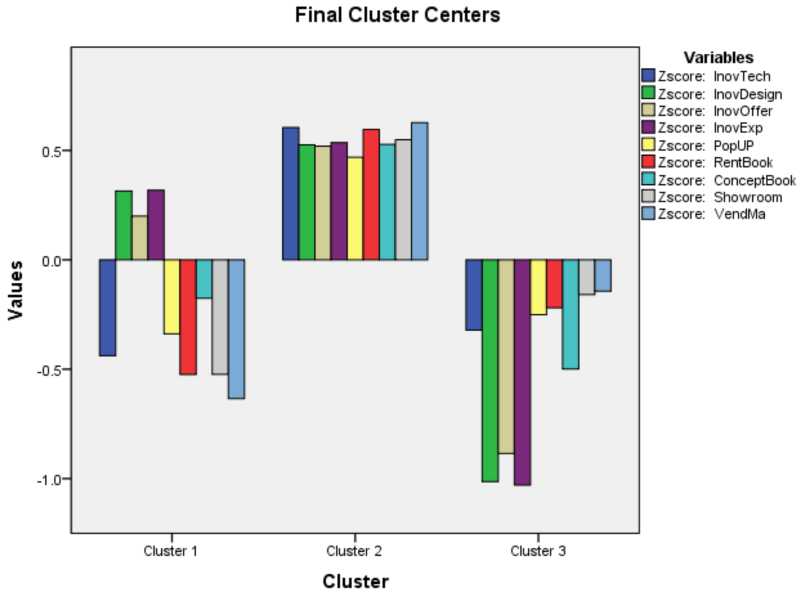

Figure 9. Respondent clusters considering the appeal of innovative practices

The first cluster includes 153 persons, the second one – 188 persons, and the third one – 145 respondents. The cluster relevant to us is cluster 2, including persons with the highest appreciation of all the innovative items considered. We might call this Cluster – The Avant-garde. Cluster 1 represents the seekers of enhanced experiences in the present type of business model – we might call them – The Enhancers. Cluster 3 represents The Bookworms, those interested in books more than the context of buying.

The next step was to understand the preferences and behaviour of members of cluster 2 compared to the others. One dimension to be considered was the profiles as readers, with four items included: excitement for discoveries (Discovery - I love rummaging through books on the shelves to discover promising titles), preference for online (Online - I prefer to buy books online), preference for visiting bookstores (Visiting - I am very attached to the idea of visiting the bookstore), and attachment to reading (Personality - Reading is an important part of my personality). All clusters display similar values for Personality. The means for Discovery and Online preference for acquisitions are higher within cluster 2 compared to the other clusters (See Table 7).

The ANOVA test shows that the only homogenous item is the personality trait – all respondents consider to a high degree that book reading is part of their personality. The Post Hoc Tests identified differences significant at the 0.05 level between the Avant-garde and the Bookworms in connection with Discovery and Visiting. Also, there are significant differences between the Avan-garde and the Enhancers in terms of Online buying preference. Figure 10 presents these means for comparison.

The evaluation of the three clusters continued with investigating the number of books bought and read. The Avant-garde are the ones reading less than they buy, suggesting that they are the easiest targets of marketing. Table 8 presents the average number of books bought and read by each Cluster.

Table 7. One-way ANOVA test: Reader profiles and Innovation clusters

7.1. Descriptives

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Disc	1	153	4.16	.911	.074	4.01	4.30	1	5
	2	188	4.32	.893	.065	4.20	4.45	1	5
	3	145	4.00	.979	.081	3.84	4.16	1	5
	Total	486	4.17	.933	.042	4.09	4.26	1	5
Online	1	153	2.73	1.071	.087	2.55	2.90	1	5
	2	188	3.28	.986	.072	3.13	3.42	1	5
	3	145	3.12	.964	.080	2.97	3.28	1	5
	Total	486	3.06	1.032	.047	2.97	3.15	1	5
Visit	1	153	4.07	1.033	.084	3.91	4.24	1	5
	2	188	4.05	1.041	.076	3.90	4.20	1	5
	3	145	3.75	1.077	.089	3.57	3.93	1	5
	Total	486	3.97	1.057	.048	3.87	4.06	1	5
Personality	1	153	4.41	.878	.071	4.27	4.55	1	5
	2	188	4.40	.844	.062	4.28	4.52	1	5
	3	145	4.32	.904	.075	4.18	4.47	1	5
	Total	486	4.38	.872	.040	4.30	4.46	1	5

7.2 Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Disc	.077	2	483	.926
Online	2.860	2	483	.058
Visit	.897	2	483	.409
Personality	.490	2	483	.613

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7.3. ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Disc	Between Groups	8.691	2	4.346	5.077	.007
	Within Groups	413.443	483	.856		
	Total	422.134	485			
Online	Between Groups	26.534	2	13.267	13.081	.000
	Within Groups	489.853	483	1.014		
	Total	516.387	485			
Visit	Between Groups	9.633	2	4.816	4.374	.013
	Within Groups	531.840	483	1.101		
	Total	541.473	485			
Personality	Between Groups	.674	2	.337	.442	.643
	Within Groups	367.904	483	.762		
	Total	368.578	485			

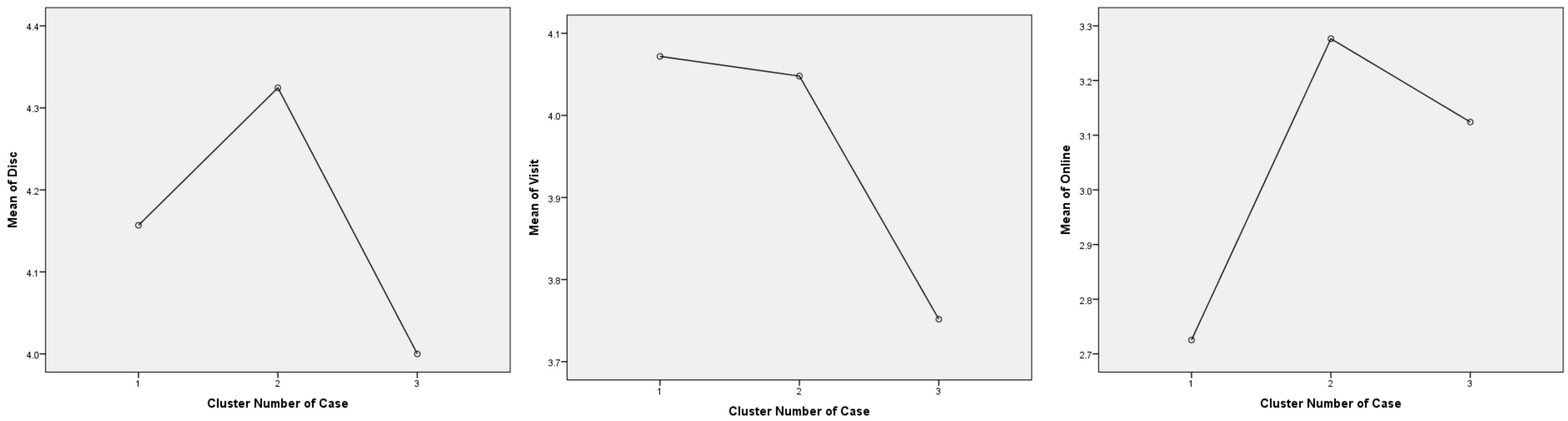

Figure 10. Means Plots

Table 8. Book acquisitions and reading, by cluster

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Buying	1	147	21.48	27.039	2.230
	2	187	25.16	48.567	3.552
	3	144	26.79	44.151	3.679
	Total	478	24.52	41.623	1.904
Reading	1	148	21.70	30.247	2.486
	2	187	18.21	27.363	2.001
	3	143	29.36	48.360	4.044
	Total	478	22.63	35.939	1.644

The last aspect considered was the socio-demographic profile of the three clusters. The items considered were status, gender, residency, and income. The structure of the clusters considering all these aspects are presented in Tables 9 to 12.

Table 9. Status * Cluster Number of Case

Crosstab						
			Cluster Number of Case			**Total**
			1	**2**	**3**	
Status	General public	Count	112	161	110	383
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	73.2%	85.6%	75.9%	78.8%
	Writer	Count	8	4	13	25
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	5.2%	2.1%	9.0%	5.1%
	Book industry professional	Count	33	23	22	78
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	21.6%	12.2%	15.2%	16.0%
Total		Count	153	188	145	486
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10. Gender * Cluster Number of Case

Crosstab						
			Cluster Number of Case			**Total**
			1	**2**	**3**	
Gender	Woman	Count	117	156	98	371
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	76.5%	83.0%	67.6%	76.3%
	Man	Count	36	32	46	114
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	23.5%	17.0%	31.7%	23.5%
Total		Count	153	188	145	486
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 11. Residency * Cluster Number of Case

Crosstab						
			Cluster Number of Case			**Total**
			1	**2**	**3**	
Residency	Very large city	Count	97	104	72	273
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	63.4%	55.3%	49.7%	56.2%
	Large city	Count	32	35	25	92
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	20.9%	18.6%	17.2%	18.9%
	Medium city	Count	8	20	25	53
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	5.2%	10.6%	17.2%	10.9%
	Small city	Count	11	22	15	48
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	7.2%	11.7%	10.3%	9.9%
	Rural	Count	5	7	8	20
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	3.3%	3.7%	5.5%	4.1%
Total		Count	153	188	145	486
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 12. Income * Cluster Number of Case

Crosstab						
			Cluster Number of Case			**Total**
			1	**2**	**3**	
Income	less than 300 euros	Count	7	26	13	46
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	4.6%	13.8%	9.0%	9.5%
	301 - 500 euros	Count	11	25	24	60
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	7.2%	13.3%	16.6%	12.3%
	501 - 1000 euros	Count	69	67	53	189
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	45.1%	35.6%	36.6%	38.9%
	1001 - 2000 euros	Count	40	46	45	131
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	26.1%	24.5%	31.0%	27.0%
	2001 - 3000 euros	Count	22	14	7	43
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	14.4%	7.4%	4.8%	8.8%
	more than 3000 euros	Count	4	10	3	17
		% within Cluster Number of Cases	2.6%	5.3%	2.1%	3.5%

Total	Count	153	188	145	486
	% within Cluster Number of Case	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson's R shows that the only correlation (a weak one) is between status and clusters. The Avant-garde cluster is dominated by the general public to a wider degree than the other clusters. Book industry professionals are better represented among the Enhancers, while the writers are among the Bookworms. These later aspects are consistent with their job profiles.

Women dominate all clusters but to a wider degree in the Avant-garde cluster and less in the Bookworms cluster. It suggests those women are eager to a wider extent than men to experiment. Men also prove to be more interested in books and reading than in how they acquire the books. Nevertheless, the correlation between gender and clusters is not statistically significant.

Considering the place of residency, it seems that in small cities the desire to innovate in book acquisition is higher than in other cases. In Bucharest, and to some extent in large cities too, the Enhancers are better represented than in the case of other places. It might be related to a wider offer they have; therefore, they can be picky from where they buy books. In rural areas and medium cities, we find a higher interest in books and more Bookworms compared to the other clusters. These correlations are not significant from a statistical perspective. Lastly, we observe that the cluster of the Avan-garde tends to bring together the wealthiest and the poorest.

Discussions and conclusions

Resuming the literature review we can conclude that developing a culture of innovation, using technology to foster consumer experience and to "listen' to their needs, but also innovating the business models results in competitive advantages for the companies in general and those acting in retail in particular. The present study looked more attentively into the book market.

The findings of the present study revealed interesting insights into the behaviour of the Romanian frequent readers. We mention that are very few studies about the book market in Romania. Therefore, the results are more valuable in this context: the in-store innovation was evaluated as a preference for bookstores that are innovative in the usage of technology, interior design & space management, product & services portfolio, and buying experience. The preference for certain innovative business models compared to "classical" bookstores has been investigated for 5 types of models: Pop-up bookstore, Rental bookstore, Concept bookstore, Showroom, and Vending machine. The preferences identified are not high - the Showroom and the Concept bookstore models were the only models which received a score a little bit higher. Therefore, there is not much appeal in these new business models, bookstores might be looking for even more innovative approaches.

Gradually, the Romanian book market built (sometimes partially or incompletely) all the components of the western book industry: big players appeared - publishers and bookstores, but also independents, self-publishing, and the indie market (Hrib, 2018). The Romanian book market did not have enough generations to consolidate in the capitalist regime, during the communist period (after WWII until 1989) both the publishing and the distribution were carefully controlled by the state (Bardan, 2019).

For Romanian customers, the most relevant are the possibility to explore books, the atmosphere in the bookstore, and the interior design & space organization. The least important are the additional services offered (which are very scarce in Romanian bookshops), technology, and organizing various events. When considering innovative approaches, the present data suggest that investing in technology is currently not very appealing. At the same time, the public positively appreciates interior design – therefore, innovating adequately in this area would add consistently to attracting the readers. A limitation of the present survey is that it does not measure the attitude and opinions of those who rarely enter libraries and are not so experienced readers. Perhaps innovation in technology or areas that are less important to our respondents (experienced readers) will attract non-readers.

Bookstores are through the products they sell a source of knowledge and innovation, but as the results show the consumers are not necessarily sensitive to innovation which implies the technology or format of the stores, in this case, we recommend to the decision-makers to concentrate on their innovation efforts into the process, store atmosphere, marketing mix, and loyalty programs. Also, another giveaway for bookstore owners is the fact that although in retail emerged lots of innovations the bookstore remains a more a classic place for the Romanian readers and they are not willing to adopt very early innovations related to technology or different retail formats.

Nevertheless, the investigation reveals three segments of readers, we called Avan-garde, which are more prone to innovative approaches to a wider degree than the other two segments – the Enhancers and the Bookworms. Taking into consideration this finding we recommend further investigation of the Avan-garde readers. We also recommend further development of this study, considering qualitative approaches, aiming at all actors of the book market: authors, all kinds of publishers, librarians, as well as bookstores.

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