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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE ROMANIAN COSMETIC INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT. Green has become the new black. Dealing with this idea, the trend nowadays regarding the beauty industry seems to be more and more about sustainability and corporate social responsibility policies. Lately, CSR activities are highly performed in order to create, strength and/or clean the brand image. Cosmetic companies have long received criticism for unethical and non-environmentally friendly business practices like animal testing, waste, pollution, unsustainable sourcing or toxic ingredients. Whether responsibility toward the world and sustainability has been part of the corporate DNA or not, the beauty industry is trying to demonstrate that the focus is not only on the external appearance of the consumer, on the aesthetic, but also on the ethical and moral practices. In order to differentiate themselves from the competition, companies implement CSR initiatives and strategies to create a strong and unique brand image. In this regard, the purpose of the present study was to investigate how the top three beauty companies in Romania communicate their CSR activities externally, on their corporate website, but also what impact this types of strategies have on the Romanian consumer and on their purchase decision, by the use of a qualitative content analysis and a survey. The underlying aim of this research was to investigate the most used and valued external CSR activities, so that other beauty companies can have a guideline of the most successful initiatives, but also to determine if corporate social strategies can influence the buying decision of the consumer in a positive and significant way.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility (CSR), beauty industry, external communication, corporate website, customer purchase intention

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1. Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has gained increased importance during the last decades and this concept is nowadays more discussed than ever before. Continuous developments are being driven by innovative ideas in the cosmetics industry, where considerations such as responsible sourcing and social impact are leading the industry towards being one of the most ethically considerate in the world. Moreover, product innovation is not enough to succeed. Companies search for different ways to innovate and differentiate themselves. Therefore, cosmetics companies implement CSR strategies and activities in order to differentiate themselves from competitors and consider it as a resource that they can run innovative businesses.

Since the beginning, the beauty industry used to be blamed and disapproved for the conducted business practices, which were perceived as being unethical and harmful for the environment, like animal testing, unsustainable sourcing and chemical pollution (Organic Monitor 1). Cosmetics products are quality goods that are bought for their quality and for aesthetic reasons and since consumers are using and applying them on their own body, they are creating links based on trust, awareness, loyalty, emotions and sensitivity. The fact that customers are becoming more health conscious about the used products, leads to a constant concern about the chemicals and ingredients that can be found in this goods and also about the possible long-term detrimental and negative effects that this beauty products have on the body and the environment.

Because the cosmetic industry is highly consumer oriented, these companies felt pressured by the demands from society and are now increasingly and actively trying to adopt ethical, ecological and responsible business practices (Organic Monitor 2). The external communication strategy is an integral and very important part of the overall implementation of CSR and the way the beauty companies are presenting and framing the information regarding this activities should not only provide a better brand image or a resource that can be

used in order to run innovative businesses for the present, but should also become fuel for the future by leading to a constant growth.

The present study aimed to explore and to analyze the external role of corporate social responsibility initiatives in the cosmetic industry and the influence on customer purchase decision in Romania. The central questions of this research therefore are:

1) How do the top three cosmetic manufacturers in Romania communicate their corporate social responsibility work externally, on their website?
2) How do corporate social responsibility activities influence the Romanian customer relationships in the cosmetic industry?

The purpose was to investigate how beauty companies frame their CSR initiatives on their corporate website, how Romanian consumers perceive the importance of CSR, and if CSR has a decisive role in the purchase decision.

2. Literature Review and Useful Concepts

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become popular in the early twenty-first century. Over the years the CSR concept has been defined, redefined and extended. When referring to CSR, the term is used as a wider concept such as defined in *Business for Social Responsibility* (2003) as achieving commercial success in ways that honor ethical values and respect people, social communities, and the natural environment. In many CSR related studies is used the definition provided by Carroll (1991, 39-48) which states: "The social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time".

These dimensions, explained below, became nowadays requirements. Moreover, it is expected by society that organizations are increasingly committed in the ethical responsibilities, and the philanthropic obligations are desired.

In this regard, of Carroll's pyramid, the primary responsibility of the company remains to be profitable and to satisfy the shareholders, deliver value for the consumer and riches for the business (economic dimension). To obey and comply with the law, are the requirements of the legal dimension. To be moral, ethical and fair but also to respect people's rights and to avoid harm is what ethic is expecting from all types of organizations, while philanthropy expects performing activities that are advantageous for the community and being a good corporate citizen (Carroll, 1991, 39-48).

On the other hand, Friedman (1970, 23-22) states that "there is one and only one social responsibility of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase profits." He therefore asserts that there is no real reason for companies to involve in giving, because in doing so, the business does not increase profits in any way. Porter and Kramer (2011, 67) are analyzing the relationship between businesses and society from the shared value view point, declaring that "Companies could bring business and society back together if they redefined their purpose as creating 'shared value' – generating economic value in a way that also produces value for society by addressing its challenges." Another theory that describes CSR is the *Triple bottom line-approach*, which is investigating the dimensions of the so-called three Ps: people, planet and profits.

Triple bottom-line "captures the essence of sustainability by measuring the impact of an organization's activities on the world… including both its profitability and shareholder values and its social, human and environmental capital" (Savitz apud Slaper & Hall, 2011, 5). This theory and the shared value observation point are providing a more high-minded perspective on sustainability and company, while Carroll's Pyramid is more business focused. The mentioned approaches form a basis for understanding how CSR can be defined in theory but also how this practice can be used in a coherent way.

2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility in Romania

In Romania, the CSR concept emerged according to Mandl and Dorr (2007) in the 1990s, when several multinational institutions, numerous NGOs and Romanian organizations became common with the modern approach of CSR. At the beginning all this institutions were mainly focused on humanitarian goals. The tendency was followed and during the 2000s due to the major developments which occurred in the Romanian business environment by the accession to EU, CSR changed and became even more popular. Such developments refer most often to the process of replacing old technologies with environmentally friendly production/services, as well as to implementing employee health policies and society-oriented projects.

An important step ahead for CSR evolution in Romania can be recognized on two dedicated websites, www.csrmedia.ro and www.responsabilitatesociala.ro, which became affiliate of CSR Europe since November 2011 and where annually reports (*CSR Trends and Realities in Romania*, 2016) of CSR activities are made visible and explained through conducted studies. The last study that was made in Romania regarding CSR activities is called *Dynamics and Perspective of CSR Domain in Romania* (2018) and the goal was to determine and to explore the development and the perception of top executives, managers and CSR specialists from various companies in this country on the evolution, dynamics and challenges of this field in 2017 and 2018.

The study was conducted using 46% foreign companies and 54% Romanian companies. After investigating the results, the interpretation of the values was made based on the most relevant and viable indicators for the current analysis:

➢ 78% of the respondents, compared to 86% in 2017, have defined CSR as involvement in the community.

➢57% of the companies, compared to 55% in 2017, stated that they are involved in CSR because it is part of the PR strategy.

➢67% of respondents, dropping from 79% a year ago, say they are engaging their employees in CSR actions.

➢21% of the respondents, compared to 29% previously, declared that the CSR budget in 2018 is between 50,000 EUR and 100,000 EUR.

➢84% of the companies communicate about their CSR projects in social media (an increase of + 5pp), 81% through press releases (-3pp) and 78% through the company's website (stagnation).

➢75% of the companies, compared to 65% previously, targeted education for intervention and support and only 60% vs. 65% social domain.

➢30% of companies consider the environment to be the most important area for assessing the impact of CSR activity in 2018.

➢70% of respondents in 2018, compared to 72% previously, helped the community through cash donations, and 47% vs. 58% made donations in kind.(*Dynamics and Perspective of CSR Domain in Romania*, 2018)

According to experts in the field of CSR, Romania has made significant steps to integrate CSR in companies' gene, but is still learning what social responsibility means and how it should be best developed and exploited. "The efforts made by companies to approach a socially responsible business model are more visible than in previous years, also because of consumers who pay attention to the entire process of manufacturing and distribution of a product before buying it. Plus, they are careful of the impact that the company has in the community", stated Alexandra Maier, corporate social responsibility specialist with Avon. (Sebesi, 2017)

2.3 CSR Communication

CSR can only become tangible through the way it is communicated and presented using language, because without words nobody could understand and become aware of this kind of actions. It can even be argued that through language, meaning is given and action is established and this means that CSR is in a close relationship, even interrelated

with the communication process. Many studies have explored the process of CSR communication as a bridge between the company and its stakeholders. Even if it is hard to communicate to stakeholders, especially to customers, mainly because each of them is different and not all have the same values, opinions and expectations about social responsible behavior, Morsing (2005, 84-88) has proposed two types of strategies to enhance customer reactions with CSR communication.

The informing and interaction strategy are vital for a business in order to create a good positioning, awareness and also to inform the stakeholders. If this interaction is done right, the strategies will feed from each other and will create positive customers outcomes (stronger relationship, stakeholder identification). However, most CSR communication typically focuses on a company's involvement in various social matters and its engagement in a specific CSR cause where four factors are typically highlighted: the commitment to a cause, the impact it has on the cause, motives and the reason why it engaged in a particular social initiative, and the fit to the cause, the congruity between the cause and the company's business.

First, the commitment of a company to a specific cause is often described. This can present information about donating funds, in-kind contributions, corporate resources such as marketing expertise, human capital and other holdings (money, time) that are dedicated to the cause (Dwyer, 1987, 11-27). Secondly, the impact an organization has on a cause is frequently communicated by explaining what specific goals are achieved. Instead of focusing on the input side of its involvement in a social cause, a business can focus on the output side of its CSR aim. In addition to CSR commitment and CSR impact, CSR communication can also focus on CSR motives.

These motives can be either intrinsic or extrinsic, with extrinsic meaning that organizations engage in CSR in order to increase profits, and intrinsic that companies act out of a genuine concern for the social issue at hand (Forehand, 2003, 349-356; Yoon, 2006). Lastly, the fit, or the perceived congruence between a social issue and the company's business is often addressed.

Corporate social responsibility fit may result from common associations that a brand shares with the cause, affinity with specific target segments or corporate image associations created by the brand's past conduct in a specific social domain. This categorization of Shuili Du (2010, 10-12) is useful, because it shows how companies try to create a better relationship with their stakeholders and try to influence the perception of stakeholders about the company through communication.

After understanding the content of CSR communication, there are studies focused on the channels via which this communication is taking place. Nowadays there are a variety of communication channels through which information about CSR activities done by a company can be disseminated. According to a number of researchers, the Internet is the prime communication channel in this century, due to the fact that the information can be spread worldwide and can reach numerous stakeholders, so that companies are increasingly relying on this platform as a source for information (Isenmann, 2006, 247-256). Especially the corporate website is a popular and influential channel to showcase CSR commitment, and research has shown that there is a significant rise in the use of these corporate websites for reporting CSR initiatives (Isenmann, 2006).

Correlations have been found between the perception of customers towards a company's reputation and the type of communication channels, because the characteristics of a channel can lead to questions about the motives of companies (Rolland & Bazzoni, 2009, 249-163). As the Internet and the corporate website is the most used and preferred medium for CSR communication, this study will focus on the communication by cosmetic companies via this channel.

2.4 The Background of CSR in the Cosmetic Industry

In the present study, one specific business area is in focus - the cosmetic industry. To provide a better understanding of the current analysis, a brief background of CSR work within the industry will be presented.

CSR has a very important role in the cosmetic industry. Since the consumers use cosmetics, in terms of products, covering everything from basic hygiene essentials to luxury products, on themselves, it creates a personal link and connection with the industry. According to the OECD (2007), the main CSR focus for cosmetic companies is set on the environmental and ecological safety and the social standards. The first aspect refers to the control of the environmental effect on manufacturing place of activity, but also the delivery centers, the use of natural/bio substances in product recipes and of biodegradable/recycled and environmental friendly materials.

Of great importance are also the internal standards, such as employee development program (to increase employee satisfaction), like offering a motivating/productive work environment within the company, health and safety policies and non-discrimination of employees (by sex, age, race, and/or culture). External activities, for example helping and protecting cultures abroad by funding local agricultural projects and local agricultural economies, are as well desired social standards. The mentioned topics were investigated in the content analysis of this research, aside from other issues that do not overlap with previous research, like breast cancer, woman rights, self-esteem of the consumers, child abuse, sex-traffic, diversity or fair trade.

CSR issues have been long considered and assumed in the cosmetic industry, with pioneer CSR companies coming from this sector like Natura, The Body Shop, Aveda etc.. These companies' founders' core ambition clearly was to change consumption patterns. The cosmetic industry is thus in the forefront of CSR evolution and growth, due to reasons mentioned above, but maybe also because of a sense of working to get past its history of getting negative media attention due to animal testing, unethical product production and the product's association with vanity.

Altogether, the cosmetic industry is trying to get more socially and environmentally sustainable. However, in the increase and acceleration of this *green-washing* (when organization spends more time and money claiming to be *green* through advertising and marketing, than actually

implementing business practices that minimize environmental impact and when the company is trying to position itself as more socially and environmentally responsible than it is), false and uncertain information has become a problem. In this manner, it is becoming increasingly vital and crucial for cosmetic companies to practice transparency towards the consumers in order to gain their trust, and, as a result, to increase their income. (Sahota, 2014)

When concentrating on the relationship between the buying motivation and CSR initiatives, previous research conducted by Sen & Bhattacharya (2001) concluded that there is a beneficial and decisive connection between an organization's CSR activities and the purchase behavior, but only when a variety of conditions are satisfied. First of all the consumer has to support and believe the issue that the CSR initiative is dedicated to, the product has to be of high quality, and lastly the customer should not be required to spend more money for the social responsibility. In this matter, regardless if the CSR-activity is perceived as positive by the consumer, quality and price are more critical criteria for the buying decision.

3. Methodology

The methods used to answer the research questions of the present study are the qualitative content analysis and the survey. In the following, the collected data and their interpretation are illustrated.

3.1 Qualitative research method – Content analysis

One of the purposes of this study was to determine how the top three cosmetic manufacturers in Romania communicate their Corporate Social Responsibility work externally. In order to gain valid information that could allow the current topic to be explained in detail, a qualitative research was chosen as a method of study. The qualitative research

was used to outline, categorize and structure data, and to produce conclusions that helped with the gathering of examples of the most implemented CSR initiatives in the cosmetic industry.

The choice was made to identify leading cosmetic companies in CSR communication in Romania, to observe their external communication channels and further, using a quantitative research method, to identify how Corporate Social Responsibility activities influence the Romanian customer relationships in the cosmetic industry.

First, the CSR initiatives of three cosmetic brands were analyzed. Since only few companies were investigated, a selection had to be made and in addition, several filters were used. In this regard, the Top 50 cosmetic brands worldwide was used as a ranking (HAIGH, 2018). The most valuable cosmetic brands of the world are assigned a brand rating here, based on the strength, risk and future potential of the companies. This ranking was the most appropriate to determine the most well-known and purchased beauty companies of the world. A specific selection from this list was made after conducting an initial research that focused on companies that actually had CSR information available on their websites. Since the present research refers to Romania, the focus was on the top three beauty companies with the most purchased products in this country. According to a study conducted by Stirile.ProTV in 2017, and on a ranking made by Wall-Street in 2018, the leading cosmetics manufacturers in Romania are Avon Products Inc., followed by L'Oreal Group and Beiersdorf AG. After this initial selection, the following beauty brands were chosen as an object of the content analysis: L'Oreal, with focus on the company The Body Shop, the actual pioneer company in CSR initiatives, NIVEA and Avon.

The first goal was to identify how cosmetic brands frame their corporate social responsibility activities on their websites, how they communicate these initiatives externally and on what topics they focus.

The information regarding CSR on the corporate websites of the top three Romanian cosmetic companies was analyzed on several aspects. First, a short description of each company was made based on their history. Secondly, it was determined what commitments/internal

CSR activities are described and how they were performed, in order to understand more about the CSR activities cosmetic brands typically engage in. At the end, the external CSR activities are presented and analyzed. The investigation of the official website of each of the three selected brands was performed according to the following criteria: category of CSR activity/initiative; specification (name/concept of the conducted campaign; the purpose of each activity and the proposed goal).

Via the content analysis process, the collected data indicated the CSR activities, initiatives and information that are available online, on the website of each of the three chosen cosmetic brands. When comparing them, some aspects become clear and also some overlapping topics are noticed. Surprising was the fact that all brands have more or less the same topics that they discuss but in a slightly different manner. The website with the most CSR related information available and well described was The Body Shop, while AVON had by far the least facts and the CSR initiatives were not so clear and good organized.

The first common topic is philanthropy and/or charity. All brands do, however, support different kinds of causes. The Body Shop, for instance, defends Human Rights and supports causes that have to do with this issue, like child and sex trafficking, the right to education and domestic violence. NIVEA also supports causes dealing with children, their development and the well-being of the entire family. Avon is a company focused on defending women's rights and their health, but is also engaged in initiatives that fight against human violence.

All the analyzed companies fight against animal testing and are using alternatives like in vitro testing or clinical tests with human volunteers. It also became apparent that two brands have a foundation to carry out these missions, like The Body Shop Foundation and the Avon Academy. There is also a similarity in the way the companies support certain causes. An often used method is donating a certain amount of profits of a certain product to a cause, but also setting up trainings and involving the employees in certain causes is popular.

The Body Shop also uses petitions, which is something the other analyzed companies do not seem to do. Avon also does something different by involving celebrities in the causes and events. Secondly, the environment is often outlined as an issue in the social responsible strategy of the companies. All the three brands want to protect the environment and biodiversity by reducing gas emissions/CO_2, electricity, waste and water consumption. Actions that are taken in order to achieve these goals and commitments are mostly the use of raw ingredients, innovations regarding the packaging and generating as little waste as possible. There are, however, a couple of topics that are not discussed on the website of every brand. Breast cancer, for instance, is only discussed on the website of Avon, self-esteem is only a topic at The Body Shop, and social inclusion for the elderly or ending hunger for children seems to only be discussed by NIVEA.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the investigated cosmetic companies seem to frame their external CSR activities on the following topics:

- ✓ Environment/Planet
- ✓ Philanthropy/Charity
- ✓ Human Rights/Women Rights
- ✓ Protecting children and ending domestic violence
- ✓ Natural/raw ingredients and recyclable/reusable packaging
- ✓ Animal testing.

All these subjects seem to have something in common and to be related to the concept of humanity. The human aspect is in the center of each of the analyzed beauty companies and it became clear that people and their rights are also an important aspect of CSR. This result provides new insight in the knowledge about what CSR is related to and gives a better understanding of this broad concept, specifically in the beauty industry. It can be stated that CSR is a subject that is nearly linked to people and their emotions and the human area is as important

as sustainability, charity and the planet. According to this research and its findings, other future studies should concentrate and provide more insight into the specific CSR activities beauty companies engage in, for example by interviewing the cosmetic brand managers directly.

3.2 Quantitative Research Method – Survey

3.2.1 Questionnaire design

In order to analyze how Romanian customers perceive corporate social responsibility in the cosmetic industry and if CSR can influence their purchase intention and buying decision, a self-administered survey was deployed as a second research method. The questionnaire was designed using Google Docs. and sent via Facebook, E-mail and WhatsApp. 107 valid questionnaires were collected. 92.5% of the respondents were women and only 7.5% men. Most of the participants were aged between 18-25 (33.6%), being full-time workers (67.3%) and having a bachelor degree (56.1%), and a monthly income between 3,000 and 4,000 RON (31.8%).

The questionnaire consisted of 11 questions, written in Romanian language. First, the results regarding the general preferences and purchase motivations regarding cosmetic products were analyzed, followed by the customer acknowledgment regarding the concept of CSR and its initiatives, and lastly the relationship between corporate responsibility and the buying decision is discussed.

3.2.2 Data analysis

➢ *General preferences and purchase motivations*

Concerning the frequency of buying cosmetic products, as depicted in figure 1, most participants tend to buy such products quite frequently, either more often than once a month (47.7%) or once a

month (28.0%). Many of them also indicated the fact that they are buying beauty products once in three months (16.8%). Since the majority buys cosmetics rather frequently, they can be regarded as customers in the beauty industry.

Cât de des cumpărați produse cosmetice?

107 răspunsuri
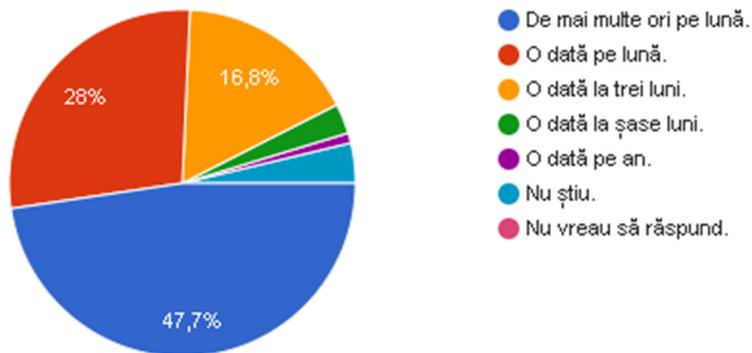
Table 1. Frequency of buying cosmetic products

The most popular brands among Romanian customers are L'Oreal, Vichy, Farmec, NIVEA, La Roche-Posay, NYX, Dove and Avon, as indicated by the respondents of the given questionnaire. As the present research is focused on the top three cosmetic brands in Romania, the interest was to test if the respondents would pick exactly these brands out of a self-made list consisting of 8 beauty company names, selected randomly. On the first place in the preferences of the respondents was L'Oreal (33.6%), followed by Vichy (17.8%) and Farmec (12.1%). NIVEA was on the fourth place (11.2%) while Avon was chosen by 7.5% and was on the same place with Dove and Estee Lauder. The results are illustrated in the table below.

Care sunt brandurile de la care achiziționați produse cosmetice cel mai des?

107 răspunsuri
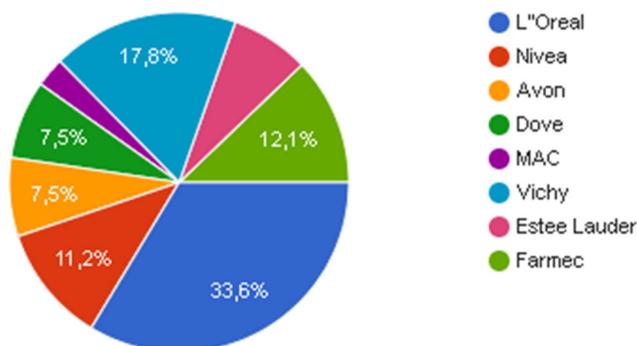
Table 2. Brand preference

Further, in order to determine the most important factors that have an impact on the buying decision, the respondents were asked to rank certain determinants depending on the degree of relevance. These factors were not specifically about CSR, but some options were related to the concept. This question served to understand what customers generally find important when it comes to buying cosmetics.

	1= most important	2= important	3= unimportant	4= most unimportant
Price	28.1	**57.0**	10.2	4.7
Quality	**79.4**	20.6	-	-
Packaging	15.0	37.4	**34.6**	**13.0**
Image of the brand	33.0	**49.0**	16.0	2.0
Environmentally friendliness	34.5	39.0	20.5	6.0
Ingredients	60.7	26.1	11.2	2.0
Previous experience	**71.9**	24.2	2.8	1.1
Recommendation	41.1	46.7	8.4	3.8

Table 3. Importance of factors in buying decisions

According to the table above, it seems that quality and previous experience are most important for customers when it comes to buying cosmetic products. Price, recommendation and the brand are an important factor for some respondents, which means that customers buy a lot of their cosmetic products based on the budget they have and the companies name and reputation. The most unimportant factor seems to be packaging.

When these topics are regarded as CSR related, it becomes clear that customers do not find them very important in their buying decisions, and that quality, previous experience, price and recommendation are more important factors. This could say something about the social value orientation of customers and could suggest that, in general, they do not find CSR important in their buying decisions. This aspect needs more investigation, therefore the following section will focus more specifically on CSR and on the perception of the customers regarding the given topic.

➢ *Customer acknowledgment regarding the concept of CSR and its initiatives*

The second part of the questionnaire focused on the recognition of CSR activities and strategies performed by beauty companies, as well as the issue support and the social value orientation. The acknowledgment is about how known and famous the concept of CSR is in Romania, the issue support refers to the importance of specific CSR concerns for consumers and the social value orientation indicates how customers value CSR and whether they find it important or not.

Questioning the knowledgeableness of the CSR term, the participants had to indicate if they are familiar with this concept and activities related to it or not, and if they do, some examples were asked. According to the given answers, 55.1% of the respondents are not aware of corporate social responsibility, 35.5 % stated that they know about this strategy, while 9.3 % could not tell if they are aware

of CSR or not. This statistic proves that most Romanian consumers are not familiar with the concept of social responsibility and the results should concern and be a question mark for companies regarding the promotion they are doing towards this concept. Among the mentioned brands known for having CSR initiatives were companies like: AVON, Estee Lauder, KUKA, JeffreeStar, Heineken, OMW, Continental and doTERRA.

The issue support was the next analyzed topic and the results linked to it should indicate how important it is for the consumer that a beauty brand supports and is actively engaged in different types of CSR activities/actions/initiatives. As it can be observed in the table below, the majority of respondents find the use of safe/natural ingredients as being the most important factor. Planet protection/ environmentally friendly production is also marked as being important to many consumers, as well as protecting the human rights. Least important seems to be donating to charity and the activation of self esteem.

	1= most relevant	2= relevant	3= irrelevant	4= most irrelevant
Environmentally friendly production	50.5	42.0	6.5	1
Donates to charity	29.9	45.6	20.6	**3.9**
Protects human rights	**57.9**	28.9	13.2	
Treats employees well	42.0	46.7	10.3	1
Encourages diversity	36.4	47.7	14.0	1.9
Protects the environment	**71.9**	27.1	1	-
Uses safe and natural ingredients	**79.4**	19.6	1	-
No animal testing	57.0	28.0	13.0	2
Activates self esteem of customers	49.5	37.3	10.3	**2.9**
Fights against breast cancer and HIV	57.0	33.6	8.4	1

Table 4. Issue support of the customers

The content analysis, however, made clear that all the analyzed beauty brands do engage in charity a lot; in fact, every company has much information about philanthropy or activation of self esteem on their website. In Romania all the evaluated brands (The Body Shop, NIVEA and Avon) engage in protecting human rights either through

raising funds for deprived children or by fighting against human violence or breast cancer and according to the above results this issue is indeed among the most voted ones.

Next, for measuring the social value orientation of the Romanian consumers, the respondents had to indicate whether they agreed with some given statements. Through social value orientation two aspects are targeted: the perceived importance of CSR and the awareness of CSR activities. The results are shown in table 5. 85 out of 107 respondents (79.4%) find it important that their favorite cosmetic brand contributes towards society and community at large but 35 (32.7%) do not know at all if their preferred beauty brand is engaged in CSR activities or not. This could mean that customers are not informed or unaware of the CSR initiatives and strategies of their favorite cosmetic brands. However, they seem to be interested in the information because a majority of the respondents thought that cosmetic brands should communicate their CSR more (76.6%).

	YES	NO	I do not know
It is important that my favorite cosmetic company contribute towards society and community at large.	**79.4**	6.5	14.1
I know if my favorite cosmetic brands are socially responsible in their daily practices.	20.6	32.7	**46.7**
Cosmetic companies should communicate their corporate social responsibility more.	**76.6**	3.7	19.7
It is easy to find information about social responsible cosmetic brands.	31.8	23.7	**44.5**
Are you willing to pay a higher price for a socially responsible cosmetics product?	**65.4**	11.2	23.6

**Table 5.** Statements regarding social value orientation

According to the results, it could be concluded that the Romanian consumer is actually interested in CSR and wants to know more about it, wants to be informed and aware about this actions but unfortunately they do not receive enough data and news from brands. When respondents were questioned whether they find easy information

about social responsible cosmetic brands or not, the answers were quite divided: 31.8% pointed out that it is easy to find information, 23.7% indicated that it is not easy, and 44.5% did not know if it is easy to find information. The fact that many respondents indicated that it is not easy to find data and facts about social responsible companies supports the previous statement that brands do not give enough information about their CSR activities or they do, but in a wrong way, as the consumers are not aware of them at all. An important matter is also that the majority did not know if it is easy or not to find data about CSR and this result could indicate that customers are not actively searching for information about social responsible cosmetic brands. However, a third of the respondents indicated that seeking for CSR data is easy, so they were also challenged to determine through which channels they receive information about social responsible companies. Participants who indicated they are not actively searching for this type of information were also able to answer this question, because even though they do not seek for it, it is possible that they confront this kind of data, even though not purposely.
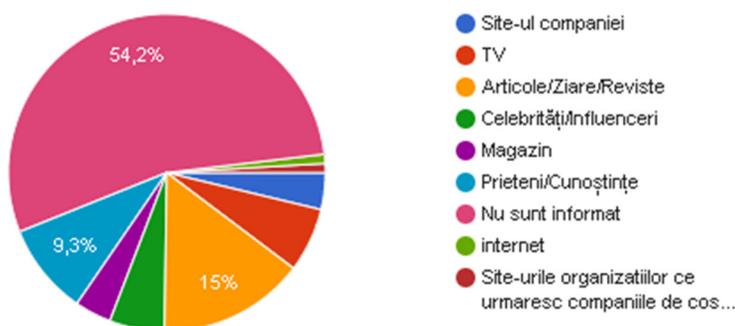
Table 6. Information channels

As it can be seen in the figure above, the most mentioned channels for receiving information about CSR were articles/newspaper/magazines (15.0%), followed by data collected from friends (9.3%) and TV (6.5%). The least mentioned was the Internet (0.9%). Surprisingly, the official website was only mentioned by 3.7% of the respondents, while this platform is regarded as a popular channel for companies to express their CSR through and is also being increasingly used by companies (Isenmann, 2006). As expected, 54.2% are not using any channels to gather news about CSR activities. This result stresses out the lack of interest about social responsible strategies in which beauty companies engage in.

Concentrating on the acknowledgement of CSR initiatives implemented by beauty brands and further on the effect of this strategy on the purchase decision of the Romanian consumer, the participants had to indicate whether they would pay a higher price for a socially responsible cosmetic product. 65.4% pointed out that they would pay more for a social orientated product, while only 11.2% would not do it. This finding could indicate that if the beauty companies would present their CSR activities in a better way, so that the information reaches the customer, the sales could increase.

➢ *The relationship between corporate responsibility and the buying decision of the Romanian consumer*
➢

The following section of the questionnaire was focusing on understanding and evaluating the influence of CSR on the relationship between the Romanian consumer and his/hers purchase decision. The results are presented in table below.

	1= strongly agree	2= agree	3= disagree	4= strongly disagree
I favor a company that makes a positive impact on the world.	**78.5**	17.8	2.8	0.9
I would recommend others to buy from a brand that is socially responsible.	63.6	29.9	3.7	2.8

	1= strongly agree	2= agree	3= disagree	4= strongly disagree
When a brand acts socially responsible, I exert effort to buy its products.	15.9	**57.0**	**22.4**	4.7
I am more inclined to buy 'green' products, even if they are more expensive.	**72.9**	21.5	1.9	3.7
I identify strongly with brands that are socially responsible.	23.4	**55.1**	19.6	1.9
I would switch away from my favorite brand if the company is not socially responsible.	27.1	**51.4**	12.2	**9.3**

Table 7. Relationship between purchase intention and CSR activities

As it can be seen in the figure above, the majority of the respondents would favor a company that makes a positive impact on the world (78.5% strongly agreed and 17.8% agreed). This could show that customers would rather prefer a company that is socially responsible and does not harm the environment/planet, to another one that would not have such a positive impact on the world. A similar result was obtained when it comes to brand recommendation. More than a half of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement about whether they would recommend others to buy beauty goods from a brand that is socially responsible, and more than a quarter of the participants agreed. It can be concluded, that most consumers would give recommendations and would rather support and advice others to purchase beauty products due to CSR activities.

Moreover, appellants were positive towards a couple of declarations that defined the buying intention. For instance most respondents totally agreed that they are more inclined to buy "green" (ecological/natural) beauty products, even if they are more expensive (72.9%), and also some of them partially agreed on this topic (21.5%). The interpreted results could indicate that Romanian customers are influenced in a positive way by goods that are eco-friendly and would spend more money for them, than for other beauty products that are cheaper but at the same time lower in quality.

Furthermore, most respondents agreed (57.0%) and some totally agreed (15.9%) on the statement whether they would exert more effort to buy a product from a company that is engaged in socially responsible activities. Also on the same topic a quarter of the asked customers partially disagreed on the same argument (22.4%). This demonstrates that people are not only willing to pay more money but are also prepared to make more effort to acquire quality/"green" products that are responsible towards environmental and social considerations.

When questioned about the personal identification with socially responsible brands, more than a half (55.1%) agreed but also a significant number of participants (23.4%) totally agreed on the same subject. Assessing the higher percentage, it can be concluded that Romanian consumers are more inclined towards organic goods and identify themselves with beauty products that have a positive impact on the environment and society in general.

When evaluating the brand loyalty, most people indicated they would switch away from a brand that is not socially engaged and agreed or partially agreed with this statement (51.4% agreed and 27.1% totally agreed), but many others disagreed or totally disagreed (12.2% disagreed and 9.3% totally disagreed) on the same topic. Judging the received results, it could be stated that consumers would give an irresponsible brand the benefit of doubt and would even give up on a beauty company that has a negative attitude against the environment. Regarding this matter, it can be concluded, when taking into consideration the previous statement as well, that the relationship is quite tight between brand loyalty and beauty products that are socially responsible, but not unbreakable or indestructible. As demonstrated through the obtained results, CSR is a subject that can arouse consumer emotions and therefore it can create sensitive links between customers and the brand.

The last aspect that was analyzed and evaluated in the survey was whether the Romanian consumer would penalize a beauty company that does not act socially responsible. Taking the abuse and

harm into consideration, the respondents had to indicate under what conditions they would not buy a product from a brand. The results are presented in the table below.

Nu aș cumpăra un produs cosmetic de la o companie care:

107 răspunsuri

- 🔵 Poluează mediul
- 🔴 Realizează teste pe animale
- 🟠 Tratează rău angajații (abuz de putere/condiții precare de muncă, etc.)
- 🟢 Rănește societatea (discriminare)
- 🟣 Utilizează ingrediente chimice/ nesigure
- 🔵 Toate

50,5%

13,1%

22,4%
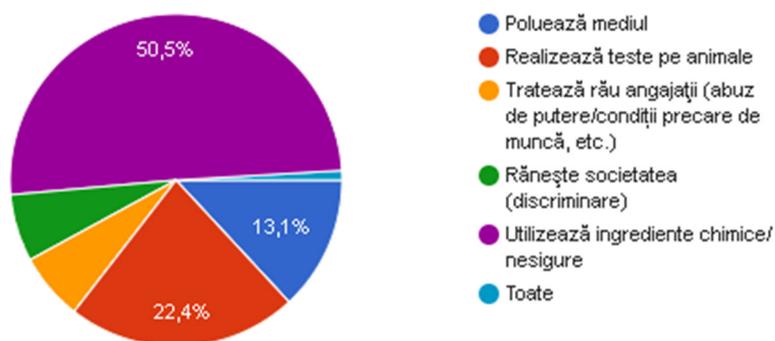
Table 8. Conditions under which customers
would not purchase beauty products

Obviously, as the data indicates, the most important factor for customers is whether cosmetic companies use safe or unsafe ingredients. More than a half of the respondents indicated the fact that they would not buy a product if the beauty brand uses chemical or unsafe ingredients (50.5%). Like explained earlier in this study, when discussing the content analysis, cosmetics products are quality products that are bought for their values, features and for aesthetic reasons. Therefore, consumers find it increasingly important to know what the products consist of and what exactly they use on their body. This aspect also explains why the criterion regarding safe and natural

ingredients is considered as highly important. The second issue that was pointed as quite important was about animal testing: 22.4% of the respondents would not buy a product if it has been tested on animals. Overall, it seems that the participants to the survey find all conditions pretty important, with treating employees badly or harming society scoring lowest, but still 6.5% would not buy a beauty product from a company if it abuses the workers or hurt the society.

4. Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to analyze the external role of corporate social responsibility initiatives in the cosmetic industry, the influence on customer purchase decision and to answer the following research questions: *How do the top three cosmetic manufacturers in Romania communicate their corporate social responsibility work externally, on their official website?* and *How do corporate social responsibility activities influence the Romanian customer relationships in the cosmetic industry?* The aim was to investigate how beauty companies frame their CSR on their corporate website, how Romanian consumers perceive the importance of CSR, and if CSR has a decisive role in the purchase decision.

The content analysis of the three leading cosmetic brands in Romania: The Body Shop, NIVEA and Avon was conducted in order to investigate and to find the answer for the first research question. The qualitative research showed which activities are mostly framed as being part of the CSR strategy of beauty companies, namely: the environment/planet, philanthropy/charity, engagement in local communities/human rights, protecting children and ending domestic violence, natural/raw ingredients and recyclable/reusable packaging, animal testing and self-esteem of customers, fighting against breast cancer or HIV. All this subjects seem to have something in common and to be related to the concept of humanity.

The human aspect is in the center of each of the analyzed beauty companies and it became clear that people and their rights are also an important aspect of CSR. This result provides new insight in the knowledge about what CSR is related to and gives a better understanding of this broad concept, specifically in the beauty industry. It can be stated that CSR is a subject that is nearly linked to people and their emotions and the human area is as important as sustainability, charity and the planet. According to this research and its findings, other future studies should concentrate and provide more insight into the specific CSR activities beauty companies engage in, for example by interviewing the cosmetic brand managers directly.

The present study also investigated the motivations and reasons why the beauty companies engage in CSR initiatives. The results showed that all of them seem to have more or less the same interests. According to the theoretical framework and concentrating specifically on the *four-part model* of Carroll (1991) or on *the triple bottom line-approach* of Bailey, the so-called three Ps: people, planet, and profits, all types of responsibilities and obligations are important for beauty brands. They all attempt to be ethical, to be moral and fair but also to respect people's rights, to be social orientated and to avoid harm. At the same time, the economical reason should not be neglected, as it also became apparent that the brands want to increase profits by engaging in CSR.

It is actually the responsibility of each company to be profitable and to satisfy the shareholders, but at the same time to deliver value to the consumer and to increase the riches for the entire business. Next, all brands want to be charitable, to be a good corporate citizen and therefore perform in activities that are advantageous for the community by fighting against several human issues and engaging in fair trade. The environmental aspect, the planet is also a subject that every single beauty company is taking into consideration when engaging in CSR activities. Reducing the CO_2/electricity and water consumption or implementing the reduce/reuse, recycle/rethink and replant concept are also on the agenda of cosmetic brands. Lastly, even

the legal responsibility is recognized by at least one brand, which stresses out the obedience of the law in its CSR policy (The Body Shop).

The second research method, the conducted survey, was designed in order to understand the relationship between CSR initiatives in the cosmetic industry and the purchase decision of the Romanian consumer. The results framed the answer for the second research question, namely: *How do Corporate Social Responsibility activities influence the Romanian customer relationships in the cosmetic industry?*

Purchase motivation, general preference as well as awareness of customers were the first topics discussed. CSR activities are not related to the preferred brands and are therefore not something that determines whether a beauty company is perceived as favorite or not, indicated the collected data. Another result that is linked to consumers purchase motivation is the importance of the CSR activities (brand image, ingredients, packaging and environmental friendliness). When these topics are regarded as CSR related, it becomes clear that Romanian customers do not find all these factors very important in their buying decisions, and that quality and the previous experience are more important. These findings are quite uncertain and could be better investigated and analyzed in future studies, preferably in an interview format, to make sure the rationale understanding becomes clear and to allow a deeper discussion on the subject.

Furthermore, in order to find how customers perceive the importance of CSR, their issue support and social value orientation was investigated. The received data showed that the use of safe and/or natural ingredients is the most important CSR issue.

Planet protection/environmentally friendly production is also marked as being important to many consumers, as well as protecting the human rights. Least important seems to be donating to charity, fair trade, diversity or the activation of self esteem.

When comparing this information to the content analysis of the brands' corporate website some surprising results come into sight. One of the most discussed and presented CSR topic for the beauty

industry seems to be self-respect, confidence, philanthropy and/or charity. However, when it comes to the issue support of customers not many find this an important topic (29.9% charity and 49.5% activates self-esteem). This is also the case when it comes to animal testing. The Body Shop for instance is framing a big part of its CSR around this issue even though not many consumers find it an important problem. The current results should concern cosmetic companies and their used strategy regarding CSR activities, because there seems to be a discrepancy between what they communicate externally and what consumers desire to hear about.

Focusing on social value orientation, most respondents find it important that their favorite cosmetic brand contributes towards society and community at large (79.4%), but striking is that also a big amount of people does not know whether their favorite brand is socially responsible even though the majority indicated that cosmetic companies should communicate their CSR activities more. The fact that most Romanian customers are unaware, could be due to ineffective CSR communication, which would fit the above statement, that implies a discrepancy between what customers want and what companies do and implies that cosmetic brands should inform their customers better about CSR in order to gain strategic benefits. Furthermore, another issue could be that beauty companies do not use the right channels when it comes to their CSR communication. Due to the obtained results only 3.7% of the customers indicated that they receive CSR information via corporate websites, but the most popular channels seem to be articles/newspaper/friends and TV. It can be concluded that customers do not want to search for information themselves, but are interested in this topic so, in order to reach as much people as possible, CSR communication should consist of channels that directly target customers, without them having to exert much effort to receive information.

Regarding the transactional outcomes and the purchase preference of the Romanian consumer, the current results showed that customers are willing to pay a higher price and invest more money for products from social responsible brands (65.4%) and therefore, the buying decision

seems to be positively influenced by CSR activities. In terms of brand loyalty and long-term outcomes, customers would favor a company that makes a positive impact on the world and would also recommend it, but at the same time they would penalize and even switch away from a cosmetic brand if it were not socially responsible.

In conclusion, it can be stated that CSR is a topic that has the power to create strong and positive links between the cosmetic industry and the purchase motivation of the Romanian consumer. Nowadays, people are more inclined towards organic goods and identify themselves with products that are high in quality, made of natural ingredients and that have a positive impact on the environment and on the society as well. Good and effective CSR activities and a better communication of these initiatives can increase the profit of a beauty business and also enhance brand image and reputation.

5. Limitations

The present study has also its limitations. The first one is linked to the amount of participants. The survey was sent online and only 107 people responded to all questions. This amount was enough for data analysis and for sketching a valid conclusion, but a higher number of respondents could give a more accurate and well-founded picture. The second limitation refers to the sampling method of the conducted survey. Most of the respondents were woman and were aged between 18 and 25. Therefore, the obtained results can only be generalized to consumers in this category and not to the whole population.

Another important limitation of this research was the fact that no other research method was used to clear some uncertain results. For example, there were respondents that indicated that they do not seek for information about CSR activity or that it is not easy to find data regarding this concept, but it is still unclear why they are not interested in this initiatives or how the communication from companies should take place so that the information gets as easy and as efficient as possible to them.

Lastly, there are also limitations about the sampling of the content analysis. The selection of the brands was made according to the Top 50 ranking cosmetic brands worldwide and then the results were filtered using a research conducted by Ştirile ProTV in 2017. Therefore, the obtained data can not indicate the fact that the same three companies remained in top three in 2020 as well. In addition to that, only three brands were investigated, which cannot account for all cosmetic brands.

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CRISIS COMMUNICATION IN THE DIGITAL CONTEXT. A LITERATURE REVIEW FRAMEWORK

DALIT KIRALY[1]

ABSTRACT. In this paper, the author would like to acknowledge the contribution means of communication have given to the sturdiness of the civilian population, in times of security crisis, based on Ella Ben-Atar's work, a qualitative research which examined the role of the educational radio in regards to the topic of sturdiness in times of an emergency, using the conversation with radio listeners format, during the security crisis in Israel which took place during "Operation Pillar of Defense" in 2012. The research was done in the "Kol Hanegev" (Voice of the Negev) radio station, which is located in Sapir College in the southern parts of Israel and is being manned by B.A students from the Department of Communication.

Keywords: Crisis, Communication crisis, Mass media, Resilience, New media.

Introduction

A time of crisis or war enlists special preparation in any society. The authorities supervise the flow of information and maneuver between the public desire for intel, a need that grows while under situations of uncertainty, to the concern towards national security. Such supervision can be expressed by allowing only partial publication or complete and total censorship. When it comes to that, not only that sanctions over the flow of information do not diminish demand, on the contrary, it

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increases it, hence increasing the tendency relying on the free channels of the interpersonal communication. A research that examined the communication patterns within the home front during the Yom Kippur War (Peled and Katz, 1974) has uncovered that friend-to-friend conversations perform a crucial role in understanding the situation at hand as well as relieving stress.

Furthermore, the research found that interpersonal communication channels were more relevant among the lower socio-economic groups, helping them to understand what was taking place as well as to calm themselves down. Information flow through informal channels filling out the space that created by censorship. Such an empty space is often used as a fertile foundation for rumors (Shibutani, 1966), which are then used as an alternative for the official intel that is not published. Unfortunately, there is no way to authenticate a rumor since one will not be able to trace its origin. Rumors move around in an independent and unsupervised manner, any man to whom the rumor gets to become an additional link in the chain who would then, in turn, can add to or diminish from it in terms of their overt or covert needs. Authorities are required to consider the benefits of content supervision in times of crisis in contrast to the drawback, which may lead to the formation of rumors, as such rumors under crisis situation may prove to be a danger and threat to the common order and social stability.

Rumors that are being transferred via means of mass media are public and, as a result, require attention (Caspi, 1995). In Israel we can see how combination of conditions that produce a highly developed rumor mill. A highly beneficial social media is an essential component for spreading rumors and it grows tighter under crisis as it is assisted by traditional communication patterns. Israel is considered a society that preserves traditional interpersonal, familial and social communication patterns well. With that being said, the integration of intel censorship with an emergency leads to the widespread creation of "Lieutenant Rumor" in its many variations.

From nearly its inception worked the research of means of mass media on the importance of combining said means with the interpersonal communication, to achieve the desired effect (Lazarsfeld and Merton,

1971). In reality, both types coexist side by side. As such, we can integrate both methods together in two different and separate ways, they are called Parallel integration and Complementary integration.

Parallel Integration: An absolute exploitation of the interpersonal communication and mass communication both separately and in parallel, without making any effort to strictly coordinate between messages within the various channels. For instance: political or commercial campaign.

Complementary Integration: A phenomenon in which both means of communication complete one another, for instance: "Media Forum", "Focus Group."

The Functions of the Mass Media

It is common to think about different roles in regards to mass media:

1. To reflect reality – common conception among the Israeli population, mostly within the state media.

2. The democracy's "Watch Dog" – Supervision and warning of every oversight or disorder in the political establishment.

3. Mediate between various parts within the population, especially between the public and the political leadership.

4. A source of entertainment for the consuming audience.

In his article "The Basic Model of the Communication Process", Lasswell (1948) classifies the functions of the media to three categories:

1. Surveillance – Gathering and spreading intel regarding people, events and processes. Commonly expressed in "news" format.

2. Correlation – Attaching fragments of information into a broader context while recommending on how to understand and respond to various events. Commonly expressed in various commentary formats.

3. Cultural Transmission - Intergenerational transmission of the cultural heritage, while expressing symbols and cultural values that are important for creating identity and intergenerational continuity in society (Caspi, 1993, 78). There is expectation that the media would perform as agents of mediation and sometimes as educators via television, films, books, literature, the arts, leisure journalism and whatever that is not considered "news".

Other researchers (Wright, 1959, 1985, Mcquail, 1984) listed two more additional functions to the mass media:

1. Entertainment, which provides stress relief, whether personal or communal, which may harm the society's stability, by music programs, movies and alike.

2. Mobilization, which is partially classified under the Mediation factor of mass media.

"Recent years have proven time and time again that it is in the media's power to promote and nurture national, central and ethical values, molding behavioral patterns in times of emergency, wars or crises… the trend to mold opinions and manipulating does not hide under a cloak of commentary." (Caspi, 1993, 79).

Each of the mass media means has its own relative advantage. Before the age of television, it was the radio that filled the role of entertainment which television fills these days and the newspaper is more used as a mediator, for its ability to broaden and deepen itself. However, the distinction between one role to another is not clear and unequivocal since that media consumers would often treat one format differently.

In the modern world, there is an incredible amount of information, an "Explosion of Information" that increases the individual's embarrassment that births the desire for "a device that would explain the facts and relate to a wider context and through this, will grant meaning to the mixture of news and information." (Caspi, 1993, 85).

New Media versus Traditional Means of Communication

Ever since the sixties, the term "New Media" has included a wide and varied array of beneficial communication technologies. Authors of the "Handbook of New Media" (Lievrouw and Livingstone, 2006) choose to define "New Media" in "a complex manner which coils information communication technologies (ICT) in social contexts relative to their use and combines three ingredients: technological products and devices, activities, practices and uses: social organizations and arrangements that are created revolving around said devices and behaviors… The core properties of the "New Media" are: Interconnectivity, granting the consumer access as both addresser and addressee, Interactivity, versatility and openness at the ends of the media process as well as the fact they are present everywhere and not centered around a sole domain." (Mcquail, 2014, 43).

The two main forces driving the change were satellite communications and the use of the computer as a means of communication. The computer's massive power as a means of communication is the result of the digitization process, which enables efficient and integrated transfer of information components of all types and formats. Even though it hasn't happened yet, in principal, the means mass media presented above have become superfluous, since they can be assimilated into the same computer communications network and at the same reception center (at home, for example). Today, there is a shift of the press to the Internet.

Other innovations in addition to computer technologies have changed some aspects of mass media (Carey, 2003), new means of broadcasting via cable, satellite and radio helped increasing broadcast capability.

The Internet

Its beginnings are linked to American efforts to achieve military supremacy over the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The Advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA), whose goal was to promote

interactive collaboration among American universities in computerized knowledge resources, so that they could communicate with distant computers. As a result, the ARPANET was created. The ARPANET was a communications network between computers, designed to link research institutes and computer centers in the United States. Connection of the network began around 1969 and by 1971, it had fifteen computer servers. In 1973, the Norwegian Institute carried out the first international connection to the Internet, through which additional European countries were connected to the network (John. N., 2008).

Influence Theories of the Mass Media

Influence is the result of social interaction between two factors – Influencer and Influenced. The causative agent causes the response of the recipient. The response may be cognitive, emotional (affective) or behavioral. Cognitive level refers to the range of mental activities such as perception, data processing, remembering, thinking and learning. The emotional level addresses reactions that stir as a result of media exposure, for example: anger, joy, sadness, regret and alike. The behavioral level addresses the influence means of media have over our behavior and functioning. The effects can be sorted by the degree of control and supervision between the addressee and the recipient. Whether they are pre-planned or not, whether the recipient is aware of the impact. What is the nature of the effect and how long it is expressed? Micro effects can be distinguished from their macro counterparts. Caspi summarizes the influence attributes means of media have (Caspi, 1995, 65): Different kinds of changes – design, conversion or reinforcement occurs at the cognitive, emotional or behavioral level, directed or unintentional by the addressee, the recipient is aware or unaware of them, occurring at the individual or the general level, in the short or long term, resulting from the mere exposure to the media or the content transmitted through them.

Research engagement on the effects of difficulties involves many constraints: Conceptual-ideological constraints and methodological historical constraints. There is a debate between those who favor the functionalist approach and those who support the critical Neo-Marxist school. According to the critical view, if we treat mass media as a social institution, as the functionalists recommend, the question of influence is irrelevant because it is not raised for other social institutions, such as the family, the economic or political institution. Scholars who support different ideologies may interpret similar phenomena differently and attribute them to entirely different meanings. For example, the contribution of the media to preserving the consensus may be interpreted by functionalists as one of many influences. On the other hand, the critical school, which undermines the sanctity of the existing social order, attributes such an influence to a central and decisive significance (Caspi, 1995, 17).

Historically speaking – the development of communications in terms of technology is quick, intensive and drastic. Research struggles keeping up with the changes taking place within the media industry and as a result, keeping up with the audience's consumption habits. In the time it would require one to perform an in-depth research, technological innovations within the consuming population may occur and the research would lose its validity even before it had started. Hence, it is also difficult addressing findings and conclusions made by previous research, before technological changes. The empirical tools available today also find it difficult providing an appropriate research array which would enable measuring long term influences, macro and subconscious influences and would conclude an unequivocal circumstantial link between exposure to means of communication and possible outcomes.

Caspi (1995, 19) discovered three traditions in the research of influences related to mass communication. The first tradition, which benefited during the first four decades of the 20th century, had witnessed an omnipotent factor within mass communication with an almost infinite potential that had fast and direct effect on whoever that has

been exposed to it. This perception attributed to the media the ability to dictate in an instant and effective manner opinions, feelings and behaviors.

The second tradition – the Limited Effects Approach, has been formed in the United States around the late 1940s, attributed limited impact to the media, which is contingent on intermediary factors protecting the individual from mass media. It challenged the assumptions regarding assumptions about a uniform, rapid and direct impact. It presented how different people are affected differently by the media.

The third tradition – began appearing around the 1970s as a trend that once again adopts the perception of the media as having great power, even though not in the same manner as seen in the first tradition (Noelle-Neumann, 1973). This approach focused on the long-term impact of the media in terms of organization, values, norms and such.

"We can say, that fluctuations that characterized the argument regarding impact – from the strong influence model to a limited influence model and then going back to the strong influence model – are based on changes in the social world during this period […] In the 1930s it has been discovered that the strong media influences, because of the economic downturn, and the political trends which revolved around the war, gave birth to a fertile foundation for growth of certain types of influences. Similarly, the normality of the fifties and sixties produced a model of limited influences. Around the late 1960s, political controversy and inflation joined together, exposed the social structure in fundamental ways and made it permeable to the media (Carey, 1978; Caspi, 1995, 19).

The theory involving mass society referred to the process of social change: the individual loses the family framework and becomes isolated in the crowd (Kornhauser, 1953). German sociologist Ferdinand Toennies, differentiated between the community (Gemeinschaft) and the society (Gesellschaft). As said by Toennies, the community is the typical social system of the pre-modern society. It is based on unmediated interpersonal relationships (as well as on interpersonal communication)

and is characterized by a deep identification of the individual with the other and with the community and its values. This solidarity comes from what sociologist Emile Durkheim called the "Mechanical Solidarity", connections of both difference and similarities that were felt among members of the community and their broad common trait. Each and every detail is deeply rooted in certain primary groups - the family, the village, the community of believers - and shares their backgrounds, beliefs, and norms." (Kaspi, 1995, 20). In contrast to the community, Toennies characterizes modern society in anonymous and competitive relationships, breaking with tradition and loosening interpersonal ties. "In such a society there is an atmosphere of alienation, and mechanical solidarity gives way to "organic solidarity" - a system of connections based on differences, complementarities and interdependence. In such circumstances, the bonds formed between people become a kind of utilitarian and purposeful "contract." (Caspi, 1995, 19).

The radio, which was present in every household, was considered as a very real threat of invasion of privacy, mostly due to the detachment state of the individual within the mass society and his disconnection from interpersonal bonds. This gave birth to the Magic Bullet theory or the Hypodermic Needle Theory, whereby the mass media, and especially the radio, is like a syringe needle that transmits its messages directly to the individual's brain, which is described as the target Passive, helpless and completely exposed to the contents of the "syringe".

Usage of the media as means of campaign has become more common because of the First World War, mostly via the radio. Such propaganda was seen in a negative eye and as a manipulation whose sole purpose was to spread lies and half-truths. In his research called "Propaganda Techniques in the World War" (1927), Lasswell has identified several categories of the propaganda:

• Propaganda in order to justify the war's objectives – mainly internal in nature - to the population on the home front and to the soldiers on the front lines. Its purpose is to strengthen the citizens' belief in the justice of the war, the public's willingness to bear the burden and the morale of the soldiers.

• Accusation - Places responsibility for the war on the opponent, in order to undermine the legitimacy of the enemy's regime and the motivation of its fighters.

• Slander or Satanism – Presents the enemy as the devil himself and sharpens the distinction between the good guys (us) and the bad guys (them).

• Illusion of Victory - Especially in wars that have lasted a long time, to encourage the fighters in the hope that the good end is approaching and sowing despair among the opposing forces.

Lasswell's research is of great importance in the study of propaganda and the media in general. Among other things, they formed the basis for the communication model of the five main questions: who says what, by what means, to whom and by what influence.

The Media's Impact Over Event Outcomes

Research (McQuail, 2014, 600) says that the media can lead to change by itself but only rarely, though she does provide "transmission pipelines", means and an arena for the "unfolding" of events in which various players and agendas are involved that are often competing with one another. One type of event in which the media plays an active and significant role in the course of its occurrence is usually of a public and collective nature, has a historical significance and lasts for a long time during which interaction between the media and the key players. This is significantly evident in international crises and events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Arab Spring, the civil uprisings that began in the social networks and led to actual uprisings in reality. McQuail (628) accepts the claim that the new properties that means of communication can and do serve for matching and strengthening the process of communication as we have seen thus far. Communication makes full use of the new media and sees it as an arsenal of better and more beneficial tools for getting the message through. Integrating

interactivity, participation and networking in large-scale advertising and transfer of old-style communications products that are owned by only a few hands. The new media is effective in tying fans and followers to media sources and streamlining information from the public, enabling targeted audience targeting. McQuail compares this to the difference between "smart bombs" that are supposed to hit a spot, a barrage of bombs fired at random.

Communication in Times of Crises

"Communication in Times of Crises" is a concept reminiscent of the Indian parable of a group of blind people trying to describe an elephant. Each person touches one of the elephant's organs and describes his feelings, and each description is different, of course, than what the animal actually looks like" (Coombs, 2004, Limor, ibid, Mendlzis, 2014, 335). Coombs (Coombs and Holladay, 2010) states that the term crisis does not have a precise or common definition yet. The definition suggested by Coombs describes crisis situation as "a significant risk has the potential to have adverse negative consequences if not properly handled" (Coombs, 2007a, Limor, ibid, Mendlzis, 2014, 335). The crisis contains, says Coombs, three types of risks that are related to each other: a threat to public safety, financial loss and damage to reputation, that is, image and credibility. Some crises can cause disasters and loss of human life (in Limor, Leshem, Mendelsis, ibid., 2007b, 335).

1. There are three clear characteristics of the crisis, according to a classic definition, that try to distinguish between a crisis situation and other problematic events: "It constitutes a threat to values of paramount importance to the organization, it requires a response within a short time and it occurs unexpectedly and unexpectedly" (Hermann, 1963, 64). Ulmer and his colleagues view the crisis as an event or a series of unexpected events that create high level of uncertainty and risk, or have the potential to threaten the organization's most important goals

(Ulmer Sellnow and Seeger, 2007). A crisis is also defined as "an unexpected event that threatens important expectations of stakeholders and can seriously affect the functioning of the organization and produce negative results (Coombs, 2007b, 2-3, Limor, Leshem, Mendelsis, ibid., 335). A crisis that threatens the ability to perform an organization and is not properly dealt with might cause damage to the organization. Barton (Barton, 1993 Limor, Leshem, Mendelsis, ibid., 335) sees crisis as "a situation in which the individual, the group, or the organization cannot cope in routine work processes, as a result of pressures stemming from a sudden change." The definition of the World Health Organization for crisis situations calls it "an unstable situation that creates great danger or great difficulty, and may even escalate it to a deterioration" (Limor, Leshem, Mendelsis, ibid., 335). According to all the definitions, a crisis situation hinders the organization's ability to achieve its goals, and requires it to be rearranged (Smith, 2007, Limor, Leshem, Mendelsis, ibid., 335). The term organization refers to the state, society, organization, and individual person. Limor, Leshem and Mendelsis (ibid., 335) state that experts in the field are able to differentiate among three types of crises:

1. An immediate crisis that occurs without warning or following a faint warning, such as a tsunami.

2. A crisis that develops slowly which gives a higher probability of stopping it. An example to that would be the Mouth and Foot disease from Britain in the late 20th century.

3. A prolonged crisis that continues for quite a long time.

The mass media plays a significant role in each of the crisis situations (Avraham, 2009). The definition of "Crisis Communication" is obscure and not unequivocal. Researchers believe that the concept includes two separate systems: a system of gathering and disseminating information about the crisis, and formulating a strategy for coping with the crisis, its results and its implications (Coombs, 2004, Limor, Leshem, Mendlzis, ibid, 335). The term consists of two components: Crisis and Communication in Crisis. On the face of it, any negative

publicity in one of the forms of media creates a crisis situation in the famous organization, but in fact, not every negative publication is perceived as a crisis. Kathleen Fearn-Banks (Fearn-Banks, 2007, Limor, Leshem, Mendlzis, ibd., 336) distinguishes between two types of crises – one that happens in the organization but does not reach the media and the public and a communicational crisis – whose echoes reach the media and public. Hence, a media crisis begins once the mass media are aware of the crisis in the organization.

From this moment, the organization is dealing not only with the crisis itself, but with its media and public implications as well. It is possible to identify different groups that the organization depends on during crises: employees of the organization, customers, shareholders, citizens of the community, members of management, professional organizations (Fearn-Banks, 2007, Limor, Leshem, Mendlzis, ibid., 336). The broad preoccupation with communication in crisis situations comes from the social, communicational and technological changes that took place mainly in the last two decades of the 20th century and in the first decade of the 21st century.

The Radio in the New Era

Despite the somber predictions in regards of the radio's future following the emergence of television, the radio has never faded nor pushed aside. The radio has a special advantage unlike other means of communication, especially for its status as a secondary medium, which enables us performing other tasks while listening to it (Starky & Crisell, 2009). The radio stands in the background and accompanies us all day in such mundane and natural manner that it is hard for us to comprehend its contribution to our lives (Lavi, 2011).

The Radio Under State of Emergency and War

During an emergency or war, the radio has a crucial and central role by providing the population with an important service and it enables access, availability, immediacy and live report from the field. In times of crisis, citizens in a democratic country set aside internal disagreements and unite to cope with the crisis, such as "gathering around the flag", this can be seen in Israel during the Gulf War (1991) when Kol Yisrael (Voice of Israel) and Army Radio joined forces for joint broadcasts. It is precisely at this time that the advantages of the radio, especially its accessibility, its availability and its ability to transmit information immediately, live and communicate with people in society, become apparent. These data led the research field to examine today the contribution of radio not in entertainment or government, but in its unique contribution to emergency situations during this period of accelerated development in technology. In emergency situations, communication broadcasts are a main source of information on pressing questions: "What?" "When?" "Where?" The extensive media coverage enables viewers to feel part of the community, and in times of distress, the social ties and unity of local communities are consolidated and merged into the heroic national ethos (Libs & Prosh, 2006; Hermoni, Lebel & Tzuriel, 2011, Neiger, Mayers & Zandberg, 2009).

Research literature deals with the importance of the media as a source of information, encouragement, comfort, and satisfaction of emotional and psychosocial needs. In the field of broadcast interviews, four sub-categories are distinguished (Montgomery, 2012): Interviews with reporters, mainly reporting or interpreting; Interviews with experts for explanation and advice; Interviews with functionaries responsible for restoring functioning in a disrupted routine; Interviews with "ordinary" people, affected by the news events and reporting on the impact of events. Most researchers agree that during emergency situations, the Israeli media joins in the national effort, relinquishing

its role as a "guard dog" and not criticizing the establishment. In other words, even media that in normal times criticizes the government tends in times of crisis to avoid doing so and instead, maintains national morale and to mobilize for national goals by allocating more broadcast time and priority to the positions of decision makers. Katz and Wedell (Katz & Wedell, 2009; Neiger et.al.) examined the role the plays in new nation-states. According to them, in many countries, radio has been widely used since its effectiveness in transmitting messages between the government and citizens and in disseminating national educational messages. In this context, researchers found radio better than television, more expensive for production and consumption, and the press, which requires literacy.

In times of emergency, listeners are more likely to turn to the radio to share their feelings and events with their lives, compared to normal days, because of the need to share the conditions of the routines with others and return to a renewed homeostasis. Emotional acceptance of emotions (in the case of radio, between the broadcaster and the listener) usually reinforces the positive component associated with adaptation and the development of mental strength, thus making this radiophonic format part of the emergency support system (Gilat, 2013; Lavi, Northman-Shwartz & Dekel, 2015). The radio also plays non-journalistic functions for the behavior of the crisis (Barzilai, 1992), such as handing over peace demands from soldiers to their families, counseling programs and conversations with listeners. In some cases, the radio was the first to provide information and report on the events on the front and even participated in the wars themselves by sending messages to reserve forces, as a means of making alarms and as a means of communication between the front and the home front.

To this day, there have only been a few studies conducted regarding the role of radio as a building support systems over the airwaves and as one that can influence the residents' perception of the intensity of the crisis. Among them is a study that follows the huge fires in Australia (Cohen, Hughes &White, 2007), when the national Australian radio station took on the role of a factor reporting about the

spread of the fire while emphasizing the importance of the bond between the media and the community. Residents were updated regarding what was being done above the site and received instructions regarding preventive measures and actions they are required to take (Cohen, Hughes, & White, 2007; Hall, 2011).

The media plays a significant role in transmitting information to the public in emergency situations. However, misuse may lead to radicalization and drama in the nature of the broadcast and to the search for sensations, which may result in damage to the civilian strength. Out of the experience accumulated in the world resulting from widespread disasters, researchers have identified five principals in promoting sturdiness, which are beneficial beyond differences in its traits, its radius and ties to the disaster:

1. **Security Increase -** In order to increase strength you are first required to strengthen the individual's sense that they will be protected and is able to receive intel regarding people who mean to them, and as such, refuting rumors and using the media for reliable information. The media can increase the sense of security within the community via media coverage that would transmit live and constantly updating report concerning the matter at hand by refuting rumors (especially in view of the development of social networks in which information is spread without control nor filtering) and by transferring intel from an authority factor (McQuail, 2014; Nosk & Limor, 1995).

2. **Increasing Calmness -** To increase resilience, it is important to calm the physical manifestations of distress and successfully deal with negative thoughts and feelings. While the media does have the ability to mediate the news, the individual should know how to use them wisely and controlled use to catch up without exacerbating the anxiety. Self-teaching and practice of skills such as joy, humor, interest and positive emotions can widen the set tools and optimize the individual's struggle with hardships. Researchers suggest music as an option for stress relief and can be loosening and soothing (Booth, 2010 ;Hutchinson, 2012).

3. Increased Sense of Competence - During emergency or threat, it is important to restore the sense of both self and collective competence as well as the belief that it is possible to deal against such hardships. A perception of high self-competence makes it possible to act even in situations of difficulty, especially when one believes that the task is important (Kaplan & Asor, 2012). In order for one to be able to sense one's competence, they are in need of partners who would then cooperate or join with them for the sake of figuring out problems that are too big for one individual to handle (cass, 2012).

4. Increasing Social Cohesion - Social cohesion, mutual support and the existence of "togetherness" among members of the community enable the preservation of social structures and therefore, maintain the rules and order that prevailed in the company prior to the crisis. Cohesion is measured firstly in the absence of serious conflicts among members of the community or among the sub-groups residing with in. Communal Cohesion affects the individual's psychological state directly by the fact that it enables for their mental stability (Lev-Sade, 2003).

5. Giving Hope - The sense of hope expresses an active mental process that awakens in order to deal with a threat (Snyder, 2000). Hope can awaken expectation and therefore, it also directs action so that the results are as good as possible. Optimism is a learned trait, and it is reinforced when the individual challenges excessive catastrophic thinking, which it would then replace with realistic aspirations and fact-based thinking that does not ignore the problems but can also anticipate their solution (Levi et al., 2012). Services within the community that support and strengthen the belief that returning life to their proper course is available, have a great value (Margalit, 2014). Hobfoll et al. (2007) claim that a message of hope given directly following a traumatic event benefits greatly to the victim's regrouping ability.

The research I have chosen to relate to is this article, examined how the components of resilience mentioned above are expressed in the bond between broadcasters and listeners in times of a security threat.

Research Questions (of the educational radio regarding resilience during an emergency)

1. Which components of resilience described by Hobfoll et al. (2007) have been expressed during Kol Hanegev's educational broadcasts during an ongoing security threat?

2. How the components of resilience did received a spontaneous or premade expression during conversations with the viewers? and in what way the immediate and actual threat on the lives of the broadcasters found spontaneous expression during broadcast?

3. How did dialogue with listeners during state if emergency expressed dialogical practices of cooperation and equality during the conversation or of authority and strength?

Hypotheses (of the educational radio regarding resilience during an emergency)

1. The emergency broadcasts will feature content related to the five principles of immediate intervention in threat situations: security, calm, ability, cohesion and hope (Hobfoll et al, 2007).

2. In the spontaneous discussion regarding the broadcasters, one would be able to spot statements that increase the various components of resilience, and there will be statements that harm the sense of resilience. The physical threat experienced by the broadcasters will be reflected in the frequency of the appearance of those who harm the strength.

3. The social and geographic affiliation group from which the listeners come to broadcast will affect the messages transmitted on the broadcast and the relationship that is woven between the broadcaster and the listeners.

The study is based over the phenomenological paradigm that deals with examining the human experience by information collected from the research of field. This is a qualitative study, based on an analysis

of the content of texts produced by the radio station Kol Hanegev at Sapir College during the emergency broadcasts taking place during Operation "Pillar of Defense". All recordings are original and accepted for the purposes of the research in their entirety. The research materials were collected from the radio station's archive.

Study Period (of the educational radio regarding resilience during an emergency)

Operation "Pillar of Defense" which took place during the month of November, 2012.

The Course of the Study (of the educational radio regarding resilience during an emergency)

An analysis of the conversations in radio programs during the operation is part of a broad study in which radio broadcasts were analyzed in emergency situations (Ben Atar, 2016). During the operation, about 24 conversations were held with listeners. All of the listeners were current or former students in the communications department at Sapir College, and the broadcasters contacted them on their own initiative to share experiences from the emergency situation.

Analysis of Findings (of the educational radio regarding resilience during an emergency)

The content of the broadcasts was classified into five main themes from the point of view of the psychosocial approaches described above, and especially the typology of Hobfoll et al. (Hobfoll et al., 2007). These themes were examined in connection with the relationship between broadcasters and listeners. The five themes were: increasing security, increasing the sense of calm, increasing the sense of ability, increasing social cohesion and giving hope.

The Findings (of the educational radio regarding resilience during an emergency)

During the eight days of battle of operation Pillar of Defense, when classes have been suspended, students were not forced to man the radio station but there were those who chose to do so (20 students, a few of the college's graduates as well as some broadcasters from the community). Unlike regular school days, during which the station broadcasts continuously three hours in the morning and from noon till midnight, during the operation broadcast were made from 7:00 until midnight, live and continuous broadcasts that were accompanied by reports regarding the situation, directives from the HFC (Home Front Command) and interviews with both representatives from the community as well as professionals. During analysis of the conversation broadcasted, give themes have been found: 1) Sapir is our home; 2) Ways to create solidarity during live broadcast; 3) Feelings and emotions resulting from the fighting; 4) We have to remain optimistic; 5) Functioning under fire.

Summary

In conclusion, this study sheds light on a unique angle that usually disappears from view. Young broadcasters who operate from an area under real threat to their lives function simultaneously as a person who provides support and strength to listeners and as those who are encouraged by the listeners with whom they converse. The recognition of the special role of educational radio in times of emergency for the development of resilience emphasizes the need to provide a professional response during an emergency, not only to the content of the broadcast, but also to the feelings of broadcasters operating under fire. Digital media contribute to human relationships, especially in times of crisis.

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ORIENTATION LOCK: ON? ASPECT RATIO IN SOCIAL MEDIA

ALEXANDRU DOROFTE[1]

ABSTRACT. The shape of a video (aspect ratio) is subject for debate for more than 100 years. From film to television to digital and mobile, the aspect ratio of video went from almost square to super wide. After the arrival of video capable mobile phone, everything started to go backwards. We first observed unintentional vertical videos, then square video created especially for mobile devices and even some vertical platforms that encourage users to only create vertical videos. This study aims to provide a systematic review of the most common aspect ratios throughout the history of film and video, but most of all to describe the current situation and possible trends regarding the aspect ratio of modern videos – what are the most common aspect ratios, in what situations are the used, are the trends indicating the increase of vertical or horizontal? The quantitative research conducted on over 3000 videos posted on Facebook shows that most common shape for video right now is square, but vertical videos are also of high interest. 1:1 aspect ratio may be a transition from landscape to vertical. As users become video producers themselves, more and more content is being created. The traditional video producing workflow is being challenged and it becomes apparent how that user-generated content is gaining on professional produced video.

Keywords: *Mobile Devices; Smartphones; Screen Format; Vertical Video; Mobile Film-making*

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Introduction

For more than 100 years, the traditional shape of the video screen was a horizontal rectangle. It varied from the first Motion Picture Patent (1:33) to the super wide Panavision 70 (2:20), but it was always horizontal. All that was about to change in 2005 when YouTube was launched and the first user generated video content reached the Web.

Traditional video was shot horizontally because our eyes sit horizontally, but technology is in constant motion, and video is no exception. We are long past the age of classic horizontal 4:3 or 16:9 devices that constrain the way we consume video. The arrival of mobile devices created a revolution where the consumers became producers and the producers (brands and marketers) have to pay attention to the influencers that set the trends in video creation, becoming in a way consumers themselves.

A recent study showed that 72% of millennials (people born between the early 1980s and 2000s) no longer turn their phone (from 9:16) to watch videos in widescreen (16:9) (Pogue, 2018)– a good reason for marketers to create videos with vertical aspect ratios in mind. Changing aspect ratio is not only a question of post-production cropping; it is an issue of pre-production, when the shooting is planned with the end result in mind. Video producers have to be aware of the particularities of each platform (or platforms) that they have to create the video for, their suggested specifications and aspect ratio (horizontal, square or vertical).

The aspect ratio of a video is a creative way to deliver the message to the audience. It is not the message itself, but merely a tool that can have a great impact on the way people receive, interpret and interact with the video.

1. Literature review

1.1. Define aspect ratio, orientation

Aspect ratio (AR) is a term that generally is used to describe the relation between the height and the weight of an image. However, this concept is of great interest as it is not only used to define the shape of an image on screen, but also the shape of a display device, a camera sensor or a film stock (Jackson, 2016, p. 78). Aspect ratio is also important in many of the design related activities (web design, UX/UI design, game design etc.).

It is crucial to remember that it is the ratio between the numbers that defines the shape of the frame, not the number themselves. In other words, the aspect ratio is a numerical way to describe a rectangular form. In the case of the ubiquitous 4:3 aspect ratio, the shape can be described as a 4 units wide and 3 units high rectangle (Cinemasource, 2001). The units that define the shape could be pixels, centimeters, inches, millimeters. Although the common ratio form (4:3) is used more often, in the cinematographic industry it is common to reduce it to a single number (1.33).

Another way to explain aspect ratio is by the smallest set of numbers that can be achieved by dividing each side of the colon by two. For a 1280x1024 (SXGA) resolution, dividing it by two would mean 640:512, then 320:256 and so on, to the smallest possible numbers, 5:4, an aspect ratio witch is very close to being square. (Jackson, 2016).

Table 1: Most important aspect ratios in the history of video (until mobile)

Name/use	Aspect Ratio		
Square format	1:1	1:1	FILM: Stills, some large format cameras (120 film). Used in social media
Aspect ratio for SD TV in most of the world	4:3	1.33:1	Originally used by the Lumière Brothers for silent movies so used until the late 1920, TV, Computer displays, SD Televisions (except in Europe) old film

Name/use	Aspect Ratio		
Academy Ratio		1.375:1	FILM: Named after the "Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences" in 1938. After the introduction of sound on the same film.
35mm "full frame" stills	3:2	1.5:1	FILM-Stills: The aspect ratio of 35 mm film used for still photography
HDTV, Widescreen PC Monitor	16:9	1.78:1	Aspect ratio chosen for all modern HDTV standards, also many widescreen PC, laptop and video screen devices.
Paramount format	15:9	1.66:1	FILM: Developed by Paramount Pictures, now common in mainland Europe; native Super 16 mm frame ratio.
"Panavision"		2.39:1	Aspect ratio of current anamorphic (widescreen) theatrical projection from 1970 onwards. Specified as 2.40:1 for Blu-ray Disc film releases (1920×800 resolution).

1.2. A Brief Overview of the Aspect Ratio

The first recorded aspect ratio that was used on a massive scale was the 4:3 or 1.33 aspect ratio and it was invented by William Kennedy Dickson. In 1909, the Motion Picture Patent Company declared this AR to be the industry standard for silent film in the United States. In 1932, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences changed the standard to a 1.37 aspect ratio due to the addition of sound on the film stock. This new AR was called the Academy ratio (Hess, 2017).

The invention of television as a direct competitor for the cinema led to a series of changes that introduced new aspect ratios. It was not until big production houses had to compete with the commercialization of television sets that they began experimenting with new ratios to give the audiences something they could not get at home — wider and larger screens (McCullagh, 2019).

What followed was a decade-long war of widescreen formats. Starting with Cinerama (a multicamera and multiprojector system, AR 2.59), then passing to Cinemascope (AR 2.45), Vistavision 1945 (AR 1.85), Todd AO (a 70mm film with AR 2.20) and Super Panavision 70 (2.20), just to name a few.

The most common modern aspect ratio is 16:9 (1.78). This standard came about as a compromise between theater aspect ratios and television's 4:3 format. The 16:9 aspect ratio allowed for the comfortable viewing of both older television programs and blockbuster films, without having to crop and "pan and scan" either format to fit well on the screen (McCullagh, 2019).

1.3. Mobile devices and aspect ratio

Mobile video is a big part of media consumption at this moment, but when it was first introduced, it was more of a gimmick then a serious feature. The first important moment for the mobile phone came when it became available as an object of mass consumption during the 1990s. First text messages (in 1993), then the first smartphone and the first camera phone came along in 2002, followed by the Apple iPhone, with a touch screen, in 2007 (Kossof, 2014).

The mobile phone is a main component of a culture that is changing our understanding of the new millennium. (Jenkins, 2006, p. 5). In a "databased culture" (Manovich, 2001) where digital products are considered an important forms of cultural (and personal) expression, the mobile phone (with a camera) has become a powerful tools for capturing, editing, storing and distributing, therefore promoting new ways of producing and experiencing media.

1.4. Online video and aspect ratio

Although online video has been around since the early 1990s, when web browsers attained the ability to display images, while a camera was connected to the Internet and was able to refresh in order

to transmit images, the focus of this paper will be on the period that followed the launch of the first online video services. In 2005, YouTube was launched and Apple introduced a video podcast for iTunes (together with the iPod it opened the era of mobile video). After 2007 Justintv, Ustream, Livestream, Metacafe, Dailymotion, and other video services become available. All this, combined with a higher quality internet connection, started a trend of video consumption that would not stop to this day.

With the arrival of the smartphone, people were able to create and distribute their own digital content. This raised a big problem: not all people were trained in the art of shooting video. Many preferred to keep their phones in a vertical position resulting in a vertical video. This practice was mocked at first in such manner that in 2012 the "Say no to vertical video" campaign was launched, also known as VVS or Vertical Video Syndrome (Beaulac, 2019). This campaign encouraged people to shoot horizontal videos instead of vertical ones, arguing that cinema, computers, and the human eyes sit horizontal. In spite of the campaign, the number of vertical video continued to rise and eventually all major social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, IGTV, etc.) offered support for square and vertical videos.

1.5. Vertical videos and brands

It was when the social platforms started to encourage marketers to create video ads designed especially for mobile devices when everything skyrocketed. Facebook claimed 8 million videos per day, Snapchat over 10 billion vertical views per day, and Periscope, over 110 years of vertical videos per day (Lafferty, 2016). In 2016, 54% of consumers wanted to see more video content from the brands they support (hubspot.com, 2017) and 87% of businesses use video as a marketing tool (wyzowl.com, 2019). These are just a few statistics that should make a picture of the situation of video consumption in the past years. The numbers are appealing and marketers embraced the medium without hesitation.

The issue with mobile video production is that it does not work like traditional video, but it has to be specifically designed for mobile device. In order to address these issues, Facebook (applicable for Instagram as well) put together a "good practice guide" when creating content for its platforms: aspect ratios of 4:5 for feed, 9:16 (vertical full screen) for stories, 1:1 for carousels, 16:9 for in-stream videos (facebook.com, n.d.).

The tools for video production started to adapt for vertical format. Brands like iMovie (Apple), Quik (GoPro), Kinemaster, Adobe Spark, and even the industry standard Adobe Premiere started offering the possibility to create video in vertical aspect ratios.

Video producers also acknowledged the importance of vertical video and started to adapt for the new format. National Geographic produced the final episode of their documentary "One Strange Rock" in vertical format and streamed it on IGTV. Although it is 47 minutes long, it has generated over 3 million views. Spotify started to introduce vertical videos exclusive for their platform in an attempt to build interest, and Netflix introduced previews for their film in vertical format (Gilliland, 2018).

The way people produce and consume video dictates the aspect ratio for the videos that are produced. This is mainly because people do not turn the phone horizontal, because consumers are also producers and because younger generations do not have any kind of setback regarding vertical videos since they are the "inventors" of this format.

2. Research design

This study aims to identify the new trends in video creation, from a platform perspective. The affordance of each digital platform prompts changes in the creation of video, from format to length and content. This study focuses on Facebook as the social network sites that incorporates a plethora of functionalities and content types, centering on the next research questions:

(RQ1) What is the most common orientation for Facebook videos?

(RQ2) What are the most common video aspect ratios used on Facebook pages?

(RQ3) Is there a relationship between video length and Facebook appraisal indicators?

(RQ4) What claims do the descriptions make about the video content?

2.1 Methodology

Quantitative methods were deemed favorable for this study, given the applied nature of the research questions. Furthermore, quantitative analysis on text corpuses in the form of a clustered co-occurrence network was chosen as a preferred method for studying the video description. The scope of the text analysis is to identify subjects and specificities of video descriptions in the context of multimodal communication and expectation building.

2.2 Sampling and data collection

The pages chosen for the study were considered on the basis of two indicators: popularity and content. Popularity was established by the number of page likes. Pages dedicated to a very specific niche (e.g.: cooking video, do it yourself) were excluded from the sample in favor of more general audiences. At the intersection of online tops, statistics, popularity and content, the next pages were chosen:

Table 2. Sampled Facebook pages

	Name	Page	Year of page creation	Number of page likes (May 2018)	Number of videos posted in 2017
1.	**UNILAD**	www.facebook.com/uniladmag	2011	42 mill.	538
2.	**LADbible**	www.facebook.com/LADbible	2012	36 mill.	484
3.	**The Dodo**	www.facebook.com/thedodosite	2014	24 mill.	533
4.	**Now This**	www.facebook.com/NowThisNews	2012	14 mill.	560
5.	**BuzzFeed Video**	www.facebook.com/BuzzFeedVideo	2013	13 mill.	554
6.	**Seeker Media**	www.facebook.com/SeekerMedia	2015	8.7 mill	541

Given that the number of video uploaded on the Web fluctuates throughout the year and can be seasonal, this research proposes a longitudinal study, covering the year 2017. Using an API interrogation software, data for 4776 video was collected, but after manual filtering and processing, incomplete and erroneous data were discarded, making the final dataset DS=3211 videos. The following metrics were also collected: number of likes, reactions, comments, height and weight (from which the aspect ratio was calculated), length (in seconds) and the text description.

3. Analysis

3.1 Orientation and the growth of square videos

The relation between the height and the width is indicative of the orientation of the video, which can be either horizontal or vertical. However, with the rise in prominence of Instagram, square videos are seen to permeate other platforms as well.

The shortcomings of vertical videos were discussed in a previous section, and, as Figure 1 showcases, the number of vertically shot videos is in decline, with three of the six interrogated Facebook pages showing extremely low numbers. Our sampled data provides evidence that square videos are becoming the preferred method for creating video content.

However, LADbible stands out as the page with the highest number of vertical videos and lowest of horizontally shot videos. Given that a vertical video is any video that has the height larger than the width, even by only a few pixels, a secondary manual assessment of the dataset revealed no anomalies in the width-height proportion of the LADbible videos.
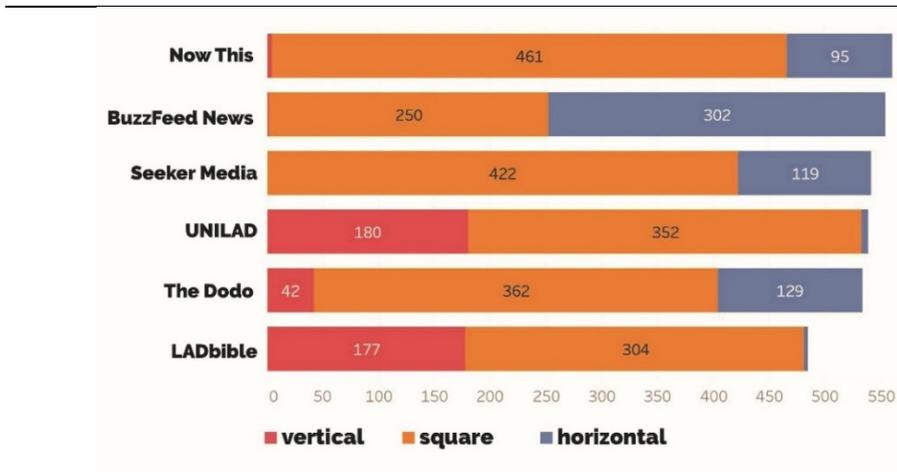
Figure 1. Video orientation for DS = 3211 videos

3.2 Aspect ratio in Facebook videos

Further calculations on the proportions between width and height rendered the aspect ratio of each of the sampled videos. Building on the previous analysis, it is expected that the majority of videos have an aspect ratio of 1:1 (67%). For the purpose of this visualization (Figure 2), the orientation of the video was ignored and the aspect ratios merged (ex.: 16:9 for horizontal videos and 9:16 for vertical videos are both in the 16:9 category).

While most of the pages show a uniform distribution between 1:1 and 16:9 (most common aspect ratio for mobile consumption), LADbible stands out, again, through the use of contrasting video formats. Almost a quarter of the videos posted on that page have employed the 4:5 aspect ratio, one associated with the proposed Facebook video standards.

Atypical aspect ratios are, in this analysis, those that do not fall in the categories covered by Facebook guidelines. Only 2.2% of the sampled videos fall in that category, a negligible number for the purpose of this research. Usually this category is associated with videos that were not created with this aspect ratio but latter cropped to fit the mobile screen.

Figure 2. Aspect ratio for DS = 3211 videos

### 3.3 Video length and appraisal

In the attention economy of social media, the length of a video is a powerful metric, in need of constant scrutiny. The histogram in Figure 3 follows the distribution of number of videos according to length, in custom intervals. The gross amount of video have under 4 minutes (83%), with a staggering drop for videos between 4 and 15 minutes (14%). The analysis reveals that longer videos were posted to the Facebook pages, between 1 and 9 hours (30 videos).

Closer analysis reveals that 25 of the 30 videos over 1 hour were posted by NowThis, two by Seeker Media, two by the UNILAD and one from The Dodo, referencing events like the US Government shutdown (8h livestream), animal livestreams, the Royal Wedding prep livestream, Hurricane Florence, senate hearings regarding Brett Kavanaugh, former president John McCain's funeral, sports and American politics.
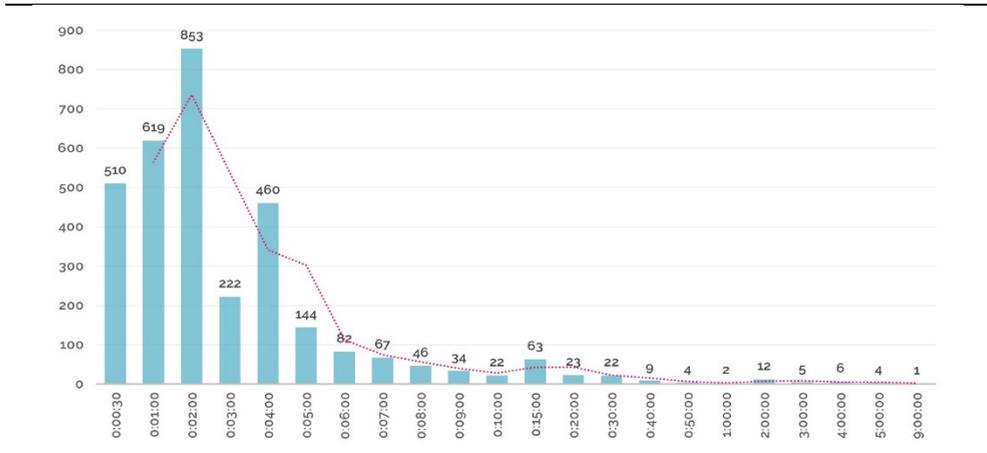
Figure 3. Histogram showing number of videos by length of video DS = 3211

On average, NowThis has the longest videos, given its 25 hours long livestream, followed by BuzzFeed News, The Dodo, Seeker Media, UNILAD and LADbible. However, when measuring against appraisal indicators, the shorter videos are seen to show an increase in reactions, with The Dodo standing out. Length cannot solely account for popularity, of course, so the next part of the analysis is useful to contextualize the findings presented here.
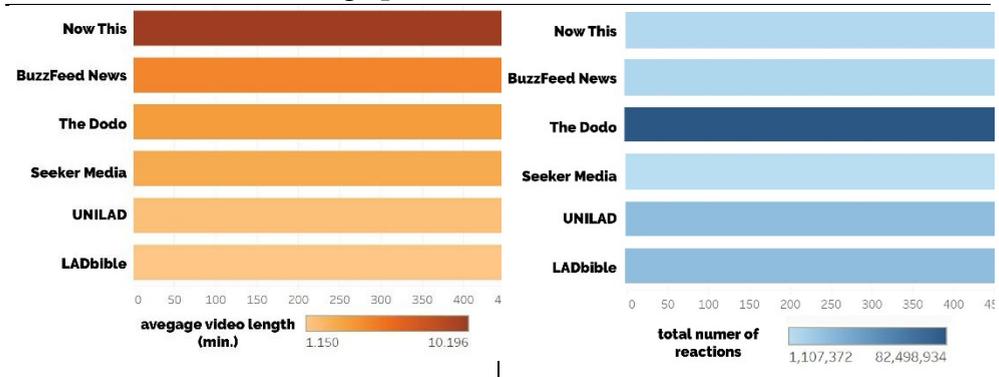
Figure 4. Average video length and total number
of reactions per Facebook page DS=3211

3.4 Content and claims

The following analysis is based on the descriptions attributed to the videos. We favored the descriptions over the titles because they offer more information and context. The result is a co-occurrence network with an additional variable, the name of the page. The clusters are indicative of the major themes employed by each of the analyzed pages.

Figure 5 showcases the most common words associated with each individual page and the words with higher degrees of co-occurrence. According to the analysis, each page has a specific type of content it promotes. The Dodo published videos with animals, feel good stories about rescuing and saving kittens, dogs, and family members. LADbible and UNILAD also prominently feature video about dogs and cats, but use a more dramatic words – *incredible*, *absolutely*. NowThis is shown to promote more news-centered content, with *Trump*, *politics*, and *gun violence* as reoccurring subjects in their descriptions. The Parkland Highschool shooting and the Hurricane Florence are seen to take center stage in the visualization. SeekerMedia is shown to feature videos with science-centered content, revolving around *NASA*, the *universe* and *scientists*.


Figure 5. Co-occurrence network, top 120 edges

4. Findings

The growing popularity of Instagram has, most probably, prompted the increase of square videos and has led to the decrease of vertically shot videos. The classic horizontal orientation is still been used by certain content creators, but it fades in comparison with square videos. It remains unsure if the square videos are created in this manner or they are edited on order to better suit the platforms they inhabit.

Building from this, it becomes obvious that the most common aspect ratio is 1:1, specific to square videos. The second most popular aspect ratio remains the 16:9 widescreen, most intuitive for mobile phone viewers. However, LADbible steps outside of these canons and embraces the 4:5 and 2:3 formats, commonly associated with Facebook.

Video length is one of the metrics that delineates Facebook and Instagram videos. Given that Facebook allows video uploads of any length, it enters YouTube territory, incorporating as many functionalities as possible on the social media backbone. Facebook even allows for video livestreams, a tactic employed by several pages throughout 2017. Videos between 2 and 8 hours are not common, but make up for an interesting subset for further studying. Covering very diverse subjects, livestreaming videos is mostly used by the pages shown to feature news and current affairs related content, like Now This and BuzzFeed News, with The Dodo and its animal livestreams coming into third place. Length and appraisal are two metrics rather hard to link is such an analysis. However, seems that shorter videos have a higher appraisal rate that long and unedited livestreams.

The co-occurrence analysis ties all the finding together, showing that emotion stories with happy endings are the ones that create more buzz around, with The Dodo, LADbible and UNILAD at the forefront of human interest stories and rescued animals. On the other hand, Now This, which has a very pronounced news content is shows to have lower engagement numbers.

5. Conclusions

This case study shows how the shape of videos produced for online platforms (Facebook in this case) is going through a transformation, a trend that is more and more visible in the last years. A quantitative is very useful in understanding the extent of this transformation process.

The content type of these videos is also an interesting topic to analyze. The main segment of video produced and distributed is human interest story followed by current affair/news story.

Both the literature review and the case study suggest that the aspect ratio is in constant transformation and this time it all starts from the end user. It is no longer the case of video producers changing the shape of the video in order to attract more viewers. This time around, the behavior of the users dictates the trend. The platform, Facebook in this case, provides a guideline (based on studies of video consummation) that most marketers and video producers follow in order to access a larger audience.

The general trend that can be observed is that more and more video is being produced in two ways. In the first case, users demand more video and video producer try to accommodate this demand and in the second case users produce video on their own, because of the development of budget friendly and intuitive tools that allow everyone to easily produce videos.

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THE EVOLUTION OF NICOLAE CEAUŞESCU'S CULT OF PERSONALITY IN *SCÂNTEIA* NEWSPAPER

ALEXANDRA CĂTĂLINA ORMENIŞAN[1]

ABSTRACT. In December 2019, Romania celebrates 30 years of liberty, after the fallout of communism, as a result of the revolution which started on December 16, 1989. This paper aims to draw the evolution of the cult of personality in the *Scânteia* newspaper, through analysis of its three important steps: the beginning, the highest level, and the downfall. Also, it was conducted a detailed discourse analysis, so the subtleties of the language were revealed, which were essential for the evolution of the cult. The articles were analyzed in detail, to observe the descriptions and the prases given to the Romanian president. The analysis also focused on the days after the start of the revolution and the fall of communism, in order to compare the articles about Nicolae Ceauşescu.

Keywords: communism, Ceauşescu, Scânteia, personality cult, press.

Introduction

Communism was 44 years in the Romanian history, being as well one of the most disputed ones after the fall of the regime. Nicolae Ceauşescu was the president of the country between 1965 and 1989, therefore around him was built a very strong personality cult. This study aims to analyze how the positive image of Nicolae Ceauşescu was built by one of the most important newspapers existing in that

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time: *Scânteia* (in translation, *The Spark*). Over a few years, the personality of the Romanian leader was developed into a real cult.

In order to gain the popularity that could ensure him the authority to establish his vision on the way society works, Nicolae Ceauşescu used the newspapers. The press created the belief that he enjoyed the total support of the people, being the most suitable for the position he held. During the last years of communism, there were articles in which he was no longer an ordinary person, but he was deified.

A lot of instruments were used over the time, to promote the cult of personality. This paper analyzes the strategies by which defects were blurred and Nicolae Ceauşescu`s qualities were pulled to the extreme.

Nicolae Ceauşescu – a brief biography

Nicolae Ceauşescu (January 26, 1918-December 25, 1989) was born in Scorniceşti village, county of Olt, in a family with 10 children. After finishing school in the village, at the age of 11, he moved to Bucharest, where he became the apprentice of a shoemaker.

Articles and books written in the communist years claimed that his career in Romanian politics begun at the age of 12, when he joined the revolutionary movement, following that at the age of 15 he became a member of the Romanian Communist Party (PCR). A few years after the fallout of the communism, in 1992, Ion Gheorghe Maurer, former president of the Council of Ministers of the Romanian Communist Party, gave an interview in which he talked about the entire communist period. Asked if it is true that the president started his revolutionary fight at the age of 12, Ion Gheorghe Maurer, said that "his father may have sent him with sheep on the meadows at the time, and for the intellectuals who wrote his biographies, that meant revolutionary movement..." (Betea, Maurer and the world of yesterday. Testimonies about the Stalinization of Romania 2001, 204).

In 1933, Ceauşescu was arrested for communist agitation during a strike. In 1934 another three arrests follow, for the accession

to the communists, judged for the incitement to strikes in 1933. Thus, he came to be known by the authorities as a dangerous communist agitator, an active promoter of communist and anti-fascist propaganda material. In 1936 he was arrested again and imprisoned for two years in the Doftana prison (Gruia 2009).

After the death of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Nicolae Ceauşescu was elected the President of Romania, in 1965, after the 9th Congress of the PCR.

Maurer also talked about Ceauşescu`s personal life, describing his wife, who also developed a cult of personality over the years: "Elena Ceauşescu, before she married him, lived with I don`t know how many [men]. She also had two children – I don't know with whom. [...] He raised them, but she only knows with whom she made them. Ceauşescu adopted them when he married her [...], for the people not gossiping about the fact that she was not a virgin." (Deletant 1998, 85)

Nicolae Ceauşescu's policy focused on reducing the country`s external debt through measures such as limiting utilities or food, increasing productivity in agriculture or increasing prices.

The cult of personality

The cult of the personality was one of the central elements of the communist political regime. As Manuela Marin also explains in her book, *Origin and evolution of the cult of personality of Nicolae Ceauşescu*, the definition of the cult of personality implies the orientation on two levels. First, it involves "a propaganda campaign, initiated, planned and controlled, which has an individual in its center, most often the leader of a state or a political formation". This means that, by public means, a positive image of the person will be promoted, and the audience will be convinced of the exceptional character and the extraordinary qualities possessed. In such a process, all the press is involved, being forced to

publish only positive articles about that person. On the other hand, Marin points out that in order for the cult to work, there must be a single person in the center of such a campaign (Marin 2008, 30).

President Nicolae Ceauşescu benefited of an impeccable image, numerous positive articles about him, which dominated the Romanian press, by submitting it to the party, by establishing a favorable law. The cult of personality has gradually ascended, reaching very high peaks, in the last years of communism. The idea comes from other communist states. In 1971 Nicolae Ceauseşcu, paid a visit to China and North Korea, from where he returned with the ideas that contributed to the solidification of a cult of personality, already existing in Romania, in an incipient form. Impressed by the welcoming reception he had in China and North Korea, by the thousands of people who greeted him with banners on which there were written only good wishes, Ceauseşcu returned to the country, and he introduced new measures. Just a month after returning from Korea, the dictator published on the front page of *Scânteia* the new program of measures, which has remained in history under the name of the July Theses (Andriescu 2014).

Even if it did not happen to a high extent, the cult of personality of Nicolae Ceauşescu existed before he visited China and North Korea. The moment when it debuted can be considered the moment when he condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the state members of the Warsaw Treaty. "The speech delivered by Nicolae Ceauşescu in front of those gathered in the Palace Square (August 21, 1968), marked the beginning of the manifestation of the cult of personality of the Romanian leader", because he became even more popular, enjoying the support of the Romanians (Marin 2008, 83).

Afterward, the cult of personality also evolved by consolidating, more and more, the power in Ceauşescu`s hands. Many leaders, mainly former supporters of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, withdraw from the PCR, therefore Nicolae Ceaueşcu built his power base and emphasized his role as a leader.

As in the case of Kim Ir Sen, the magnitude of the cult of Nicolae Ceauşescu`s personality allowed him to promote his own family among the party. Thus, his wife, Elena Ceauşescu, also came to enjoy a cult of personality along with her husband.

Propaganda was the instrument used for reaching the masses in order to gain the desired sympathy. Being used persuasively, it had the expected results, based on people`s appreciation towards Ceauşescu. Eugen Denize (2006, 331) wrote, in an article about communist propaganda and agitation, that the party selected and prepared propagandists to convey its messages. The same article explains that special attention was paid to these activists` training, because they had to have solid knowledge on the socialist economy, but also of literature, in order to transmit the information attractively, simple, but plastic as well. After they were trained, the propagandists had the role of educating the citizens in the communist spirit, through various lessons and seminars. After rewriting Ceauşescu`s biography, the propagandists made the connection between the president`s real image and its final projection unnoticeable. "No matter how big the inconsistencies of his politics, which aim to consolidate and perpetuate his power, he has always managed to justify what he does through propaganda", as Ute Gabanyi (2000, 87-8) shows.

Finally, a part of the cult involved convincing the Romanians that Ceauşescu is appreciated and even considered a model by international personalities. Anneli Ute Gabanyi (2000, 89) questions the veracity of statements made by politicians such as Richard Nixon, who, after his visit to Romania, would have said: "Why Romania? Because president Ceauşescu is there and we can learn something from him. He contributes to solving the most acute global problems" or by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher, who supposedly said: "I was impressed by the personality of president Ceauşescu, and especially by the man who is in charge of Romania". Another example would be the Indian publication *Neuer Weg*, which called Ceauşescu a humanist, philosopher and exemplary communist thinker. Mark Almond (1988,

24) draws attention to Nicolae Ceauşescu`s cynicism: "His flattery in the western states and his attention to every detail of comfort during his visits... his duplicity and cynicism of unusual intensity." Visits to other communist states, but also the reception of foreign politicians in Romania have always been of high importance for Ceauşescu. As proof of its intense international policy, there were 103 official visits abroad and 110 that Ceauşescu received, while he was the president of Romania.

Legislation of the communist press

In 1974, the press was the subject of strict legislation. The law (3/1974 press law 1978), adopted by the Parliament of the Socialist Republic of Romania, subjects the Romanian press to rules meant to serve the interests of the Romanian Communist Party. Starting with the first article of the 3/1974 law, the role of the press was clearly explained: to permanently advocate for the application of the communist principles and for the promotion of the progress in all domains, existing or not. The wooden language, characteristic of this regime, is used. In the third paragraph of this first article, it is stated that the press must massively disseminate valuable ideas and initiatives, contribute through its entire activity to the development of the multilaterally developed socialist society.

The second article of the same law brings more clarity, stating that the press carries out its activity under the leadership of the Romanian Communist Party. Thus, the question of the press`s objectivity is raised, considering the subordination of the press towards PCR. Paradoxically, the next article of the law ensures a pseudo-freedom of the press, ensured by the Constitution, which obviously could not exist, due to the previous provisions.

But the attributions and functions of the press went beyond informing or promoting and supporting ideas of PCR. The press was responsible for educating young people in the communism spirit, for instilling the values and ideas with which they must grow.

In article 14 of the law, there is a new climax regarding the role of the press. It becomes responsible for the general well-being of society, for removing all that is bad and for restoring balance when it is disturbed.

The second section of the law clarified the right to edit articles and the idea of censorship comes into play. Article 17 grants political institutions the right to edit newspapers, according to unspecified criteria.

Another aspect worth mentioning is that the journalist was protected by the 3/1974 law. Article 44 states that it is forbidden to exercise any pressure and intimidation actions against the journalist.

The Romanian media landscape and communist censorship

The communist Romanian press experienced two distinct periods during the leadership of Nicolae Ceauşescu. Until 1971, a liberalization took place, and new publications appeared, in addition to the existing ones. The situation changed later, the media landscape being unrecognizable in the last years of communism, when numerous publications were closed, and the remaining ones became tools of the Communist Party.

Thus, at the beginning of the communism period, the Romanian press included numerous publications, carefully supervised by PCR, which even organized courses for journalists. A journalism school was also set up in Bucharest, as a proof of the attention paid to the press, by a party that needed its control. The most important such newspaper was *Scânteia*, followed by *România Liberă* (Rad, Incursions in the History of the Romanian Press 2008, 163). After 1971, the media landscape experienced changes. Following the Congress of Political Education and Socialist Culture in 1976, it was established that the press has many shortcomings, so it was decided to officially end the censorship.

Despite this decision, "in reality, as proved in practice, this measure was a farce, the official censorship being replaced by an unofficial one, much more drastic" (Rad, Incursions in the History of the Romanian

Press 2008, 164). Over time, it was forbidden to divide the dictator`s name into syllables or write it on different lines. There were also printing mistakes, which resulted in the dismissal of the people who committed them. An example is found in the newspaper *Făclia* when, by separating the syllables of the word tiring, the prefix *un* was omitted. Therefore, the result was: "the tiring activity of Comrade Nicolae Ceauşescu". The journalist was automatically fired (Rad 1999, 179).

Wooden language in Romanian press

Used especially in totalitarian regimes, the wooden language has its origins in Czarist Russia. It then expanded to communist totalitarianism and Nazism, providing examples of linguistic voluntarism that can be included in the log of the wooden language. "We are not talking to say something, but to achieve a certain effect", said Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Nazi Public Propaganda, quoted by Lavinia Betea (2009, 179)

Regarding the wooden language consolidated in Romania, it dominated Ceauşescu`s speeches, press articles or telegrams, received and sent, by the president. This language was characterized primarily by hyperbole and superlatives. Also, there was a substantivization of the discourse, to evade the accuracy of the verb and to induce the equivocation of timelessness. Also, the impersonal and passive constructions dominated the discourses, as well as the predilection for comparatives and the excessive use of the imperative mode (Betea 2009, 182).

Françoise Thom (1993, 105) says that the wooden language can lead to the creation of parallel reality and works on two levels: it dissociates the words of things and "pretends to compensate the loss of meaning, imagining another universe, totally and immediately significant, because it is structured like a language. This completely intelligible world must make one forget that the language that describes it has no meaning and that the entities that mobilize it have no existence."

Research design

Methodology

The research method used in this paper is the qualitative content analysis, applied on the first and the last five years of cult of personality. The newspapers from January 26 were selected for analysis, because that was the dictator`s birthday, when the cult of personality was at its highest. The first five years of the cult were identified based on a quantitative analysis, which shows that the year in which *Scânteia* started publishing articles dedicated to Nicolae Ceaușescu was 1973 (10 articles on January 26). The last five years of communism represented the climax of the cult of personality, when promoting the positive image of the president has reached its limits. It was also analyzed how Nicolae Ceaușescu's image changed after his death, through the same newspaper.

Research questions

In order to achieve a better understanding of how this newspaper built the image of the Romanian president, the analysis focused on the following research questions:

(RQ1) What type of articles were used by Scânteia to build the cult of personality?
(RQ2) Which were the most frequent characteristics of the dictator, promoted by Scânteia, contributing to the development of the cult of personality?
(RQ3) Did the texts have any essence or were they marked by the wooden language?
(RQ4) To what extent did Nicolae Ceaușescu`s image changed after the fall of communism?

Results and discussion

The first years of the cult of personality

1973

In 1973, six of the eight pages of the newspaper *Scânteia* were dedicated to Nicolae Ceausescu. On the occasion of the 55 years of life and 40 years of revolutionary activity of the dictator, a joint meeting of the C.C. Executive Committee of the PCR, the State Council and the Council of Ministers, dedicated to the celebration of Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu was organized.

Scânteia published the entire congratulatory speech, delivered by Ion Gheorghe Maurer, who addresses with *dear comrade*, thanking Ceausescu for his special contribution to the development of Romania, emphasizing the status of savior of the people, a hero of the motherland. In the same speech, the dictator is attributed qualities such as fiery patriotism, internationalist spirit, communist humanism, as a result of dedicating his life to "serving the fundamental interests and aspirations of the people`s progress and well-being".

Formulations such as "consistency with which you act for the continuous improvement of the organization and management of society", "we all value the firmness and consistency with which you advocate for the strengthening of friendship and collaboration with all socialist countries" or "we all know and admire the firmness with which you fight for the promotion of the principles of socialist ethics and equity", appear very frequently, which contributes to the construction of a cult of personality, because the dictator seems to be loved by the whole country, his image being built immaculately. Assuming that the entire people love their leader is a clear sign of building the personality cult. The idea of a patriotic defender of the country, who deserves to be honored for dedicating his life to this purpose, is also emphasized.

The speech delivered by Nicolae Ceausescu is also published. He talked about the hardships he had to overcome, and the gaps

Romania had before his leadership. His speech is marked by modesty, saying that he has always endeavored to fulfill his duties, without affirming that he has succeeded. This achievement is only suggested.

1974

In the eight pages of the newspaper on January 26, 1974, there is no article referring to the birthday of Nicolae Ceausescu. The first page of the newspaper is dominated by economic and social topics. There are, however, telegrams for/from other presidents. First of all, two letters are published, having as recipient Polish politicians. A standardized content is noticeable, dominated by the wooden language, and the letter received by Nicolae Ceausescu is almost identical to the one he sent. The telegrams seem slightly different. In Moktar Ould Daddah`s letter (the president of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania), a certain sincerity of the sent feelings can be observed, due to the formulation of a response to the received letter, which shows that it has been considered. Also, the formulations are more personal, they are not so strongly marked by the wooden tongue. On the last page of the newspaper are published three more telegrams, sent by President Ceausescu to *His Excellency, Mr. V. V. Giri*, President of the Republic of India, to Sir Paul Meera Caedwalla Hasluck, Governor-General of Austria, and to Edward Gough Whitlam (Prime Minister of Australia). The publication of these telegrams aims to highlight the international status of Ceauşescu and the fact that he is appreciated by other leaders of states, which brings an extra positive image and helps to build the cult of personality.

1975

In *Scânteia* of January 26, 1975, there are references to the birthday of President Nicolae Ceausescu, both in articles and in telegrams. On the first page is published an article called *The Communist Example*, in

which, as the title suggests, a portrait of the ideal communist is made, along with the characteristics of a member of the communist society. The article continues on the second page of the newspaper and it is one of the very few articles of praise in which the president is also quoted.

The fact that, in the same sentence, Ceauşescu's name and the words "communist`s moral profile" are the only letters written in bold characters, highlights that the qualities presented apply to himself. Although these features are not directly attributed to him, the suggestion is clear. Furthermore, Ceausescu is compared to the great personalities of Romanian history, being presented as a continuator of them.

Two telegrams were published on the same page, along with an article about the visit of Vladimir Brezhnev, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, who expressed his wishes and good thoughts, "a message of friendship with wishes for health, long life, and new successes. The two telegrams published in *Scânteia* this year were received from Iosip Broz Tito, president of the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, and from lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho, president of the CC Presidency of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam.

The topic of the last article from this issue, dedicated to Nicolae Ceausescu, was his activity as a writer, also published abroad. Until 1975, 34 volumes were translated into 13 languages. In the article *Expressions of high esteem for socialist Romania, for the president of our country*, the opinions of people abroad are presented. For example, Dr. Banko Petkovici, a representative of a publishing house in Belgrade, says that he intended to publish the book *Selected Writings of President Nicolae Ceausescu* due to "the growing collaboration between Yugoslavia and Romania and due to the great interest of the Yugoslav public opinion for the personality and the work of the president of the neighboring country". Another example, presented in the same article, is Nicoleta Tetti, the general manager of a publishing house in Milan, who believed that Ceausescu`s work is worth reading because he is a state leader and an important revolutionary, at international level.

1976

In 1976, on Nicolae Ceausescu`s birthday, *Scânteia* was not published. The next day`s edition contained 6 pages, but no article was written regarding the president`s birthday. The only appreciative article occupied the second and third pages of the newspaper, and the praises were not regarding his birthday, but his activity, in general.

The telegrams were also published in 1976, expressing feelings of appreciation, good thoughts and unlimited love towards Nicolae Ceausescu, on behalf of all the citizens in the county. The cult of personality was developed by such articles because the public could read that the president is appreciated by other politicians, workers or ordinary citizens. The veracity of all the letters from a lot of counties can be questioned, primarily due to their structure, which betrays the existence of a predetermined model that had to be respected, which means that certain content was imposed. Secondly, the wooden language was used, which does not allow the transmission of a consistent message, but the same meaningless collocations, which have become clichés due to excessive repetition.

1977

A year later, the January 26, 1977 edition of *Scânteia* newspaper did not include, through the 6 pages, any articles referring to the birthday of Nicolae Ceausescu. The only references to this event were in the two telegrams received from other state leaders. The article intended to give praise to Nicolae Ceausescu is called *Communist Leadership*, which talks about the ideal way to run a country. Similarly to *The Communist Example*, written two years earlier, it has the same construction: it presents the ideal way to lead, and right after that Ceausescu is given as an example, which suggests that he is the one who implements that ideal plan to rule the country.

The telegrams received by Nicolae Ceausescu on the occasion of his birthday became normality. With the evolution of this phenomenon, their evolution and formulation were even more ambiguous, and the wooden tongue was ubiquitous. The telegrams (both received and sent) started to have the same structure, the same order of ideas.

The last article in this issue of *Scânteia*, dedicated to Nicolae Ceausescu, is about the contribution that the Romanian president made to the whole world through his books.

The last years of the cult of personality

1985

In the last five years of communism, things were completely different regarding Nicolae Ceausescu's image in the *Scânteia* newspaper. The articles dedicated to him occupied a much larger space than in the first five years when the cult of personality started to grow. Also, the homage poems started to appear, and the number of telegrams the president received was significantly increased. Also, the front page was always in colors, as were the photos with the president, whose number increased significantly.

In 1985, on Nicolae Ceausescu`s birthday, almost 7 of the 8 pages contained only articles on this topic. In this edition, there were also 10 photographs of him. Also, seven homage poems have been published.

On the first page, printed in red letters, this message was published: "To the hero of the country, the beloved leader of the party, comrade Nicolae Ceausescu: fervent appreciation, honor, and love from the whole nation." There is a significant difference from the previous newspapers, in the way the messages for the president were transmitted. While in the first five years of the beginning of the cult of personality they were almost completely absent, now they dominate almost the entire newspaper transmitting.

In the main article on the first page, *From the bottom of our hearts, Happy birthday!*, the author talked about *The Ceausescu Epoch*, the name that the period during his presidency received. Moreover, the author of the article speaks on behalf of the people, saying that they will follow their leader and the Party "on the bright path of living our golden dream, the communism". The cult of personality reached such a high level that the president and the Party pretend to be loved by all citizens since they are willing to do anything for them.

In another article on the front page, it is explained that democracy represents the power of the people. It is also published an article about the dictator`s life, which is described by pointing out sacrifices he has made through his revolutionary involvement, highlighting that he is a man who fought for freedom and for ordinary citizens.

A group of five homage poems is published and on page six, under the name of *Thoughts for the Hero of a Homeland of Heroes*. In one of them, *Soldiers Forever*, the author expresses feelings of devotion towards Nicolae Ceausescu, whom he calls a hero ("We have a tricolor! We have a country! / At the helm of the country we have a hero!") or "the most beloved Romania`s son". It is worth noting that these homage poems were written not only by Romanians, which indicates that their purpose was to show that Nicolae Ceausescu is loved by all citizens, regardless of their ethnicity. The paper dedicated, at this point, more than one issue to the dictator`s birthday. For instance, in 1985, the telegrams were published on January 30.

On January 26, 1986, on the first page of the *Scânteia* were published 4 articles and homage poetry. Also, there is a birthday wish, written in red letters, above the frontispiece: "The people of socialist Romania wish, from their hearts to their beloved leader, Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu, with unwavering love and appreciation, Happy Birthday!" The main article on the first page is *To the Great Hero of the Country, High Honor*, in which the author writes about Ceauşescu using appellations as *hero* or *the brilliant leader of the destinies of the socialist nation*.

Not only journalists or employees of the newspaper were published in *Scânteia*. Being a PCR "organ", as it was self-titled on the frontispiece of each issue, this newspaper was a tool of communist propaganda. As a result, members of the Party also published laudatory articles, contributing to the development of the personality cult.

1986

In a poem on the first page of *Scânteia* (January 26, 1986) Nicolae Ceausescu is raised to an almost divine level, being considered the one who created an environment in which Romania could keep its head up, noble and courageous.

In the 26th January 1986 edition, no telegrams received from other presidents were published. But the homages continued to be published until the end of the month. The fifth page of the January 30 edition was the one on which the President`s telegrams were published, on the occasion of his birthday. 18 foreign politicians wrote to Nicolae Ceausescu in 1986 (from countries such as Bulgaria, Morocco, Argentina, Brazil, Korea, Liberia, Austria, Venezuela, etc.).

1987

The issue from 26th January 1987 could not be found, but the analysis focused on other days since the praiseworthy articles were published from 25th to 30th January. Two homage poems were published in the first newspaper. One of them, *Brilliant Revolutionary Guide for Present and Future*, a total submission of the people towards the president can be observed, along with unbounded appreciation. The second poem describes all the difficulties that Nicolae Ceausescu had to endure until he became so appreciated. The poem is conceived as a story, in which the hero is oppressed until his kindness is acknowledged. On 30th January, 21 telegrams received from leaders of states such as Bulgaria, Jordan, Morocco, San Marino, Korea, Egypt, and others were published.

1988

"Happy Birthday, Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu, glorious leader of the party and the country!" – this message opens the 26th January 1988 issue of *Scânteia*, written in capital letters, above the frontispiece.

An interesting case can be found in the previous edition, 25th January, in which the poem Hero of Peace was published. In the case of this poem, there was a printing error and some lyrics were eliminated. The acrostic was supposed to form the name Ceausescu Nicolae, but following the technical error resulted in CEAUŞESCOLAE, which roughly translates into Ceauşescu nothing.

The appreciative articles continued until the end of the month, but this time the 32 telegrams were published on January 28. One of them was received from Yasser Arafat, the president of Palestine. He also sent a telegram the previous year, the differences being made only by the different order of some sentences. Except that, the letters were identical, which shows the lack of interest and the wooden language at its finest.

1989

In 1989, the last Nicolae Ceausescu`s birthday as president of the country, the main article on the front page sent a message of *deep love and esteem*, *firm revolutionary commitment*. The article describes the achievements of Nicolae Ceausescu and expresses, once again, the appreciation of the people.

In another article on the first page, the greetings addressed to Nicolae Ceausescu by Mihail Gorbachev are presented.

As for the telegrams, the 26 of them were published on January 28. Yasser Arafat sent one this year as well, very similar to the other two: the same length and order of ideas.

Nicolae Ceauşescu's image in *Scânteia*, after his death

Between 16th and 25th December 1989, the Romanian society was marked by the Revolution which led to the fall of communism. This major event culminated with the execution of the presidential couple, on December 25.

The last published edition of the *Scânteia* was on December 22, 1989. In the next two days, the newspaper appeared under the name of the *Scânteia poporului* (in translation, *The spark of the people*), and from December 26 it was called *Adevărul* (*The truth*), which is published nowadays as well. Both the first issue of *Scânteia poporului* and the second one contained, in their entirety, articles on the unfolding of the Revolution in the country.

Regardless that a few months ago *Scânteia* published numerous telegrams of congratulations of president on the occasion of his birthday, critical opinions of personalities abroad were now published: "UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, welcomed the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime in Romania" or "Jaques Delors, the president of the EEC Commission, specified that Removal from Ceausescu's leadership is a formidable thing. It is a reason for celebration". The second issue of *Scânteia poporului* encouraged Romanian people to join the Revolution: "Citizens of Romania, comrades! [...] Participate with all the courage in the armed fight, do a unique, powerful front, to immediately and definitively defeat the bestial resistance of the terrorists". Yesterday`s hero is considered a terrorist today. The one who just a few days ago was presented as being the most beloved son of the homeland is now considered a leader who must be defeated by the citizens he leads, in order for them to regain their freedom.

"We are free!" This is the beginning of an article in the article *The Imperative of the Moment*, from December 24, 1989. This article describes the feeling of the Romanian people to be free, for which they thank the army: "We greet, we recognize ourselves, we encourage each

other with V for Victory. It is the most beautiful, most exciting moment of our modern history." The same author says that the happiness cannot be complete until those who served the former president are eliminated: "Ceausescu`s killers, these bandits formed by the image and resemblance of the dictatorship, continued to reap human lives". Therefore, Ceausescu, who was presented as a model for his people, now became the coordinator of a terrorist gang.

Adevărul published a column named *The Lie Policy*, where the journalists wrote about Nicolae Ceausescu`s lies. By far, the harshest article is *Năpârcile* (*The asps*), in which the author uses an aggressive language about the real status of the former leader. In this article, neither his name nor his wife is mentioned, *him* or *her* being the only used words. Ceausescu`s oratory is ironized here, along with Elena Ceausescu`s abilities: "He called himself, with the most abject shamelessness, the most beloved and estimated. And she added the title of the best scientist. From the globe. She just omitted: she could not write, and she was barely able to read. And he spoke like illiterate peasants […]". The author also ironically refers to the idea of *the new man*, promoted by Ceausescu`s servants, associating him with Hitler: "They were trying to carve you after the image and likeness of the new man, invented by their führer, who was the apprentice of a shoemaker". Then he talks about Ceausescu in a very harsh language: "Coward. Disgusting. The killer. But there are no expressions measuring this bastard and our rage, in no language on earth. Maybe just his own name, which went beyond everything that humanity has had more horrible so far, in terms of sinister connotations. Stalin? Hitler? Helpless boys. Even the devil is not as bad. Ceausescu? The most detestable, the ugliest, the more awful word spoken in the vocabulary of the whole world."

Conclusions

As shown through this paper, the newspaper *Scânteia* was one of the tools by which the image of president Nicolae Ceausescu was promoted very intensely.

As one of the most important national newspapers, it was distributed to a large number of people, so messages from the president or party could be very easy propagated among the population. The credibility of these messages is questionable. Given that the newspaper is entitled Organ of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, the objectivity of political messages could not be expected.

The types of pieces that massively contributed to the development of the personality cult were the articles about the dictator`s life and his achievements, but also about his incommensurable contribution to the development of the society. There were also published telegrams from other presidents and prime ministers, in order to prove that Ceauşescu was appreciated abroad. Last but not least, the number of homage poems has grown, especially in the last years of communism.

The most frequent characteristics of the dictator, promoted by *Scânteia*, contributing to the development of the cult of personality were those of a man who fought for his country, who became the most loved citizen of Romania, a hero and, paradoxically, a symbol of freedom. The climax was reached after 1985, when the image of Nicolae Ceausescu was no longer just a positive one, but also unrealistic. In the articles from this period, all the characteristics of the cult of personality can be found. He was considered the most important personality in the country, he was called the hero of the nation, the most beloved son of his people, and he was considered a genius. Moreover, Nicolae Ceausescu was considered the liberator and savior of the people, the person who should get the credits for the flourishing situation of Romania.

All the articles and telegrams were marked by the wooden language. The vague expressions and the lack of explanations for certain affirmations made the articles hard to understand. Furthermore, this type of language was more visible in the telegrams. Their structure was strict and rigid, so everyone fits into a well-established pattern: they started with the birthday wishes, they continued to express happiness for the understanding between the two countries and ended with the hope that these relationships will continue and develop in the future.

After the death of Nicolae Ceausescu, his image undergoes radical changes. *Scânteia poporului* and *Adevărul* had entire editions dedicated to destroying the images that they have built meticulously for 25 years. With the outbreak of the Revolution, the newspaper went out of its way and urged the people to participate in the fight for the removal of the dictatorship. The articles about Ceausescu were written in a very harsh way: from genius and hero, he became a thief, terrorist and criminal. The journalists who promoted her positive image became, suddenly, promoters of the anti-communist struggle.

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AD-BLOCKERS, TRACKERS, AND HOW READERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO OBSTRUCT DIGITAL PUBLICATIONS' REVENUES

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ABSTRACT. Online publications that use outdated web platforms still support themselves financially through old-fashioned ad promotion methods inserted into the web pages of press articles. While many readers harm the publications they read by blocking advertisements or using Read It Later technologies (in most browsers) or content curation and bookmarking tools (Pocket, Feedly, Instapaper), which involve the extraction of the text for "clean" reading formats or stripping the extra content from the site, the Romanian media landscape bursts with publications which do not fully understand the effects of blocking advertisements on the web and the impact on revenues from old forms of advertising such as pay per click, per view, per acquisition, or ad-words. Or, if they are doing it, they are exposing the users to some data privacy risks. In the first part of the article, we will try to outline how these technologies and applications offer readers a less distracted reading experience, as well as how much online advertising revenues on which newsrooms depend upon were affected. In the second part, we will try to illustrate the ways in which the media could convince the audience to abandon the blocking software or to propose and adopt, if they have not already done so, new financing models: reader revenue (by partial or full subscriptions) or CPM (cost per thousand impressions) partnerships. The study contains a brief recording and analysis of the number of ads and online trackers present in the homepages and throughout the articles of 5 mainstream media publications and 4 unaffiliated publications, as reported by Ad-Blocker Plus and Disconnect Mozilla Firefox add-ons.

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1. Introduction. Ads, revenues and the media background

"I run a browser plugin called Noscript, and another called Ghostery. I don't recommend them, not because they aren't good, but because they turn web browsing into a part time job. No one has time to deal with these things. In order to not be tracked, you have to constantly be paying attention to what every page is doing." (Quinn Norton, 2015)


Fig. 1. Forbes ad-blocking detection message

Advertising initially transposed in online medium in the same forms that could be found in the analogue space: static messages, placed as banners on web pages, for a certain period. To track the number of readers that have been getting their messages, agencies were basing their statistics depending on this rudimentary way of doing advertising. Online ads were sold similarly to the ones in print, depending on some criteria like the size of the ad and the estimated number of unique visitors of the site or webpage. Between 2000 and 2010, the web designers were coming from traditional media and were treating sites like digital brochures with covers (most of the times very animated),

content areas and template pages. The continuous development of the digital space led to the most profitable and influent web advertising: Pay-per-Click (PPC). This has developed a commercial model by classifying the content, which was a way of measuring and calculating budgets for advertising agencies. Additionally, the formula contained storage files of individual statistics on the use of web pages (cookies), which have been utilized to identify users that accessed certain sites and that helped companies move their ads from one web page to another. Cookies offered a measuring instrument for online climate, on behalf of the advertising agencies.

The banner can be considered the most rudimentary form of advertising. It has been transposed in online in the early 90s, when the web page owners were seeking for additional incomes to support their content. Online service provider Prodigy, displayed on the lower part of the screen banners promoting Sears products (Schmid, 2017). The first online banner was sponsored by a law firm in Silicon Valley, in 1993. At present, the simplicity of this type of advertising represents a weak point, as, even though users would see the banner, they are so used to it that they would not even click it or even block it from the very beginning using an ad-block technology.
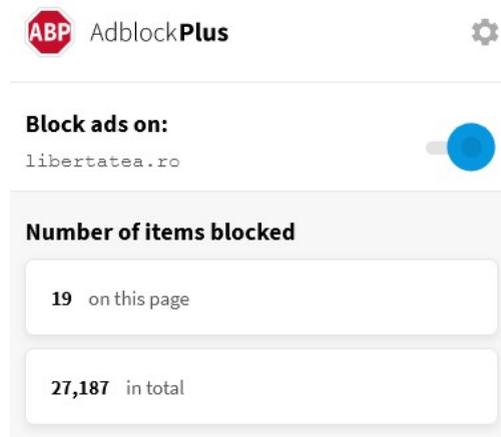
Fig. 2. Blocked ads on the website of Libertatea publication

Another traditional source of income is sponsorship. An advertising agent can sponsor a whole site or just a certain page or column. Sponsorship is usually used to bring in a new product, for a certain time period, so that most likely users will engage more than in the case of rotating ads. This type of advertising comes as an advantage for advertisers, as the audience perceives it as a partnership between the sponsor and the website so that the product benefits of the same credibility as the website on which the advertising runs. For the editor, the main perk is the financial stability that comes from the sponsorship.

The newsletter, tested as a form of advertising in 1987 by Garry Thuerk (Pavlidou, 2019), created antibodies to spam messages among e-mail users. Spam messages have become industrial operations, especially because the authors use many computers connected via botnet (a computer network controlled by a central one) to send spam remotely. Nowadays, newsletters sent via e-mail have turned this service into a „killer app" and have created, in the information congestion, the concept of news curator journalist (Gupta, 2014).

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) is, perhaps, one of the most advantageous forms of traditional advertising. Generally, advertising agencies pay for each click on the ad. Most of the times, these ads are links displayed as part of search result pages. Google AdSense is the most popular system based on this methodology. Equally, we can also include here Google AdWords and Yahoo Search Marketing services.

Affiliated advertising programs are based on a concept where agencies are rewarding websites for any added benefit. Technically, web pages mark the broadcasted ads with a code that helps the advertiser identify from which website the user came. A good example of this type of ads is Amazon, that provides links to products from the same page. The ones that benefit are the editors that earn a few percent of each sale generated. Unfortunately, affiliated advertising works only for big websites, where transaction volumes are considerable.

Pop-ups are, generally, new windows that open from the browser on top of the one already opened by the user. Their main purpose is to attract traffic or to collect e-mails. They are normally generated using scripting languages such as JavaScript, and can take advantage of the

browser's security breaches. A more subversive version is the pop-under, a window that opens in the same way only that it is hidden under the active window, which makes it difficult to identify the website that opened it. Pop-ups and other related technologies are not recommended by the web standards and consortia that regulate the web space.

Trackers are web technologies that secretly collect data on users through the web page on which the material accessed by the reader is located. Trackers contribute to *invasive surveillance* and seriously breach the ethics principles of journalism, especially in the case of self-funded journalism, financed by the readers who are paying for the quality and transparency of the content and practices. Trackers also congest communication and makes it difficult to access the site and loading time of the media material (Lembert; Pickard, 2015).

As journalism is going through major changes, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, where education and tradition did not pave the way for the digital era, journalists managed to communicate and earn the audience trust in just a few places. In addition, even if there is an abundance of information, subjects dwelled by the media nowadays are of inferior quality and do not fully meet the needs of the public or the principles that journalism follows (Cook, 2016: 5-6). Also, in the absence of detailed journalism and with the crisis of journalist specialized in certain areas, the subjects that are being addressed are mainly general. Not being able to understand modern formats of reading, due to the same financial crisis that mass media is experiencing, or the lack of interactivity of the web pages, that are more and more accessed through smartphones, are other pain points (Tulio, 2013: 11). Another issue encountered in today's media is the affiliation to political groups. The political partisanship is radically separating the audience. Printed media and televisions are highly dominated by politicized information, random opinions and weak social, political and economic debates. In this equation, emerges also the economic influence of social media, a field that is still being explored in countries like Romania, where the audience uses social media not only in interpersonal relations, but also to read the most important headlines, which they then share.

In this climate, old editorships are learning how a certain message has been received, observe the reaction of the audience and institutions and get to decide whether they can intervene in a way that is adequate for each situation. From editorial offices where inertia was too high, or from those where a lot of restructuring took place, emerged a wave of journalists, publishers and supporters that laid the foundations of new editorships that are politically unaffiliated and that have found means of financing, producing what it has also created in Romania an important segment of independent journalism.

Professionals from advertising and informational industry are aware of the decrease in the value of the „cost per thousand impressions" (CPM). Traditional media business models have reached a dead end. Readers are on the move in online and they want a smooth and fast way to information. The transition from print to web was fast and needy, and did not have the expected results on the advertising market. Raju Narisetti, chief editor of *Washington Post*, estimated before the ad-blockers crisis an annual loss of around ten million dollars, cause by this transition (Narisetti, 2011).

2. Ad-Blockers, trackers, ad-blocking related techs and how they obstruct digital publications' revenues

Like beta-blockers, ad-blockers keep at a low pace the pulse of revenue but, as opposed to the pharmaceutical drugs, they increase the hypertension of/or between media publishers and advertisers. Not as much as in 2016 when Ad-blockers created hysteria but it still does. The old-fashioned funding model of advertising was initiated by the press, and then it pierced the web. For a more pleasant online experience, users started using Ad-blocking and Read Later technologies, and then a hot war spreaded among readers, journalists and advertisers.
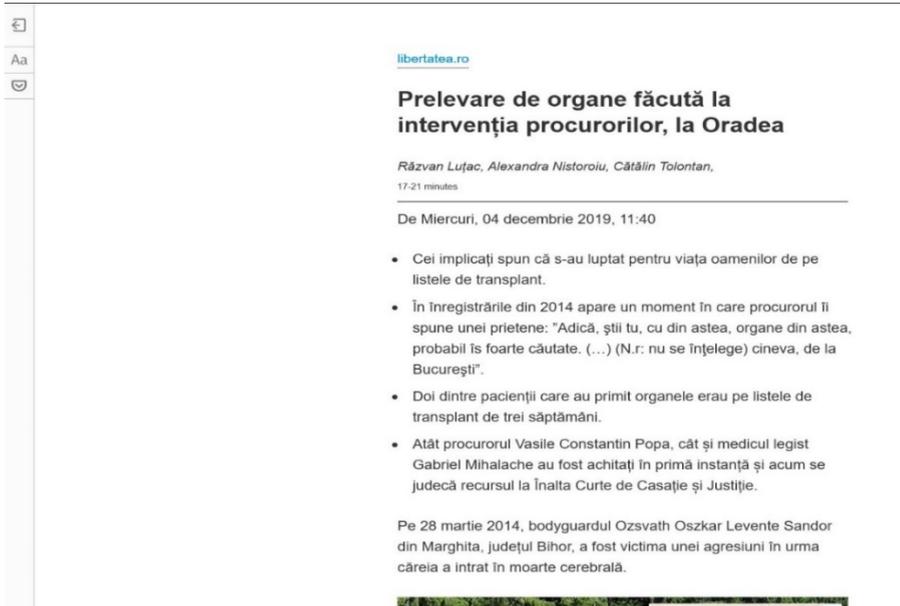
Fig. 3. Reader View mode in Mozilla Firefox

In the US, the CEO of the Interactive Advertising Bureau claimed that "ad-blocking is robbery" (Malyarov, 2015). The Eyeo & PageFair Ad-blocking report for 2018 highlights the global growth of ad-blockers and the financial impact it has on the online advertising industry growing every year.

The current ad model irritates users and forces them into using ad blockers. Estimates suggest **11%** of the global internet population are blocking ads.

There are over **600 million** devices with some type of ad-blocking software installed, and the number is growing.

Mobile ad blocking is increasing rapidly - **62%** of devices with ad-blocking software installed are mobile. This amount grew by **108 million** in 2015-2016.

Fig. 4. The Eyeo & PageFair Ad-blocking report for 2018 (I)

Ad-blocking is not such a harsh talking point in the digital media industry anymore, but it continues to fault traditional means of funding. A lot of publishers and advertising agents are seeking refuge. Just that the blocking software, AdBlock, is a very popular one, as the numbers of users that utilize plugins and ad-blockers is continuously growing. Page Fair estimates that the total count of customers that use various plugins to block ads is around 150 million, most of them being educated young people that know how to use computers.

18%

Around **18%**[2] of US internet users on desktop are blocking ads.

20%

Around **20%**[3] of EU internet users on desktop are blocking ads.

50%

Other sources suggest that close to **half of all internet users are blocking ads**.[4] The ad-blocking community is huge and continues to grow year to year.
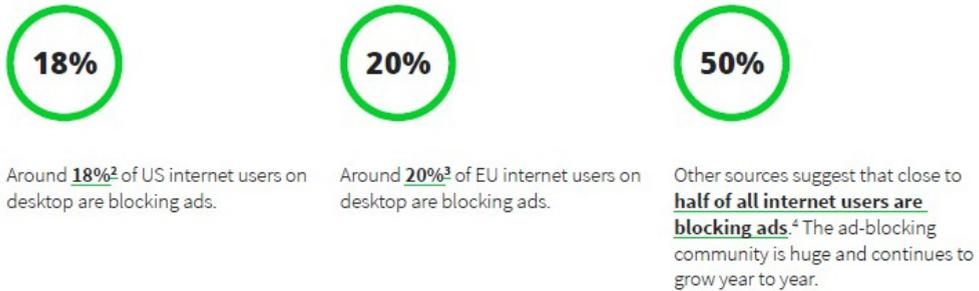
Fig. 5. The Eyeo & PageFair Ad-blocking report for 2018 (II)

As per the PageFair annual report on the usage of ad-blockers, software programs that block ads determined a loss of 5,8 billion dollars in the US in 2014, 10,7 billion in 2015, while for 2016 a total loss of about 20,3 billion, with an estimated global cost of 41,4 billion, has been confirmed. According to the same report, gaming sites users are more inclined to use AdBlock, whilst the less tempted ones are the users that access websites on health, government or charity (Eyeo & PageFair, 2015; 2016; 2018).

„Ad blocking is a serious threat for the entire advertising industry", stated David Frew, senior manager of Internet Advertising Bureau. It is essential for Internet users to understand that online content is not free of charge, and in this matter, it is interesting to take a closer look at Facebook, which makes use of the personal data of users not by chance (Wall, 2015). As stated by Brian O'Kelley, executive director of AppNexus, a digital technology company, websites are to blame for the users' reaction of using ad-blocking programs, because they became too greedy when displaying banners on about 50% of the screen of a homepage.

In Romania, an ad-blocking program can be found on approximately 14% of the browsers, and a recent estimation shows 18% of the browsers, according to a study conducted by TailWind and IAB Romania (Tail-Wind; IAB, 2017). The same study shows the fact that the highest tolerance rate is registered in the case of in-stream ads, retargeting or interstitial.

Less Ads through subscriptions can be a luxury for those who choose to buy ad-blockers so that their webpages load faster. Digital technologies impact not only the forms of distribution of content but also its marketing models, monetization and financing, as well as strategies and alliances that media organizations must adapt to new competitive scenarios. *Washington Post* was among the first publications to install a block wall in a fight of blocking the blockers.

Ad-blockers are applications (plugins or browser extensions) that remove or alter advertising content on a webpage. While a webpage is loading, the ad-blocker looks at the site's scripts and compares them against a list of sites and scripts it was built to block. If it finds any, it blocks them. In the form of browser extensions (for the 2 powerful ones, Mozilla Firefox and Chrome), software and mobile applications (Reader Mode, Feedly, Pocket, Instapaper, Send to Kindle), ad-blockers identify and remove common display ads for individual users.
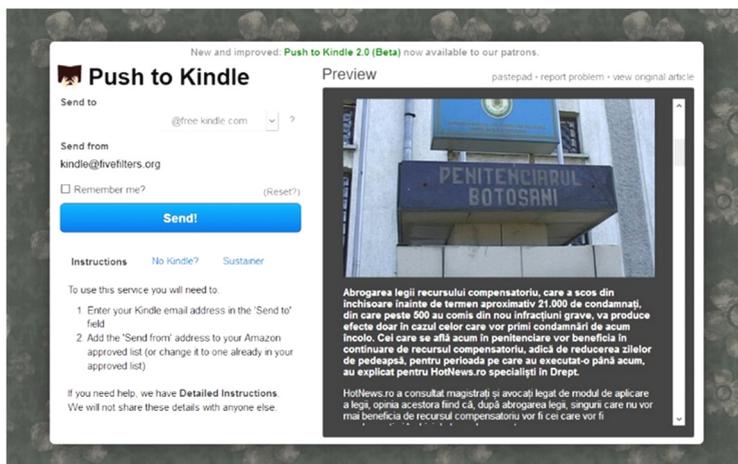

Fig. 6. Send to Kindle "stripping" model plugin

If we are to take into account the schism in the media industry, it is mandatory to impose a business model meant to help media agencies produce quality journalism, by keeping their independence and equidistance from public institutions or political spheres at the same time. Digital reality cannot be ignored anymore especially in the countries that have a lot to catch up in this technology race. While digital journalism production and distribution start to be acknowledged, the ways of making money out of digital journalism are yet to be well understood (Mele, 2016). A possible alternative has been already suggested at the end of 2011 by Jeff Jarvis, which, related to *The New York Time*'s decision of introducing Paywall, proposed not to sanction loyal readers with a fee, but to reward them through an inverted paywall system. More clearly, it was suggested to offer an initial bonus that, in time, was spend on reading articles or, content rewards if users were accessing ads, sharing materials through social media or providing personal data, as well as rewards for increased activity in the comments section.

Not only traditional media was struck by the public's absenteeism, but also informative websites and apps. The old distribution control model, where most of the users were visiting a homepage or app connected to a single media organization, will continue to lose ground to supersharing as readers distribute materials among them.

In this new business model, the partnership between journalists and the audience is essential. No news will be spared by supersharing.

Le Monde's tactic was to actively discuss their strategies both internally and externally, involving their audience and advertisers, every three months. This ensured that all parties are being informed about any changes that might occur. To transfer this concept in offline, the company organized in 2014 *Le Monde Festival*, where readers could pay to meet journalists, to engage in discussions, to attend shows, meetings and workshops. A year ago, *Le Monde* launched an app that offers a morning limited edition, at 7 am, as opposed to their long tradition of afternoon publication (Phys.org, 2015). Dreyfus's concept was that a company needs to reinvent itself every two, three months in order to survive on the market.

3. Romanian Media Short Case Study

In order to better understand ads and trackers within the Romanian media landscape, we first monitored the homepages of 5 online mainstream publications and 4 unaffiliated (independent) publications. In the second phase, we monitored one stand-alone material from each of the above publications and illustrated the ads behavior in connection to the format of the articles. The number of trackers and peculiarities were catalogued from the same individual articles, as reported by AdBlock Plus and Disconnect for Mozilla Firefox, one of the safest and most transparent web browsers. From the mainstream monitored publications we recall the following: Adevărul, Evenimentul Zilei, Libertatea, Newsweek and Hotnews, and from the independent ones: PressOne, Recorder, Casa Jurnalistului and Rise Project. The list of articles can be found in the *References* section, and the captures in a link at the end of the list.

Disconnect is a browser extension used in most of the desktop or mobile operating systems, developed by Brian Kennish and Casey Oppenheim (Disconnect, 2019). Disconnect is trying to identify and stop online trackers from webpages, that are running without the user's consent. As the matter of fact, all trackers run without user consent. In its history, there have been many arguments between Disconnect and Google on the fact that, in reality, blocking trackers is affecting the ad-based revenue system, endorsed by Google for companies with which they had agreements.
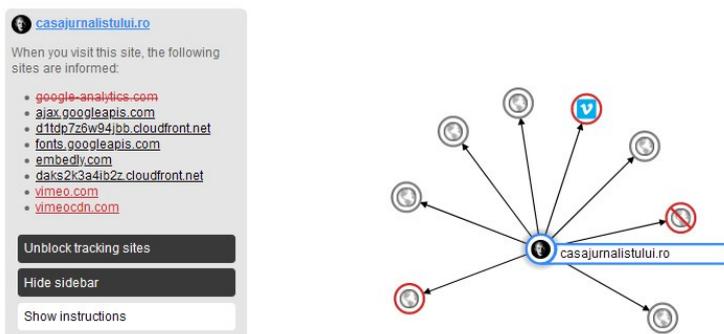

Fig. 7. The Disconnect Plugin on Casa Jurnalistului Article

Developed by Wladimir Palant, AdBlock Plus is the most popular add-on, blocking certain forms of advertising on websites. AdBlock Plus is also available for most of the operating systems, desktop or mobile. The extension operates based on filters connected to an open access database, to which around 30.000 users contribute to maintain and care (AdBlockPlus, 2019).

In 2011, the extension introduced the Acceptable Ads Initiative, which allows advertisers and websites that serve non-annoying ads apply to get their ads whitelisted. The Acceptable Ads guidelines suggest, among other rules and regulations, giving back to the user the content control and also creating innovative user and web friendly ads (Acceptable Ads Initiative, 2019).

Most of the ad-blocking software tries to identify in different ways the communications between the browser and the ads servers and to stop a series of HTML elements from loading or being displayed to the final user. From a technological perspective, the Energy Consumption of mobile web browsing drains the battery faster (Visser, 2016), while, from a legal perspective, we need to consider that in some countries it is considered fraud and it became prone to legislation. If we are to talk about trackers, even if we consider mainstream publications or unaffiliated journalism platforms, in most cases, you, as a reader, already pay with your privacy, because every move is watched and saved by a plethora of trackers: Chartbeat, Google, Nielsen, Moat.

Mainstream Media	Article Blocked Ads	Articol Trackers
Newsweek	15	15
Libertatea	13	63
Hotnews	6	23
Adevărul	4	20
Evenimentul Zilei	1	13

Independent Media	Article Blocked Ads	Articol Trackers
Recorder	9	20
Rise Project	0	14
Casa Jurnalistului	0	8
PressOne	0	8

Fig. 8. Ads statistics and trackers in Romanian media

All the monitored Romanian publications, mainstream or independent, contain trackers.

Mainstream Media Article Trackers

Note: One Article Sample.

Libertatea	63
Hotnews	23
Adevărul	20
Newsweek	15
Evenimentul Zilei	13
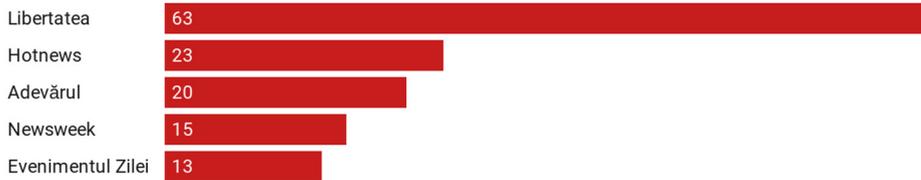
Reported by Disconnect.
Source: A. Stipiuc • Created with Datawrapper

Fig. 9. Trackers in mainstream Romanian publications

The number of trackers can seem surprising in the case of publications that get their funding exclusively or partially from readers' donations. The majority of trackers run as an API (application program interface) subset for other content distribution platforms (Google YouTube, Facebook Instagram, Vimeo, Medium) and social media (Facebook).

Independent Media Article Trackers

Note: One Article Sample.

■ Article Trackers

Recorder	20
Rise Project	14
Casa Jurnalistului	8
Press One	8
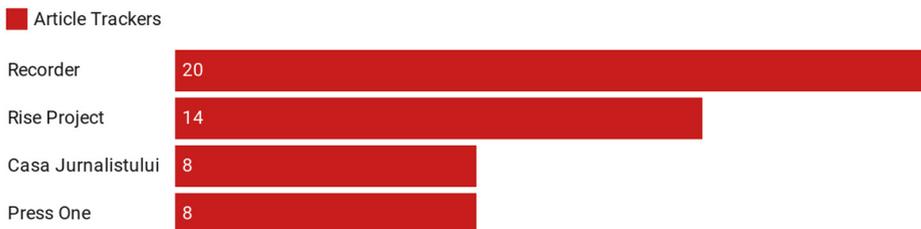
Reported by Disconnect.
Source: A. Stipiuc • Embed • Created with Datawrapper

Fig. 10. Trackers in independent Romanian publications

Others are joined in API subsets with various web platforms for journalists (fonts, cloud storage etc.), but not all of them. There is also a series of trackers that connect media content to certain companies with which you cannot establish a fast, transparent link: Amazon CloudFront, for, most probably, affiliated advertising programs, AdOcean or Gemius (companies that "provide advertising or advertising-related services such as data collection, behavioral analysis or retargeting") (Whotracks.me, 2019). As an important note, the trackers reported by Disconnect also contain incomplete site errors / roots, and incomplete URLs (Me and My Shadow, 2019).

Out of the mainstream publications monitored, the highest number of trackers was reported on Libertatea website.

Mainstream Media Article Ads

Note: One sample article.
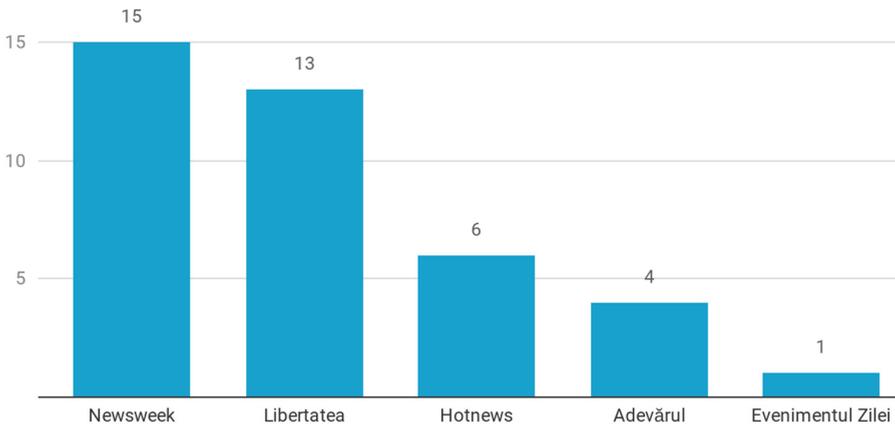
Reported by Ad-Blocker Plus.
Source: A. Stipiuc • Created with Datawrapper

**Fig. 11.** Ads in mainstream Romanian publications

All the mainstream publications contain a significant number of ads; however, AdBlock Plus only reported ads in the Recorder material from the independent publications monitored.

In a short interview, the Recorder editorship declared that

"We never set up pay per view or pay per click. Our YouTube incomes are under 1000 euros per month. We generate profit from our success by building awareness about the support through donations we rely on from our viewers and until now, it worked. About 40% of our earnings come from donations and the rest from branded or advertising content - all the numbers can be found in our last online report. On Facebook, we only boost branded content posts or native ads when we need to meet the number of views we agreed on with the companies that contracted our services and we did not have an organic reach for that target. But most times we drive traffic to our site without paid distribution - if the story is good, even if we announce it as branded content, our viewers want to see it, without us needing to promote it. Some of our branded content materials have thousands of organic shares and thousands of comments on YouTube, especially our editorial pieces. The trackers we use are the ones that provide site analytics to measure traffic, cookies, Facebook share buttons, adservers for ads and YouTube, embedded in our site. As far as we aware of, Gemius tracker only collect basic data such as ip addresses, browsing history, searches, we don't use third-party web trackers." (Recorder, 11.12.2019)

Independent Media Article Ads

Note: One sample article.
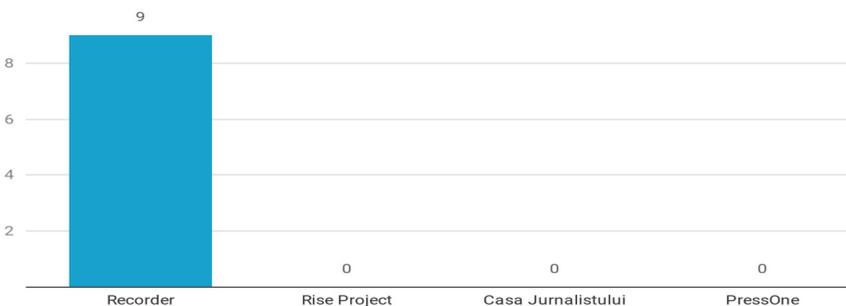
Reported by Ad-Blocker Plus.
Source: A. Stipiuc • Created with Datawrapper

Fig. 12. Ads on/in independent Romanian publications

4. Instead of conclusions - What can be done?

As they are stopping ads from displaying, ad-block technologies sabotage the traditional business model of digital journalism, that continues to rely on revenues from ads or from the number of clicks on ads links. The blocking model used by ad-blockers only makes the relationship between journalists and their readers worse. Besides, because ad-tech business is tracking online movement and throwing ads at readers, companies care even less about the quality of the journalist or of the media formats. Hence, advertisers will continue this defective policy of financing only the publications that manage to throw as many ads as possible in the readers' direction.

Although advertising blocking programs have been in place for more than ten years, they have become popular among users starting 2012. This has led to annual widening losses and media institutions are increasingly trying to persuade readers to disable the software when visiting their websites or pay a monthly subscription to view journalistic content without advertising. It is certain that the traditional business model is no longer functional. Although media institutions can still make money traditionally, they lose when they try to convert content. However, new companies are condemned to change how they respond to readers' behavior if they want to survive. Probably the most plausible business model is a formula of contributing key points:

- Native-advertising & advertising in general (no matter the form and how it is delivered) but truly more creative: i.e. Recorder advertorials;
- Better Ads (Lecompte, 2015);
- Sales & subscriptions for delivered content;
- Value added services & products: the goodies (i.e. journalism books, special events etc.);
- Studies of young adults' interaction with online news and advertising in the online Romanian mainstream (local & national)

landscape and Interviewing business (f)actors for real numbers to contribute to The Ad Blocking Report, regarding the forecast of the future of the online journalism advertising industry;

• Promoting the AdBlock Initiative and registering as many companies as possible on the whitelist.

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