# The Internal Conditions of e-Book Publishing in Iran

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**Abstract:** To investigate the factors affecting internal conditions of e-Book publishing in Iran (strengths and weaknesses) and provide appropriate strategies to improve and promote it in the country. The research is an applied one and carried out as a survey. For data analysis, SPSS Software and LISREL were used. Statistical population consisted of 294 experts, managers and publishers of electronic books. According to experts, the current status of the indicators of the dimensions of governance, technology, economy and culture is not satisfactory. The score of the dimensions of governance with an average of "33", technology with an average of "48", economy with an average of "17" and culture with an average of "15" were lower than 50 which represents the average level.

**Key words:** Electronic publishing, electronic devices, internal conditions, SPSS, LISREL

## INTRODUCTION

Today's world is the world of science and technology that is changing rapidly day by day and the countries try to be prepared for entry into this world and adapt to changes. We must also prepare ourselves to deal with these situations and plan for expanding the culture of our society to deal with such changes. The role of information and communication technologies in the field of publishing industry is so broad that need a serious plan by cultural practitioners and policy makers. Confusion and uncertainty about the future of the publishing industry in which many occupations are operating is worrying. To deal with these problems and save the publishing industry from the recession and create areas of motivation and hope, we require new approaches to interact with stakeholders in this field. In the digital age, faster and easier access to information is very important for users that is of the most important factors in choosing online publishing policy by some publishers. Although, there is a fear among publishers that e-Books reduce the sales of printed books, publishers with sufficient knowledge benefit from selling e-Books; so that they sell both electronic and print books or sell e-Books with higher prices to the print customers. According to the economic times report in 2010, 8 million Kindle reader which lets the users to download and read digital editions of books and newspapers were sold in the United Kingdom and the United States. Such news can flip to the publication industry practitioners and

stakeholders to take this industry seriously and turn to new ways on their business to survive and continue their work. Khodaverdi (2013) expresses various forms of digital media and wrote: digital media are able to establish different forms of communication in different forms of media that audiences with every taste and inclination can use the facilities and capacities of this media. Software media (educational software, encyclopedic, children and adolescents, general and functional), games and digital entertainments (computer games, online games, mobile games, network games), online media and the internet (online private and user-centric media, websites and different services ranging social networks, online communities, online dialogue), digital arts (digital cinema, computer graphics, digital painting, digital theatre, digital music), mobile phone and its various services (SMS, MMS, value-added services) are a variety of digital media tools.

Ameli has suggested online journalism and discussed about its different features: this journalism has never closed the final page of the newspaper but also is a continuous environment to which the daily volume of content is added frequently. This type of journalism providesis continuous editing facilities and the text can be newly edited immediately after being exposure to a virtual environment. On the other hand, it has the capacity of using previous databases and linking to the content in cyberspace. This environment provides a broad possibility of deconcentrated journalism both in the production and distribution or consumption stages.

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Lancaster (1989) knows the third stage of e-Publishing evolution process as the creation of completely new born text using all the capabilities of virtual space including hyper text, hypermedia, motion and sound. There is no doubt that with the development of media technologies and the emergence of new communication tools, electronic publications will be in touch with their users through new and interactive forms by access to unique capabilities. So far, different divisions of electronic publications have been provided. Some divided the texts produced and distributed electronically into two groups of information-based and communication-based. This division is based on main functions of each of these publications. For example, CD-ROMs and websites are often in information-based publications and e-Mail or newsgroups in the communication-based category because the main objective of these publications (second group) is establishing synchronous or asynchronous interaction between individuals (Ludwick and Glazer, 2000).

According to some others, electronic publications can be divided into two groups based on capacity and functions: the first group includes electronic versions of pre-existing traditional media and the second covers the contents provided by completely new and emerging media. e-Book or electronic book is not something unfamiliar and new and is known more or less for the artists as a phenomenon of the digital age. e-Book, in fact is an electronic edition of a physical book that in addition to text, voice and image has special features like text search, finding the subject, etc. (Oghli, 2007). e-Books in comparison with traditional books benefit from significant advantages including: storage of large amounts of data in low space, possibility of storage and note-making of the sections needed to study, the possibility of simultaneous use of accessories, facilitating research activities, possibility to use other media such as video and audio with text, possibility to change the form and shape of texts such as: the font size, line length and size of the screen according to the user's preferences and transportation. Today in the industrial world, several institutions understand the importance of this industry and more or less started supporting it and planning the further development. For example, the Frankfurt Book Fair has dedicated 7 annual awards for favorite e-Books that includes a special award of 100 thousand dollars. In another example, several websites can be noted that support many of the authors who want their books to be released in electronic form but less attention has been paid to the huge flow of technology in our country. e-Book is not only a modern, efficient and flexible way for the users but also a tool in the hands of publishers to offer their creativity. However, the number of publishers who entered the field of electronic publishing is not very impressive. It is clear that the lack of welcome by the users is a major cause. Maybe the biggest legal challenge to develop electronic publishing is intellectual property rights which requires government legislation and enforcement. Contribution to the development of electronic book publishing as the main body of society's culture can be on one of the main responsibilities and perhaps the most important task of cultural managers. Therefore, according to the problems in the field of printing industry and development of electronic devices in the society, e-Book publishing industry in the country must be considered as a basic necessity and priority. By the use of web and development of this industry, the context for the activity of business firms related to publishing and there by culture should be provided. This study aims to investigate internal conditions of publishing industry using scientific methods in order to offer strategies and action plans for the development of electronic publishing in the country.

**The main objective of the study:**
- e-Book publishing development in Iran

**The secondary objective of the study:**
- To assess the significance of the factors affecting the development of e-Book publishing in Iran (governance, economy, culture and technology)

**Research questions:**
- What effective strategies and actions can e-Book publishing have on its agenda in Iran?
- How the internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and barriers to e-Book publishing in Iran will be assessed?

**Literature review:** According to the survey conducted on the topic of study, there are few studies that have addressed this issue comprehensively. However, one can find cases that are related to the subject expressed in the following. Maxim (2012) in his article "e-Books' role in the transformation of the printing industry" reviews the impact of e-Books and e-Commerce on the evolution of the present and the future of the publishing industry. Carreiro (2010) in his article "e-Books" investigated e-Books and digital devices and also other technologies affecting the printing industry and explained how new technology is changing the publishing industry. Simon and Giuditta in a report entitled "Statistical, Local and

Competitive Analysis of Media and Content Industries" comprehensively reviews book printing industry in Europe and America. Cristina (2010) in his article "Electronic Publishing in Europe" provides a general overview of digital printing status in Europe which is obtained from Editech conference.

Birtle (2011) in an article called "Development and the Future of e-Book Publishing in Japan" believes that a combination of high population rate in Japan and development of electronic industry has provided a good environment to adopt e-Book in the country. Professor Frank Romano in his article "The Book Publishing Industry Developments" in the journal of printing industry discussed the different types of book and considered storage costs of the books never be sold as one of the problems of publishing industry. Fahimifar and Heydari (2014) in their study examine the economic aspects of e-Book publishing and consider the audience's needs as the most important reason to encourage publishers to the e-Books.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research is applied and carried out as a survey. This documentation includes all upstream documents and the questionnaires and interviews were used for the experts and electronic book publishers, students, managers and technical experts. These people have at least 5 years of continuous activity in this industry or they have relevant higher education or the director of related organizations. The 294 questionnaires were collected out of 310 questionnaires distributed. To do this research, after the preparation of the questionnaire, its reliability was tested by 8 teachers and experts in this field. Cronbach's alpha method was used to evaluate the reliability which showed that the questionnaire has desirable reliability. To analyze the data obtained from samples, both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used. For the analysis of research data, SPSS and LISREL Software and single-sample t-test statistical methods were used to evaluate variables and then confirmatory factor analysis was used to assess measurement models.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Factor analysis of the concept of e-Book publishing:** Factor loadings of the model in the standard estimation indicate the impact of each variable or item in the description and explanation of the variance of variable scores or the primary factor. In other words, the factor loading shows the correlation of each observer variable
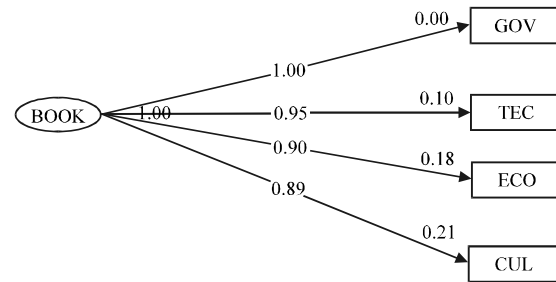


Fig. 1: Measurement model of the questionnaire on the concept of e-Book publishing
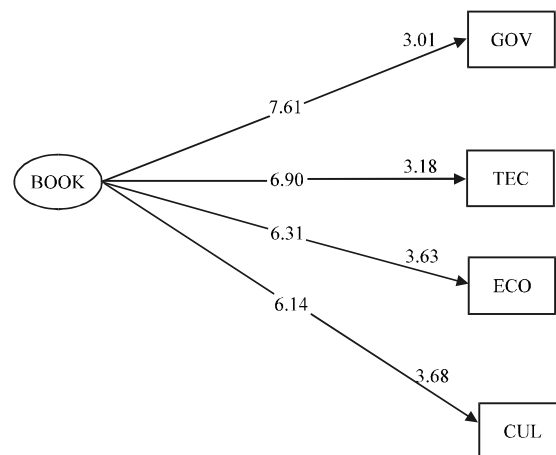


Fig. 2: The significance of measurement model of the questionnaire on the concept of e-Book publishing

(questionnaire) with latent variables (factors). According to Fig. 1, we can see factor loadings of each research questions. For example, the governance has a factor loading (1.00). In other words, the governance almost explains 1% (1.00 with power 2) of its variance. The amount of the error is 0.00 (the variance is not explained by the governance); it is clear that the lower is the error rate, the coefficients of determination is higher and there is greater correlation between the question and the corresponding factor. The coefficient of determination is a number between 0 and 1. The closer to 1 increases the amount of variance explanation.

The next output, Fig. 2 shows the model in the significance of the coefficients and parameters obtained, measurement model of factor loadings for each research question that all the coefficients obtained are significant; because the amount of significance test is greater than 1.96 or less than -1.96 representing the significance of relationships. Two outputs of LISREL Software (the model in standard estimation mode and in significant coefficients) are shown in Table 1.
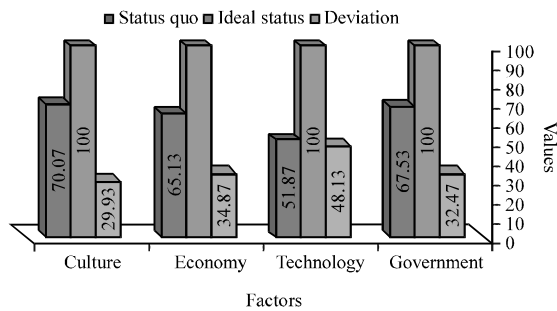
Fig. 3: The concept of electronic publishing

Table 1: e-Book publishing status quo

| Comparing to the average level of 50 | Min. | Max. | Mean | SD | t-values | Significance level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Governance | 14 | 59 | 47.32 | 97.10 | -75.8 | 0.0 |
| Technology | 28 | 68 | 13.48 | 85.90 | -04.2 | 8.0 |
| Economy | 8 | 66 | 87.34 | 53.16 | -02.5 | 0.0 |
| Culture | 11 | 61 | 93.29 | 28.15 | -19.7 | 0.0 |

The results of t-test show that the status of the concept of e-publishing is not satisfactory (Fig. 3). The score of the dimension governance, technology, economy and culture at the calculated means is <50 which is the average. The majority of respondents have scored <50 to the questions. Generally, they are not satisfied with the status quo of the concept of electronic publishing that is to say their opinion about the status quo of the concept of electronic publishing is negative. In other words, all dimensions of the concept of electronic publishing has a high improvability in the development of e-Book publishing.

**The results from the research questions:** The findings of the first research question: what effective strategies and actions can e-Book publishing have on its agenda in Iran? Reviewing the statute of the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance and related documents in this section, we find the followings:

**Strategies to develop e-Book publishing:**
- The development of reading and research culture and enhancing the spirit of inquiry, truth-seeking and lifelong learning in the public and the use of scientific research findings in everyday life
- Public culture to strengthen software movement and indigenous production of science in society
- Raising the status and professional qualification of teachers, lecturers, researchers and technicians
- Expansion of production space for science and thinking with the support of free-thinking and theorizing seats

- Promoting the participation of scientists and players of science and technology in social missions
- The use of the capacity of the media to advance the goals of science and technology system in the country
- Training and specialized improvement of human resources in the field of information technology
- Empowering students to take advantage of information technology at all levels of public education
- Strengthening intellectual creativity and mental strength and also logical thinking for innovation in information technology
- Encouraging technical experts and researchers to explore the new frontiers of information technology
- Facilitation of formal trainings based on information technology in schools
- Strengthening ICT-based education system in large and small high schools and colleges

**Effective measures to develop e-Book publishing:**
- Simplifying the language of science to the public and generating appropriate words in order to institutionalize the culture of using science and scientific achievements in life
- Increasing access to scientific resources through public and virtual libraries expansion in different regions
- The application of scientific and innovative techniques in education methods and development of textbooks, especially in education in order to promote creative scientific thinking at the lowest ages
- Strengthening intellectual incentives and also credit and material encouragement to gain the attention of social elite
- Solving social and economic problems of teachers and researchers
- Institutionalizing social commitment and discipline
- Assigning an important part of the national media programs to science and technology issues in a simple language understandable for the public of
- Choosing the best public media based on the amount of attention to science and technology and allocating awards
- A needs assessment and planning human resource development in information technology
- The development of space and educational facilities and organizing the countries' capacities to provide and promote scientific level
- Organization of the jobs needed for IT and classifying them

- Providing the perfect platform to expand scientific associations and trade union organizations in various areas of information technology
- Development of the educational capacities of Technical and professional required for IT development programs

The findings of the first research question: internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) how electronic book publishing will be assessed in Iran?

**The strengths of electronic book publishing in the country:**
- Being digital
- Being hyperlink
- Being interactive
- Communications
- Transport and concurrent transactions
- Network and sharing text
- Being deconcentrated
- Strengthening text via virtual reality
- The storage of large amounts of data in a low space compared to traditional books
- Possibility of storage and note-making of the sections needed to study
- The possibility of simultaneous use of accessories
- Facilitating research activities such as key word search and text comparison
- possibility to use other media such as video and audio with text
- possibility to change the form and shape of texts
- e-Learning and distance education

**The weaknesses of electronic book publishing development in the country:** In spite of valuable and efficient advantages, e-Books compared to traditional books have weaknesses that some of them are mentioned below:

- The need to use e-Books study tool
- Learn how to operate thee-book device, ranging from computers and reading devices
- Poor quality of displaying text in e-Books as well as eyestrain and poor vision often resulted from an on going study

**The major problems hindering the development of e-Book publishing in the country:**
- Cultural weakness of the authors and translators as a result of the laxity of public cultural support
- The economic and financial weakness of publishers and lack of professional stability

- Lack of material rights of authors and disregarding these rights by the publishers and also the lack of necessary legislation for the protection of these rights
- Social weakness of the publishers due to the lack of open socio-political space and lack of dignity and decent social status
- Social weakness of the publishers manifested in the following aspects
  - Lack of belief in the principle of material and intellectual rights of authors and translators
  - Lack of attention to basic social and intellectual needs
  - Disregarding the cultural base and dignity
  - Lack of attention to the importance of specialization
  - Disbelief in the need to ads
  - Lack of technical facilities
  - Union weakness
- Illiteracy, low educated and neo-education of readers
- The lack of adequate access to books, lack of public libraries and low purchasing power
- Lack of habit to read and easy habit to other media, particularly television
- The book audit, most publishers have considered it as the biggest obstacle
- The shortage of the educational system and disregarding cultural fields, particularly in relation to books and libraries

## CONCLUSION

This suggests that respondents are not satisfied with current situation of the above dimensions in the mentioned questions. In other words, all dimensions of the concept of electronic publishing has a high improvability in the development of e-Book publishing.

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