



## Assessing the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Publishing Indicators: A Case Study of Iran

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### Abstract:

*This paper focuses on analyzing the publishing and economic indicators of the Iranian Publishing Industry before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The study employs a quantitative approach with content analysis methodology, utilizing a researcher-made checklist for data collection. The statistical population consists of 722,988 book titles published in Iran from April 2016 to April 2023, sourced from statistical reports in the Iran Monthly Bank of Book Publishers. Trends in book publication, geographical distribution, and pricing are compared across the three time periods, revealing increases in certain subjects during the pandemic, such as philosophy, social sciences, art, literature, and geography. However, the average number of publications has decreased across all topics during this period. Additionally, other publishing indicators show no significant differences before and after the pandemic, highlighting the industry's resilience despite challenges posed by the global health crisis.*

**Keywords:** Publishing industry, Covid-19 pandemic, Publishing indicators, Cultural progression, Iran's publishing landscape.

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## Introduction

The publication of books is a reflection of the advancement of civilization, culture, and human society, serving as a key indicator of societal growth and development alongside other sources of information (Matlabi, 2019). Book publishing plays a crucial role in disseminating knowledge and expanding information, contributing to increased social awareness and fostering responsible and engaged citizens (Asif et al., 2022). The benefits of books extend beyond individual consumers to benefit society at large by expanding knowledge and shaping informed individuals (Matlabi, 2019).

Despite facing various challenges such as financial crises, the rise of e-books, and competition from other forms of media, the publishing industry has endured over the years (Angus, 2021). Regional or international crises, such as wars, also pose threats to the publishing industry, impacting the economic, political, cultural, and social landscapes of societies (Ahmadi, 1958). The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 further disrupted global society, leading to restrictions on public gatherings, quarantines, and stay-at-home orders worldwide (WHO, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic brought new challenges to the publishing industry, including the closure of stores due to quarantine, reduced purchasing power among consumers, and changes in consumer behavior (Behrangi et al., 2023). The pandemic also influenced trends such as increased online book purchases, as individuals spent more time at home during the lockdowns (Nguyin et al., 2020). This research aims to analyze the economic and publishing indicators of Iran's book publishing industry from April 2016 to April 2023, comparing data before, during, and after the Covid-19 epidemic to assess the impact of pandemic-related restrictions on the industry.

## Literature Review in Iran and the world

In a study conducted by Babolhavayeji et al. (2011), the analysis of book publishing in Iran between 1979 and 2008 was explored using documentary and bibliometric methods. The research community included statistical information on all books published during this timeframe. Descriptive statistical methods such as percentage, average, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation coefficient were employed to investigate the publication status. The study revealed a total of 560,339 book titles published, showcasing a significant increase from 1,863 titles in 1358 to 56,893 titles in 2008. The findings indicated that the number of active publishers experienced approximately 10% growth, with the total price of published books increasing by 84% on average. Books in the field of religion constituted the highest number of publications, while general books had the lowest count. The research findings suggested a positive correlation between the number of publishers and book supply, as well as between book price and book supply.

Furthermore, the Office of Cultural Studies and Planning along with the Deputy of Cultural Affairs of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (2019) conducted a study on book production and supply demand from 2000 to 2018. The research revealed a total of 1,164,951 published book titles during this period, with varying trends in subject focus and publication numbers. The analysis demonstrated a decline in the number of published book titles between 2013 and 2017, with an emphasis on first edition books over reprints. Notably, Tehran emerged as the leading publisher

location, with a shift in thematic trends towards children and adolescents and study aids in recent years.

Shoghpour, Hariri & Abazari (2022) delved into the status of book publishing in Azerbaijani Turkish language from 1979 to 2018 using descriptive statistics. The study focused on 4,690 book titles in Azerbaijani Turkish language, revealing that most books were authored works and first editions. Publishers in Tabriz dominated in terms of publication, particularly in the field of literature. The analysis highlighted a decline in average book numbers over the years, with a consistent increase in average book prices. The study underscored the importance of preserving Azerbaijani Turkish language publications despite lower publication numbers compared to other languages.

Overall, these studies shed light on the dynamic landscape of book publishing in Iran, showcasing trends in publication numbers, thematic shifts, and publisher contributions over different periods. The findings underscore the need for continued research and support for diverse language publications to enrich the literary landscape in Iran.

The National Academy of Statistics, Accounting and Auditing (2019) conducted a comprehensive statistical analysis of the book publishing industry in Ukraine from 1917 to 2017, focusing on the dynamics of industry indicators during the years 2017-1991. The results showed an average annual growth of 620 units or 5.13% in the number of books and brochures produced by the industry, although there were periods of negative growth, particularly in 1993, 1999, and 2015. The per capita production of books in Ukraine was found to be insufficient, raising concerns about the cultural and educational impact of limited access to books. The study emphasized the importance of books in society, debunking the misconception that printed books are less relevant in the digital age. It highlighted the influence of socio-political events on the publishing industry and underscored the need to consider industry dynamics within the broader context of societal changes.

Cernicova- Buca & Luzon (2020) examined the availability of electronic books in Romanian university publications during the Covid-19 pandemic, emphasizing the importance of open access to academic books. Their research revealed that only a few academic publishers had embraced open access and adapted to the challenges posed by the pandemic. The study suggested that modernization and restructuring of academic publishing practices could lead to increased accessibility and relevance of university books.

Mrva- Montoya & Luca (2021) investigated book publishing practices in the Humanities and Social Sciences in Australian universities, highlighting the impact of institutional pressures and research funding environments on academics' publishing behaviors. The study identified increasing pressure on academics to prioritize journal articles over books and to publish with internationally recognized publishers to meet performance expectations. The findings emphasized the need for positive developments in these fields to support academic independence and research quality. Asif et al. (2022) explored the challenges faced by the book publishing sector in Pakistan, emphasizing issues such as weak study culture, government regulations, maritime smuggling, and financial constraints. The study called for creative solutions

from stakeholders to address these challenges, including private investments, government strategies to combat smuggling, and technical training for publishing staff. Melinščak Zlodi (2022) investigated the publication status of scientific books in Croatia, highlighting the scattered nature of open access to academic books in the country. The research pointed out the reliance on direct subsidies from the Ministry of Science and Education for funding scientific book publications and emphasized the need for diverse mechanisms and sustainable business models to promote free access to university books. The study underscored the importance of tailored approaches to open access based on national and regional characteristics.

Overall, the review of literature underscores the importance of open access, funding mechanisms, and industry dynamics in shaping the landscape of book publishing in various regions and underlines the need for innovative solutions to address challenges and enhance accessibility in the academic publishing sector.

The literature review on the study of economic and publishing indicators of the book publishing industry in Iran and the world reveals a significant increase in the number of published books over the years. The studies highlight trends in publication numbers, thematic shifts, and publisher contributions in Iran. Additionally, research in other countries such as Ukraine, Romania, Australia, and Pakistan explore challenges faced by the book publishing sector and call for innovative solutions to promote accessibility, open access, and sustainable funding mechanisms. Overall, the review emphasizes the need for continued research, support for diverse language publications, and the importance of adapting to industry dynamics to enhance the academic publishing sector.

### **Research Methodology**

The present study is decision-oriented with practical implications that address specific needs (Mansourian, 2019, p. 22). The research is descriptive and quantitative in nature, aiming to describe and measure the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the book publishing industry in Iran. Content analysis methodology was employed to analyze data from relevant documents (Mansourian, 2019, p. 28).

The statistical population for this study comprises 722,988 book titles published across various subjects and fields between April 2015 and April 2023. Data was collected from the monthly statistical reports of the comprehensive information bank of book publishers available at "<https://ketab.ir>ShowStatistics>" during the period from April 2016 to April 2023. The data is arranged by DDC. The Information on publishing and economic indicators, including the number of titles, authorship, translation, place of publication, edition status, total number, average number, and average price of books, was gathered in PDF format.

Excel was used to organize and analyze the data according to research objectives and questions. Tables were created for each subject and field, showcasing monthly publishing and economic indicators from April 2016 to April 2023. Graphs were generated to highlight trends in each indicator over the study period. The highest and lowest values for each index were identified, and monthly averages were calculated using the data in SPSS.

To compare publishing and economic indicators before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic, three distinct time periods were defined: pre-pandemic (April 2016 to February 2020), pandemic (March 2020 to March 2022), and post-pandemic (April 2022 to April 2023). Tables were created in SPSS to analyze and compare publishing trends across these three periods for each subject and field. Efforts were made to present the data effectively while minimizing the number of diagrams to enhance clarity and facilitate interpretation.

## Findings

To assess the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on publishing indicators in Iran, ANOVA and Tukey's post hoc test were conducted. This study examined the economic and publishing indicators of Iran's book publishing industry across various disciplines in three distinct periods - before, during, and after the pandemic. The tables below provide examples of the statistical analysis conducted on select disciplines.

An investigation of the economic and publishing indicators of the Iranian book publishing industry was conducted across various subjects including DDC, children's books, and educational aid books before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the extensive number of tables involved, this section will present a summarized statistical table covering the overall economic and publishing indicators for the entire range of subjects.

### ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
titles	Between Groups	22803786.202	2	11401893.101	1.794	.173
	Within Groups	502213735.810	79	6357135.896		
	Total	525017522.012	81			
cost	Between Groups	5073660868224 .928	2	2536830434112 .464	276.307	.000
	Within Groups	725315868531. 072	79	9181213525.71 0		
	Total	5798976736756 .000	81			
tirage	Between Groups	2975349.998	2	1487674.999	50.002	.000
	Within Groups	2350414.441	79	29752.082		
	Total	5325764.439	81			
authored books	Between Groups	7248368.315	2	3624184.157	.946	.392
	Within Groups	302499486.234	79	3829107.421		
	Total	309747854.549	81			
translated books	Between Groups	4424698.299	2	2212349.149	2.766	.069
	Within Groups	63185366.396	79	799814.765		
	Total	67610064.695	81			
publishedintehran	Between Groups	11165873.801	2	5582936.901	1.538	.221
	Within Groups	286717095.175	79	3629330.319		

	Total	297882968.976	81			
publishedinProviences	Between Groups	5178400.631	2	2589200.316	2.503	.088
	Within Groups	81713775.856	79	1034351.593		
	Total	86892176.488	81			
firstpublishe	Between Groups	13389391.928	2	6694695.964	2.904	.061
	Within Groups	182106978.267	79	2305151.624		
	Total	195496370.195	81			
reprint	Between Groups	1400387.314	2	700193.657	.583	.561
	Within Groups	94860625.906	79	1200767.417		
	Total	96261013.220	81			
generaltirage	Between Groups	1072671554082	2	5363357770410	4.243	.018
		13.730		6.870		
	Within Groups	9986968991443	79	1264173290056		
	Total	1105964054552	81			
		594.800				
averagetirage	Between Groups	2975349.998	2	1487674.999	50.002	.000
	Within Groups	2350414.441	79	29752.082		
	Total	5325764.439	81			

Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) crona	(J) crona	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
titles	befor	during	-1203.75486	641.60379	.152	-2736.3377	328.8280
		after	-599.60993	815.48730	.743	-2547.5440	1348.3241
	during	befor	1203.75486	641.60379	.152	-328.8280	2736.3377
		after	604.14493	897.86332	.780	-1540.5586	2748.8485
	after	befor	599.60993	815.48730	.743	-1348.3241	2547.5440
		during	-604.14493	897.86332	.780	-2748.8485	1540.5586
cost	befor	during	-306142.536*	24382.94825	.000	-364385.4718	-247899.5995
		after	-695565.778*	30991.06477	.000	-769593.3565	-621538.2003
	during	befor	306142.5356*	24382.94825	.000	247899.5995	364385.4718
		after	-389423.243*	34121.61080	.000	-470928.6776	-307917.8080
	after	befor	695565.7784*	30991.06477	.000	621538.2003	769593.3565
		during	389423.2428*	34121.61080	.000	307917.8080	470928.6776
tirage	befor	during	308.35245*	43.89296	.000	203.5064	413.1985
		after	484.87057*	55.78856	.000	351.6098	618.1313
	during	befor	-308.35245*	43.89296	.000	-413.1985	-203.5064
		after	176.51812*	61.42401	.014	29.7961	323.2401
	after	befor	-484.87057*	55.78856	.000	-618.1313	-351.6098
		during	-176.51812*	61.42401	.014	-323.2401	-29.7961
authoredbooks	befor	during	-684.05920	497.94910	.359	-1873.4977	505.3793
		after	-271.19326	632.90019	.904	-1782.9861	1240.5995
	during	befor	684.05920	497.94910	.359	-505.3793	1873.4977
		after	412.86594	696.83227	.825	-1251.6398	2077.3717
	after	befor	271.19326	632.90019	.904	-1240.5995	1782.9861
		during	-412.86594	696.83227	.825	-2077.3717	1251.6398
translatedbooks	befor	during	-519.50416	227.57832	.064	-1063.1148	24.1064
		after	-329.05851	289.25519	.494	-1019.9951	361.8781
	during	befor	519.50416	227.57832	.064	-24.1064	1063.1148
		after	190.44565	318.47415	.822	-570.2856	951.1769
	after	befor	329.05851	289.25519	.494	-361.8781	1019.9951
		during	-190.44565	318.47415	.822	-951.1769	570.2856

publishedintehran	befor	during	-810.52544	484.78528	.222	-1968.5199	347.4690
		after	49.33688	616.16880	.996	-1422.4901	1521.1638
	during	befor	810.52544	484.78528	.222	-347.4690	1968.5199
		after	859.86232	678.41076	.418	-760.6404	2480.3651
publishedinProviences	befor	during	-393.97410	258.80357	.286	-1012.1717	224.2235
		after	-650.52482	328.94292	.124	-1436.2625	135.2129
	during	befor	393.97410	258.80357	.286	-224.2235	1012.1717
		after	-256.55072	362.17092	.759	-1121.6593	608.5579
firstpublishe	befor	during	-906.17854	386.35445	.055	-1829.0537	16.6966
		after	-560.70390	491.06186	.491	-1733.6910	612.2832
	during	befor	906.17854	386.35445	.055	-16.6966	1829.0537
		after	345.47464	540.66621	.799	-946.0012	1636.9504
reprint	befor	during	-297.38483	278.84677	.538	-963.4591	368.6895
		after	-39.54787	354.41811	.993	-886.1375	807.0418
	during	befor	297.38483	278.84677	.538	-368.6895	963.4591
		after	257.83696	390.21946	.787	-674.2705	1189.9444
generaltirage	befor	during	1123517.411	904772.6794	.432	-1037690.366	3284725.188
		after	3296337.273 <sup>*</sup>	1149978.601	.015	549412.2699	6043262.276
	during	befor	-1123517.411	904772.6794	.432	-3284725.188	1037690.366
		after	2172819.862	1266143.081	.206	-851584.3184	5197224.043
averagetirage	befor	during	308.35245 <sup>*</sup>	43.89296	.000	203.5064	413.1985
		after	484.87057 <sup>*</sup>	55.78856	.000	351.6098	618.1313
	during	befor	-308.35245 <sup>*</sup>	43.89296	.000	-413.1985	-203.5064
		after	176.51812 <sup>*</sup>	61.42401	.014	29.7961	323.2401
	after	befor	-484.87057 <sup>*</sup>	55.78856	.000	-618.1313	-351.6098

## Conclusion

Based on findings of the research, it was determined that during the Covid-19 epidemic, the number of translated books increased along with the average number. A comparison between the periods before and after the epidemic showed an increase in translated books and overall book count. While the average number decreased during the epidemic, other publishing indicators remained stable. Additionally, there was an increase in philosophy and psychology books published during the epidemic, with all indicators showing growth except for the average number.

Interestingly, the trend of increased indicators continued even after the epidemic ended, except for the total number, which remained unaffected. Religion books, on the other hand, saw a decrease in total number and average number during the epidemic period compared to pre-epidemic times. Social sciences literature displayed an increase in translated books, books published in Tehran and other cities, and first edition books during the epidemic. However, the average number decreased during this period.

The study also explored language books, revealing a decrease in the number of titles, authored books, books published in Tehran, first edition books, reprinted books, and total book count during the epidemic. In natural sciences, translated books, average number, and total number decreased during the epidemic. Applied sciences books showed an increase in translated books during the epidemic and a decrease in average number post-epidemic.

Art books experienced an increase in various indicators during the epidemic, but with a decrease in the average number. Literature books also saw an increase in certain indicators during the epidemic period. History and geography books showed an increase in several indicators during the epidemic, with a decrease in the average number.

In the field of teaching aids, a consistent decrease in the average number was observed throughout the epidemic and post-epidemic periods. The study also showed a downward trend in the average number for books intended for children and adolescents.

Overall, the findings suggest that translated books and books published in other cities increased during the epidemic period, while the average number decreased. Post-epidemic, the number of books published in other cities increased across all subjects, with a decrease in total number and average number. While the findings cannot be directly compared to previous research due to unique circumstances, the results align with studies on the impact of war on publishing indicators.

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