


Article

# Authorship in Communication Science Journals: Mapping Romanian Practices

Mariana Cernicova-Buca 

Department of Communication and Foreign Languages, Politehnica University Timisoara,  
300006 Timisoara, Romania; mariana.cernicova@upt.ro

**Abstract:** Scientific authorship is an evolving concept, being challenged by the numerous varieties in definition and practice of its ideational form. Variations in interpretation occur not only along the traditional demarcation line between hard sciences and the social sciences and humanities but also within the same science branch, along parameters such as geography or institutional representation. This article explores the websites of internationally indexed communication science journals in Romania, from the point of view of authorship definitions, authorship requirements, and author-related ethical provisions. The web-based analysis is supplemented by opinions shared by editors of seven journal publishing venues. Findings show that less than half of the Romanian communication science journals allude to the international debate concerning authorship vs. contributorship models. A data-based critique of the self-presentation of the selected journals on their main page is also formulated. The findings of this study can help improve the journals' self-presentation and self-promotion and set a benchmark for science communication among disciplines in SSH. In addition, it opens the floor for debate on scientific publishing patterns and practices in the given domain in Romania, making room for comparisons and filling in gaps in information on the topic.

**Keywords:** author; multiple authorship; contributorship; journal; credit taxonomy; communication sciences; publishing



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## 1. Introduction

Sharing and exchanging novelty, celebrating discoveries, and championing progress are interwoven with the history of mankind. The anecdotal story of Archimedes' "Eureka!" has inspired many centuries of scientists, who have felt the urge and excitement in letting others find out about new concepts, ideas, and thoughts as soon as they are born. "Eureka" contains revelation but also pride in the discovery and an eagerness to share the finding with the rest of the world. Even before the Ancient Greeks, arguably, scientists passed knowledge forward and forged networks [1]. We are in debt to Michel Foucault with a modern, and, at the same time, historical view on the identity and nature of authorship. Foucault made a point in arguing that in the Middle Ages scientific texts were only "considered truthful if the name of the author was indicated", by contrast to literary texts, which were "accepted, circulated, and valorized without any question about the identity of their author" [2]. Scientific authorship has established itself as a concept covering the affirmation of truth but also as a recognition of credit to those who pushed the boundaries of science. As Barton Moffatt so well put it, "Authorship is a window into the practice of science" [3].

From the somewhat idyllic image of scientific authorship as a manifestation of the scientist's stance among peers and within a discipline, authorship grew into being a marker of professional value, a condition for attracting funding to support research, and a sign of intellectual productivity, measured, labeled, weighed, and ranked. In academia, it is a determining factor for climbing the ladder of tenure and promotion, establishing the esteem of the researcher and their "market value" for the universities and the self. Through publishing, authors engage in a competitive race not only to bring their contribution to

furthering knowledge but also to meet the expectations of their employers, who are, in turn, ranked with a heavy stress on scientific productivity, reflected by the annual published output of its members [4]. The pressure for academic publishing has led to the development of a global industry, involving up to 10,000 publishers and around nine million authors in 17,000 universities worldwide [4]. The “publish or perish” culture is here to stay, and authors face numerous challenges as they are called upon not only to feed the hungry mouth of the scientific publishing industry rapidly and constantly with (hopefully) new content but also to face the increasing demands of a bureaucratic nature from the universities and society, driven by rules not as relevant for science as they are for marketing and resource allocation. However, at this point, we resonate with Ken Hyland’s remark that academic publishing is not a monolithic activity, conducted and/or understood by all in the same way: “Discipline, academic experience, rhetorical expertise, geographical location” are among the most powerful factors influencing publication practices [4]. As Osborne and Holland debate, professional practices differ radically across “hard” sciences vs. social sciences and humanities [5], leading to a fierce debate over the authorship vs. contributorship models to fit publishing practices in an evolving ecosystem [6,7]. Johann and Mayer try to chart the realm and point out that in hard sciences multiple authorship prevails, leading to an extreme case of more than 5100 individuals named as co-authors of an article in *Physics* [8], a phenomenon labeled as hyperauthorship [9]. In other domains, such as the social sciences and humanities, “the average number of co-authors has only marginally increased and single-authored publications are still widespread” [8]. An analysis of the publication realities in social sciences in Spain, for instance, where the national evaluation agencies have established limitations on the number of co-authors, showed that such measures were not necessary since “there is no inflation of authors” in the SSH and rarely articles are signed by a maximum of four authors [10]. However, what can be perceived as single authorship can be misleading, as proved by a case that stirred an interesting debate in science. A single author in *Mathematics*, producing articles and books under the signature Nicolas Bourbaki, proved to be a group of four and up to twelve members at a time, in a chain of generations originating in the period of WWII [11]. No wonder even the idea of scientific authorship is considered by some authors as “something of a misnomer because scientific authorship practices are tied to specific disciplinary ecologies and have little to do with authorship in other areas” [12]. The scientific community is encouraged to embrace a pluralist attitude towards authorship since it “is entirely possible that there will be multiple accounts of authorship that are valid in differing domains or even that different accounts of authorship can all be valid in the same domain” or even within the same subfield [3].

While accepting that authorship is an evolving concept, with the debate concerning definitions open and vivid, we share Mario Biagioli’s surprise that the topic fuels thousands of administrative memos, policy statements, guidelines, articles, editorials, and reports but attracts little attention in the humanities and social sciences research [12]. At best, attention is drawn to ethical issues and gift/ghost authorship [7,13,14], authorship and acknowledgment statements [15], and authorship criteria [12,13,15,16]. McNutt et al. call for transparency in authors’ contributions and responsibilities to promote integrity in scientific publication [17], urging journals, which represent the most active segment of science publishing, to adopt policies capable of removing “ambiguity in expectation for authors and ongoing university stakeholder meetings for managing the cultural and disciplinary variability in deciding who has earned authorship”. Scientific journals with a history of more than three centuries remain (still) “the de facto archive for scientific communication, and scientists continue to consider scholarly journals to be extremely valuable” [18], despite the advent of new forms and formats facilitated by the digital revolution [19]. To maintain quality, relevance, and prestige, journals are urged on one hand, to cultivate the publishing culture, and on the other, to supply support systems and adequate services to authors [20], thus ensuring that they will continue to be the preferred venue for knowledge dissemination and the depositaries of the currency that is researchers’ reputational capital.

Against this background, this present research focuses on the practices specific to social sciences as a broad field, narrowing down to communication sciences as a subdomain, and to Romania as a geographic territory. Researchers find that “Romanian scholarly productivity is weak compared to other countries” [21] and propose that measures be taken to increase scientific output. With a new discipline, such as communication science, the situation is complicated by the lack of supporting infrastructure and the dispersions in understanding research networking and building a community of practice. The research questions, aiming to clarify the support that can be expected by potential authors from the relevant Romanian communication science journals, are:

RQ1: Do Romanian communication science journals establish authorship definitions?

RQ2: Are there clear author expectations provided on journal websites?

RQ3: Are there specific provisions regarding multiple authorship?

RQ4: Is there a relationship between the indexation and the self-presentation of the journal to attract authors?

In conducting the research, inspiration is drawn from Chang’s analysis of authorship practices in social science journals [16], which emphasized that the aim of an authorship definition is to maintain fairness in providing academic credit, while participants contributing to research without meeting authorship requirements should be listed in the acknowledgment section. Chang’s findings showed that more than half of 1065 journals from 7 social science disciplines do not offer an established authorship definition, and only 3.8% of the journals directly listed authorship definitions in the instructions for the authors’ section. In addition, despite the expectation that high-quality journals would highlight the importance of authorship definitions for recognizing qualified authors, most journals with higher impact factors included in his analyzed corpus did not tend to have established authorship definitions [16]. Along similar lines, Mario Biagioli’s comments on scientific authorship [12] offered a generous frame in signaling that scientific publishing could shift from the model of authorship to “Contributorship and Guarantorship”. He makes a solid argument in favor of adding transparency in the matter of scientific publishing, reducing arbitrariness for “both authors, editors, and users”, and preventing misconduct in scientific life. Name ordering in cases of multiple authorship is a controversial issue, and professional conventions are so diverse that they cease to supply a (much-needed) guidance, as Brand et al. observed [22].

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Romanian Scientific Journals in Communication Sciences

Romanian journals in communication sciences are “young” outputs of scientific research since the domain itself was introduced to this country only after the fall of communism in the last decade of the 20th century and the creation of faculties of journalism and, later, of communication science [23]. The professional standards for Romanian academia require research-based teaching and, as a minimum, the presentation/publication of at least one research paper per year. With the refining of standards for advancement in an academic career, Romanian professionals are also handed out indications regarding the quantity and quality of the research output. For each stage in the academic career, the applicant needs to present a professional profile with articles published in journals that fulfill established quality requirements, measured by indexing and impact factors. The latest version of these standards in use is established by the Order of the Minister of National Education and Scientific Research no. 6.129/20.12.2016 which approves the minimum necessary and mandatory standards for the awarding of didactic titles in higher education, professional research, and development degrees, including the quality of doctoral supervisor and the qualification certificate. The new minimum standards, available in the annex to the minister’s order for each CNATDCU commission separately, are based on the proposals developed by the National Council for the Attestation of University Titles, Diplomas, and Certificates (CNATDCU) [24]. The standards mention scientific authorship but without defining the term; the conditions vary by scientific domain. For some sciences,

book publishing is mandatory, for others only journals matter, and the reading of standards displays a large difference in practices among disciplines.

For communication sciences, the Web of Science journals with an impact factor higher than 0.1 count the most, and researchers are expected to obligatorily report such publications. Second in the hierarchy are journals indexed in the Web of Science but with impact factors lower than 0.1 or without calculated impact factors. In the same category fall journals indexed in at least three databases indicated by the standards: Scopus, EBSCO, ProQuest, CEEOL, ERIH, etc. Faculty also need to provide proof of publication in journals from this category. Additional, though not mandatory conditions include serving as editors or members of editorial boards of indexed journals, peer reviewing, and proving impact in the scientific community. The list is longer but the above-mentioned issues are the relevant ones for research on authorship and journal publication. Co-authorship is acceptable but serving as the primary author or being a sole author is encouraged.

The Romanian academic tradition from the 20th century onwards established faculty-led journal publishing in the form of Annals or Scientific Bulletins. It naturally followed that the foundation of new study programs and faculties after 1990 also brought to life new publications, as venues for the scientific output of the faculty body. Additionally, following the standards established at a national level, Romanian editors of such publications struggle to fulfill the conditions relevant for Romanian authors and index the journals in the relevant international databases. International indexation is a proof of quality and a precondition to attract authors. The rapid growth in the number of scientific publications led to an initiative, on the part of Romanian authorities in charge of education and research, to evaluate and rank these publications in 2011. The National University Research Council (Consiliul Național al Cercetării Științifice), which is the Romanian national research funding body and the accrediting body for academic journals and academic publishers, established the criteria for ranking the journals in terms of content, quality of the editorial process and of the editorial boards, quality of articles, international relevance (proved by indexation in international databases and by impact factors), transparency, and circulation. In 2011, journals had to prove they have a website in Romanian and in a language of wide international circulation, “containing: (1) general information on the magazine; (2) the summary of the issues published in the last ten years ( . . . ); (3). summaries of the articles published in the last four years (in the Romanian language or in one of the languages of international circulation)” [25]. Almost ten years later, journals in humanities were re-evaluated according to an updated methodology, which mentioned the necessity for journals to have a functional website, offering access to the articles but general information to be included on the homepage is no longer presented in detail [26]. As a result, the self-presentation of Romanian scientific journals varies not only among disciplines but also among publishers and even in the styles practiced by one and the same publisher.

This research focuses on communication science journals as part of the social sciences system. A European attempt to comparatively analyze publication patterns in the SSH placed Romania under the “no data” rubric in 2018, the project continuing without Romania present for the remaining seven countries [27]. Therefore, the first step in the research is to create a corpus of journals in communication sciences. The following criteria of inclusion have been applied: the journal needs to be based in Romania, to mention communication studies among the scientific domains specified in the journal description, and to be indexed in the main databases specified in the standards provided by the Ministry of Education. The list and an analysis of the language of publication are discussed in prior research [28], with 22 journals matching the selection criteria. Two publications were excluded from the corpus, one with an irresponsive website, and one which did not publish new issues since 2019. The corpus of journals and their website addresses are presented in Appendix A.

On comparing the publication opportunities for researchers in Serbia and Hungary (countries neighboring Romania) relevant to reaching their academic advancement goals, Marko Čudić [29] states that while in Hungary currently, only one journal holds the prestigious Q1 ranking, “Serbia has had no such journals to offer so far”. Similarly, in

Romania, social sciences journals do not reach, so far, high places in the ranking systems. Only three of the identified journals are indexed by the Web of Science but still in the Emerging Social Sciences Index (ESCI): *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies; Ekphrasis. Images, Cinema, Theory, Media*; and the *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations*. The rest of the journals in the list are indexed in at least three of the relevant databases in various combinations. The presentation of the journals is given in alphabetical order of their title.

Research shows that the authorship criteria of most journals in the social sciences and humanities (SSH) are rather homogenous and that journals in this area have the highest share of missing definitions [8]. In addition, “the inconsistent location of authorship definitions and inconsistent name for the location of authorship definitions are barriers to the visibility of authorship definitions” [16]. To map the Romanian practices, the analysis aimed at identifying the following items (Table 1):

**Table 1.** Research items.

Item	Questions
Location of information for authors	Does the journal website have a dedicated section for authors? If not, where is the information concerning authorship placed? How many clicks are necessary to access the information?
Definition of authorship	Does the journal provide a definition regarding authorship? Is there a clarification concerning authorship/contributorship?
Recommended number of authors	Does the journal set a recommended/maximum number of authors? If so, is there an indication regarding the taxonomy of credit? Is there an indication regarding the functions of the corresponding/lead author and the order of authors in the list?
Ethical provisions	Does the authorship section provide ethical guidance (described by the journal or referenced from international guidelines)?

The data were collected in September–December 2022, from the websites of journals included in the corpus.

## 2.2. Editors, as Sources of Insight into the Publication Practices

To fill in possible gaps, due to the scarcity of information on the journals’ homepage, individual interviews were conducted with the editors-in-chief of publications identified in the list. Seven respondents offered their views by responding to the following questions:

1. Is there a terminological difference between “author” and “contributor” in social sciences and humanities?;
2. What is your definition of an “author” (of a scientific article)?;
3. Do you recommend or limit the number of authors for the articles accepted for publication?;
4. In the case of multiple authors, how do you recommend establishing their order?
  - (a) Depending on the contribution made
  - (b) Depending on the teaching degree
  - (c) Alphabetically
  - (d) Another—which?

To ensure candor in the responses, anonymity was ensured for participants in the research. They did not have access to responses offered by peers and agreed to receive the results in the form of the final output of the published research. The interviews were conducted in November–December 2022.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Scientific Authorship and Authorship-Related Information on the Journals’ Homepage

The survey showed that out of the twenty journals with active homepages, roughly half have a dedicated section informing authors, though not always one click is enough to access the information. Only one journal offers a definition of authorship (position 8 in



Table 2 below) and only two journals (positions 3 and 10) offer guidance in case of multiple authorship. The number of authors seems irrelevant to the editors since no journal recommends or limits the list of authors. However, it is possible that the practices existing in the area are supposed to be known and the number of authors is kept down to a maximum of five authors, without explicitly mentioning this in the journal's publishing policies. Ethical provisions, on the other hand, have a prominent place, only two journals (positions 9 and 18) omit such information.

The image presented by the analyzed websites resonates with the findings of other authors who comment on the variety of practices [20]. In twelve out of the twenty journals, special sections for authors are present; four times the information is embedded in other sections and requires two clicks to be accessed by those interested in the topic. As for a definition of authorship, only one journal (number 8 in the list) provides such a text: "We define the author of an article as that person who actually writes the article. Any other person(s) who has generated ideas, made comments on a draft or offered any kind of technical help will be mentioned in the Acknowledgements. In cases of multiple authorship, each author will be listed alphabetically when authors contribute equally to the writing of the paper. If contributions are unequal, the primary author will be listed first. An agreement in this sense will be signed by all the authors before publication. A written agreement will also be required, signed by all the authors, in cases of changes in authorship. In cases of multiple authors, the editor will e-mail only one author, called the corresponding author, designated as such by the group authoring the paper, and who will inform all co-authors at all stages". All the other journals seem to take for granted that authorship is a known concept and does not need clarification. No recommendations are formulated regarding the number of acceptable co-authors.

As anticipated, the journal homepages shed little light upon the concept of authorship and seemed to neglect the multiple authorship debate.

Credit taxonomy also receives little attention, with only three journals bringing the issue to the fora. One of the journals in this group (number 3 in the list) formulates the requirements in a clear manner: "Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made significant contributions should be listed as co-authors. The corresponding author ensures that all contributing co-authors and no uninvolved persons are included in the author list. The corresponding author will also verify that all co-authors have approved the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication". Another journal (number 10) offers only technical guidance: "In case of multiple authors of one article, all authors should be displayed on a new line, followed by organization details, separated by commas". A special case is a journal that lists four authorship criteria embedded in the Publication Ethics section (journal 6): "Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND Final approval of the version to be published; AND Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved". In the case of multiple authorship, all co-authors must fulfill all four criteria. Non-author contributors can be mentioned in the Acknowledgement section, and increased responsibilities fall on the part of the corresponding author.

The ethical provisions, on the other hand, receive a much stronger emphasis, with eighteen of the journals containing dedicated sections. Eight out of the group declare (though most of the times only embedded in the text concerning ethical standards) that they subscribe to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) for guidance on academic practices [30]. Apparently, the editors considered this statement sufficient and only three journals share links for interested individuals to consult the actual provisions recommended by COPE. This organization offers tools and guidelines for transparency and best practices in scholarly publications, including debates on authorship, contributorship, and editorial

duties. Among the requirements for the journals' websites, criteria for authorship are listed as a must-have. In addition, the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) encourages journal editors to publish and promote accepted authorship definitions appropriate to their fields [16,30], yet the results show that in Romania such definitions are not provided.

**Table 2.** Information for authors on the journal homepage.

Journal	Dedicated Section for Authors	Definition of Authorship	Recommended Number of Authors	Credit Taxonomy	Ethical Provisions
1. <i>Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Communicatio</i>	+	–	–	–	+
2. <i>Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies</i>	+	–	–	–	+
3. <i>Annals of the University of Craiova for Journalism, Communication, and Management</i>	+	–	–	+	+
4. <i>Buletinul Institutului Politehnic din Iași secția Științe Socio-Umane</i>	–	–	–	–	+
5. <i>Communication Interculturelle et Littérature</i>	+	–	–	–	+
6. <i>Cultural Intertexts</i>	–	–	–	+	+
7. <i>Ekphrasis. Images, Cinema, Theory, Media</i>	–	–	–	–	+
8. <i>HyperCultura</i>	+	+	–	+	+
9. <i>Journal of Communication and Behavioural Sciences</i>	+	–	–	–	–
10. <i>Journal of Media Research</i>	+	–	–	+	+
11. <i>ME.DOK Média–Történet–Kommunikáció</i>	–	–	–	–	+
12. <i>Professional Communication and Translation Studies</i>	–	–	–	–	+
13. <i>Revista Română de Jurnalism și Comunicare</i>	+	–	–	–	+
14. <i>Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations</i>	+	–	–	–	+
15. <i>Saeculum ULBS</i>	+	–	–	–	+
16. <i>Social Sciences and Education Research Review</i>	+	–	–	–	+
17. <i>Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai—Ephemerides</i>	+	–	–	–	+
18. <i>Studies in Visual Arts and Communication—an International Journal</i>	+	–	–	–	–
19. <i>Styles of Communication</i>	–	–	–	–	+
20. <i>Technium Social Sciences Journal</i>	–	–	–	–	+

Note: The sign “+” is used for existing information, and “–” for absent information.

### 3.2. A View from the Editors

The individual interviews supplement the picture, offering insights into the struggle of Romanian communication science scholarships to establish rules governing this realm (Table 3). The responses are grouped according to the topic, and the order of respondents is maintained throughout the presentation.

The question on authorship vs. contributorship revealed differences in understanding the terminology, as seen in the responses of the editors, presented below in Table 4.

**Table 3.** Presence of information on the journal’s homepage, by type of journal.

Issue	WoS Journals	Non-WoS Journals
Authorship section	2	10
Definition of authorship	0	1
Credit taxonomy	0	3
Ethics provisions	3	15

**Table 4.** Journal editors’ view on the difference between ‘author’ and ‘contributor’.

Is there a difference between author and contributor?	<p>(R1) The author is the person who generates the idea, develops the concept, the structure, proposes the case study and the appropriate research methods, gathers the contributions, elaborates the text. The contributor is the person who participates in the realization of the study with data gathering, parts of the research.</p> <p>(R2) No.</p> <p>(R3) In communication sciences we do NOT make this difference. They’re all authors.</p> <p>(R4) I DO make the difference, depending on the place (not the type) of publication. Thus, Author = usually scientific article to journals, with a stand-alone circulation, or sole author of a book; Contributor = author of article/chapter, submitted to be integrated into a collective volume, edited/coordinated by someone else.</p> <p>(R5) It’s a major difference. The author conceives, does the design of the research, sketches the ideational; has an essential contribution. The contributor has a non-essential contribution in the design and conduct of the research.</p> <p>(R6) They are partial synonyms. For me an author is the sole signatory of a book. Contributor = author of article/chapter, submitted to be integrated into collective volume, designed/proposed/edited/coordinated by someone else.</p> <p>(R7) I don’t make a difference. Any contributor is an author.</p>
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Responses show that some of the editors consider the term author as a stand-alone signature (R4, R6), reserving the term contributor to situations in which the scientific output is integrated into a collection alongside other authors, such as collective volumes or journals. Other respondents consider that all signatories of an article are authors (R3, R7). A third line of interpretation attributes to the term author additional qualities (R1, R5), such as leadership in developing the idea and/or design of research, the term contributor, in such cases being reserved to co-authors that follow the lead and contribute their pieces to complete the research and bring it to publication. Respondents imply that authorship and contributorship are different steps in a hierarchy of value, although such a difference is not made in the literature on the topic [3,13,15,17], nor in internationally accepted guidelines [30,31]. These differences in interpretations are supported by the definitions editors offered to authorship, as presented below in Table 5.

In addition, the recommended number of signatories for an article indicates a variety of opinions, as reflected by the answers below in Table 6.

Responses are consistent with the general practices encountered in social sciences [10]. (R4) interprets the issue of authorship as not necessarily related to the number of authors per article but the number of authors per publication, be it a journal or another type of collective volume. His opinion echoes concerns expressed by other researchers who feel that online scientific publishing abandons the traditional idea of authorship and editorial work. Such opinions lead to reflections that “it’s not just the author: the editor and the



reader are dead, too" [32]. The electronic revolution changed the familiar landscape [9,19]. (R6) voiced concerns over multiple authorship, deriving from ethical concerns. His main fear is that malpractice (denounced by standards in fair publication) can breach the editor's good faith and cover "gift authorship" or abusive practices in establishing authorship, especially if the co-authors belong to the same institution or department. He reluctantly admits that collaborative work is possible but encourages sole authorship in scientific careers. Such concerns are not country-specific or domain-specific but are shared by a much larger audience, including publishers, funders, universities, authors, and evaluators [22]. The last set of answers, around the order of the names in a co-authorship situation, present little variations of opinions, the dominating idea being that the contribution should prevail over other possible criteria, as seen below in Table 7.

**Table 5.** Journal editors' definition of authorship.

Definition of authorship	<p>(R1) I already replied.</p> <p>(R2) The researcher who conducted the research in question and based on the obtained results wrote the related study.</p> <p>(R3) The author of a scientific article is persons who contributed to the realization of this article. There are publications (e.g., Computers in Human Behavior) where they ask for details of the contribution (e.g., to the theory part, to the methods, to the collection and analysis of data, etc.)</p> <p>(R4) The author of the scientific article cumulatively fulfills the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) obtained some/an original scientific result based on research based on scientific principles</li> <li>(b) communicate it for publication</li> <li>(c) adapts it to the requirements/recommendations of the reviewers following the evaluation process</li> <li>(d) publish the article in a publication that falls within the sphere of scientific editing.</li> </ul> <p>(R5) The author conceives, designs of the research, sketches the ideational line, carries out or coordinates the experiments, the case studies. He/she is involved in all phases of research, including drafting the original version and finalizing the article after receiving comments from the reviewers.</p> <p>(R6) Author = the creator and owner of a text (regardless of whether it is scientific, essay, literature, etc.)</p> <p>(R7) Author = the person who has the skills, knowledge, and interest to produce a new, original, and interesting research. Unfortunately, I have seen enough cases where the content is merely a compilation from resources, without contributing to the progress of knowledge.</p>
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**Table 6.** Journal editors' expectations regarding the number of authors signing an article.

Recommended number of authors	<p>(R1) 1–5 authors</p> <p>(R2) No</p> <p>(R3) There was no such thing. But the number of authors per article has increased even in the humanities in recent years.</p> <p>(R4) I am aware that the number of authors may differ depending on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) type of publication (for online journals there are no constraints related to the cost of print, so they can host a larger number of articles than the journals providing hard copies)</li> <li>(b) the obligation to publish—in case of accepted articles, submitted at conferences</li> <li>(c) requirements from the evaluators: different university centers, geographical positioning, etc.</li> </ul> <p>(R5) A maximum number is not fixed, but for communication sciences, encountering more than four authors/co-authors per article may raise concerns.</p> <p>(R6) I had all kinds of situations. Some twenty years ago, I could not accept multiple authorship for an article or a chapter. Now my position is more nuanced. I don't believe in co-authors from the same field/institution. I've seen enough "gift authorship" situations to be skeptical of this practice. But if the authors come from different specializations, e.g., philologist + computer scientist/sociologist, then yes, I think the result is legitimate. In humanities multiple authorship is not very widespread. In other disciplines, everyone takes their "slice" of the workload and of fame, according to their competencies.</p> <p>(R7) When I wrote with others, I didn't put forward conditions. I think that in interdisciplinary studies it's normal to have more authors. The same goes for articles that involve investigating practical cases and/or field studies. I think it is about the complementarity of skills, but it can also be about the resources attracted for the emergence and promotion of a new scientific product.</p>
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**Table 7.** Journal editors' expectations regarding the order of names listed as co-authoring an article.

Order of names in the list (for multiple authorship)	<p>(R1) Depending on the contribution.</p> <p>(R2) Always depending on the contribution made, and if the authors consider that they had equal contribution, then in alphabetical order, by last name.</p> <p>(R3) Clearly according to the made contribution.</p> <p>(R4) From personal experience, I would say that the order depends on the contribution. But also, it is customary to prioritize authors according to the didactic degree, especially for articles signed together with Ph.D. students. In case of established teams, recurrently publishing together, the order is sometimes negotiated to occur by rotation, to obtain a balance. However, I know about situations where 3/(x) authors submit 3/(x) articles, and each was written only by the first author. Personally, I try to discourage such practices.</p> <p>(R5) Depending on the contribution and workload.</p> <p>(R6) Context is of the essence. The order may depend on the author with the highest visibility/"marketability". But it also depends on the contribution of each individual, or, in case of equal contribution, the order should be alphabetical. I think it is the authors who must decide.</p> <p>(R7) It can be random, depending on the academic degree, but the authors have a decisive say in the matter.</p>
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The editors' responses acknowledge that publishing a scientific paper is a core channel for passing on knowledge to the scientists working in the same field or related fields and that in SSH co-authorship is legitimized mainly by the complementarity of competencies displayed by the members of a team. There is no consensus on the terminology used for publishing practices, especially in defining authorship. Unlike journals that offer detailed possibilities for the persons authoring a scientific article to pinpoint their actual work, through credit taxonomy, the analyzed journals do not include a special section to clarify the roles of researchers in producing a public text. Authorship and contributorship are viewed as partial synonyms by some of the respondents, leaving this topic still in the making. In the case of sole signature, the debate seems futile. However, two out of seven respondents made a point in assessing that authors publishing in journals or collective books should be considered contributors, as they bring their piece of the puzzle into a design set by someone else (editor/author). There is a consensus that in the cases of multiple authorship, the order of the names should be decided by the individuals working toward the publication. Curiously enough, the credit taxonomy is not evoked by any of the respondents. Additionally, in their responses, half of the respondents hinted at unethical practices in establishing authorship. Such cases are reported in mainstream media, make the topic of debates and reports, and are raised in academic circles but do not seem to be part of the Romanian scientific journals' narratives concerning publishing.

#### 4. Discussion

After examining sections for authors on the journals' homepages and corroborating the results with the opinions shared by editors, we come to conclusions similar to those voiced by Chang [16] "that clearly stating authorship criteria on journal websites is not prevalent among social science journals". The variation in understanding the concepts of authorship, co-authorship, and contributorship, shown by editors' views on the topic, encourages the idea that efforts should be made towards reaching a "controlled vocabulary of contributor roles and mechanisms" [22], enabling coordination among scholarly publishers. With rare exceptions, researchers reading the self-presentations of the selected journals will encounter difficulties in understanding the criteria that account for authorship or finding guidance concerning multiple authorship. The research question Q1 finds that the sections dedicated to authors, with one exception, do not provide definitions of authorship and very rarely roles counting towards defining contributorship are covered in the Ethics sections of the journals' websites. The same stands true for identifying author expectations (Q2).

Regarding multiple authorship (Q3), only three journals make some reference to the order of the names or to the responsibilities of the corresponding author. Upon verifying random samples from each journal archives, we found that sole authorship is prevalent, and that co-authorship does not reach more than four authors per article, similar to what

Robinson-Garcia and Amat assessed in their evaluation of SSH publishing in Spain [10]. However, the trend in social sciences publishing indicates an increase in multiple authorship, and Romanian journals should be ready to offer a clearer image and face situations of disputes among authors or cases that require retractions or corrections in the post-publication phase, which means that handling lists of authors can prove to be increasingly challenging [3–6]. At present, even journals that describe criteria for authorship or use rhetoric such as the one specific for credit taxonomy do not include in the content of the journal sections to identify the roles of the co-authors/contributors, declaring that they follow the transparency requirements contained in the guidelines established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) [30]. While understanding that authorship is a mechanism for assessing credit, accounting for integrity, and allocating responsibility in the publication process [6,7,17], as voiced by the editors interviewed in the research process, the surveyed journals lack the educational dimension in their discourse oriented towards potential authors regarding possible roles in the research–publication continuum.

Even though eight out of the twenty journals make a point of displaying awareness of the COPE guidelines concerning ethics in publication, thus adhering to an international set of standards, they do not organize the information on their homepages according to COPE recommendations in offering authorship definitions, criteria, attribution, or roles in cases of multiple authorship [30]. Is there a difference in the self-presentation discourses among the Web of Science-indexed Romanian journals and the rest of the group? This research question (Q4) was formulated because professional standards in Romania place Web of Science (WoS) indexed journals high in the criteria for promotions. Such journals have special appeal to Romanian authors. Yet, the analysis shows that in terms of the informativity of the websites, these Web of Science indexed journals (numbers 2, 7, 14 in the list) do not particularly stand out in clarifying author-related issues (Table 3).

However, this image is not necessarily surprising, since Chang already assessed that higher-ranked journals do not automatically offer more guidance in comparison to the other professional journals from the same domain [16]. Although it would not be practical to have as many definitions of authorship as there are journals [16], a list of authorship criteria [30] and a display of roles defining credit [22,31] would contribute to a stronger self-presentation of journals, as Hyland and Tse recommend [20]. In addition, the evolving evaluation criteria set for scientific journals should determine editors of Romanian journals handle with more care the issues around the contributorship model.

## 5. Conclusions and Further Directions of Research

Since journal websites are essential communication platforms that link journals and researchers, updated and complete authorship definitions should be made easily available to potential beneficiaries [16]. Romanian publishers could help build a clearer, easier-to-navigate ecosystem by adopting author definitions, credit taxonomies, and ethical guidelines to diminish the fuzziness of the publishing process [13]. The fact that communication sciences are relatively young in Romania [23,28] can play a positive role since there is little historical context to be accounted for and the emerging practice can be steered towards already conquered peaks in the realm of SSH. McNutt et al. recently produced a list of recommendations that are workable, relatively easy to implement, and would add to ensuring authorship transparency and a climate of ethical publishing: setting standards for authorship, providing expectations for corresponding authors, and involving major stakeholders (scientific societies, universities, funding agencies) in consolidating the image and practice of scientific writing [17]. Despite the large variety of conceptions regarding its definition [5], authorship is, so far, more a name or a list of names of individuals working towards publication [20]. It is the mechanism for establishing credit, integrity, accountability, and responsibility. As such, it should be treated more carefully on the journals' window case.

The findings presented in this study need further deepening, to investigate, for instance, the actual practices of multiple authorship in Romanian communication science

journals, patterns of co-authorship, and researchers' perceptions on the publication climate ensured and/or created by the domestic publishing ecosystem. The editorial work is an interesting topic of inquiry in its own right since the volume of publishing increases and the tasks diversify and change over time [32]. As Hyland and Tse propose, the journals should better understand the nature of the text describing this scientific product to the community of practice and to society at large. The journal description, containing reference to authorship, transparency, and ethical climate reflects and makes visible the value system of an academic community [16,20]. Thus, the findings of this study can help improve the journals' self-presentation and self-promotion and set a benchmark for science communication for other disciplines in SSH. Among such improvements, journals should consider establishing authorship criteria and definitions and clarifying the provisions regarding multiple authorship. International practice shows that major publishers, such as Springer, offer courses for editors to deal with the increasingly more complex challenges of the publication process [33]; so does COPE [30]. The findings in the present research indicate that professionalization in the journal presentation would be beneficial. While preserving the journals' autonomy and styles, incorporating credit taxonomy and authorship criteria, and clarifying the contributorship model would result in better positioning of Romanian journals.

In the evolving ecosystem of global scientific publishing, early adoption of best practices would help Romanian journals acquire status and establish quality in communication sciences. An indication of the needed directions is already internalized by editors of leading journals in the field, as shown by the collected responses. In addition, the fact that eight out of twenty journals adhere to COPE principles of academic conduct is a sign that the global research area is not interrupted by Romanian practices. The next step would be to unfold the discourse on authorship and scientific credit in the appropriate sections of the analyzed journals' websites, improving their visibility and marketability and making them more author/contributor friendly.

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## Appendix A

**Table A1.** List of Romanian journals in communication sciences and their websites.

1.	<i>Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Communicatio</i>	<a href="http://www.acta.sapientia.ro/acta-comm/communicatio-main.htm">http://www.acta.sapientia.ro/acta-comm/communicatio-main.htm</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
2.	<i>Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Film and Media Studies</i>	<a href="http://www.acta.sapientia.ro/acta-film/film-main.htm">http://www.acta.sapientia.ro/acta-film/film-main.htm</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
3.	<i>Annals of the University of Craiova for Journalism, Communication, and Management</i>	<a href="https://www.aucjc.ro/about/">https://www.aucjc.ro/about/</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
4.	<i>Buletinul Institutului Politehnic din Iași secția Științe Socio-Umane</i>	<a href="https://dppd.tuiasi.ro/cercetare/buletinul-ipi-sectia-socio-umane/">https://dppd.tuiasi.ro/cercetare/buletinul-ipi-sectia-socio-umane/</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
5.	<i>Communication Interculturelle et Littérature</i>	<a href="https://revistacil.wordpress.com/">https://revistacil.wordpress.com/</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
6.	<i>Cultural Intertexts</i>	<a href="https://www.cultural-intertexts.com/">https://www.cultural-intertexts.com/</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
7.	<i>Ekphrasis. Images, Cinema, Theory, Media</i>	<a href="https://www.ekphrasisjournal.ro/index.php?p=home">https://www.ekphrasisjournal.ro/index.php?p=home</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
8.	<i>HyperCultura</i>	<a href="http://litere.hyperion.ro/hypercultura/">http://litere.hyperion.ro/hypercultura/</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
9.	<i>Journal of Communication and Behavioural Sciences</i>	<a href="http://anale.spiruharet.ro/index.php/behav-sci/index">http://anale.spiruharet.ro/index.php/behav-sci/index</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)

Table A1. Cont.

10.	<i>Journal of Media Research</i>	<a href="https://www.mrjournal.ro/">https://www.mrjournal.ro/</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
11.	<i>ME.DOK Média–Történet–Kommunikáció</i>	<a href="https://www.medok.ro/en/medok/about-medok">https://www.medok.ro/en/medok/about-medok</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
12.	<i>Professional Communication and Translation Studies</i>	<a href="https://sc.upt.ro/ro/publicatii/pcts">https://sc.upt.ro/ro/publicatii/pcts</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
13.	<i>Revista Româna de Jurnalism si Comunicare</i>	<a href="http://www.jurnalism-comunicare.eu/rjrc/index_en.php">http://www.jurnalism-comunicare.eu/rjrc/index_en.php</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
14.	<i>Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations</i>	<a href="https://journalofcommunication.ro/index.php/journalofcommunication">https://journalofcommunication.ro/index.php/journalofcommunication</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
15.	<i>Saeculum ULBS</i>	<a href="https://revistasaeculum1943.wordpress.com">https://revistasaeculum1943.wordpress.com</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
16.	<i>Social Sciences and Education Research Review</i>	<a href="https://sserr.ro/">https://sserr.ro/</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
17.	<i>Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai—Ephemerides</i>	<a href="http://studia.ubbcluj.ro/serii/ephemerides/">http://studia.ubbcluj.ro/serii/ephemerides/</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
18.	<i>Studies in Visual Arts and Communication—an international journal</i>	<a href="https://journalonarts.org/">https://journalonarts.org/</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
19.	<i>Styles of Communication</i>	<a href="http://stylesofcomm.fjsc.unibuc.ro/home">http://stylesofcomm.fjsc.unibuc.ro/home</a> <a href="https://stylesofcomm.fjsc.ro/">https://stylesofcomm.fjsc.ro/</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)
20.	<i>Technium Social Sciences Journal</i>	<a href="https://www.techniumscience.org/index.php/socialsciences/about">https://www.techniumscience.org/index.php/socialsciences/about</a> <a href="https://techniumscience.com/index.php/socialsciences/index">https://techniumscience.com/index.php/socialsciences/index</a> <a href="https://techniumscience.com/index.php/socialsciences">https://techniumscience.com/index.php/socialsciences</a> (accessed on 22 December 2022)

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