

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY: APPLIED BUSINESS AND EDUCATION RESEARCH

2025, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1771 – 1782

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.06.04.17>

Research Article

Navigating The Publishing Landscape: Lived Experiences of Marketing Professionals in the Publishing Industry

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Article history:

Submission 05 January 2025

Revised 31 March 2025

Accepted 23 April 2025

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ABSTRACT

The publishing industry is rapidly evolving, driven by digital advancements and shifting consumer demands. Marketing professionals are crucial in navigating these changes, employing innovative strategies to achieve the organization's objectives. This phenomenology study explores marketing professionals' lived experiences and understanding of the meaning of their experiences in the publishing industry. Six (6) marketing professionals participated in the interview and were selected based on the set inclusions by the researchers. A structured interview guide was employed to unearth the participants' lived experiences and understand the essence of their responses, and Colaizzi's method was used to generate the study's themes. Subsequently, the study generated four key themes: (1) *challenges encountered by a marketing professional*, (2) *marketing strategies utilized by a marketing professional*, (3) *motivational factors as fuel to a marketing professional*, and (4) *observed trends in the publishing industry*. The overall results suggest that marketing professionals in the publishing sector are tasked with finding a balance between innovative creativity and adaptability to ongoing changes. They must adeptly leverage new trends and execute successful strategies while managing the challenges of a highly competitive and rapidly changing environment. To achieve success, these professionals should be resourceful and visionary, consistently enhancing their methods to address the needs of a dynamic market.

Keywords: *Publishing Industry, Marketing, Marketing Professional, Lived Experiences, Qualitative*

Background

The publishing industry has long made significant cultural, educational, and intellectual progress. It is the backbone for disseminating

ideas, shaping public discourse, and preserving knowledge across generations. In a study, the UK publishing industry is a world leader in many areas, and its five largest companies earn

How to cite:

Tojoy, A. A., Polinar, M. A. N., & Delantar, A. F. A. (2025). Navigating the Publishing Landscape: Lived Experiences of Marketing Professionals in the Publishing Industry. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*. 6(4), 1771 – 1782. doi: 10.11594/ijmaber.06.04.17

a quarter of the combined revenue of the world's 50 most powerful firms (Tatarinova, 2021). Besides, in recent decades, the landscape of this industry has been profoundly transformed by technological advancements (Ali & Hassoun, 2019), the globalization of markets (Kovac & Wischenbart, 2019), and shifting consumer preferences (Cotrino, 2021). Traditional print-centric models now coexist with digital platforms, such as e-books, audiobooks, and online subscription services. These changes have redefined how content is produced, distributed, and marketed to an increasingly diverse and tech-savvy audience.

In the dynamic world of publishing, where competition is stiff and consumer preferences continuously change, having skilled marketing professionals is not just an advantage but a necessity. As a matter of fact, Stošić-Mihajlović and Trajkovic (2020) expressed in their study that the marketing profession is reputable and provides opportunities for rapid advancement, leading to a sustainable competitive advantage in the modern market. Also, in the modern market, modern marketing plays a crucial role in successful entrepreneurship by attracting customers, determining strategic decisions, increasing sales and profitability, and improving brand positioning in the market (Bilyk et al., 2023).

Marketing in the publishing industry involves treating books like any other product and applying the approaches of the four variables of the marketing mix to sell them (Jiménez-Marín & Zambrano, 2020). These marketing professionals ensure that a publishing company's products reach their intended audience, generate revenue, and build a loyal customer base. They stand at the forefront of these shifts, tasked with balancing the nuances of traditional and digital strategies.

Marketing professionals are vital in this transition, leveraging data-driven campaigns, social media outreach, and strategic partnerships to maintain relevance in an increasingly competitive marketplace. A study pointed out that the publishing industry should pay attention to trends and changes, accurately grasp market demand, adjust marketing strategies promptly, and emphasize collaboration and

joint promotion (Qin & Li, 2024). However, despite the relevance of marketing to people, a study indicated that challenges in marketing communications management in the book publishing industry include preparing book products for readers and promoting them efficiently on the market (Alexandrov et al., 2024). Another perspective from a different study revealed that publishers with deficit budgets should consider bloggers' advertising, merchandise, sponsorship, websites, and Google Ads to promote books effectively (Havryliuk & Rudkiska, 2020). Ultimately, it will prioritize new media and technology, develop targeted marketing strategies, and leverage online advantages to activate user engagement and strengthen connections with fans, books, and authors can be a principal factor in uplifting the operation of the publishing industry (Qin & Wang, 2024).

While extensive studies exist on publishing trends and consumer behavior, there is a notable lack of qualitative exploration into the lived experiences of marketing professionals within the publishing industry. Most research tends to focus on quantitative metrics, leaving a gap in understanding the personal narratives, marketing strategies used, and their work's emotional and psychological dimensions. Addressing this gap is crucial for developing tailored support systems, training programs, and policies that align with the unique demands of their roles.

This study aims to delve into the lived experiences of publishing industry marketing professionals to uncover the challenges, successes, and strategies they employ in navigating the ever-changing market. This research seeks to provide actionable insights that can inform industry stakeholders, enhance marketing practices, and contribute to a more sustainable and adaptive publishing ecosystem by exploring their perspectives.

Methodology

This study is tailored to utilize a purely Phenomenological approach, explicitly using the Husserlian route in qualitative research. This approach aimed to gain a rich understanding of the lived experiences of the key informants and

the marketing professionals working in the publishing industry.

This study is grounded in the context of a publishing company located in Lapu-Lapu City, Philippines, a vibrant urban center with historical and economic significance. Named after the Filipino hero who resisted Spanish colonization, Lapu-Lapu City is situated on Mactan Island, a hub for both tourism and commerce. Known for its thriving economy, the city has successfully integrated its rich cultural heritage with modern advancements, creating an ideal environment for industries, including publishing, to thrive.

The study's participants were marketing professionals currently employed in a publishing company. These participants played an essential role in the study as they had firsthand and genuine experience of the practices in the establishment. Six (6) participants were chosen using a purposive sampling technique, which aims to select an informant that is based on the set criteria of the researchers, namely: (1) it should be a marketing professional or an employee that holds a position in doing marketing activities, (2) employed for two or more years in the industry to ensure that they have grasped the valuable experience of a marketer, and (3) they are wilfully to participate in the data gathering. Moreover, the study achieved data saturation after conducting in-depth interviews with six participants.

The main instrument utilized in the study is the researchers themselves since they served as absorbers of all information gathered in the data gathering. However, the researchers were guided as they used a structured interview guide that was carried out to guide and ensure that all the inquiries were addressed. Ultimately, the researchers were the ones conducting the interview process, and at the same time, they were the recipients of the answers from the key informants.

In addition, the interview guide underwent a face validity test among experts in the field. The basis for the interview guide will also come from their readings of marketing books, journals, professional magazines, and other supplementary materials available for their disposal.

The study employed Colaizzi's (1978) approach to analyze the qualitative data, focusing

on understanding marketing professionals' lived experiences. The process began with thoroughly reading each transcript to comprehend the participants' responses. The significant statements were then carefully identified and extracted. From these, meaningful insights were drawn, reflecting the essence of the participants' experiences. These insights were subsequently organized into key themes, which were used to structure the analysis. Ultimately, the findings were woven into a rich, detailed narrative that captured the fundamental structure of the experiences shared by the participants.

This study upheld ethical standards by adhering to key principles, including respect for individuality, fairness, and empathy. In respecting individuality, the dignity and privacy of participants were prioritized, ensuring their anonymity throughout the process. Regardless of their roles as marketing professionals and their status within the company, participants were treated equally and allowed to engage and respond to the questions posed by the enumerators, who also served as the researchers. Each participant's input was valued based on their unique needs, societal contributions, and merits. Additionally, the researchers approached participants empathetically, honoring their willingness to participate in the interviews and ensuring no conflicts of interest were present.

Result and Discussion

Theme #1: Challenges Encountered as a Marketing Professional in the Publishing Industry

Sub-theme 1: Building Trust as a Core Challenge

Establishing trust emerged as a pivotal challenge for marketing professionals in the publishing industry. Most participants consistently demonstrated the difficulty of creating and maintaining trust in an era where customers can access many choices and are increasingly skeptical of marketing messages. One participant noted, "Customers are wary of promises that seem too good to be true. It takes more than a good pitch to convince them we are different. (*Ang mga kustomer mabinantayon sa*

mga saad nga ingon og maayo kaayo nga tinuod. Nagkinahanglan kini labaw pa sa usa ka maayo nga tono aron makombinsir sila nga lahi kami.)". Another participant shared, "I considered earning trust from clients is a challenge since they have a belief that we, marketing professionals, will sugarcoat some of our scripts just to convince them to buy our products. (*Akong gikonsiderar nga ang pagbaton og pag-salig gikan sa mga kliyente usa ka hagit tungod kay aduna silay pagtuo nga kami, mga propesyonal sa marketing, mag-sugarcoat sa pipila sa among mga script aron lang makombinsir sila sa pagpalit sa among mga produkto.*)". These insights underscore the need for authenticity in marketing strategies. Marketing professionals must demonstrate credibility by providing consistent, transparent communication and delivering on promises. However, failure to establish trust can lead to reputational harm and a loss of market share, further emphasizing the critical nature of this challenge.

Building trust is a significant challenge for marketing professionals due to several factors, including the nature of virtual environments, the credibility gap, and the complexities of e-commerce and investor relationships. Several research papers have proven this point. Building trust in virtual work teams, particularly in marketing, is challenging due to the lack of physical presence (Guinaliu & Jordan, 2016). Also, the "credibility gap" is a fundamental challenge for entrepreneurial marketers. Entrepreneurs often must establish trust without pre-existing relationships, relying on enthusiasm and shared values to mitigate perceived risks (Ali & Birley, 1998). Moreover, another study revealed that in e-commerce, trust is crucial for customer relationship building. The digital environment lacks the physical cues present in traditional commerce, making it harder to establish trust. Marketers must navigate these differences to build and maintain trust in virtual settings (Papadopoulou et al., 2001; Warrington et al., 2000).

Building trust in marketing is challenging due to the virtual nature of many interactions, the need to overcome credibility gaps, and the complexities of digital and investor environments. Successful trust-building requires un-

derstanding and addressing these unique challenges through effective leadership, communication, and relationship management strategies.

Sub-theme 2: Decoding Client Expectations

Another recurring theme was understanding and meeting clients' needs and expectations. Customers bring diverse perspectives and priorities, which can shift rapidly in response to market trends. One participant described the challenge as "trying to hit a moving target; what clients value today might not be what they prioritize tomorrow. (*naningkamot sa pag-igo sa usa ka naglihok nga target; kung unsa ang gipabilhan sa mga kliyente karon mahimong dili kung unsa ang ilang prayoridad ugma*)."

Another marketing professional expressed, "Sometimes, it feels like we have everything we need to understand what people need genuinely, but it is overwhelming to make sense of it all. There is so much information; acting on it feels nearly impossible. The challenge is that most of it is not straightforward numbers—stories, opinions, and experiences. Finding patterns in all that takes so much time and can feel daunting. (*Usahay, morag naa nato ang tanan nga atong gikinahanglan aron masabtan kung unsa ang tinuod nga gikinahanglan sa mga tawo, apan kini hilabihan ka bug-at nga masabtan kining tanan. Adunay daghang kaayong impormasyon; ang paglihok niini halos imposible. Ang hagit mao nga kadaghanan niini dili prangka nga mga numero—kini mga istorya, opinyon, ug mga kasinatian. Ang pagpangita og mga sumbanan sa tanan niana nagkinahanglan og daghang panahon, ug kini mahimong makahahadlok*)."

This complexity is compounded by the highly competitive nature of the publishing industry, where personalized solutions and customer-centric approaches have become essential. Marketing professionals must engage in active listening, data-driven analysis, and iterative feedback loops to adapt effectively. Thus, the study highlights the importance of investing in market research and client engagement initiatives to bridge this gap.

Different scholarly papers showed a correlation to the above finding. An old study mentioned that understanding client needs and ex-

expectations is crucial for marketing professionals to effectively perform their roles in the integrated marketing communications (IMC) approach (Beard, 1996). Also, from another paper, Levin and Lobo (2011) indicate that knowing clients' needs and expectations helps advertising agencies foster long-term relationships with clients, focusing on creativity and relationship management. Furthermore, maintaining client relationships is crucial in the financial advisory industry, as firms that unlock clients experience higher levels of misconduct and increase fees, questioning whether clients are better off (Gurun et al., 2020). This only shows the importance of decoding clients' needs and expectations since the above-mentioned studies have proven this concept timeless.

The dual challenges of building trust and understanding clients' expectations reflect broader industry dynamics, where relationship-building and adaptability are key points of success. Marketing professionals must navigate these intertwined challenges by adopting innovative strategies that balance personalization with authenticity.

Theme #2: Marketing Strategies Utilized by Marketing Professionals in the Publishing Industry

Sub-theme 1: Leveraging Social Media for Brand Visibility and Engagement

Social media marketing emerged as a dominant strategy utilized by marketing professionals in the publishing industry. Most participants emphasized the role of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter in showcasing the company's vision, products, programs, and promotions. One participant noted, "Social media allows me to humanize my brand and connect with my audience where they are most active. I can build trust and foster meaningful relationships by sharing authentic stories, engaging directly with followers, and showcasing the people behind my business. It is a platform where I can listen to my audience's needs, address their concerns in real time, and create a sense of community beyond traditional marketing. (*Ang social media naghimo sa akong brand ug nagkonektar kanako sa akong mga kliyente diin sila labing aktibo.*

Pinaagi sa pagpaambit sa tinuod nga mga istorya, pag-apil direkta sa mga tagasunod, ug pagpakita sa mga tawo sa luyo sa akong negosyo, makatukod ako og pagsalig ug makapalambo og makahuluganon nga mga relasyon. Kini usa ka plataporma diin ako makapaminaw sa mga panginahanglan sa akong mga mamiminaw, matubag ang ilang mga kabalaka sa tinuod nga panahon, ug makamugna og usa ka pagbati sa komunidad nga labaw pa sa tradisyonal nga marketing.)" This strategy amplifies brand visibility and facilitates two-way communication, enabling companies to build stronger connections with their audience. Through social media campaigns, interactive content, and influencer collaborations, marketing professionals can create a dynamic presence that resonates with diverse customer segments. However, the findings also suggest that the success of social media marketing depends on consistent and meaningful engagement, requiring a balance between promotional and value-driven content.

Several studies corroborate the study's findings. In a study conducted in Spain, the researchers concluded that social media could leverage brand visibility and engagement, with Facebook generating the most fans and Twitter being used for content generation. At the same time, Instagram has better engagement results. (Magadán-Díaz & Rivas-García, 2020). Also, few studies shared the same thought that social media positively contributes to the brand engagement of a company, specifically the increase of click-through rate and conversion rate (Yang et al., 2016) and brand loyalty (Helme-Guizon & Magnoni, 2019; De Vries & Carlson, 2014).

Sub-theme 2: Personalized Marketing as a Competitive Edge

Utilizing personalized marketing strategies was critical to meeting client needs and differentiating the company from competitors. This is a strategy, according to Montgomery and Smith (2008); personalization in marketing adapts standardized products or services to individual customer needs, creating profit for the producer and increased value for the consumer. Four out of six participants highlighted the essence of personalized marketing in their

profession, as it involves tailoring messages, recommendations, and offers based on customer data and preferences. As one marketing professional explained, "Creating personalized experiences for my clients is at the heart of what I do because making them feel truly valued and understood is essential. In an industry where relationships are everything, I focus on understanding their unique needs and preferences, going the extra mile to ensure every interaction leaves a lasting, positive impression. (*Ang paghimo og personal nga mga kasinatian alang sa akong mga kliyente mao ang kasing-kasing sa akong gibuhay tungod kay ang paghimo kanila nga tinuod nga gipabilhan ug nasabtan hinungdanon. Sa usa ka industriya diin ang mga relasyon mao ang tanan, nag-focus ako sa pagsabut sa ilang talagsaon nga mga panginahanglan ug mga gusto, pag-adto sa dugang nga milya aron masiguro nga ang matag interaksyon nagbilin usa ka malungtaron, positibo nga impresyon.*)". This strategy improves customer satisfaction, fosters loyalty, and drives higher conversion rates. By leveraging tools such as customer relationship management (CRM) systems and analytics, marketing professionals can craft bespoke experiences that align with individual expectations. However, the findings indicate that the effectiveness of personalization depends on ethical data usage and maintaining customer trust.

The study's results aligned with several research papers in different academic databases. Just like the studies of Rajendran et al. (2024) and Ponomarenko and Siabro (2021), personalized marketing enhances customer experience, customer loyalty, conversion rates, and brand loyalty by providing more pertinent and timely communications. Other studies indicated that personalized marketing, driven by data mining techniques and tailored to customer preferences, cultural orientations, and specific offerings, can enhance engagement and satisfaction and effectively navigate the digital landscape to achieve positive customer outcomes (Yusnidar et al., 2023; Mehmood et al., 2020).

The emphasis on social media and personalized marketing strategies reflects a shift toward customer-centric approaches in the pub-

lishing industry. These strategies enable companies to build stronger relationships with their audience, enhance brand loyalty, and navigate the competitive landscape. By combining the broad reach of social media with the precision of personalized marketing, professionals can effectively address the unique challenges of the publishing market.

Theme #3: Motivational Factors as a Fuel to Marketing Professionals in the Publishing Industry

Sub-theme 1: Passion as the Driving Force in Marketing Careers

As per the participants, passion emerged as one of the motivational factors among marketing professionals in the publishing industry. They consistently expressed how their love for books, storytelling, and the creative aspects of marketing fueled their enthusiasm and perseverance. One participant shared, "Marketing is not just about selling products; it is about building brands and sharing stories that inspire and connect with people worldwide. I am part of a community that understands the power of impactful storytelling and leverages it to make a difference. (*Ang pagpamaligya dili lang bahin sa pagbaligya sa mga produkto; mahitungod kini sa pagtukod og mga tatak ug pagpaambit sa mga istorya nga makapadasig ug makakonektar sa mga tawo sa tibuok kalibotan. Kabahin ako sa usa ka komunidad nga nakasabut sa gahum sa maimpluwensyang pag-istorya ug gigamit kini aron makahimo usa ka kalainan.*)". This intrinsic motivation drives professionals to navigate challenges and innovate within the dynamic publishing landscape. Passion also fosters a sense of purpose, making their work more fulfilling and impactful.

Generally, having that passion for a job boosts an employee's morale and motivates them to contribute a lot to the organization, especially in achieving the vision and mission. These studies proved that harmonious work passion positively impacts career commitment (Jung & Sohn, 2022), improves job satisfaction (Tanoto et al., 2023), and mediates the interplay between career attitude and proactive work behaviors (Gulyani & Bhatnagar, 2017).

Sub-theme 2: Recognition as a Catalyst for Performance

Recognition was identified as another principal motivator, with participants highlighting how acknowledgment of their contributions—whether through formal awards, verbal appreciation, or client feedback—enhanced their morale and productivity. One participant noted, "Knowing that my work contributes to the team's overall success and that my colleagues appreciate my efforts keeps me going, even when facing setbacks. Shared success is the most excellent motivator. (*Ang pagkahibalo nga ang akong trabaho nakatampo sa kinatibuk-ang kalampusan sa team ug nga ang akong mga paningkamot gipasalamatan sa akong mga kaubanan nagpapadayon kanako, bisan kung nag-atubang sa mga kapakyasan. Ang gipaam-bit nga kalampusan mao ang labing dako nga tigdasig.*)" Another participant shared, "Seeing the positive impact of my campaigns and receiving recognition for my contributions is incredibly motivating. It fuels my drive to overcome challenges and consistently deliver exceptional results, even when deadlines are tight or the pressure is on. (*Ang pagkakita sa positibo nga epekto sa akong mga kampanya ug ang pagdawat sa pag-ila sa akong mga kontribusyon makapadasig kaayo. Gipadasig niini ang akong pagmaneho aron mabuntog ang mga hagit ug kanunay nga maghatag talagsaon nga mga sangputanan, bisan kung ang mga deadline higpit o ang presyur nagpadayon.*)". These responses signify that recognition boosts individual motivation and fosters a positive organizational culture where professionals feel valued and supported.

Numerous studies have highlighted the significant impact of employee recognition on organizational outcomes. For instance, research by Bradler et al. (2013) has demonstrated that recognition boosts overall performance. It is particularly effective when directed at high-performing employees, reinforcing their contributions and fostering a culture of excellence. Similarly, Kurniawan and Anindita (2021) have shown that recognition initiatives significantly enhance employee engagement, creating a more motivated and connected workforce. Furthermore, Yang and Jiang (2023) emphasize

that recognition positively influences employees' perceptions of organizational justice, fostering a sense of fairness and equity within the workplace. These findings underscore the multifaceted benefits of recognition programs in driving individual and organizational success.

Sub-theme 3: Career Development as a Path to Growth and Fulfillment

The study revealed that opportunities for career growth and professional development play a crucial role in motivating marketing professionals. Participants emphasized the importance of training programs, mentorship, and clear career progression paths in maintaining engagement and commitment. One participant explained, "Having access to learning opportunities and seeing a future for myself in this industry keeps me motivated to improve every day. (*Ang pagbaton sa mga oportunidad sa pagkat-on ug pagtan-aw sa kaugmaon alang sa akong kaugalingon sa kini nga industriya nagpadayon kanako nga madasig sa pag-uswag matag adlaw.*)" Another participant expressed, "Knowing that my efforts contribute to personal growth and the potential for a long-term career in this industry inspires me to continually strive for improvement (*Ang pagkahibalo nga ang akong mga paningkamot nakatampo sa personal nga pag-uswag ug ang potensyal alang sa usa ka dugay nga karera sa kini nga industriya nagdasig kanako sa pagpadayon sa pagpaningkamot alang sa kauswagan.*)". These responses from the marketing professional demonstrate that career development initiatives equip professionals with the skills needed to excel in their roles and demonstrate the organization's investment in their long-term success.

The following studies corroborate the above study's results: Career development, as discussed in Chagelishvili et al.'s (2023) study, plays a key role in human resource development, contributing to personal self-realization and effective organizational functioning. Another study found that career development significantly impacts employee professionalism, with a 78.2% positive effect, while 21.8% is influenced by other factors (Iskamto, 2022). Ultimately, even other fields shared the same

thought that career development is vital in ensuring effective quality management of training in the South American Army (Els & Meyer, 2023) and growth and retention for early career scientists (Morrow et al., 2023).

The interplay of passion, recognition, and career development illustrates the multifaceted nature of motivation among marketing professionals in the publishing industry. Passion provides the foundational drive, recognition reinforces their efforts, and career development sustains their engagement over time. Together, these factors create a supportive and empowering environment that enables professionals to thrive and contribute meaningfully to their organizations.

Theme #4: Observed Trends in the Publishing Industry

Sub-theme 1: The Rise of Digital Publishing

Marketing professionals identified the increasing popularity of e-books and other digital formats as a significant trend shaping the publishing industry. Almost all participants noted that digital publishing offers unparalleled convenience and accessibility, enabling readers to access content instantly and carry extensive libraries on their devices. One participant explained, "Digital formats have opened up new markets and made publishing more inclusive, allowing us to reach readers who might not have access to physical books. (*Ang mga digital nga format nagbukas sa bag-ong mga merkado ug naghimo sa pagmantala nga mas inklusibo, nga nagtugot kanamo sa pagkab-ot sa mga magbabasa nga mahimong walay access sa pisikal nga mga libro.*)". The shift toward digital is also attributed to technological advancements and changing consumer habits, particularly among younger audiences who prioritize convenience. However, professionals also acknowledged challenges such as intensified competition, piracy concerns, and the need to optimize marketing strategies for digital platforms.

Consistent with the aforementioned findings, several studies relate to the observed trend. In a study, the author expressed that digital communication technology has revolutionized publishing, affecting everything from

physical book printing to author access to e-commerce and brick-and-mortar book selling (Thompson, 2021). Also, digital publishing is a significant development trend that is reshaping the publishing industry through content integration, advanced technology, and evolving market mechanisms, driving the transformation and upgrading of publishing formats—particularly in China, where the growth of digital publishing aligns with the broader global shift in the industry (Xia, 2017, 2016).

Sub-theme 2: The Shift Toward Interactive Content

The emergence of interactive content was another trend observed by marketing professionals. Interactive formats, such as augmented reality (AR) books, gamified reading experiences, and multimedia-enhanced e-books, are becoming increasingly popular as they align with consumers' desire for engaging, participatory content. One participant remarked, "Readers today are looking for more than just words on a page; they want experiences that immerse them in the story or provide a sense of agency. (*Ang mga magbabasa karon nangitag labaw pa sa mga pulong sa usa ka panid; gusto nila og mga kasinatian nga makapaunlod kanila sa istorya o makahatag og pagbati sa kabubuton.*)". Interactive content is a powerful tool for boosting reader engagement, providing an immersive experience that captivates audiences and encourages them to participate actively. This innovative approach not only enhances the quality of the content but also presents publishers with unique opportunities to stand out in an increasingly competitive landscape. However, several participants noted that creating such dynamic content demands a considerable investment in technology, specialized expertise, and a comprehensive understanding of audience preferences. They highlighted that success relies on balancing creativity with technical know-how, ensuring the interactive elements resonate with the intended viewers.

A few studies proved the relevance of integrating interactive content into the publishing industry. In fact, interactive content significantly positively impacts consumer engagement and brand loyalty, building stronger relationships between brands and consumers, as

per the study of Mere et al. (2024). Also, even during pandemic times, digital storytelling engages learners, creates a positive learning environment, and increases motivation and self-confidence, making it a valuable tool for interactive learning (Rajendran & Yunus, 2021).

The rise of digital publishing and the shift toward interactive content reflect broader technological and cultural transformations within the publishing industry. These trends underscore the need for marketing professionals to adapt their strategies by leveraging digital tools and embracing innovative formats. By doing so, they can effectively cater to evolving consumer demands and position their companies at the forefront of industry advancements.

Conclusion

The overall findings indicate that marketing professionals within the publishing industry face the critical task of balancing creative innovation and the ability to adapt to constant change. They must skillfully harness emerging trends and implement effective strategies while navigating the inherent challenges of a fiercely competitive and swiftly evolving landscape. To succeed, these professionals must be both resourceful and forward-thinking, continually refining their approaches to meet the demands of a dynamic market.

The study's findings have implications for both the marketing and publishing industries. The identified challenges highlight the importance of relationship-building skills and client-centric communication strategies among marketing professionals. Publishing companies must invest in continuous training programs that enhance their marketers' ability to build trust and interpret diverse client expectations, thereby fostering stronger, more effective partnerships.

The strategic responses identified—particularly the use of social media platforms and personalized marketing—suggest that contemporary marketing within the publishing industry is becoming increasingly data-driven and audience-centered. This shift implies that publishing firms must embrace digital transformation by equipping their marketing people with tools, platforms, and technologies that support real-time engagement, content

customization, and brand differentiation in a crowded marketplace.

Additionally, the motivational factors revealed in this study highlight the essence of organizational culture and human resource development. Passion, recognition, and career advancement are key elements that contribute to organizational productivity and employee retention. Publishing companies should, therefore, implement policies recognizing achievements, nurturing talent, and creating clear pathways for career growth, thereby strengthening their workforce, specifically marketing professionals.

Lastly, the observed trends—digital publishing and interactive content—present opportunities and challenges. These trends imply a need for agile and responsive marketing strategies to technological innovations. Publishing firms must align their marketing efforts with these trends to stay relevant, create engagement, and capitalize on new revenue streams.

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