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A Comparative Study of the Marketing Strategies of Author Tere Liye and Other Indonesian Authors in the Book Industry

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the marketing strategy implemented by Tere Liye and compare it with the conventional marketing model commonly used by Indonesian authors through publishing houses. The research uses a descriptive approach based on literature analysis and secondary data related to digital transformation in the publishing industry. The results show that the marketing strategy adopted by Tere Liye reflects a shift from a conventional publishing model to a digital-based direct-to-consumer approach through his own e-commerce platform. This strategy allows greater control over pricing, promotion, and distribution. In contrast, most Indonesian authors generally rely on publishers and bookstores for distribution, where marketing control is largely handled by third parties. The findings indicate that Tere Liye's strategy offers several advantages, including full control over pricing and promotional activities, more direct and intensive relationships with readers, and the potential for higher profit margins due to a shorter distribution chain. However, this model also presents certain challenges, such as relatively limited distribution reach and the need for independent management of operational and logistical processes. On the other hand, the conventional strategy used by authors through publishers provides advantages in terms of wider distribution networks and established publishing systems. Nevertheless, this approach also has limitations, including reduced author control over pricing and promotion, as well as smaller profit margins due to the involvement of multiple intermediaries in the distribution process. Overall, the study highlights the importance of flexible business models in the publishing industry to remain competitive amid ongoing digital transformation.

Keywords: Tere Liye, Digital Marketing Strategy, Publishing Industry, Direct to Consumer, Digital Transformation

INTRODUCTION

The world of book publishing has undergone significant evolution in its structure and market choices. The advent of digital technology and the development of information storage have transformed the market landscape. The publishing world, once closely tied to the printing industry, is now shifting with the advancement of information technology (Akil, 2022).

Therefore, new, innovative marketing strategies are needed for the current digital marketing era.

In the context of the changing market in the book industry, marketing strategy is a crucial factor in determining the success of a work and author in the industry. Marketing is no longer conventionally conducted through bookstores and publishers, but has evolved through the use of digital media and direct communication between authors and readers. Rapid developments in information technology have paved the way for digital marketing and e-commerce to become industry strategies for expanding business reach globally (Ain et al., 2024).

In Indonesia, according to data obtained from the publisher BukuLoka (2025), the number of publishers registered with the national library has reached 25,695, an increase of approximately 443 publishers from 25,252 in 2024. This demonstrates the immense competitiveness of book publishers in Indonesia.

Among the many popular authors in Indonesia, Tere Liye is one whose works are highly acclaimed and have a large readership due to his prolific writing. According to Goodreads, as of September 2024, Tere Liye had published over 65 books. His popularity is evident in the novels that have been adapted into films, including "Hafalan Shalat Delisa." According to data from Cinemapoetika, the film "Hafalan Shalat Delisa" successfully attracted 631,997 viewers in its four weeks of screening.

Underpinning Tere Liye's success, he developed a marketing strategy that involved collaborating with numerous publishers, including Gramedia Pustaka Utama, as a form of marketing. Tere Liye employed conventional marketing and industrial distribution. However, in 2021, in line with digital advancements, Tere Liye partnered with Sabakgrip Nusantara, publishing his book "Janji," to independently sell his books directly to readers, demonstrating a shift from the conventional market to digital and direct distribution. Marketing has undergone a significant shift from traditional methods to a digital approach, driven by rapid technological developments and internet penetration. Unlike traditional marketing, which relied on print, television, and radio media with one-way communication, digital marketing now enables more personalized, data-driven two-way interactions (Chaidir & Irawan, 2024). Fundamentally, digital marketing is a marketing activity using digital media to promote a company's brand (Latifah et al., 2022). The implementation of digital marketing opens up cross-border reach, intensifying business competition. This strategy can be optimized by utilizing various supporting platforms, such as online promotional activities. Simply using a computer, laptop, gadget, or smartphone connected to the internet, simply access social media, which is very useful for introducing, promoting, and even selling business products and services (Nofiani et al., 2021).

Broadly speaking, e-commerce is a term used to describe the sale of goods and services over the internet (Rehatalanit, 2021). The implementation of technology, competitiveness, and sales volume are realized through e-commerce. This platform facilitates the marketing of a variety of products and services, both physical and digital, involving various stakeholders, including investors, consumers, and the government (Dewi et al., 2011). The growth of e-commerce in the modern era can provide a business alternative for entrepreneurs, adapting to evolving market conditions and the creation of healthy competition. The increasingly improved development of e-commerce has encouraged many online shopping app companies to join the industry (Susanti, 2022).

Publishing is the activity of creating and distributing books and newspapers, conducted by an industry focused on producing and reproducing literature and information, or the activity of creating information for public consumption (Agustian et al., 2023). Pambudi (in Marchelinka, 2023) defines publishing as making it available to the public, presenting to a wider audience words and images created by creative minds, then edited by editors, and then reproduced by the printing department. Book publishing encompasses not only publication but also stages of manuscript selection, editing, layout design, and direct distribution to the public.

As the publishing industry evolves, it is undergoing a significant transformation from the conventional to the digital era. Therefore, publishers need to fundamentally develop their current business models to create products that meet the needs of today's era. This is because customers in the digital age encompass all users of various online media. In Indonesia, the publishing industry is fortunate to still survive (Rachdian & Azis, 2021). Personal branding is essentially a continuous process of managing an individual's image or recommended image, as well as the impression they convey to others (Anggarini, 2021). Personal branding is similar to the general brand management process, but the brand is associated with the individual's presence and identity, which defines their strengths. Through a personal branding strategy, business owners and other professional service providers are required to build a specific image and identity to influence others to have positive perceptions and views of their character, personality, abilities, appearance, and offerings (Bahar et al., 2022).

Tere Liye's marketing paradigm shift, from reliance on mainstream distributors to independent, digital-based distribution, necessitates a comparative study to analyze the differences between Tere Liye and other authors in the publishing industry.

METHOD

The research methodology used is descriptive qualitative research with a comparative analysis approach. According to Adiputra et al., (2021) (in Putri et al., 2024), descriptive research is research used to describe or explain a phenomenon, whether natural or man-made. This research is used to analyze and describe the results of the research subjects systematically, without aiming to provide broader implications. The data used is secondary data, namely data obtained indirectly through an intermediary. Secondary data can be obtained through evidence, notes, books, journals, or historical reports that have been compiled in archives or documentary data. (Bata, 2021)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tere Liye's Marketing Strategy

Based on the author's analysis, despite collaborating with Gramedia bookstores, Tere Liye now has its own online bookstore, Toko Buku Tere Liye.

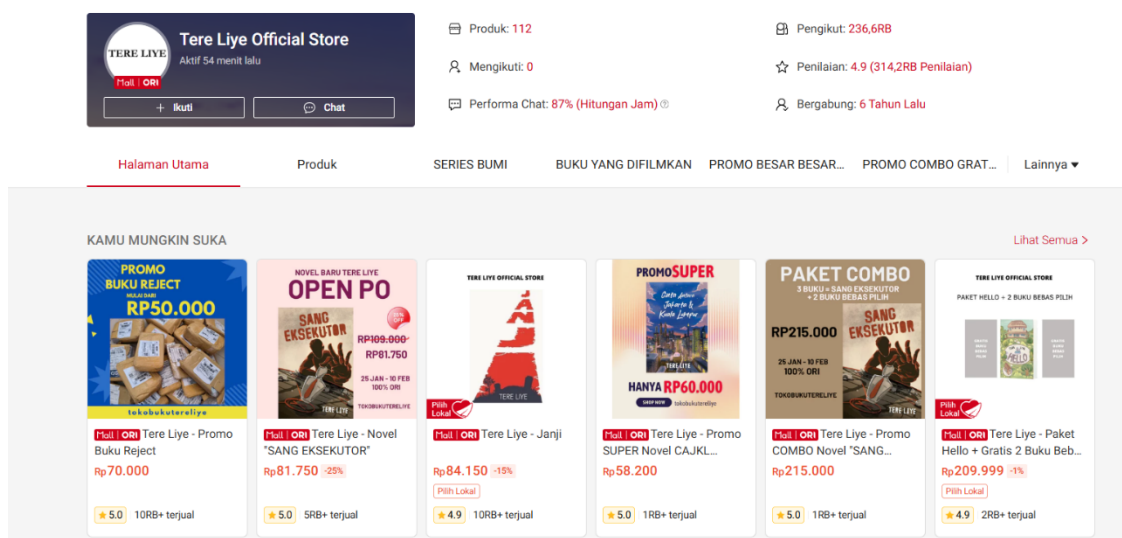


Figure 1. Tere Liye Bookstore E-Commerce

Source: Author's documentation from the Shopee platform, Tere Liye Bookstore (2026).

Through its own e-commerce platform, Tere Liye implements a direct-to-consumer distribution model. This model enables efficiency in the distribution chain by reducing margins

typically allocated to distributors and brick-and-mortar bookstores, thus optimizing profit potential. In addition to increasing distribution efficiency, the d2c model also allows Tere Liye full control over pricing, promotions, and customer management. This strategy has the potential to strengthen consumer loyalty because interactions are conducted directly without intermediaries.

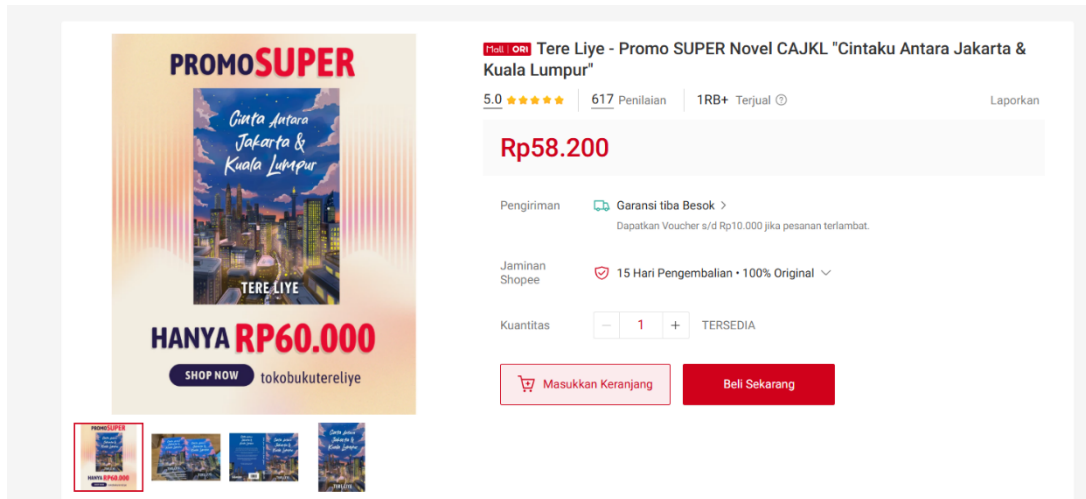


Figure 2: Tere Liye Book Discount Promotion on E-commerce Platforms

Source: Author's documentation from the Shopee platform, Tere Liye Bookstore (2026).

In Figure 2, Tere Liye's book promotion shows that Tere Liye implemented a price promotion strategy by offering discounts on his products. This strategy demonstrates the implementation of promotional elements in digital marketing, aimed at increasing appeal and encouraging consumer purchasing decisions. Discounts like these can increase the urgency of a purchase, especially in a competitive e-commerce market. Offering discounts in a store has the potential to influence consumer attitudes, satisfaction, and loyalty (Wulandari et al., 2025).

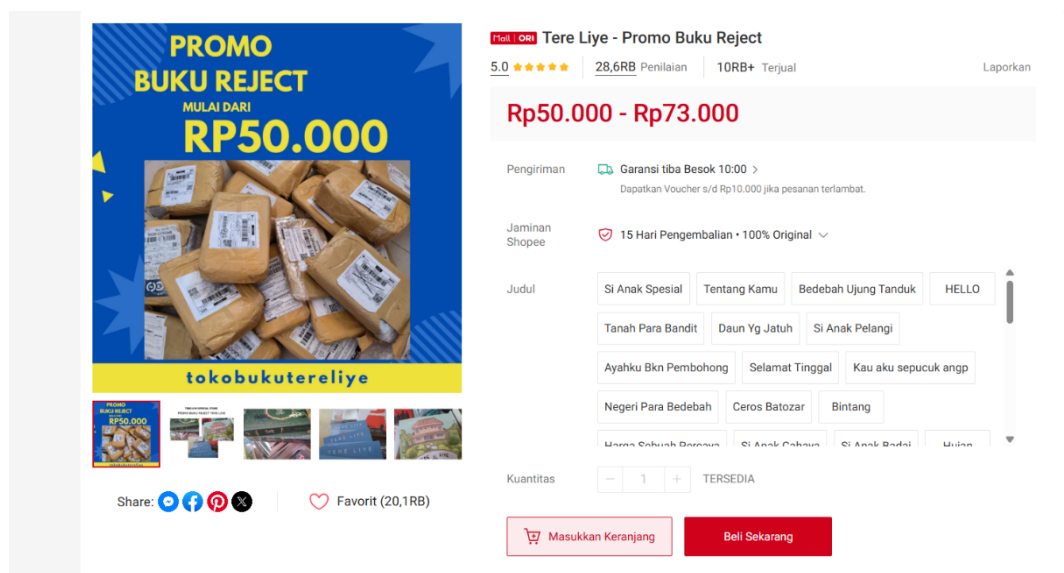


Figure 3: Offerings of Tere Liye's rejected books on e-commerce platforms

Source: Author's documentation from the Shopee platform, Tere Liye Bookstore (2026).

Figure 3 shows that Tere Liye Bookstore also offers rejected books at significantly lower prices. This strategy reflects price differentiation to reach price-sensitive consumers and optimizes product economic value in inventory management.

Based on these findings, Tere Liye's marketing strategy demonstrates an integration of direct distribution and variable pricing. The use of this e-commerce platform provides full control over distribution and promotion, and the implementation of discounts and sales of rejected books reflects flexibility in pricing policies. This combination of strategies demonstrates a new effort to face competition in the book industry in this digital era while simultaneously expanding the market segment network.

Marketing Strategies for Indonesian Authors in the Book Industry

In general, Indonesian authors still rely on publishers as their primary partners in the distribution and marketing process. The distribution model used remains conventional, through physical bookstores and marketplaces managed by publishers. In this system, authors have no direct control over pricing, promotion, or product distribution.

One example of distribution can be seen through the Gramedia platform, one of the largest bookstore chains in the country. Established decades ago, Gramedia now faces competition not only from brick-and-mortar bookstores but also from online bookstores, e-commerce platforms, and digital reading services (Wulandari et al., 2025).

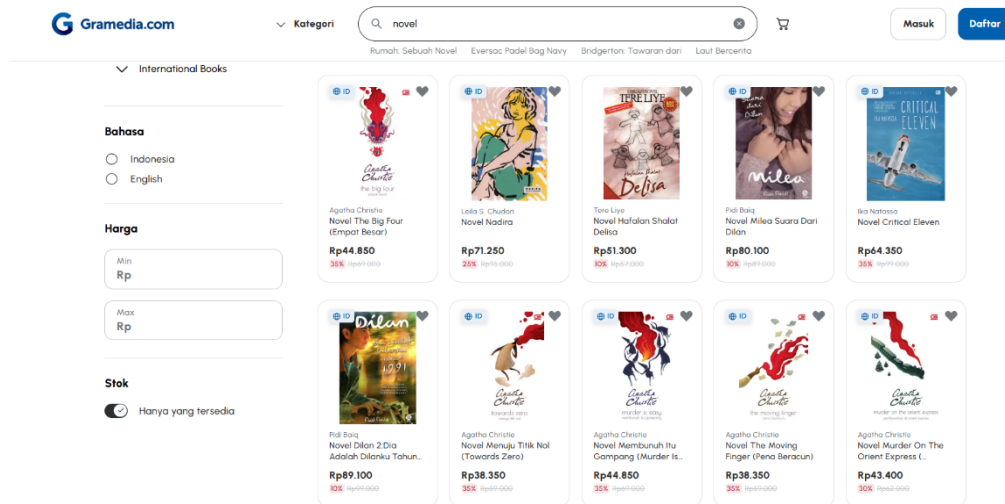


Figure 4 Gramedia.com E-commerce

Source: Author's documentation from the Gramedia.com website (2026).

Based on the display in Figure 4, book sales by Indonesian authors are conducted through the Gramedia.com platform, an official retailer that collaborates with various publishers. In this system, prices, discounts, promotions, and distribution are determined by the publisher and retailer, not the author directly. This indicates that the author's role in the production of their work is more limited, while marketing and distribution aspects are managed by a third party.

Analisis Perbandingan

Table 1 Comparison of Marketing Strategies of Tere Liye and Other Authors

Components	Tere Liye Strategy	General Writer Strategy
Price Control	by Author	by Publisher/Retailer
Distribution Chain	Short (direct to consumer)	Long (Publisher – Distributor – Store)
Reader Interaction	Two-way and direct	Limited through third parties
Promotion Flexibility	Very high (Reject Books, Bundles)	Limited to store policy

Components	Tere Liye Strategy	General Writer Strategy
Strengths	High control over pricing and promotions, direct relationships with readers, higher profit margins.	Wider distribution reach, supported by a network of publishers and bookstores.
Weaknesses	The distribution network is more limited and requires independent operational management.	Limited pricing and promotional controls and smaller profit margins.

Source: Processed by researchers (2026)

Based on the comparison in Table 1, it is clear that Tere Liye's strategy represents a clear adaptation to developments in digital technology and e-commerce. The shift from reliance on mainstream distributors to independent, digital-based distribution (direct-to-consumer) allows for efficiencies in the distribution chain. This contrasts sharply with other Indonesian authors, who generally still rely on major publishers and retailers as their primary partners, thus limiting their pricing control and promotional strategies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that Tere Liye's marketing strategy demonstrates a shift from a conventional model to a digital-based direct-to-consumer model through its own e-commerce platform, which provides significant control over pricing, promotion, and distribution. Meanwhile, Indonesian authors typically rely on publishers and sellers for distribution, leaving third parties to exercise marketing control. To remain competitive, publishing industry players must develop flexible business models as a result of the industry's digital transformation. The marketing strategy implemented by Tere Liye has several advantages, including full control over pricing and promotion, a direct, intense relationship with readers, and the potential for larger profit margins due to a shorter distribution chain. However, this strategy also has disadvantages, namely a relatively limited distribution reach and the need for independent operational and logistical management. On the other hand, the strategy used by general authors through publishers has the advantage of a wider distribution reach and the support of an established publishing system. However, this strategy also has disadvantages in that it limits the author's control over pricing and promotion, and lower profit margins due to the involvement of several intermediaries in the distribution process.

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