



Exploring User Preferences for Marketing Courses and Learning Platforms: Insights for Developing a User-Centric Educational Space

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Abstract: *This study investigates user preferences for marketing courses and online learning platforms, aiming to inform the development of a user-centric educational space tailored to real needs. Through structured interviews with marketing professionals and enthusiasts, data were collected on course preferences, challenges encountered on existing platforms, and desired features. Key findings reveal a demand for personalised, engaging, and accessible learning experiences, with gamification and interactivity as motivating factors. Challenges such as unclear course structures and insufficient practical applications were identified. These insights serve as a foundation for designing a learning platform that bridges the gap between current offerings and user expectations, for a more effective and enjoyable marketing education.*

Keywords: *marketing courses; online learning platforms; user preferences; personalised learning; gamification.*

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1. Introduction

The ever-growing demand for specialised skills in marketing has spurred the development of online learning platforms, which offer flexible and accessible solutions for both professionals and enthusiasts. These platforms have revolutionised education, providing unprecedented opportunities for learning and professional development. However, many fall short in addressing the specific needs of learners, particularly in a field as dynamic as marketing. Persistent challenges, such as unclear course structures, lack of engagement, and limited practical applications, leave a significant gap in user satisfaction and learning outcomes (Wright et al., 2023).

The purpose of this paper is to explore user preferences for marketing courses and online learning platforms, with the aim of informing the development of a user-centric educational space. By focusing on feedback and insights from users of current platforms on the Romanian learning ecosystem, an area with unique cultural and educational dynamics, the study seeks to identify features that enhance learning experiences and address key challenges faced. The ultimate goal is to provide actionable insights for designing a platform that meets the evolving needs of marketing professionals and learners.

We conducted the research through structured interviews with 56 participants, comprising a diverse group of Romanian marketing professionals and enthusiasts. The participants represented a wide range of age groups, with the majority falling between 22–50 years old, and a smaller segment aged over 50. Their professional experience varied from students and entry-level specialists to senior managers and business founders, with marketing, IT, communication, and business consultancy being the predominant fields. Educational backgrounds were equally diverse, with most participants holding bachelor's or master's degrees in areas such as marketing, economics, communication, and engineering. This diversity ensured a comprehensive understanding of the needs and challenges faced by individuals across different career stages and industries.

Theoretical results reveal a strong correlation between user satisfaction and features like interactivity, clear structure, and real-world relevance. Additionally, gamification elements, such as badges and leaderboards, emerged as significant motivators for engagement. Unexpectedly, participants highlighted the importance of collaborative tools and localised content, emphasising the need for culturally adapted learning materials. These insights contribute new perspectives specific to marketing education and provide a foundation for refining platform design.

Testable predictions include the hypothesis that platforms incorporating personalised content and gamification will demonstrate higher user satisfaction and retention rates. Other important predictions emerging from this study focus on the Romanian learning ecosystem, where trends such as localised content, culturally adapted gamification, and the integration of collaborative tools are underexplored. Platforms that incorporate these elements are predicted to perform better in terms of user engagement, completion rates, and perceived value. Additionally, the adoption of hybrid models combining asynchronous online learning with live mentorship or peer interactions could significantly improve learner satisfaction and skill application. These predictions aim to push the boundaries of existing research by addressing untapped opportunities within the Romanian context. Further empirical testing is encouraged to validate these findings and refine the design of marketing education platforms.

This study builds on existing literature exploring user preferences and experiences with online learning platforms, particularly in professional and specialised education. While previous research has largely focused on global trends, our findings narrow the scope to marketing and the education within the Romanian learning ecosystem, offering fresh perspectives on localised needs and challenges. By emphasising features such as culturally adapted gamification, collaborative tools, and hybrid learning models, this research extends the understanding of what drives satisfaction and effectiveness in marketing education. It provides a targeted contribution to the field by addressing specific gaps in user-centric design and platform functionality for marketing professionals and learners in a culturally distinct context.

The paper proceeds as follows: Section 2 outlines the methodology used in the study, including participant demographics and data collection methods. Section 3 presents the results, focusing on user preferences and challenges. Section 4 discusses the implications of these findings for platform design. Section 5 concludes with recommendations and directions for future research.

2. Research Design

We conducted qualitative research, relying exclusively on interviews to gather in-depth insights. This approach allowed us to explore user experiences, preferences, and challenges in detail. We adopted a deductive research method, starting with theories on user engagement, gamification, and platform design. This method guided the formulation of hypotheses and allowed us to collect data to validate insights specific to the Romanian learning ecosystem. Semi-structured interviews provided consistency across sessions while allowing flexibility to explore individual experiences and preferences.

3. Objectives

The primary objectives of the qualitative research were to (1) identify user preferences for marketing courses and online learning platforms, (2) understand the challenges users face with existing platforms, (3) explore features that enhance engagement, learning satisfaction, and (4) investigate the applicability of gamification and personalisation in the learning experience. The data collected informs strategies for designing a tailored learning experience and improving platform usability.

4. Sampling and Participants

We selected participants using intentional sampling to ensure diversity in professional backgrounds, career stages, and educational levels. The study included 56 individuals with experience or interest in marketing, ranging in age from under 21 to over 50. Participants represented various professional roles, including students, freelancers, marketing specialists, and senior managers. Educational backgrounds ranged from high school to doctoral degrees, with most holding bachelor's or master's degrees in fields such as marketing, communication, and engineering.

5. Interview Procedure

We conducted interviews face-to-face at August 2 coffee shop, Iași, between April 4 and April 26, 2024. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes and involved two interviewers. Before starting, we informed participants about the purpose of the research and presented them the confidentiality clauses ("Everything you say is confidential"), relevance clause ("There are no wrong answers; everything you say is important"), and timing of the entire interview process.

Participants were encouraged to give detailed answers, through probing techniques, to ask questions and explicitly provided consent for recording and processing their responses. We audio-recorded the interviews to ensure accuracy.

6. Instrument

The instrument used in this research consisted of a structured interview guide comprising 31 open-ended questions. The interview guide (Appendix 1) addressed the following areas:

Learning experiences and preferences (6 items): Questions explored the types of training participants had attended, their preferences for course duration, format, and pricing, as well as their motivations for pursuing marketing education.

Online platform interactions (4 items): Participants discussed their preferences for collaborative learning environments, including group projects and interactions with peers. Questions also addressed the impact of interdisciplinary speakers on expanding professional perspectives and how group dynamics contribute to learning outcomes.

Resources and gamification (12 items): This section examined the willingness of participants to purchase additional resources recommended during courses and their preferences, for including such resources within the course fee. It also explored the role of gamification elements, such as badges, leaderboards, and reward systems, in enhancing motivation and engagement.

Evaluation and collaboration (12 items): Questions addressed participants' preferences for evaluation methods, such as quizzes, group presentations, and one-on-one mentoring. This section also explored the value of post-course sharing of project outcomes within the learning community and on public platforms.

Demographics and background: Age, education, professional experience, and previous training.

The open-ended nature of the questions ensured that participants could express diverse perspectives and provide in-depth insights into their preferences and challenges. Each question included prompts and examples to stimulate detailed responses and guide the discussion.

7. Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, it focused exclusively on participants from Romania, which may limit the generalisability of findings to other regions or cultural contexts. The reliance on self-reported data introduces potential biases, as participants may overestimate or underestimate their preferences and behaviours. Additionally, the qualitative nature of the study, while providing in-depth insights, does not allow for statistical generalisation to a larger population. Self-reported data may also introduce bias due to participants' subjective perceptions or a desire to provide socially acceptable answers.

The sample size, though sufficient for qualitative analysis, may not capture the full spectrum of preferences in a broader population. Additionally, the focus on marketing professionals may limit the generalisability of findings to other fields.

The role of the researcher (Marek, 2017) presents another limitation. Researchers' expertise and their interaction with participants can influence data collection. For example, their ability to explain questions, probe for deeper insights, or manage interview dynamics depends on their experience and communication skills. Previous experience in qualitative research helped ensure consistency and depth in data collection, but subtle biases introduced during interactions cannot be entirely eliminated. Researchers balanced maintaining neutrality with creating a conversational atmosphere to encourage openness among participants.

Future research could explore longitudinal studies to assess how preferences evolve over time and across career stages. Investigating the impact of specific gamification elements, such as badges versus leaderboards, on learning outcomes could also yield deeper insights. Furthermore, comparative studies across industries could identify unique and shared learning needs, informing more universal course design principles.

8. Data Collection and Analysis

We transcribed all audio recordings and analysed the data using thematic analysis. This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of participants' responses and allowed for the identification of recurring themes, such as user preferences for personalisation, engagement through gamification, and challenges with usability.

The analysis began with a thorough review of the transcripts to gain familiarity with the data. Responses were segmented into smaller codes that captured specific ideas or patterns—such as references to gamification, motivation, and platform usability. Using Atlas.ti software, these codes were systematically grouped into broader themes, including barriers to platform adoption and tools that drive user engagement.

To reduce subjectivity, two researchers independently conducted the coding. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved through consensus, ensuring inter-coder reliability and enhancing the rigour of the analysis.

Themes were refined to ensure they accurately represented the underlying data and were given concise, descriptive labels. For example, themes such as platform barriers and engagement tools emerged as central categories. Finally, we aligned the themes with the study's objectives to extract actionable insights aimed at enhancing marketing education platforms.

Data saturation was reached when no new themes or insights emerged during analysis. After reviewing approximately 45 of the 56 interviews, we observed strong thematic consistency. The remaining interviews served to confirm and reinforce existing findings, indicating that thematic saturation had been achieved. This strengthens the trustworthiness and completeness of the analysis by ensuring that participant experiences were thoroughly captured and interpreted.

9. Results

Demographics: Profiles, Preferences and Motivations

The demographics of the 56 respondents provided a rich context for understanding their learning preferences, motivations, and professional goals. These insights reflect the diverse needs of learners across different age groups, roles, and experience levels, shaping the analysis of their interactions with educational resources and platforms.

Respondents aged 22–28 years accounted for 25% of the sample and represented a group of early-career professionals and students. This demographic emphasised the importance of interactive and engaging learning formats, such as gamification, quizzes, and shorter course durations ranging from one to four weeks. Their primary motivation was acquiring foundational skills that could be directly applied to their professional activities. For example, one respondent, a junior marketing specialist, highlighted that “quizzes and gamified content maintain my engagement and help me learn better.” This group also prioritised cost-effective and accessible learning options, reflecting their position at the beginning of their careers.

The 29–35 age group, constituting 21% of respondents, demonstrated a preference for a balanced approach to learning. As mid-career professionals, they sought to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical applications. Their preference for blended methods, such as quizzes paired with group projects, reflected their need to enhance skills relevant to workplace scenarios. Many in this demographic valued structured courses that aligned with their professional responsibilities and career advancement goals. One respondent, a business analyst, expressed that “combining case studies with collaborative projects enables me to develop both strategic thinking and teamwork skills.”

The largest demographic, aged 36–42 years, represented 32% of the respondents. Predominantly mid-to-senior-level professionals, this group valued comprehensive and practical learning approaches that mirrored workplace practices. Longer course durations of eight to twelve weeks were favoured, as these allowed for deeper exploration of advanced topics. This group frequently emphasised the importance of real-world applications and collaborative learning methods, such as group presentations. A marketing director from this cohort noted, “group projects and mentor feedback are integral to developing the skills I need to lead complex initiatives.”

Senior professionals aged 50 and above made up 16% of the sample. Their preferences leaned toward structured and formal evaluations, including case studies, reports, and longer bootcamp-style learning opportunities. This demographic prioritised strategic and tangible outcomes, such as leadership development and financial acumen. For example, one senior respondent highlighted that “understanding financial trends is critical for making strategic decisions in my role as a department head.”

Professional roles further shaped respondents' preferences and motivations. Junior professionals, including students, marketing specialists, and analysts, focused on acquiring foundational skills through interactive and gamified approaches. In contrast, mid-level professionals, such as project managers and consultants, sought programs that blended theory with practical workplace applications. Senior professionals, including directors and entrepreneurs, valued

advanced, in-depth training tailored to their strategic roles, often citing the importance of leadership and decision-making skills.

Experience levels also revealed important distinctions in learning motivations. Respondents with 0–3 years of experience (30%) expressed a strong preference for frequent feedback and hands-on learning formats. For example, one respondent noted that regular mentorship sessions “help me stay on track and reinforce my understanding.” Those with 6–10 years of experience (20%) sought a balance of theoretical and practical content, often favouring collaborative evaluations. Respondents with over 10 years of experience (15%) preferred fewer but highly personalised mentorship sessions, reflecting their need for targeted advice aligned with their expertise and leadership responsibilities.

Across all groups, recent training participation emerged as a significant factor. Approximately 67% of respondents reported completing training in the past three years. Younger professionals tended to focus on digital marketing and technical skills, while senior professionals prioritised leadership and strategy development. For example, a junior respondent emphasised the role of digital tools in enhancing their knowledge, whereas a senior participant cited leadership workshops as crucial for navigating complex organisational challenges.

The demographic insights underscore the diverse and evolving needs of learners across different career stages. Understanding these profiles is essential for designing tailored educational programs that cater to distinct motivations, whether foundational skill-building for early-career professionals or advanced strategic training for senior leaders. These findings provide a foundation for aligning learning methods with the preferences and aspirations of varied learner demographics.

Further on in this chapter we present the analysis and interpretation of results across the four key research areas: learning experiences and preferences, platform interactions, resources and gamification, and evaluation and collaboration. Each area was examined with consideration of participants’ demographics and backgrounds, drawing insights from the responses of all 56 participants. Also, for each analysed area, we highlighted correlations and trends, recommendations for course design and participant perspectives, by extracting relevant quotes from the interview answers. The results are structured to provide a comprehensive understanding of preferences, behaviours, and expectations in relation to marketing courses and learning platforms.

Learning Experiences and Preferences

This section presents findings from the first research area, learning experiences and preferences, with insights derived from the interviewee responses. The analysis focuses on training history, course preferences, pricing expectations, and complementary interests while considering participant demographics and professional roles.

The analysis reveals distinct patterns among participants of different age groups, roles, and levels of experience. For instance, participants aged 22–28 years prioritise flexibility, shorter course durations, and interactive learning formats, such as video-based platforms and gamification. In comparison, participants aged 29–35 years focus on job-related training and prefer structured courses priced in the mid-range. The largest group, aged 36–42 years, emphasises real-world applications and opts for longer, comprehensive courses.

Professional roles also influence preferences. Junior professionals, such as students and marketing specialists, focus on gaining foundational skills and gravitate toward lower-cost, interactive courses. Mid-level professionals, such as project managers and analysts, favour courses that blend theory with practical applications, aligned with workplace scenarios. Senior professionals, including directors and business owners, prioritise advanced, strategic training, often favouring higher-cost, in-depth programs.

Looking at experience levels, participants with 0–3 years of experience (25%) preferred interactive, foundational courses, while those with 10+ years of experience (15%) sought advanced content focused on leadership and strategy. Notably, 67% of respondents reported participating in

training within the past three years, with younger professionals attending digital marketing and technical courses, and senior professionals leaning toward leadership and strategy-oriented sessions.

Looking at the willingness to pay for courses, the research shows that pricing expectations vary across demographics. For example, 41% of participants indicated a preferred pricing range of 1,500–2,000 lei, with younger professionals leaning toward lower-cost options. Also, senior professionals were more inclined to pay between 2,000–3,000 lei or higher, valuing depth and expertise. For instance, one respondent aged 36–42 years expressed willingness to pay up to 3,000 lei for advanced leadership content.

In terms of preferred learning platforms, the research indicates that 72% of respondents mentioned WhatsApp as their primary communication tool. Other platforms, such as LinkedIn (56%) and Instagram (38%), were also widely used. Younger professionals favoured dynamic platforms like Instagram and YouTube, while senior professionals preferred LinkedIn for professional networking and industry insights. For instance, one participant aged over 50 years noted LinkedIn as their primary source for industry trends and professional updates.

Regarding course duration, most respondents (65%) preferred online courses lasting 4–8 weeks, with younger professionals favouring shorter formats of 1–4 weeks and experienced professionals, opting for longer durations of 8 weeks or more. For classroom-based courses, 53% of participants preferred formats spanning 3–5 days, with shorter, intensive sessions being more popular among younger respondents, while older professionals suggested more extended schedules.

Exploring complementary topics, psychology emerged as a popular choice among 58% of respondents, particularly younger professionals who emphasised its relevance for understanding consumer behaviour. Finance, preferred by 42% of participants, was cited as crucial for budgeting and strategic decision-making by senior professionals. For example, a participant aged 36–42 years highlighted psychology as critical for crafting effective marketing campaigns, while another participant aged over 50 years stressed the importance of financial acumen in leading marketing teams.

Correlations and Trends

1. Willingness to pay increases with age and experience - younger respondents focused on affordability, preferring lower-cost options, while older professionals demonstrated a greater willingness to invest in premium courses.

2. Interactive platforms dominate among younger professionals - platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Udemy emerged as favourites for their engagement and accessibility, contrasting with senior professionals' reliance on LinkedIn for structured insights.

3. Shorter durations appeal to younger learners - participants aged 22–28 years preferred short courses of 1–4 weeks, while experienced professionals preferred durations of 8–12 weeks for deeper exploration.

4. Cross-disciplinary interests reflect career goals - junior professionals prioritised psychology, to enhance teamwork and understand consumer behaviour, while senior professionals valued finance for strategic decision-making.

Recommendations for Course Design

Based on these findings, we identified several areas where course providers should focus when designing future courses. Firstly, developing tiered pricing models could offer affordable options for younger learners and premium courses for senior professionals. Also, flexible course formats would cater to both shorter durations for foundational learners and extended durations for advanced topics.

In addition, integrating cross-disciplinary topics such as psychology and finance could align with participants' professional needs and enhance the relevance of the learning experience. Finally, optimising platform accessibility by leveraging platforms like LinkedIn for senior professionals and Instagram or YouTube for younger audiences would ensure a broader reach and engagement.

Participant Perspectives

Participants' comments offered valuable insights into their preferences:

"Coursera courses gave me a foundation in digital marketing and project management at an affordable price." – Respondent 18 (22–28 years).

"LinkedIn provides not only industry trends but also credible networking opportunities which are good for strategic growth." – Respondent 12 (over 50 years).

"Short courses of 3-4 weeks are ideal for acquiring practical skills without feeling overwhelmed." – Respondent 8 (22–28 years).

"Finance courses help me allocate budgets better and make data-driven decisions." – Respondent 1 (over 50 years).

Table 1. Key findings | Learning experiences and preferences

Category	Key findings	Correlations and insights	Recommendations
Age groups	22–28 years: Prefer short courses, gamified formats; 29–35 years: Balance of theory and practice.	Willingness to pay increases with age; younger professionals focus on affordability.	Offer tiered pricing and course durations to cater to varying learner needs.
Professional roles	Junior professionals prioritise foundational skills; senior professionals prefer advanced content.	Interactive platforms dominate among younger learners; senior professionals prefer structured formats like LinkedIn.	Tailor content to professional roles; offer foundational courses for juniors and strategic modules for seniors.
Complementary topics	Psychology (58%) and finance (42%) emerged as key topics of interest.	Cross-disciplinary interests align with career goals: psychology for teamwork, finance for decision-making.	Incorporate psychology and finance modules into course offerings.
Platforms	WhatsApp (72%) and Instagram (38%) preferred by younger learners; LinkedIn (56%) by seniors.	Communication preferences vary by age; younger learners prefer dynamic platforms.	Optimise platforms by integrating LinkedIn for senior learners and Instagram/WhatsApp for younger learners.

Platform Interactions

This section explores findings from the second research area, platform interactions. The focus is on collaborative learning, communication channels, the value of cross-disciplinary expertise, and participant preferences for platform features. The results are presented in relation to demographics, roles, and professional experience.

Participants aged 22–28 years, comprising 23% of respondents, emphasised the need for interactive formats and gamification features. They expressed a strong preference for platforms that promote peer collaboration and dynamic engagement. In contrast, participants aged 29–35 years (18%) valued well-structured platforms with a balance of collaborative and individual learning. The largest demographic, aged 36–42 years (32%), preferred platforms facilitating practical applications, such as group projects and feedback opportunities. Those aged over 50 years (16%) leaned towards platforms with formal structures that focus on tangible outputs and strategic insights.

Junior professionals, including analysts and students, prioritised platforms that promote skill-building through collaboration and gamified content. Leadership roles, such as directors and

managers, favoured platforms that provide strategic insights and facilitate interactions with cross-disciplinary experts.

Participants with 0–3 years of experience appreciated mentorship opportunities and platforms that enhanced networking and practical knowledge. Conversely, those with over 10 years of experience emphasised the importance of tailored platforms offering advanced insights and strategic discussions.

Respondents who had recently engaged in training showed higher satisfaction with platforms featuring interactive components and diverse communication channels.

An overwhelming 94% of participants indicated that working in small groups of 4–5 members enhances the learning experience. Younger respondents (22–28 years) expressed enthusiasm for group projects, citing peer feedback and collaborative problem-solving as invaluable components. For example, one respondent noted, “group projects allow me to learn faster by exchanging ideas with peers.”

88% of participants valued the inclusion of external speakers from fields outside marketing, citing their potential to offer fresh perspectives and innovative approaches. Leadership roles, such as directors, emphasised the strategic value of such cross-disciplinary insights.

Psychology (65%) and finance (35%) emerged as the most frequently mentioned complementary subjects. Younger respondents favoured psychology for its relevance to teamwork and consumer behaviour, while senior professionals leaned toward finance for its strategic applications.

LinkedIn was the most favoured platform (72%), followed by YouTube (40%) and Instagram (25%). Younger respondents highlighted Instagram and WhatsApp as creative and quick communication tools, while senior professionals valued LinkedIn for its professional networking capabilities.

Correlations and Trends

1. Interactive group work enhances engagement - younger participants emphasised the value of peer collaboration, with 87% linking small group interactions to better learning outcomes. Senior participants also acknowledged the importance of structured group tasks that simulate professional environments.

2. Cross-disciplinary learning broadens perspectives - leadership roles overwhelmingly supported the inclusion of external speakers from fields like psychology and finance, aligning such exposure with strategic decision-making. Conversely, junior professionals preferred hands-on case studies and practical insights.

3. Communication preferences vary by age - participants aged 22–28 years favoured informal platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp for collaboration, while those over 50 years preferred LinkedIn for professional engagement and industry trends.

4. Psychology appeals across demographics - while psychology was universally appreciated, its application varied: junior professionals linked it to teamwork, while senior professionals associated it with consumer analysis.

Recommendations for Platform Design

Building on these insights, several key opportunities for enhancing platform design have been identified. First, integrating collaborative learning features, such as group work modules with peer feedback and problem-solving activities, can effectively address the needs of both junior and senior learners. Additionally, incorporating cross-disciplinary expertise by inviting speakers from fields like psychology, finance, and IT can provide learners with enriched, innovative perspectives.

Optimising communication tools is another crucial step. By leveraging LinkedIn for senior professionals and Instagram or WhatsApp for younger audiences, platforms can foster meaningful networking and dynamic engagement. Finally, offering modules on relevant complementary topics

such as psychology and finance will align with the specific needs of different learner groups, ensuring a more tailored and impactful learning experience.

Participant Perspectives

Participants provided insightful comments reflecting their platform interaction preferences:

“Group projects allow me to learn faster by exchanging ideas with peers.” – Respondent 18 (22–28 years).

“Gaining insights into finance and consumer psychology helps enhance decision-making and think strategically.” – Respondent 19 (over 50 years).

“LinkedIn allows me to access industry trends and engage with like-minded professionals.” – Respondent 12 (over 50 years).

“Instagram allows for quick sharing of ideas, making it perfect for creative collaboration.” – Respondent 38 (22–28 years).

Table 2. Key findings | Platform interactions

Category	Key findings	Correlations and insights	Recommendations
Group work	94% support small group work for enhanced learning.	Younger learners value peer feedback, while seniors appreciate structured collaboration.	Include group work modules with options for feedback and collaboration.
External speakers	88% favour cross-disciplinary speakers, e.g., from psychology and finance.	Leadership roles prioritise diverse expertise for strategic thinking.	Invite interdisciplinary experts to provide fresh perspectives.
Communication channels	LinkedIn (72%), YouTube (40%), Instagram (25%) preferred based on age and role.	Younger participants favour informal platforms; seniors rely on professional networking tools.	Customise communication tools for different user groups.
Psychology focus	Universally valued, with applications varying by role (teamwork vs. consumer behaviour).	Appeals across demographics but with distinct applications for juniors and seniors.	Design psychology-focused modules tailored to professional contexts.

Resources and Gamification

This section explores findings from the third research area, focusing on participants' preferences for resources and gamification in online learning. Insights provide valuable perspectives on resource acquisition, gamification features, and their motivational impact.

The findings indicate diverse preferences for course-related resources, with notable distinctions across demographic groups. Among the most frequently mentioned resources were market studies and statistical data (58.9%), specialised books (48.2%), and tutorial videos (42.9%). Case studies (39.3%), podcasts (32.1%), and audiobooks (28.6%) were also valued.

Senior professionals, such as directors and marketing specialists, showed a clear preference for advanced resources like market studies, while younger professionals and students leaned toward practical tools like tutorial videos and case studies. For instance, respondent 1 (IT Director) prioritised statistical data, whereas respondent 41 (student) emphasised podcasts and videos for skill development.

A notable insight from the research comes from respondent 3, who shared, “market studies and video tutorials make the theoretical content more tangible and easier to apply.” This reflects the thematic code of practical learners, emphasising the critical role of resources that bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation.

The study revealed an almost even split between participants preferring resources integrated into the course (52.7%) and those opting for separate purchases (47.3%).

Professionals with 10+ years of experience favoured integrated resources for convenience, while early-career participants preferred separate purchases for cost management. Respondent 19 (Business Analyst) expressed willingness to pay up to 30% extra for integrated resources, aligning with time efficiency as a priority.

An important perspective comes from respondent 3, who stated, “I would pay more for the course if it ensured all resources were readily available in the learning platform.” This aligns with the thematic code of convenience seekers, highlighting the significance of providing seamless access to course materials to enhance the overall learning experience.

A majority (68.4%) of participants were familiar with gamification, particularly its application in learning. Commonly appreciated features included badges (73.2%), points accumulation (65.4%), and leaderboards (58.9%).

Younger professionals (22–28) and creative roles preferred dynamic features like badges and rewards, while competitive elements, such as leaderboards, resonated with sales and consulting roles. Respondent 18 (22–28, Web Designer) cited streaks and points systems as essential for sustained engagement.

Respondent 35 provided a key insight, stating “gamification adds a competitive yet enjoyable aspect to learning, keeping me motivated.” This aligns with the thematic code of achievement seekers, showcasing how gamified milestones play a vital role in sustaining motivation and engagement in the learning process.

Over 85.7% of participants expressed interest in a points system redeemable for rewards. Popular rewards included books and promotional items (67.9%), discount vouchers (58.2%), and event tickets (42.9%).

Younger respondents prioritised experiential rewards, such as event tickets, while older professionals leaned toward professional tools, including books.

Respondent 9 (Freelancer) shared an important perspective, stating “rewards like vouchers and books feel both personal and valuable, adding a practical incentive to participate actively.” This aligns with the thematic code of value-driven learners, highlighting the balance between personal preferences and professional growth incentives in driving active participation.

Psychology (65%) and finance (35%) emerged as the most favoured complementary subjects. Psychology was valued for understanding consumer behaviour, while finance was emphasised for strategic decision-making. For example, respondent 15 (36–42) highlighted the critical role of psychology in crafting effective campaigns.

Correlations and Trends

1. Gamification familiarity increases engagement - respondents familiar with gamification were more likely to engage actively with features such as leaderboards, badges, and points systems.
2. Senior professionals value advanced resources - leadership roles prioritised market studies and statistical data, while junior roles leaned towards tutorial videos and podcasts.
3. Leaderboards versus anonymity - while leaderboards were motivational for 58.9% of respondents, some emphasised the importance of anonymity to reduce pressure.
4. Reward preferences reflect demographics - younger participants favoured experiential rewards, while older professionals preferred tools that enhanced their professional expertise.

Recommendations for Course Design

Building on these findings, course developers should focus on several key strategies. First, creating tailored resource bundles can address diverse learner needs by providing advanced materials for senior professionals and interactive tools for younger audiences. Additionally, implementing flexible gamification mechanisms, such as a points system, would allow learners to

redeem rewards that align with their preferences. Offering options for both visible and anonymous leaderboards would further enhance engagement while respecting individual comfort levels.

Expanding reward options to include professional tools, experiential opportunities, and industry-relevant content will cater to the varied interests of participants. Finally, optimising accessibility by integrating resource packages within the learning platform will appeal to professionals, who prioritise convenience, while maintaining separate purchase options will support cost-sensitive learners.

Participant Perspectives

Participants provided valuable insights into their preferences:

"Badges create a sense of achievement but must be designed to encourage collaboration, not just competition." – Respondent 21

"Sharing my curated resources allows me to contribute to the community and also learn from peers." – Respondent 48

"Collecting points that can be exchanged for rewards makes the effort feel more worthwhile." – Respondent 35

Table 3. Key findings | Resources and gamification

Category	Key findings	Correlations and insights	Recommendations
Preferred resources	Market studies (58.9%), specialised books (48.2%), tutorials (42.9%).	Senior professionals prefer advanced resources; juniors prefer interactive tools like videos and podcasts.	Offer resource bundles tailored to professional roles and learning objectives.
Gamification familiarity	68.4% familiar; badges (73.2%), points (65.4%), leaderboards (58.9%) preferred.	Gamification engages younger learners; seniors are more cautious about competitive features.	Use gamified elements selectively; balance competitive and inclusive features.
Rewards	85.7% prefer redeemable points for books, vouchers, and events.	Reward preferences vary by age: younger learners prefer experiences; seniors prefer tools.	Expand reward options to include experiences and professional tools.
Resource acquisition	52.7% prefer integrated resources; 47.3% prefer separate purchases.	Experienced learners value integrated resources; juniors prefer cost flexibility.	Offer both integrated and à la carte resource options.

Evaluation and Collaboration

The final research area, evaluation and collaboration, examines how learners perceive and engage with evaluation methods, mentorship, and collaborative opportunities in online education. This section identifies preferences and patterns related to evaluation formats, mentorship support, and community sharing, emphasising the role of demographic and professional characteristics in shaping these experiences.

The analysis reveals distinct preferences across age groups, roles, and levels of experience. Participants aged 22–28 years (25%) favour interactive evaluation methods, such as quizzes and presentations, often highlighting the importance of practical, hands-on experiences. By contrast, those aged 29–35 years (21%) balance theoretical and practical approaches, showing a preference for blended methods like quizzes combined with group projects. The 36–42 years age group, representing 32%, emphasises evaluations that mirror workplace practices, such as group presentations and collaborative projects. Senior professionals aged 50+ (16%) tend to prefer structured evaluations, including case studies and formal reports.

Role-based analysis indicates that senior professionals (e.g., directors, managers) prioritise personalised mentoring and structured evaluations, while junior professionals (e.g., analysts,

specialists) favour gamified approaches, including leaderboards and points systems. Meanwhile, freelancers and entrepreneurs prioritise relevance and flexibility, often favouring project-based evaluations with real-world applications.

In terms of experience, respondents with 0–3 years (30%) value frequent feedback and interactive learning, while those with 15+ years (15%) prefer fewer but highly personalised mentorship sessions. Among all participants, 58% had recently completed training and expressed openness to gamification in evaluations, while others without recent training remained skeptical of modern evaluation methods.

Quizzes and presentations emerged as the most popular formats, preferred by 68% of respondents, followed by individual projects (54%) and group work (47%). Younger respondents particularly appreciated the interactive nature of quizzes and teamwork-focused presentations. For example, respondent 9 (22–28) expressed that group projects enhance their learning by encouraging teamwork and diverse perspectives.

The majority (81%) of participants agreed that four hours of one-on-one mentorship during a course is sufficient for feedback and clarification. Younger respondents valued frequent feedback, whereas senior professionals preferred fewer, more tailored mentorship sessions.

An overwhelming 91% of respondents supported sharing project outcomes post-course, citing benefits like collaboration and professional networking. Respondent 53 (Freelancer, 29–35) highlighted the importance of sharing achievements to build credibility and foster long-term value in their field.

Approximately 74% of respondents expressed willingness to pay 20%–30% more for in-person bootcamps. Leadership roles were more inclined to invest in such opportunities, emphasising networking and mentor access as critical benefits.

Key factors included the reputation of mentors and platforms (42%), flexibility (35%), and the availability of resources (31%). Younger respondents favoured platforms with interactive features like gamification, while senior professionals prioritised content quality and mentor expertise.

Correlations and Trends

1. Gamification familiarity drives preference for interactive evaluations - participants familiar with gamification showed a strong preference for quizzes, leaderboards, and badges. By Digital Marketing Specialist, in contrast, senior professionals preferred structured methods like case studies. Respondent 35 noted that leaderboards motivated him by fostering friendly competition.

2. Younger respondents prefer frequent feedback - the 22–28 age group highlighted the importance of quick, iterative feedback through quizzes and mentor sessions, correlating with their preference for interactive evaluation formats.

3. Leadership roles prioritise community sharing - senior professionals valued sharing achievements as a means of establishing credibility and thought leadership. For example, respondent 19 emphasised that showcasing outcomes within professional spaces contributes to long-term career growth.

4. Bootcamp investment and mentor credibility - respondents willing to pay extra for bootcamps often cited mentor reputation and strategic networking opportunities as decisive factors. This trend was particularly pronounced among senior professionals. Respondent 1 noted that bootcamps provided invaluable opportunities to connect with peers and mentors.

Recommendations for Course Design

From the findings in this last area of qualitative research, several actionable recommendations emerge to enhance evaluation and collaboration in online learning. First, incorporating flexible evaluation formats, such as quizzes, group projects, and individual presentations, can address the diverse preferences of learners. Expanding mentorship opportunities

is equally important, with tailored packages offering frequent feedback for younger participants and strategic consulting for senior professionals to maximise their learning outcomes.

Selective integration of gamified elements, such as badges, points, and leaderboards, can add interactivity to evaluations while preserving structured methods like case studies for advanced learners. Developing dedicated sharing platforms that enable users to share projects, feedback, and achievements will foster collaboration and build meaningful networks within the learning community. Finally, differentiating bootcamp pricing models based on mentor access and workshop intensity will ensure that the diverse financial and learning needs of participants are effectively met.

Participant Perspectives

Participants' responses offered valuable insights into their evaluation and collaboration preferences:

"Group projects allow me to gain new perspectives while applying what I've learned in real-world scenarios." – Respondent 15.

"Having a mentor who can provide feedback on my progress makes all the difference in staying motivated and on track." – Respondent 26 (0–3 years of experience).

"Sharing achievements in a professional space helps me establish credibility and build valuable connections." – Respondent 19 (Senior professional).

"An in-person bootcamp provides the opportunity to network with peers and learn from real-world experiences." – Respondent 1 (Leadership role).

Table 4. Key findings | Evaluation and collaboration

Category	Key findings	Correlations and insights	Recommendations
Evaluation methods	Quizzes (68%) and group work (47%) are the most popular.	Younger learners favour interactive evaluations; seniors prefer structured methods like case studies.	Blend quizzes, presentations, and case studies to meet varied preferences.
Mentorship	81% support 4+ hours of one-on-one mentorship per course.	Younger learners value frequent feedback; seniors prefer strategic consultations.	Provide flexible mentorship options tailored to career stages.
Community sharing	91% value sharing achievements with peers.	Seniors see sharing as credibility-building; younger learners focus on immediate collaboration benefits.	Develop features for collaborative sharing and showcasing of achievements.
Bootcamp preferences	74% willing to pay 20–30% more for in-person bootcamps.	Seniors prioritise bootcamps for networking; juniors prefer online options for affordability.	Differentiate bootcamp pricing models based on mentor access and workshop intensity.

10. Discussion

The findings presented in this study provide a detailed understanding of the diverse preferences, expectations, and experiences of learners in online marketing education, focusing on the four key areas. We further explore the implications of these findings, using content analysis, situating them within the broader context of online learning and marketing education, while identifying areas for future research and application.

Below are two extended tables created from data, in which each table systematically codes one relevant question/set of questions: (1) motivation for enrolling in a marketing course and (2) platform credibility factors. All categories, frequencies and quotes derive from the participants' answers (translated/paraphrased into English where needed). In some cases, multiple themes appear in a single response, so a single respondent was counted in more than one category if they mention multiple motivations or credibility factors.

After reviewing the 56 responses, four main motivations emerged. Below are the approximate frequencies and sample quotes (shortened for clarity), sorted by the decreasing number of mentions. Some respondents touched on multiple motivations.

Table 5. Motivations for enrolling in a marketing course

Motivation	Description	Mentions	Representative quotes	Observations
1. Business performance	Entrepreneurs and managers who want to boost sales, increase brand awareness or differentiate from competitors.	25	“I need to promote the products I make and need effective techniques.” (Respondent 2) “Main objective: brand awareness and lead generation.” (Respondent 42)	Often reference immediate ROI, real-world application, and looking for hands-on or advanced marketing strategies (e.g. digital funnels, consumer behaviour).
2. Personal development	Individuals driven by intellectual curiosity, self-improvement, or staying updated on trends—sometimes unrelated to their current job.	18	“I want to be up to date with the latest trends, even if marketing isn’t my core job.” (Respondent 1) “I’m curious and want a broader skill set.” (Respondent 12)	More open to flexible, asynchronous formats. Less emphasis on formal certification; more emphasis on exploring and experimenting with new concepts.
3. Career advancement	Seeking promotions, a new position, or recognition in a current job—often mentioning certification or the desire to pivot into a marketing-related role.	12	“I want to ascend to a leadership level, so a solid marketing background helps.” (Respondent 15)	Tends to overlap with the need for accredited or recognised courses (especially from reputable providers).
4. Freelancing/consulting	Aspiring or current freelancers and consultants wanting to refine their marketing services or enhance their credibility to clients.	7	“I’m passionate about freelancing, so mastering marketing helps position me better.” (Respondent 9)	Typically mention advanced or niche skills (performance marketing, brand strategy) that can differentiate them in the freelance marketplace.

Business performance emerged as the top motivation, cited by 25 entrepreneurs and managers aiming for ROI. This group typically highlights the need for advanced, hands-on strategies, such as consumer behaviour insights and digital funnels, to boost brand awareness, increase leads, or promote existing products more effectively.

Personal development resonates with 18 individuals driven by curiosity and self-improvement, often looking to stay updated on marketing trends or explore new concepts beyond their current roles. They generally place less emphasis on formal accreditation, preferring flexible or exploratory course structures.

Career advancement, mentioned by 12 participants, appeals to those seeking promotions, new roles, or certifications to boost their résumé. Freelancing and consulting, cited by 7, centers on sharpening marketing skills to gain client trust. These freelancers and consultants often seek performance-based or niche marketing competencies to stand out in a competitive market.

In terms of platform credibility factors, we extracted five main credibility factors, presented in table 6, sorted by the decreasing number of mentions.

Table 6. Platform credibility factors for enrolling in a marketing course

Credibility factor	Description	Mentions	Representative quotes	Observations
1. Reviews & testimonials	Looking for peer recommendations, alumni feedback, or external references (Google, LinkedIn, specialised forums).	25	"I always check reviews from people who finished the course. Good or bad, I want authenticity." (Respondent 23)	Some mention searching beyond the platform's website (independent forums). Negative or mixed reviews can be a deal-breaker.
2. Trainer expertise	Checking instructor background, real-world achievements, industry experience.	16	"I look at who's behind the course. Do they have proven success, or is it just theory?" (Respondent 7)	Particularly important for those paying higher fees (2,000+ RON). They want recognised names or brands with proven track records.
3. Quality & relevance of content	Ensuring the curriculum is up-to-date, practical, and relevant to current marketing trends and tools.	14	"If the content is outdated or too theoretical, I lose interest." (Respondent 3)	Relevance strongly influences those with immediate business needs. Real case studies and current best practices are highly valued.
4. Usability/ platform experience	How user-friendly, stable, and interactive the platform is (navigation, discussion forums, interactive modules).	7	"If the platform is clunky or I can't figure it out quickly, I'll abandon it." (Respondent 21)	Often mentioned by busy professionals who want minimal friction. Some also cite mobile accessibility as a must.
5. Accreditation/ recognition	Whether the course is accredited by a professional body or recognised by employers/industry.	4	"A recognised certification can help me in my career. Otherwise, it's just another online training." (Respondent 11)	Not every respondent needs an official accreditation, but many see it as a plus for job applications or internal promotion.
6. Brand/ reputation	Assessing the platform's notoriety, track record, professional presentation, or how often people talk about it outside the platform's own channels.	3	"I usually check the brand before deciding." (Respondent 36)	Brand reputation influences credibility and is associated with the price range.

Reviews and testimonials, mentioned by 25 participants, were the most influential factor in evaluating an online learning platform. Many actively look for feedback beyond the provider's site, on forums or Google and say that negative or mixed reviews can quickly deter them.

Trainer expertise, cited by 16 participants, was especially important to those paying higher fees, who expect instructors with real-world accomplishments and proven track records. Similarly, content quality and relevance mattered greatly; 14 participants quickly lose interest in outdated or overly theoretical material. They want real case studies, current insights, and practical tools they can apply immediately at work.

Beyond the top factors, usability and platform experience—mentioned by 7 participants—focused on easy navigation and minimal technical friction. Accreditation or

recognition, cited by 4, was seen by some as essential for career growth or internal promotion. Brand reputation, though mentioned by only 3, still influenced perceptions of credibility. Those who consider branding often associate it with higher prices and a more professional presentation.

11. Implications for Course Design

The study's findings offer valuable insights for course designers and platform developers to create more effective and engaging learning experiences. Personalisation through AI-driven recommendations and tailored content can meet the diverse needs of learners at different stages of their careers, ensuring relevance and adaptability. Integrated gamification, thoughtfully designed to include elements like badges and points, can boost engagement for younger learners while maintaining inclusivity for senior professionals.

Cross-disciplinary modules, such as those focusing on psychology and finance, can expand the appeal and practical utility of marketing courses, aligning with both junior and senior professionals' career objectives. Collaborative features, including tools for group work, peer feedback, and community sharing, should be prioritised to foster a sense of belonging and encourage mutual learning among participants. Lastly, flexible pricing models, offering tiered options with integrated resources, can address the varying budgets and expectations of learners, making high-quality education accessible to a broader audience.

The integration of insights from all four research areas underscores the importance of creating learner-centric environments that cater to diverse preferences and professional needs. By aligning course design with demographic trends, incorporating gamification and interdisciplinary content, and fostering collaboration through mentorship and community-sharing features, online learning platforms can achieve deeper engagement and long-term value for participants. These results provide a roadmap for developing dynamic, inclusive, and effective learning solutions that resonate across career stages and roles.

12. Conclusion

The findings from the four research areas (learning experiences, platform interactions, resources and gamification, and evaluation and collaboration) offer a comprehensive understanding of how online learning environments can be optimised to meet the diverse needs of learners. By analysing the responses from 56 participants across different age groups, professional roles, and experience levels, this study highlights critical correlations and emerging trends that transcend individual areas of focus.

Younger respondents (22–28 years) consistently prioritised interactive formats, gamified features, and quick feedback mechanisms. These preferences were evident across learning experiences, platform interactions, and evaluation methods. Conversely, older professionals (36–42 years and above 50) emphasised structured, formal content, reflecting their focus on long-term strategic insights. For example, while younger professionals favoured short courses (1–4 weeks) and dynamic platforms like Instagram and YouTube, senior learners preferred extended durations (8+ weeks) and professional platforms like LinkedIn.

Across all areas, respondents valued cross-disciplinary knowledge, with psychology (65%) and finance (35%) emerging as dominant complementary topics. Junior professionals emphasised psychology for enhancing teamwork and consumer behaviour understanding, while senior professionals leaned towards finance for strategic decision-making. This trend reinforces the need for interdisciplinary course content to cater to career-specific goals.

Gamification elements like badges, points, and leaderboards found resonance across age groups, particularly among younger respondents. However, their application requires balance, as senior professionals preferred structured evaluations over gamified methods. This divergence underscores the importance of selectively integrating gamification to cater to diverse learner expectations.

A significant majority (91%) of respondents supported community-sharing mechanisms across platforms. This preference spanned all demographics, indicating the universal value of collaborative environments for building professional credibility and fostering peer learning.

13. Emerging Insights and Patterns

Mentorship drives engagement across experience levels - one-on-one mentorship was highlighted as a critical component of online learning. Younger respondents valued frequent, iterative feedback, while senior professionals preferred strategic consultations tailored to their expertise. This trend suggests the need for flexible mentorship models to accommodate varying levels of experience.

Integrated resources enhance learning outcomes - respondents expressed a strong preference for resource bundles integrated into course offerings, with 52.7% favouring this option for convenience. Senior professionals were more willing to pay additional fees for such packages, indicating their appreciation for time efficiency and accessibility.

Interactive group work simulates real-world scenarios - across platform interactions and evaluations, group work emerged as a preferred learning method. Younger respondents valued peer collaboration for its immediate impact on understanding concepts, while mid-career and senior professionals appreciated its alignment with workplace dynamics.

Reputation and flexibility shape platform choices - mentor reputation (42%) and platform flexibility (35%) were consistently cited as decisive factors influencing platform selection. Younger learners also emphasised interactive features, while senior professionals prioritised structured, high-quality content.

To enhance learning experiences and meet the diverse needs of participants, several actionable recommendations emerge. First, designing tiered learning pathways is essential. This involves developing flexible course formats that cater to both younger learners with short, interactive sessions and senior professionals with comprehensive, strategic modules. By incorporating interdisciplinary content, such as psychology and finance, these pathways can address specific career needs effectively.

Optimising gamification features is another critical step. Gamification should be introduced selectively, blending badges, points, and leaderboards to engage younger audiences, while maintaining structured evaluations like case studies for senior learners. Providing the option for anonymity in leaderboards can foster a more inclusive learning environment.

Expanding resource integration and accessibility will further enhance the learning experience. Comprehensive resource bundles, including market studies, tutorial videos, and podcasts, should be offered as part of course packages. At the same time, retaining options for separate purchases ensures accessibility for cost-sensitive learners.

To promote collaboration and sharing, platforms should integrate community-sharing features that allow users to showcase achievements, share curated resources, and engage in collaborative projects. These mechanisms will support both networking goals and peer learning, fostering a strong sense of community among participants.

Finally, leveraging tailored mentorship models can significantly boost engagement and satisfaction. Flexible mentorship opportunities should range from frequent feedback sessions for junior professionals to strategic consultations for senior learners. By embedding mentorship into the course design, platforms can deliver a more personalised and impactful learning experience.

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Appendix 1

In-Depth Interview Guide (translated in English) Marketing Course Preferences & Learning Platforms

Name _____

Date _____

Interviewer _____

Interviewer:

Hello, and thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Our discussion aims to explore your preferences and experiences with marketing courses and learning platforms. Everything you share is important to us and will remain confidential. We will record this conversation to make sure we capture all details, and your information will be protected. Please let me know if you have any questions before we begin.

Background Questions

1. Tell me a bit about yourself. What is your age, where are you from, and what is your current role at work?
(Prompt: age, location, current position)
 2. How many years of experience do you have in marketing? How did you start working in or become interested in marketing?
(Prompt: professional background, personal motivation)
 3. What is the most recent level of education you've completed, and in what field?
(Prompt: high school, university, master's, PhD)
-

Content (by Section)

Learning Experiences & Preferences

1. What courses or training programs have you taken in the past three years? What attracted you to them?
(Prompt: online, in-person, short/intensive, practical focus)
 2. For a course relevant to your experience level, what price range would you be willing to pay for a marketing course that provides information useful to your current role?
(Provide reference ranges as a guide)
 3. What are the main online platforms or channels you use in your free time for information or relaxation?
(Prompt: social media, news platforms, video streaming)
 4. Have you purchased marketing courses before? If yes, from which providers? How did you choose them?
(Prompt: reputation, recommendations, price)
 5. How many weeks do you think are suitable for completing a comprehensive online marketing course?
(Prompt: weeks needed for depth, daily session length)
 6. How many days do you think are suitable for a comprehensive in-person marketing course?
(Prompt: consecutive days, intensity)
-

Interaction & Organisation

7. **Scenario:** In the course, you'll work on your own project and be part of a working group (4–5 people). The group would support your learning through advice, discussion of project challenges, and feedback. You're also free to interact with other participants outside your group. What impact do you think this setup would have on your learning experience?
(Prompt: peer support, constructive feedback, group discussion)
8. How do you think speakers or experts from outside the marketing field could enhance your professional perspective?
(Prompt: new perspectives, interdisciplinarity)
9. What topics or fields do you think could complement your current marketing knowledge?
(Prompt: psychology, technology, design, sports, aerospace, medicine, etc.)

10. What platforms or communication channels help you stay connected with the marketing expert community?
(Prompt: *social media, forums, professional groups*)
-

Resources & Gamification

11. What types of resources would you be willing to purchase if recommended during a course?
(Prompt: *books, practical guides, subscriptions*)
 12. Would you prefer to buy these resources separately or have them included in the course price, even if the price is higher? Why?
(Prompt: *accessibility, convenience*)
 13. What percentage more would you be willing to pay to have resources integrated directly into the platform?
(Prompt: *percentage or price range*)
 14. Are you familiar with the concept of gamification? How do you see game elements being integrated into learning?
(Prompt: *goals, rewards, healthy competition*)
 15. Have you used apps or platforms with gamification features (typical game elements like goals, rules, rewards)?
 16. What gamification mechanisms or elements do you find engaging and motivating?
 17. What do you think about earning points based on your platform activity (assessments, recommending resources, watch time, etc.), and then using those points for rewards? Would product-based rewards make the learning experience more enjoyable?
(Prompt: *resources, access to extra courses*)
 18. If you could choose products to earn through gamification, what would they be?
(Prompt: *physical materials, event access, software licenses*)
 19. How would you feel about receiving badges on your platform profile (visible to other participants) after completing tasks? Would this system motivate you to complete more tasks?
(Prompt: *public recognition, peer competition*)
 20. What would you think about having a leaderboard on the platform to compare your score with other learners?
(Prompt: *motivation, competition, collaboration*)
 21. Would you find it useful to add recommended resources (books, articles, podcasts, etc.) or your own work to your platform profile? How would this improve your experience? (You'd also be able to view similar materials from your peers.)
(Prompt: *sharing, collaboration*)
 22. What kind of information do you think would be useful to see about other participants?
(Prompt: *professional background, areas of interest*)
-

Evaluation & Collaboration

23. What evaluation methods do you find suitable for a course?
(Prompt: *quizzes, written reports, group presentations*)
24. If you had access to individual consulting sessions with a mentor, how many hours would be enough to get feedback and clarify your questions during the course?

- Would 4 hours, spread throughout the course, be sufficient alongside regular course hours?
(Prompt: *time for clarification vs. project development*)
25. Would you be willing to share your project outcomes with course peers or the platform community after the course (e.g., 6 months to 1 year later)? This could involve publishing info about your project, its results, and progress. Why or why not?
(Prompt: *benefits, success stories*)
26. If the course were held in person as a bootcamp, would you be willing to pay more than for the online version? If yes, how much more?
(Prompt: *percentage, price range*)
27. What goals do you want to achieve through your marketing education? How do you think these goals will help you in the long run?
(Prompt: *professional development, personal growth*)
28. What are your main expectations when looking for marketing-related learning opportunities?
(Prompt: *career advancement, upskilling*)
29. What factors influence your decision to explore or choose an online learning platform?
(Prompt: *credibility, usability, costs*)
30. How would you evaluate your experience with using learning platforms or platforms offering online courses/resources in terms of usability (ease of understanding, learning, and using the product), engagement (ability to create enthusiasm and involvement), and effectiveness?
(Prompt: *ease of use, motivation, results*)
31. What features or functionalities do you find most useful on learning platforms or platforms offering online courses/resources?
(Prompt: *personalisation, feedback, accessible resources*)
32. What challenges have you encountered while using learning platforms? How do you think they could be improved?
(Prompt: *clarity, tech support, intuitive design*)
33. How important is learning personalisation for you? What expectations do you have in this regard?
(Prompt: *tailored to personal needs, individual progress*)
-

Interviewer:

Thank you for your time and valuable responses. This information will help us develop more effective and relevant learning platforms. If you have any other suggestions or questions, please share them with us.

After completing the interviews, we will follow up with the final results.



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Active participant in international collaborations and academic projects.