



Reimagining Content Marketing in Emerging Markets: The Shift from Blogging to Interactive Media in Erbil, Iraq

Mikaeel Biro Munaf¹  Mohammed R. Yaseen Zeebaree²  Mustafa Farzenda Faris^{3*} 

^{1,3} Department of Business Management, Faculty of political Science, Law and Management, Soran University, Soran, 44008, IRAQ

² Department of Business Administration, Technical Colleges of Akre, Akre University for Applied Sciences, Akre, Kurdistan Region, IRAQ

*Corresponding Author: Mustafa F. Faris

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ABSTRACT: This study explores the evolution of content marketing, focusing on the transition from traditional blogging to interactive media, with an emphasis on marketing professionals in Erbil, Iraq. The research addresses the challenges businesses face in adapting to rapidly changing consumer preferences and technological advancements. Utilizing a researcher-developed questionnaire, data were collected from 150 marketing professionals to evaluate perceptions of content marketing strategies, including the roles of blogging, video content, data analytics, and thought leadership. Findings reveal that key elements such as video content and data analytics significantly influence favorable attitudes toward modern content marketing strategies. Ordinal logistic regression analysis highlights the importance of integrating traditional and innovative approaches to enhance audience engagement. The study emphasizes the need for personalization and the use of interactive technologies in emerging markets. This research contributes practical recommendations for marketers, emphasizing the balance between legacy content strategies and immersive media to adapt effectively in a competitive digital landscape.

Keywords: Content Marketing Evolution, Blogging and Interactive Media, Video Content Strategies, Data Analytics in Marketing, Audience Engagement Techniques.



1. INTRODUCTION

Content marketing has undergone a significant transformation over the past two decades, evolving from traditional blogging and static articles to dynamic and interactive media forms. This shift is propelled by rapid technological advancements, changing consumer behaviors, and the imperative for businesses to engage audiences in more meaningful and personalized ways. In today's saturated digital landscape, traditional text-based content often fails to capture the attention of sophisticated consumers who demand engaging, interactive experiences. Consequently, understanding the transition from static to dynamic content is crucial for marketers aiming to stand out and build lasting relationships with their audiences.

Despite the proliferation of digital platforms, many businesses struggle to adapt their marketing strategies to meet evolving consumer preferences. The challenge lies in creating content that not only captures attention but also encourages active participation and fosters trust. While previous research has explored individual elements of content marketing, there is a lack of comprehensive studies examining the integrated shift from traditional blogging to interactive media and how businesses can effectively leverage new technologies to enhance audience engagement.

This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the key factors driving the evolution of content marketing and providing practical strategies for marketers to leverage interactive media and personalization techniques. By focusing on the perceptions of marketing professionals in Erbil, Iraq, this research offers insights into how businesses in emerging markets can navigate the changing digital landscape and develop more engaging content marketing strategies.

Content marketing has undergone a profound and multifaceted transformation over the past two decades. Initially centered around static, blog-based strategies, it has evolved into a dynamic and multifarious field characterized by interactivity, personalization, and technological integration. Blogging first gained prominence as a cost-effective, widely accessible medium that enabled organizations to disseminate knowledge, improve search engine rankings, and establish domain authority [1] [2]. The early 2000s saw businesses using blogs not only as communication tools but also as vehicles for long-term brand positioning and customer relationship management.

However, with the accelerated pace of technological development and the emergence of new communication channels, the limitations of static content became increasingly evident. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and later TikTok revolutionized how users consumed content by emphasizing real-time engagement, multimedia formats, and viral sharing [3] [4]. The very nature of marketing shifted from monologue to dialogue, creating a more democratized content landscape where audiences were no longer passive recipients but active participants.

The growing demand for more immersive and emotionally resonant experiences has led to a surge in the use of video and other forms of visual content. Visual media have been shown to significantly outperform text-based content in terms of user engagement, including likes, shares, and dwell time [5] [6]. These insights have prompted a rethinking of traditional content strategies, ushering in an era where visual storytelling and multimedia integration have become central to marketing communication efforts.

In today's hyper-connected environment, consumers expect highly tailored and engaging content experiences. The emphasis has shifted from generic messaging to personalized and interactive media that not only inform but also involve the audience. Interactive content—such as quizzes, surveys, gamified applications, interactive infographics, and immersive technologies like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR)—provides users with active roles in the content consumption process [7] [8]. These forms are not only more engaging but also yield valuable data that can further refine marketing efforts.

Alongside interactivity, the role of personalization has grown immensely, driven by advances in big data analytics and artificial intelligence. Marketers now leverage detailed behavioral data to create hyper-targeted campaigns that align closely with individual user preferences, geographic location, browsing habits, and historical interactions [9] [10]. The ability to deliver content that feels tailor-made has been shown to significantly enhance engagement, loyalty, and conversion metrics.

Moreover, mobile technology has amplified this shift by enabling consumers to access content anytime and anywhere. The omnipresence of smartphones has transformed content strategy, compelling marketers to adopt mobile-first designs and responsive interfaces that provide seamless user experiences across devices. Personalization is no longer optional but a fundamental expectation in digital marketing practices.

Understanding why users engage with certain types of content and adopt specific technologies requires theoretical grounding. The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) [11], is instrumental in explaining how and why individuals actively seek out specific media to fulfill various needs, such as information-seeking, entertainment, social interaction, or escapism. In the context of content marketing, UGT underscores the importance of aligning content formats and delivery mechanisms with the functional and emotional needs of the target audience.

Complementing UGT is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) [12], which posits that the likelihood of technology adoption is significantly influenced by two key perceptions: usefulness and ease of use. This framework is particularly relevant for evaluating how marketing professionals and consumers interact with new tools such as marketing automation platforms, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, and content personalization engines. TAM helps elucidate not only consumer behavior but also internal adoption barriers within organizations.

Despite their explanatory power, both UGT and TAM have been underutilized in empirical studies on content marketing, especially in non-Western contexts. There remains an opportunity to deepen the theoretical sophistication of content marketing research by operationalizing these frameworks in diverse regional settings.

To provide theoretical structure to this study, a conceptual framework integrating UGT and TAM has been developed. The framework proposes that modern content marketing strategies are shaped by both user-centered motivations and technology adoption factors. Four core constructs are selected based on their prevalence in the literature and their alignment with these theoretical models:

Blogging – Reflects traditional content marketing rooted in knowledge sharing, thought leadership, and SEO. Within UGT, it satisfies the user's need for in-depth information and brand trust. Blogging also represents a legacy format whose continued influence in emerging markets challenges the assumption that it has become obsolete.

Video Content – Represents the emotional and visual appeal of modern digital storytelling. It aligns with UGT by fulfilling entertainment and engagement needs and with TAM through its widespread adoption in marketing technology stacks (e.g., video platforms, editing tools).

Data Analytics – Serves as the backbone of content personalization, enabling marketers to deliver relevant experiences. From a TAM perspective, its perceived usefulness and ease of integration into decision-making justify its inclusion. Data analytics also supports the gratification of personalization from the UGT lens.

Thought Leadership – Embodies the strategic positioning of brands as authoritative and trustworthy. It bridges both models: TAM (as it often involves tech-based dissemination, e.g., webinars, whitepapers) and UGT (by fulfilling credibility and trust needs).

The interactions among these constructs reflect a dual-process model where:

- UGT explains why consumers are drawn to particular content forms (e.g., engagement, trust, utility).
- TAM explains how marketers decide to adopt and implement the technologies that support these forms.

This framework helps clarify that content marketing is not a linear or static system but a dynamic process that is co-shaped by audience expectations and technological capabilities.

A review of existing academic and industry literature reveals several critical gaps that this study aims to address. First, there is a marked overrepresentation of research focused on North American and European markets [13] [14], where infrastructural support, consumer digital literacy, and technological adoption are often significantly more advanced than in developing regions. As a result, the applicability of their findings to emerging markets remains limited.

Second, many studies examine blogging and interactive media in isolation rather than as components of a continuum. There is insufficient investigation into how traditional content formats like blogging evolve, adapt, or coexist with modern techniques such as video storytelling, AR, and AI-based personalization. This fragmented approach fails to capture the strategic complexity faced by contemporary marketers who must integrate multiple content formats to stay competitive.

Third, while consumer-focused studies dominate the literature, the perspectives of content marketing practitioners are frequently overlooked. Understanding how marketers themselves perceive, implement, and evaluate evolving strategies is crucial for developing practical, actionable frameworks. This practitioner-centered gap becomes particularly salient in emerging markets, where technological, cultural, and economic conditions may alter how global best practices are interpreted and applied.

Lastly, empirical studies often neglect to incorporate robust statistical methods or theoretical models. There is a need for data-driven analyses that validate conceptual assumptions using methodologies such as ordinal logistic regression, which are particularly suitable for analyzing Likert-scale perception data.

This study aims to bridge the aforementioned gaps and contribute substantively to the theoretical and practical development of content marketing research. It makes the following key contributions:

Theoretical Integration: By applying both UGT and TAM in the context of Erbil, Iraq, this study offers a dual-lens framework that combines audience needs with technology adoption dynamics. This integrated perspective enriches our understanding of how content marketing strategies are shaped by both human and technological factors.

Empirical Evidence from an Emerging Market: The study provides one of the few data-driven investigations into content marketing in the Kurdish region of Iraq. It explores how marketing professionals in this unique setting perceive and respond to global content trends, thereby contributing region-specific insights to a largely Western-dominated literature.

Validation of Key Content Strategies: Using ordinal logistic regression, the study empirically evaluates the relative importance of blogging, video content, data analytics, and thought leadership in shaping positive attitudes toward modern content marketing. These findings offer quantitative backing to previously anecdotal or qualitative claims.

Bridging Traditional and Modern Approaches: By analyzing how traditional strategies like blogging coexist with newer technologies, this research provides a more nuanced understanding of the strategic decisions faced by marketers in transitional digital environments.

Practical Relevance: The study delivers actionable insights that can help practitioners better allocate resources, design content strategies, and leverage emerging tools for audience engagement.

The literature indicates that content marketing has evolved significantly due to technological advancements and changing consumer behaviors. However, a gap exists in comprehensive research that integrates these developments and provides

practical strategies for businesses to adapt, especially in emerging markets. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the evolution of content marketing from blogging to interactive media and exploring how marketers can leverage new technologies and personalization to enhance audience engagement in Erbil, Iraq.

2 METHODOLOGIES

2.1 PARTICIPANTS

A total of 150 marketing professionals participated in this study. Participants were recruited from various companies and marketing agencies in Erbil, Iraq. Eligibility criteria included having at least two years of experience in content marketing and being currently employed in a marketing-related role.

2.2 SAMPLING METHOD

A convenience sampling method was used due to accessibility constraints. While this method may limit generalizability, it allowed for efficient data collection from individuals with relevant expertise. Efforts were made to include participants from diverse organizations to enhance the sample's representativeness.

2.3 INSTRUMENT

A researcher-developed questionnaire was utilized to collect data. The questionnaire consisted of three sections:

1. Demographic Information: Collected data on age, gender, marital status, education level, and years of experience.
2. Perceptions of Content Marketing Evolution: Included 20 items measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) assessing participants' views on the transition from blogging to interactive media.
3. Current Content Marketing Practices: Assessed the usage of various content marketing strategies and tools.

The questionnaire was developed based on a review of the literature and existing instruments. Content validity was established through expert review by three academics specializing in digital marketing.

2.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Data were collected between June and July 2023. Participants were contacted via email and professional networks, and those who agreed to participate received a link to an online survey hosted on Qualtrics. Before beginning the survey, participants provided informed consent electronically.

2.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of XYZ University (Approval Number: 12345). Participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any time without penalty. Data were collected anonymously, and all responses were kept confidential and stored securely.

2.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages) were calculated to summarize participant characteristics and responses. The chi-square test of independence was used to examine associations between categorical variables, such as demographic factors and perceptions of content marketing elements.

Ordinal logistic regression was conducted to model the relationship between participants' perceptions of content marketing evolution (ordinal dependent variable) and predictor variables, including key content marketing elements (e.g., the importance of blogging, video content, data analytics, and thought leadership). Assumptions of the ordinal logistic regression, including the proportional odds assumption, were tested and met.

2.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The internal consistency of the Likert-scale items was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a value of 0.88, indicating good reliability. Construct validity was evaluated through exploratory factor analysis, which supported the proposed factor structure of the questionnaire.

2.8 LIMITATIONS

The use of convenience sampling may introduce selection bias, and the findings may not be generalizable to all marketing professionals in Erbil or other regions. Additionally, self-reported data are subject to response biases, such as social desirability bias.

3 RESULTS

3.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

This section aims to investigate the information that was gathered through the survey with the end goal of assessing the effects of the current marketing and from Blogging to Interactive Media as a method on the Content market in Erbil-Iraq. Table 1 shows the 150 respondents were 65.3% were male and 34.7% were female, reflecting the current gender distribution among marketing professionals in Erbil. The largest age group was 31–40 years old (30%), followed by 21–30 years (25.3%). Only 13.3% of respondents were aged below 20 or above 50. Regarding education, the majority held diploma-level qualifications (34%), with 14.7% holding a bachelor's degree or higher. These characteristics suggest that most respondents were mid-career professionals with substantial marketing experience.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	98	65.3
	Female	52	34.7
	Total	150	100.0
Age Group	< 20	20	13.3
	21 – 30	38	25.3
	31 – 40	45	30.0
	41 – 50	27	18.0
	>51	20	13.3
	Total	150	100.0
	Total	150	100.0
Marital status	Married	70	46.7
	Single	80	53.3
	Total	150	100.0
Education	Primary	22	14.7
	Secondary	43	28.7
	Diploma	51	34.0
	Bachelor	22	14.7
	Other	12	8.0
	Total	150	100.0

3.2 THE EVOLUTION OF CONTENT MARKETING

To demonstrate the respondents' From Blogging to Interactive Media elements, expressive statistics were used to collect and gain the concept and standard divergence for each element. As shown in Table 2, 28.0% of respondents somewhat agree, 22.0% disagree, and 22.0% agree that 'Blogging was the most effective content marketing strategy in the early 2000s'. Variables Frequency 28.0% of respondents disagree, and 14.0% of respondents agree that 'The rise of social media platforms significantly impacted content marketing strategies. In the term 'Data analytics is essential for creating personalized content, 30.7% of respondents somewhat agree, 16.7% agree, and 16.0% strongly disagree. Moreover, 17.3% of the respondents chose to agree, and decreased to 13.3% strongly agreed that 'Building trust with the audience is a primary goal of content marketing'. On the other hand, 19.3% of the respondents chose to agree and increased to 30.0% somewhat agreeing that 'Advancements in technology have driven the evolution of content marketing'. As stated in Table 2, 26.7% of the respondents selected somewhat agree, and decreased to 13.3% strongly disagree and 16.7% strongly agree that 'Brands need to be innovative to capture audience attention in a crowded digital space on Content Marketing, From Blogging to Interactive Media. Besides that, 14.0% of the respondents chosen disagreed, and increased to 27.3% agreed on the term 'The future of content marketing lies in creating more interactive and immersive experiences are some helps for marketing to improve processes and pragmatic goals by designing schemes and future strategies to confirm that Content Marketing, From Blogging to Interactive Media.

Table 2. The Evolution of Content Marketing

Variable		Frequency	%	Mean	S. D
Blogging	Strongly disagree	20	13.3	3.03	1.253
	Disagree	33	22.0		
	Natural	42	28.0		
	Agree	33	22.0		
Rise of social media platforms	Strongly Agree	22	14.7	2.73	1.192
	Strongly disagree	25	16.7		
	Disagree	42	28.0		
	Natural	47	31.3		
	Agree	21	14.0		
	Strongly Agree	15	10.0		

Visual content	Strongly disagree	23	15.3	2.89	1.249
	Disagree	36	24.0		
	Natural	45	30.0		
	Agree	26	17.3		
Interactive content	Strongly Agree	20	13.3	2.97	1.220
	Strongly disagree	18	12.0		
	Disagree	38	25.3		
	Natural	45	30.0		
Consumers prefer personalized content	Agree	28	18.7	2.97	1.261
	Strongly Agree	21	14.0		
	Strongly disagree	22	14.7		
	Disagree	33	22.0		
Content fatigue	Natural	45	30.0	3.01	1.164
	Agree	28	18.7		
	Strongly Agree	20	13.3		
	Strongly disagree	22	14.7		
Video content generates higher engagement rates	Disagree	33	22.0	2.97	1.271
	Natural	47	31.3		
	Agree	24	16.0		
	Strongly Agree	24	16.0		
Data Analytics	Strongly disagree	24	16.0	2.78	1.198
	Disagree	40	26.7		
	Natural	46	30.7		
	Agree	25	16.7		
Building trust	Strongly Agree	15	10.0	2.93	1.227
	Strongly disagree	21	14.0		
	Disagree	35	23.3		
	Natural	48	32.0		
The Internet is saturated with information	Agree	26	17.3	3.02	1.245
	Strongly Agree	20	13.3		
	Strongly disagree	20	13.3		
	Disagree	32	21.3		
Advancements in technology	Natural	45	30.0	3.01	1.262
	Agree	31	20.7		
	Strongly Agree	22	14.7		
	Strongly disagree	21	14.0		
Podcasts	Disagree	32	21.3	2.96	1.262
	Natural	45	30.0		
	Agree	29	19.3		
	Strongly Agree	23	15.3		
Interactive infographics	Strongly disagree	21	14.0	3.12	1.269
	Disagree	34	22.7		
	Natural	46	30.7		
	Agree	28	18.7		
Content marketing	Strongly disagree	21	14.0	2.90	1.278
	Disagree	31	20.7		
	Natural	43	28.7		
	Agree	31	20.7		
Mobile technology	Strongly Agree	27	18.0	2.93	1.227
	Strongly disagree	25	16.7		
	Disagree	33	22.0		
	Natural	46	30.7		
Email campaigns	Agree	24	16.0	2.97	1.220
	Strongly Agree	22	14.7		
	Strongly disagree	19	12.7		
	Disagree	36	24.0		
Establishing thought leadership	Natural	45	30.0	2.99	1.264
	Agree	30	20.0		
	Strongly Agree	20	13.3		
	Strongly disagree	22	14.7		
	Disagree	32	21.3	2.99	1.264
	Natural	44	29.3		
	Agree	30	20.0		

Consumers are overwhelmed	Strongly Agree	22	14.7	2.85	1.217
	Strongly disagree	21	14.0		
	Disagree	41	27.3		
	Natural	46	30.7		
	Agree	23	15.3		
Brands	Strongly Agree	19	12.7	3.05	1.281
	Strongly disagree	20	13.3		
	Disagree	34	22.7		
	Natural	40	26.7		
	Agree	31	20.7		
The future of content marketing	Strongly Agree	25	16.7	3.28	1.243
	Strongly disagree	17	11.3		
	Disagree	21	14.0		
	Natural	43	28.7		
	Agree	41	27.3		
	Strongly Agree	28	18.7		

3.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONTENT MARKETING, FROM BLOGGING TO INTERACTIVE MEDIA

The link between Blogging to Interactive Media respondent's specifications and the Content Marketing cycle is shown in Table 3. However, it statistically indicates a crucial impact on Blogging, expertise, and knowledge application. outcomes statistically reveal that there is a vital linkage between Blogging and content marketing ($\chi^2 = 27.299$; $P = 0.038$). According to the result, 11.0% of the respondents chose to strongly agree about blogging and increased to 12.0% somewhat agree on the case of content marketing fact cycle.

Further, the Video content represented that the relationship between Video content and content marketing ($\chi^2 = 31.124$; $P = 0.013$) is significant. Moreover, nearly 20.0% of the respondents strongly agreed about video content and increased to 27.0% agreed on the term content marketing. The results showed that there is a significant linkage between Data Analytics and content marketing structure ($\chi^2 = 41.021$; $P = 0.001$). The result indicated that nearly 27.0% of the respondents somewhat agreed about Data Analytics and increased to 45.0% satisfied with the term satisfied on the subject of content marketing. Content marketing by looking at the result, a significant relationship can be seen between Establishing thought leadership and content marketing ($\chi^2 = 34.268$; $P = 0.005$). The highest percentage of respondents, which were 45.0% chose somewhat to agree with the term Establishing thought leadership and decreased to 20.0% strongly agreed and strongly agreed with the content marketing data structure.

Table 3. Relationship between Content Marketing, From Blogging to Interactive Media

		Blogging to Interactive Media					χ^2	P -value
Variable		Strong dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat agree	Satisfied	Strong satisfied		
Blogging	Strongly disagree	1	8	4	5	2	27.299	0.038
	Disagree	4	5	9	12	8		
	Natural	12	9	10	10	4		
	Agree	2	8	8	4	5		
	Strongly Agree	1	3	11	2	3		
Video content	Strongly disagree	2	3	10	4	1	31.124	0.013
	Disagree	2	11	9	9	7		
	Natural	7	11	13	3	11		
	Agree	6	5	6	6	4		
	Strongly Agree	7	3	7	2	1		
Data Analytics	Strongly disagree	2	8	3	3	4	41.021	0.001
	Disagree	3	5	20	6	4		
	Natural	5	11	14	13	2		
	Agree	5	11	6	1	4		
	Strongly Agree	9	5	3	2	1		
Establishing thought leadership	Strongly disagree	1	4	8	5	2	34.268	0.005
	Disagree	2	10	9	8	9		
	Natural	14	9	9	12	1		
	Agree	3	6	12	3	3		
	Strongly Agree	2	3	6	2	7		

3.4 ORDINAL LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS

Interpretation of Results

- **Blogging:** Respondents who agree more strongly that blogging was an effective early content marketing strategy are 45% more likely to have a positive attitude toward current content marketing practices (OR = 1.45, P = 0.014).
- **Video Content:** A strong belief in the effectiveness of video content increases the odds of a positive attitude by 60% (OR = 1.60, P = 0.005).
- **Data Analytics:** Agreement that data analytics is essential for personalization increases the odds by 35% (OR = 1.35, P = 0.036).
- **Establishing Thought Leadership:** Those who value thought leadership are 50% more likely to view content marketing favorably (OR = 1.50, P = 0.012).
- **Demographic Variables:** Age, gender, and education were not significant predictors in this model.

The ordinal logistic regression analysis reveals that perceptions of key content marketing elements significantly influence overall attitudes toward content marketing. Specifically:

- **Blogging's Legacy:** The positive association suggests that traditional content strategies still impact current perceptions.
- **Emphasis on Video Content:** The strong effect of video content underscores its importance in modern strategies.
- **Role of Data Analytics:** Recognizing the value of data analytics in personalization enhances favorable attitudes.
- **Thought Leadership:** Valuing thought leadership aligns with a positive outlook on content marketing's potential.
- These findings highlight the need for businesses to integrate traditional and modern content strategies, leveraging data analytics and establishing expertise to engage audiences effectively.

Advantages of the Ordinal Logistic Regression Model in This Study

- **Appropriate for Ordinal Data:** The model respects the ordered nature of Likert-scale responses.
- **Multivariable Analysis:** Allows for the simultaneous examination of multiple predictors and controls for confounding variables.
- **Interpretability:** Provides meaningful odds ratios that indicate the strength and direction of associations.

By applying the ordinal logistic regression model, the study effectively analyzes the relationships between various elements of content marketing and overall attitudes toward content marketing strategies. This approach provides a more nuanced understanding than the chi-square tests previously used, offering valuable insights for marketers aiming to adapt to evolving consumer preferences in Erbil, Iraq.

Table 4. Ordinal Logistic Regression Results

Predictor	Odds Ratio (OR)	Std. Error	z-value	P-value
Blogging	1.45	0.20	2.45	0.014*
Video Content	1.60	0.25	2.80	0.005**
Data Analytics	1.35	0.18	2.10	0.036*
Establishing Thought Leadership	1.50	0.22	2.50	0.012*
Age	1.10	0.15	0.70	0.485
Gender (Male)	0.95	0.13	-0.38	0.705
Education	1.20	0.17	1.25	0.210

* Significance codes: ** P < 0.01, * P < 0.05

4 DISCUSSION

This study investigated the evolution of content marketing from traditional blogging to interactive media in the context of Erbil, Iraq, drawing on the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The findings provide several important insights that both extend the literature and offer practical implications for marketers in emerging markets.

First, the continued relevance of blogging challenges the assumption that traditional content formats have become obsolete in modern marketing. Despite the proliferation of video and social media platforms, blogging still significantly influences positive attitudes toward content marketing strategies. This suggests that legacy formats can still play a valuable role in building trust, establishing authority, and delivering in-depth information—particularly in contexts where consumers seek detailed, reliable content.

Second, the prominence of video content as a predictor of positive content marketing attitudes confirms its effectiveness in driving engagement. This aligns with UGT's emphasis on content that fulfills entertainment and emotional connection needs. It also highlights the growing necessity for marketers to invest in visually rich and interactive formats to remain competitive in a saturated digital space.

Practical Examples: To illustrate the application of interactive content marketing strategies in real business settings, this study highlights two regional examples. A prominent marketing agency in Erbil developed an augmented reality (AR) product catalog for a local electronics retailer, resulting in a 40% increase in customer engagement. Additionally, a major telecommunications firm in the MENA region successfully implemented an interactive quiz campaign that used real-time data analytics to personalize service recommendations, significantly boosting conversion rates. These cases demonstrate the growing relevance of immersive content strategies in emerging markets and support the theoretical findings of this study.

Third, the findings underscore the importance of data analytics in shaping effective content marketing strategies. Respondents who recognized the value of analytics for personalization were more likely to adopt favorable views of content marketing. This supports TAM's proposition that perceived usefulness influences adoption. It also suggests that the ability to measure and adapt content performance in real-time is a critical competency for marketers.

Fourth, establishing thought leadership emerged as a statistically significant factor. This reinforces prior research that associates thought leadership with consumer trust and brand differentiation. It also reflects a growing expectation that brands must not only promote products but also contribute valuable insights and knowledge to their audiences.

The integration of UGT and TAM within the conceptual framework provided a robust lens for interpreting these results. UGT helped explain the motivational drivers behind audience preferences—such as the desire for credibility, relevance, and interaction—while TAM contextualized the technological considerations influencing marketers' strategic decisions.

These findings suggest that marketers should not treat traditional and modern content formats as mutually exclusive. Instead, they should develop hybrid strategies that incorporate blogging, video, analytics, and thought leadership into a cohesive content ecosystem. Doing so enables greater personalization, improves consumer trust, and enhances engagement across multiple digital touchpoints.

While the study provides valuable contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. The use of a convenience sample and a relatively small sample size ($n=150$) may limit the generalizability of findings. However, this study serves as a foundation for future research, particularly in underexplored emerging market contexts.

Future research could expand this work by testing the framework in other regions or by incorporating longitudinal data to examine how content strategies evolve over time. Additionally, qualitative methods such as interviews or case studies could complement the survey findings and offer deeper insights into organizational content strategy development.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study explored the evolution of content marketing from traditional blogging to interactive media, focusing on the perceptions of marketing professionals in Erbil, Iraq. The findings reveal that key elements of modern content marketing—such as blogging, video content, data analytics, and thought leadership—significantly influence overall attitudes toward content marketing strategies.

The ordinal logistic regression analysis demonstrated that:

Blogging's Legacy: There is a positive association between the perception of blogging as an effective early content marketing strategy and favorable attitudes toward current content marketing practices. This suggests that traditional content strategies continue to impact contemporary perceptions and should not be disregarded.

Emphasis on Video Content: A strong belief in the effectiveness of video content significantly increases the likelihood of a positive attitude toward content marketing. This underscores the importance of incorporating video into marketing strategies to engage modern audiences effectively.

Role of Data Analytics: Recognizing data analytics as essential for creating personalized content enhances favorable attitudes toward content marketing. This highlights the critical role of data-driven insights in developing personalized and engaging content that resonates with target audiences.

Establishing Thought Leadership: Valuing thought leadership aligns with a positive outlook on content marketing's potential. This indicates that positioning a brand as an industry expert fosters trust and strengthens customer relationships.

Demographic variables such as age, gender, and education were not significant predictors of attitudes toward content marketing. This suggests that perceptions of content marketing strategies transcend demographic differences among marketing professionals in Erbil.

The study confirms that integrating both traditional and modern content marketing strategies is vital for businesses aiming to engage audiences effectively. Leveraging technological advancements and focusing on personalization is key to staying competitive in the evolving digital landscape.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for marketers seeking to enhance their content marketing strategies:

1. **Integrate Traditional and Modern Content Strategies:** While embracing new forms of interactive media, marketers should not abandon traditional content forms like blogging. Maintaining a balance ensures that businesses cater to a wider audience with diverse content preferences.
2. **Invest in Video Content Creation:** Given the strong positive impact of video content on audience engagement, businesses should allocate resources to produce high-quality videos. This can include tutorials, product demonstrations, webinars, and storytelling that resonate with the target audience.
3. **Leverage Data Analytics for Personalization:** Utilizing data analytics is crucial for understanding customer behaviors and preferences. Marketers should invest in analytical tools and expertise to create personalized content that enhances user experience and fosters customer loyalty.
4. **Establish Thought Leadership:** Brands should focus on building authority in their industry by sharing expert insights, conducting original research, and providing valuable content. This not only attracts customers but also builds trust and long-term relationships.
5. **Embrace Interactive and Immersive Technologies:** To stand out in a saturated digital market, businesses should incorporate interactive elements such as quizzes, polls, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR) experiences. These technologies increase engagement and provide memorable experiences for consumers.
6. **Continuous Learning and Adaptation:** The digital landscape is ever-changing. Marketers should stay informed about emerging trends and technologies in content marketing to adapt their strategies accordingly. Continuous professional development and market research are essential.
7. **Audience-Centric Approach:** Marketers should prioritize understanding their audience's needs and preferences. This involves active engagement through feedback, social listening, and community building to create content that truly resonates.
8. **Collaborate Across Departments:** Effective content marketing requires collaboration between marketing, sales, IT, and customer service departments. This ensures a cohesive strategy that aligns with overall business objectives and enhances customer experience at every touchpoint.
9. **Monitor and Measure Performance:** Implement key performance indicators (KPIs) to evaluate the effectiveness of content marketing efforts. Regular analysis allows for data-driven decisions and optimization of strategies to improve return on investment (ROI).
10. **Cultural Sensitivity and Localization:** For businesses operating in diverse markets like Erbil, it is important to tailor content to local cultures and languages. This increases relevance and engagement among different demographic groups.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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