

Self-Publishing, Vanity Publishing & Indie Publishing: A shortcut to fame or a dangerous game?

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ABSTRACT

In November 2022, a Twitter account reported fraud committed by an owner of a well-known vanity publisher. The post that was retweeted thousand times revealed that many authors experience the same thing. Based on that case, this study analyzed reasons that drive authors to self-publish or use the vanity and indie publishing service. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with five authors acting as informants to answer the research question. The researcher presents the interview's results in three categories: the romanticism of publishing printed books, idealism in writing, and the prestige of indie publishing. The researcher analyzes the data using Michael Foucault's thoughts in his essay *What is an author?* This study found that although the informants used alternative publishing because conventional publishers did not accept their works, they had different reasons for using alternative publishing. The informants agreed that alternative publishing offers flexibility that enables them to maintain their idealism. However, the informants had different opinions on the classic conflict between idealism and income. The informants do not consider indie publishing more prestigious than conventional publishers or vice versa. However, they have their considerations when choosing a type of publisher. The interviews also showed that a supporting community, a valuable network, and pieces of information are necessary before using alternative publishing.

Keywords: authors, indie, publishing, vanity

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INTRODUCTION

On November 8, 2022, the Twitter account @ngeneaewes_ posted a thread about fraud by an indie publisher Indie Book Corner (IBC), and its owner, Irwan Bajang. The post was retweeted more than 4000 times and went viral. Many people later claimed to have been victims of the same publisher and its owner. It was surprising considering that IBC is a well-known publisher and its owner is one of the literacy activists in Indonesia. On the next day, Irwan Bajang clarified on his Twitter account that his company went through an internal problem that caused the publishing delay. On November 10, 2022, the account owner @ngeneaewes_ reported that IBC had returned his money. However, the other victims will still bring this case to court.

The case shows high public interest in publishing books. But since publishing books in big publishers such as Gramedia and Mizan are not easy, new-coming authors choose to self-publish their works or use the service of vanity and indie publishing. The researcher will briefly explain the difference since the definitions of those three publishing alternatives often overlap.

When self-publishing, an author writes, edits, layouts, designs, promotes, and sells his book. The only third-party involved in this process is the printing company. For simple books like zines, authors can print and bind them independently. Authors open pre-orders before printing to avoid the need for initial investment. Self-publishing books usually do not have an ISBN (International Standard Book Number). Most of the self-published authors do not consider ISBN important. However, those who want ISBNs for their books may have them processed by a third party. Vanity Publishing offers editing, layout, and cover design services. The author only needs to submit their manuscript and pay some money. The amount of money depends on the number of pages and books. Indie publishing is similar to conventional publishing. It only differs in the size of the company. Since indie publishers are usually more idealistic and not profit-oriented, they publish books with specific themes in fewer copies (Solihin 2018). Some indie publishers have their books printed somewhere because they do not have printing machines (Anggraini, 2020). Some indie publishers also sell their books in mainstream bookstores to help the sales (Ningsih, 2019).

Technology plays a significant role in the birth of cyber literature (Mawardi 2018; Kurniawan & Merawati 2017) and online writing platforms such as Wattpad (Bakar et al. 2020; Mawardi 2018; Lifiani & Krismayani 2019) and its use in the educational field (Hutami & Alfisuma, 2022). With the birth of print-on-demand schemes that make publishing easier, alternative publishing in Indonesia has grown rapidly in the last five years. Previous studies in Indonesia about alternative publishing tended to show the good sides of it. Studies showed that indie publishers act as a resistance against big publishers and mainstream books (Solihin 2018). By holding

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writing competitions, indie publishers actively increased public interest in literature (Ningsih, 2019; Pratiwi & Pritanova, 2018). Besides, indie publishing offered employment (Santoso & Kasuma, 2020), protected local wisdom (Aritenang & Ratna Dewi, 2022), and provided opportunities for young writers to voice their ideas by making publishing easier (Bakar et al., 2020). In 2017, Latifah analyzed the process of publishing books in IBC and how this publisher helped aspiring writers publish their books. The researcher only found one study reporting several indie publishers that gave up their idealism to accommodate the market demand (Waluyo 2020).

Meanwhile, research studies conducted abroad indicate that self-publishing aided by technology and digital structure has created a rupture in the publishing sector (Cordón-García & Muñoz-Rico, 2022). The phenomenon is still growing, but 'not yet taken advantage of all the potential that technological advances could provide'. Klimczak also (2020) states that the term vanity publishing has experienced pejoration and that writers are more likely to become victims of fraud when using vanity publishing; because they have to pay some initial investment.

The research on alternative publishing in Indonesia and abroad indeed shows different findings, but none of them explains the difference between alternative publishing and conventional publishing and why authors chose alternative publishing. Using Foucault's thoughts to analyze the data gained from interviews, this paper aims to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of using conventional publishing services versus alternative publishing services from the authors' point of view. The result of this study can provide new knowledge about self-publishing, vanity publishing, and indie publishing and help aspiring authors.

METHOD

Creswell (in Sugiarti et al, 2020: 19) mentioned the characteristics of qualitative research as focusing on the participant's perspective and framing of human behavior, its beliefs, and the underlying context. Since this research data is obtained from interviews (participant's perspective) and discussing human behavior (writing and publishing), the researcher believes that a qualitative approach is the best approach to answer the research questions.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to obtain data. This type of interview keeps the questions in line with the research objectives but enables the interviewee to answer freely. In addition, the design of the questions will ensure that the researcher gets the same type of data from each informant. Interviews aim to find the informants' motives and experiences when using alternative publishing and their views on authorship. To obtain diverse data, this study invited informants with varied ages, genders, genres of writing, and experiences. The following is the detail of the informants:

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Table 1:
Participant

Name	Genre	Age	Gender	Other Occupation	Publishing Experience
Kincirmainan (pen name)	Adult romance	42	Female	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vanity publishing user • Big publisher's author • Online platform author • Vanity publishing user
Langit Renjani (pen name)	Young Adult	43	Female	Freelance consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-published author • Indie publisher's author
Yusril Ihza F.A	Plays	23	Male	Graduate student, actor, director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-published author • Indie publisher's author
Setyaningsih	Essay	32	Female	Freelance editor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-published author • Indie publisher's author • Indie publisher's owner
Noor H. Dee (pen name)	Children Literature	40	Male	In-house Editor a Noura Publishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-published author • Indie publisher's author • Indie publisher's owner

Note: All the informants have given their consent to be mentioned in this paper.

The researchers processed the data in three stages. First, identifying aspects that are relevant to the research question. In this stage, the researchers designed the interview questions to enable the informants to share their reasons to choose certain publishers and their experience when using different kinds of publishers. Second, categorizing the data into three groups: the romanticism of publishing printed books, the idealism of creating, and the prestige of indie publishing. In this stage, the researchers read the interview transcript and separate the participants' answers into the categories mentioned above. Third, analyzing and discussing selected data based on Foucault's view of the author in *What is an Author?* After compiling the participants' answers in each category, the researchers analyze them with Foucault's thoughts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Who is entitled to be considered authors? Do people who write shopping lists or a posting on Twitter have the right to be called an author? Can someone who writes a diary—that no one ever reads—be called an author? Can someone whose blog is read by thousands of people be called an author?

Discussing authorship means discussing the two most influential essays by the end of 1960, Roland Barthes' *The Death of the Author* and Michael Foucault's *What is an Author?* Barthes questions how literary criticism tends to connect writing with its author. According to Barthes, analyzing a text only from its author will limit its meaning because a text is not purely the author's thoughts—a text is a mixture of quotes from all the works the author has read.

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We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a **tissue of quotations** drawn from the **innumerable centers of culture** (Barthes, 2016: 143)

Note: the researcher put important parts in bold

Barthes argued that the readers can only properly interpret a literary work when the presence of the author fades.

In contrast to Barthes, Foucault believed that authors play a significant role in literature and thus cannot be separated from their works.

It has been understood that the task of criticism is not to reestablish the ties between an author and his work or to reconstitute an author's thought and experience through his works and, further, that criticism should concern itself with the structures of a work, its architectonic forms, which are studied for their intrinsic and internal relationships. Yet, what of a context that questions the concept of a work? What, in short, is the strange unit designated by the term, work? **What is necessary to its composition, if a work is not something written by a person called an 'author'?** (Foucault, 1969: 301)

Note: the researcher put important parts in bold

The informants give different answers when asked to define the word, *author*. Noor H. Dee described an author as someone who writes, while a professional author is a person who has an income from writing. According to Langit Renjani, an author is a person who engraves stories that last through time. Kincirmainan called an author an artist. She explained that an author could not live without writing; an author will keep creating literary work whether people like it. Meanwhile, Yuzril stated:

An author has a big responsibility to himself and his readers. Books shape how people think. The things that construct people's way of thinking become our culture today. Like it or not, a person's thoughts can shape culture and traditions. And when other people consider it attractive, they will continuously consume it. In other words, an author shaped our culture and tradition by resisting or strengthening the existing values.

Yuzril's opinion is consistent with Andrew Bennett's opinion in his book *The Author*:

The author can **influence** others and is often thought of as having **authority** over matters of opinion, as being one to be **trusted** even obeyed (Bennett, 2005: 7)

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Note: the researcher put important parts in bold

Meanwhile, Setyaningsih shared her thought on the increasing interest among young people to become an author:

People might want to be an author for the sake of popularity, though perhaps they also want to express creativity or voice their concerns ... people think writing is easy, but it is not. The younger generation tends to only read books that interest them ... I don't think everyone can be an author. People might need to create a piece of writing using their style, but being a professional author is another different thing.

Based on Foucault and Bennett's theory, there is a significant difference between the terms *writer* and *author*. Bennett once again formulated the difference during an interview with Nicola Watson:

I think that it is useful to think about the **writer** as somebody who does something – who **writes** – and by contrast, the **author** who is also someone who, on the whole, **writes**, the author **has** a certain **ideological privilege**, a **status**, which is afforded the author and not necessarily afforded the writer.

Note: the researcher put important parts in bold

1. The romanticism of printed books

Setyaningsih argued that a person does not have to write a book to be considered an author. She believed that someone is entitled to be an author when s/he writes any piece. Setyaningsih's opinion is interesting. The fact shows that online platform authors with highly viewed stories still want to publish their stories. According to Kincirmainan, many vanity publishings target authors on online platforms such as Wattpad. Some of those publishings intend to facilitate new authors, but some have planned a scam since the beginning. Kincirmainan said that the Twitter posting about fraud did not surprise her. The "Everyone can publish a book" slogan seems promising to impatient novice authors with little knowledge about the publishing world.

Further, Kincirmainan explained that even big publishers seek popular stories on online platforms to be published. But those publishers will edit the chosen stories to keep their standard and quality. Kincirmainan said that her popular writings on the online platform still have good sales when published by major publishers. Langit Renjani argued that, despite the quality, online platform authors can self-publish their writings and sell the book for Rp200.000.00. If those authors have many followers, they can sell their books in minutes. This phenomenon proves that printed books survived the rise of cyber literature (Mawardi, 2018).

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Despite the risk of losing their initial investment, many people are still interested in using vanity publishing. Langit Renjani first used vanity publishing when printing her anthology book with 82 other authors from a writing community RAWS. The authors agreed to publish a book as a keepsake. Langit Renjani learned a lot about vanity publishing from that experience. She then concluded that publishing books are easy when you have money. According to Langit Renjani, the cost of vanity publishing ranges between IDR 300,000.00 to IDR 1,500,000.00

Yusril shared a different reason when printing his book. Yusril thinks that it would be ideal that, as an actor, he also writes his script. His play scripts had a warm reception from the audience and even won some nominee awards. But Yusril wants his writing to be read and played by more people. That was why he needed to print his scripts. Yusril realized that most indie and mainstream publishers are not interested in publishing a play script. Then, Yusril published his play script on an indie publisher owned by his writing mentor and a reputable author.

Setyaningsih had a similar experience with Yusril. Setyaningsih realized that mainstream publishers only publish essays from public figures. Therefore, she decided not to waste her time by trying to submit her essay compilation to mainstream publishers. She had it printed by a printing company recommended by her writing community. Then, she published her second essay compilation with her indie publisher.

Setyaningsih, Yusril, and Langit Renjani admit that, as authors, they wish to publish their writing. On the other hand, they understand that publishers are generally profit-oriented. Publishers decide what manuscript to publish based on its genre and its author. Based on that knowledge, they consciously decided to use the service of alternative publishing. Unfortunately, alternative options to publish may lead to misinformation. According to Noor H. Dee, most would-be authors associate publishing with an initial investment. They do not know they can publish works freely by submitting them to conventional publishers.

Foucault argued that an author's name does not only function as a reference to refer to a person with specific traits. For example, Dee, one of the members of the trio Rida Sita Dewi, is tall and has long hair. An author's name also refers to his writing. Therefore, people will associate Dee with *the Supernova* series and *Filosofi Kopi* (Foucault, 1969).

Novice authors may consider the attempt to get published by a big publisher as a road with no end. After waiting for months, there is a possibility that an author only receives a rejection letter. Repeating the same process with other publishers means waiting in uncertainties. Therefore, novice writers who never won a prestigious writing competition or had supporting networks might see vanity publishing as an assuring shortcut.

2. Idealism versus Income

Kincirmainan self-published her first novel, *Senna* because the story had an LGBT theme. Kincirmainan understood that no publishers would want to publish a book with such a sensitive theme. She had tried to offer her manuscript to an indie publisher, but they refused to publish it. With the help of a friend to edit and a cover designer, Kincirmainan published *Senna* with a print-on-demand system. The story, which was freely displayed on Wattpad for a year, had good views. In total, she managed to sell 1500 copies of this title.

Kincirmainan said authors need alternative publishing since their works are not always in line with the market demand. For an author with solid fans like Kincirmainan, self-publishing is a profitable option because, in self-publishing, all the profit belongs to the author-which can be four times bigger than the 10-15% royalty offered by a traditional publisher.

Kincirmainan argued that idealism is in accordance with income. She said that she does not always write for money. Hence, she does not always publish her highly-viewed stories. According to her, writing needs energy. Re-writing to publish an online novel means having to spend more energy.

Setyaningsih shared a different story. She printed and bound her first essay compilation and sold it for Rp10.000,00 per copy. She even gave away some copies for free. She did the publishing with the writing community she used to be part of. Years later, she founded an indie publisher, *Penerbit Babon*, and self-published her second essay compilation. Though her close friends did the editing and illustrating, Setyaningsih tried to be professional by paying them properly. Setyaningsih was grateful that the sales of her second essay compilation managed to cover the production cost.

Setyaningsih claimed that the chance to express ideas is the most important thing for her. Writing gives her satisfaction because she feels like she has done something that she has to do. She would feel better if her readers feel connected with her writing. However, Setyaningsih confessed that she started to think about publishing as a business for the sake of her company's viability.

As Virginia Wolf said, 'One cannot think well, love well, sleep well if one has not dined well.'

Besides publishing her anthology book, Langit Renjani also had experience with vanity publishers through a writing competition scheme. The competition organizer publisher her short story and other winning stories into a book. As a winner, Langit Renjani also got some merchandise and a publishing discount voucher. Still, she felt disappointed for "being used" by the publisher to run their printing machines. Langit Renjani confessed that in the future, she would try a writing competition with money as a prize for the winner. According to her,

the amount of the money is more valuable and “transparent” than a publishing discount voucher.

Money and idealism will always be conflicting. How can an author survive without money?

Langit Renjani shared about her acquaintance who uses her income from writing for an international online platform to publish her idealistic writing. Langit Renjani said the decision is a win-win solution she might do in the future.

As an author, an indie publisher owner, and an in-house editor in a big publisher, Noor H. Dee has the advantage of learning about the publishing world from different points of view. According to him, self-publishing enables an author to express his ideas freely. Through self-publishing, an author can publish whatever they want. Authors can also write the book that people need, though it may not necessarily be the book that meets the market demand. But on the other hand, Noor H. Dee said that rejections from traditional publishers help authors to measure their writing quality and build resilience.

Different from Langit Renjani’s opinion, the experience taught Noor H. Dee that idealism and money are not always in disagreement. They can synergize and bring out an excellent outcome. After mastering basic writing techniques, he argued that an author needs to know details about publishing and the procedures of publishing a book. With the same knowledge, he published his poetry book, *Jus Puisi*, by his own publisher, Minima.

Noor H. Dee admitted that he doesn’t earn much money as an indie author. But the branding he has been doing consistently and his patience to keep writing give him a chance to be a speaker or a judge in a writing competition. In the end, his track record as an author brings him income.

Yusril has a similar experience with Noor H. Dee. He often felt desperate financially and pitied himself for choosing authorship as a profession. But he believes that being an author is a learning and maturing process. He knows that his knowledge can be useful to the readers. Like Noor H. Dee, Yusril gets chances to be a speaker and lecturer from his writing portfolio.

I’d better move underground or independently than sweet-talk some people to win a literary award. If so, how does it differ from a lucky draw? I will let my writing speak for itself. I would be honored to have one person read my book and put it on a shelf or the best spot in his house than having my book mass printed but end up in thrift stores. A literary work is invaluable. We can not measure it with some amount of money. Thus, I want like to write without burdens. What matters the most is giving my best when I write. I have to finish what I have started.

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The researchers will use Foucault's theories to analyze the authors' idealism. He argued that the function of an author is built rather than automatically formed. Saint Jerome in Foucault mentioned four criteria related to the authors' role as follows:

1. The author is defined as a standard level of quality

Dee said in one of her writing classes, "In the end, if we strip down all good stories, we will only find strong structures." A good author is not merely a talented author. A good author continually hones his writing techniques and works hard to achieve a certain quality. In the end, that's what makes an author a great author.

2. The author is defined as a certain field of conceptual or theoretical coherence

An author has a specific aim when writing. Either voicing gender injustice, criticizing the hypocrisy of an organization, or sharing a peaceful message. Some authors repeatedly adopt similar themes despite the difference in their writing genres. For example, Dee consistently writes about spiritualism and a self-finding journey to find oneself.

3. The author is seen as a stylistic uniformity

Authors have their own styles and voices. The more unique their style, the more recognizable their work is.

4. The author is thus a definite historical figure in which a series of events converge

From all the criteria above, the second and third points represent the idealism of an author. For some authors, compromising idealism can be considered as changing their identity. Despite their different experiences, the five informants admit that idealism is essential to them. Instead of sacrificing their value, they tried to find a way to maintain idealism and still earn some money.

3. A prestigious club or the outcast?

When asked to explain the difference between self-publishing and publishing at a major publisher, Kincirmainan explained that self-publishing requires authors to deal with tiny details. Even though she always uses a print-on-demand scheme whenever self-publishing to avoid initial investment, she still has to pay for the editor, lay-outer, and designer. Moreover, any errors in the self-published book are at the author's risk. Reckless writing will surely arouse harsh criticism.

However, Kincirmainan said she does not favor any publishing over others. She still self-publishes her work, publishes on a writing platform, and publishes at big publishers. As an author, she would like to have her works judged by diverse readers, not only by those who love them. Major

publishers with a broad distribution coverage can easily accommodate that wish.

Setyaningsih claimed that she founded her own publishing because she wanted to create a publisher that specializes in publishing essays. Thus, Penerbit Babon not only publishes Setyaningsih's works but also the works of other authors through a selection process.

Alternative publishing not only gives a chance for novice authors but also provides a space for them to meet their readers- considering they are unknown to the public.

Setyaningsih thinks that indie publishers are fearless. Apart from that, she does not think indie publishers are better than big publishers, and vice versa. She also had a similar opinion about indie authors. Some indie authors amazed her, while others annoyed her. According to Setyaningsih, nowadays, writing festivals such as the Ubud Writer Festival provides space for both mainstream and indie authors. Though she already had her publisher, Setyaningsih admits that he still wants to publish at Marjin Kiri because it is a publisher with outstanding character and style.

Yusril admitted that he used to yearn to have his work published by a major publisher. But since he sensed an unhealthy atmosphere in the Indonesian literature environment, he chose to self-publish. Then, Yusril shared the experiences of his poet friends who rejected the offer to publish at big publishers despite their renowned status. These poets deliberately use their popularity to support indie publishers. Yusril hopes publishers can support and respect each other and not treat literature as merely business.

Noor H. Dee said he does not see big and indie publishers differently. He judges writing from its quality, not on the publisher. However, he added, it would be ideal if indie publishers had distinct characters that differ them from mainstream publishers.

Independent means free from the market demand that controls the industry. It would be great if indie publishers can publish specific and unique such as French children's literature

Based on the observations and experiences of her close friends, Langit Renjani learned that the fan base greatly affects sales. Sales options are also important. For example, a writing mentor or a speaker can boost their sales when holding a workshop. In short, Langit Renjani claimed that she will only try to publish her work in big publishers when she has a big fan base and reliable sales options.

Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of the Field of Cultural Production aims to understand the process of forming a social structure. In the social space or arena, the agents constantly compete. They either try to reach a dominant position or maintain existing power relations. Writers, editors, lecturers, critics, and publishers compete in the arena of art and literature (Karnanta,

2013). In this study, researchers will focus on the publishers as agents. Conventional publishers, indie publishers, and vanity publishers fight to dominate the literature arena and become the most seek agent to publish literary works.

Bourdieu (1993) argued:

The literary or artistic field is at all times the site of a struggle between two principles of hierarchization: the heteronomous principle, favourable to those who dominate the field economically and politically (e.g. ‘bourgeois art’), and the autonomous principle (e.g. ‘art for art’s sake), which those of it advocates who are least endowed with specific capital tend to identify with a degree of independence from the economy, seeing temporal failure as a sign of election and success as a sign of compromise (p. 40)

Note: the researchers put important parts in bold

The analysis of the interview result using Bourdieu's theory shows that conventional publishers, especially mainstream book publishers, still dominate the literary arena in Indonesia. However, alternative publications continue to try to seize the dominating position.

The following is the summary of the informants' opinions:

Table 2:
Informants' Opinions

	<u>Kincirmainan</u>	<u>Langit Renjani</u>	<u>Yusril Ihza</u>	<u>Setvaningsih</u>	<u>Noor H. Dee</u>
The definition of an author	An artist. He cannot live without writing. Writing is not merely a profession, but a calling	A person who engraves stories that last through time.	A profession with a big responsibility, since an author, constructs people's way of thinking and thus shapes culture and traditions.	A person who writes and informs something in a written form	An author is a person who writes, but a professional author is a person who gains income from writing
The type of publishing used for the first time	Self-publishing	Vanity Publishing	Vanity Publishing	Self-publishing	Conventional publisher
The genre of first published work	Adult romance	Anthology	Plays	Essays	Anthology
The reason for choosing that type of publishing	Because of the sensitive issue in the writing	Because it is the cheapest option to publish a book as a keepsake	Because conventional publishers reject his manuscripts.	Because big publishers only publish essays written by public figures	Because being a member of the writing community who also owns a publishing company
Idealism or income?	Idealism	Both	Idealism	Idealism	Both
Conventional publishing or alternative publishing?	Both. Conventional publishers provide facilities while alternative publishers provide the freedom to express	Would like to try conventional publishing once having a strong fan base	Alternative publishing	Both. There are some indie publishers with good characters and conventional publishers with idealism	Both. Conventional publishers provide facilities while alternative publishers provide freedom the to express

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CONCLUSION

Alternative publishing offers benefits and inflicts risks that are different from conventional publishing. Not every self-published writers experience fraud, and at the same time, alternative publishing does not always guarantee success. There are other factors that affect the result of using alternative publishing. The results and discussion of this paper show that many novice writers have little knowledge about publishing. People think that one needs money to have his writing published. Everybody can be a writer, but not everybody can be a professional author. Writing needs creativity and techniques, but earning money as a professional author requires a good knowledge of the publishing business. Authors can gain this information by researching or joining a writing community (Fedyanto & Mandarani, 2021). Literary communities provide networks and support for their members (Nilofar, 2020). Even some writing communities turn themselves into indie publishers to publish their members' works (Santoso & Kasuma, 2020). Knowing the character of each publisher and the rules in the publishing world may help an author avoid scams.

Authors naturally want to publish their works because a printed book proves one's ability. Most of the time, novice authors have to compromise when publishing for the first time. The result of the interviews showed that printed books still exist amidst the rise of cyber literature. The followers on the writing platform, the fan base, and branding on social media can boost book sales. Pieces of information and careful analysis can help an author gain benefit from writing, so he does not need to choose between idealism and money.

Publishing companies aim to help authors publish their books. Without authors, publishers will not exist. Therefore, authors have bargaining power and freedom to choose. Indie publishers are not better than big publishers, and vice versa. Alternative publishing is different from conventional publishing. Each has advantages and disadvantages. Self-publishing does not always guarantee profits, while on the other hand, big publishers do not always promise popularity and vast distribution. Some indie publishers eventually surrender to market demand (Waluyo, 2020), and some big publishers still keep their idealism.

Since this article only analyzes the difference between conventional and alternative publishing and the author's consideration when choosing to use their service, the reader's responses towards books published independently and books published by big publishers should be analyzed separately in the future.

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