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HOW DO COMPANIES RESPOND TO CONSUMER ADVOCACY BEHAVIOR IN THEIR DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES?

Abstract

This study aims to confirm whether the series of marketing strategies designed by companies have followed the consumer process in product consumption with reference to the stages of the 5As: aware, appeal, ask, act, and advocate. Companies respond to these stages by implementing five market interventions: consumer affinitive direction, touch power strengthening, market preference enhancement, loyalty retain quality, and e-advocacy leverage capacity. An empirical analysis using AMOS was carried out on 352 online-based culinary business operators in Indonesia, a field that has experienced massive expansion during the Covid-19 pandemic. From the results of this analysis, it can be concluded that although the market interventions do not follow the exact same process as the 5A concept, in general, the stages followed by companies in online product marketing are compatible and parallel to those in the consumer process of product consumption. The various concepts of digital marketing strategies contribute conceptually to enhance the scope of e-advocacy theory from the perspective of strategic marketing, a field that has received limited research attention.

Keywords

5As stages, corporate response, e-advocacy, culinary businesses, Covid-19

JEL Classification

M31, L66

INTRODUCTION

Every market phenomenon involving two parties can be viewed from each side's perspective. Relationships between suppliers and factories, wholesalers and retailers, and shops and consumers can be viewed in terms of behavior, both from the left side or the seller, and the right side or the buyer (Bobot, 2011; Cai & Yang, 2008; Setiawan & Ferdinand, 2021; Wagner et al., 2011). Trust in a product motivates a consumer to purchase it, and it can improve the reputation of a company or brand (Castro et al., 2006; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002). The service quality that a consumer considers when selecting a service is responded to by a company committed to providing excellent service (Rita et al., 2019; Setiawan & Hanfan, 2017). Sellers endeavor to enhance their self-image by improving their reputation, while buyers respond to the improved reputation by increasing their trust in sellers. Likewise, sellers frequently discuss their commitment to improving service quality, while buyers emphasize discussing service quality that increases their satisfaction. Discussions about trust-reputation and service quality-service commitment are like two sides of a coin, which show the response of both parties, each using its own language to respond to the same situation (Fullerton, 2011; Rita et al., 2019; Wagner et al., 2011).

The concept of the 5As in the stages of consumption from a consumer viewpoint is affirmed in marketing 4.0 by Kotler et al. (2017). It includes aware, appeal, ask, act, and advocate. However, this concept

needs to be explained in more detail in terms of a seller’s response (Kotler et al., 2017). A wealth of empirical research describes this concept from a consumer side. Several studies also examine what companies or managers should do to respond to the 5As concept (Gau, 2019; Wereda & Woźniak, 2019). Nevertheless, studies rarely attempt to explain this concept in a complete model (from the beginning to the end of the process) from the seller’s point of view. This limitation occurs due to an understanding that there are differences in viewpoints between studies oriented toward strategic marketing and consumer behavior. Shaw and Jones (2005) even emphasized that the two are in different marketing schools, so it is complicated to find research that examines these two points of view together. Nonetheless, academics and practitioners agree that marketing strategies can be executed effectively if the strategic planning process pays serious attention to consumer behavior properly (Gray et al., 2007).

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The model proposed in this study refers to the concept of the 5As, reasoned action theory, and strategic marketing process. The reasoned action theory guides analyzing the activities a company should carry out (corporate response) to bring out particular consumer behavior (Troudi & Bouyoucef, 2020). Unlike the consumer behavior approach, which always views activities from the point of view of consumer interests, the strategic marketing approach gives more attention to the activities carried out by business operators (Kracklauer et al., 2001). The variables in the study are developed from the steps taken by companies to influence the minds and perceptions of consumers following the stages of the 5As: aware, appeal, ask, act, and advocate (Kotler et al., 2017). This paper endeavors to transform the 5As in the stages of consumption to become a series of five activities from the seller’s viewpoint, which are referred to

as ConToMaLoE: consumer affinitive direction, touch power strengthening, market preference enhancement, loyalty retain quality, and e-advocacy leverage capacity.

Business operators respond to the initial process of the 5As with commensurate activities (Table 1). The first stage of the 5As, “aware,” is related to the customer’s awareness about a particular product or brand gained from experience, advertising information, or advocacy from another person (Kotler et al., 2017). A company may interpret the cognitive aspect of consumer “awareness” by implementing “consumer affinitive direction” to become closer to the consumer (Cakici & Shukla, 2017; Ha et al., 2011; Macchiette & Roy, 1992). The second stage, “appeal,” is a customer interest in a particular product or brand that makes the brand memorable and remains in the customer’s memory (Kotler et al., 2017). Finally, the producer can

Table 1. Compatibility of 5As and ConToMaLoE

Source: Kotler et al. (2017), Wilk et al. (2020).

| 5As | Consumer process | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| | Aware | → | Appeal | → | Ask | → | Act | → | Advocate |
| Understanding | Customer awareness about the existence of a particular product or brand that is gained from past experience, advertising information, or advocacy from another person | | Customer interest in a particular product or brand makes the brand always remembered and considered in the memory | | Process of actively seeking information from friends, family, or media, or directly trying a product, which convinces a customer of the excellence of a particular product or brand | | Customer decision to purchase, elaborate, or appreciate the benefit of a particular product or brand | | Customer's strong sense of loyalty to a particular product or brand, reflected in an attitude of loyalty and recommendation to other customers |
| ConTo Ma LoE | Corporate response | | | | | | | | |
| | Consumer affinitive direction | → | Touch power strengthening | → | Market preference enhancement | → | Loyalty retain quality | → | E-advocacy leverage capacity |
| Goal | Become closer to the consumer | | Attract the consumer | | Direct preference | | Retain loyalty | | Encourage advocacy |

respond to the affective aspect of the consumer's "appeal" with the activity of "touch power strengthening" to attract the customer.

Business operators also respond to the subsequent processes of the 5As with appropriate business actions. The third stage is "ask," which describes actively seeking information from friends, family, or media or directly trying a product, which convinces the customer of the excellence of a particular product or brand (Kotler et al., 2017). The "ask" stage, in which the consumer endeavors to discover the product's benefit, is followed by the company's optimization of "market preference enhancement" to direct consumer preference. The fourth stage is "act," which can be interpreted as a customer's decision to purchase, elaborate, or appreciate the benefit of a particular product or brand (Kotler et al., 2017). The process of "act," in which a consumer performs the act of purchasing the product, is met with company intervention in the form of "loyalty retain quality" to maintain customer loyalty (Dowling, 2002; Uncles et al., 2003). The last stage is "advocate," which is defined as a customer's strong sense of loyalty to a particular product or brand, reflected in an attitude of loyalty and recommendation to other customers (Kotler et al., 2017). The final anticipated consumer action of "advocate" is supported by the company through the activity "e-advocacy leverage capacity" to encourage the consumer's digital advocacy (Wilk et al., 2020).

1.1. E-advocacy leverage capacity

E-advocacy leverage capacity refers to the ability of a company to encourage a proactive attitude of consumers to appreciate, persuade, defend, and refer its product to other people through digital media (Setiawan et al., 2022). E-advocacy, also known as online brand advocacy, has relatively the same role as the online word of mouth (eWOM), which is to share the experience of using a product or service through online media (Wilk et al., 2020). The willingness of a consumer to refer a particular product – whether in the form of an object or a service – to other people has become the primary goal of digital marketing, replacing the vital role of the marketer's goal of finding consumers to use the product (Kotler et al., 2017). Other people, who include family members, close

friends, or members of the consumer's community, will place more trust in a message or comment expressing appreciation for a product as it is regarded as a more convincing purchasing experience (Schepers & Nijssen, 2018). Moreover, if a character of a person expressing appreciation for the product possesses integrity, fame, transparency, trust, and honesty, others will respond to the recommendation more genuinely (Lawer & Knox, 2006). Therefore, companies endeavor not only to persuade consumers to buy their products but also to be willing and able to refer their products to other consumers (Leckie et al., 2022).

Developments in social media have positioned e-advocacy leverage capacity as an essential asset for companies. The primary purpose of marketing activities is no longer concerned with the way consumers perform the act of purchasing a product but rather to ensure that a consumer is willing to endorse other consumers by informing, explaining, encouraging, and persuading them to buy a particular product (Wang & He, 2022; Wilk et al., 2020). Consumers a company successfully influences also dare to defend its product or brand if other public members denounce it for its low quality, poor performance, or other criticisms that may impair its image (Lawer & Knox, 2006). Consumers support this movement through online media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, or YouTube, which have the power to reach a broad audience in a short space of time (Garcia-Rivera et al., 2022; Setiawan et al., 2022; Wilk et al., 2020). Companies that successfully manage their consumers' digital advocacy can build a company image effectively and on a massive scale, which will multiply sales rapidly (Horn et al., 2015; Schepers & Nijssen, 2018).

1.2. Loyalty retain quality and market preference enhancement

Loyalty retain quality is a company's ability to maintain the loyalty of consumers so that the relationship between the company and the consumer can be sustained (Setiawan et al., 2022). Retaining consumers currently being served by a company – practitioners equate it with the CRM concept – may involve activities directly related to business transactions, such as sales discounts for members, special services, and information about new

products (Dehghanpouri et al., 2020; Dowling, 2002; Uncles et al., 2003). In addition, supporting the social activities of communities consisting of loyal consumers to improve consumer-brand engagement is another way for companies to ensure a continued relationship with consumers (Wilk et al., 2020).

Maintaining consumer loyalty is no easy feat because companies must continue improving the quality of their services, listen to consumer aspirations, empower consumer values, which are often dynamic in following market trends, and update the quality of products through various innovations (Lawer & Knox, 2006). Nevertheless, retaining buyers to become loyal consumers and repurchase a company's products often requires marketing efforts, which cost less than those needed to find new consumers (Ho & Chung, 2020; Setiawan & Hanfan, 2017). This advantage is because, on the one hand, the cost of serving the consumers borne by the company is less, while on the other hand, consumers can pay higher prices and spend more (Dowling, 2002).

A company that optimally manages consumer loyalty can influence consumer behavior to endorse other people (Setiawan et al., 2022). For example, a shopping experience that satisfies the consumer is shared with family, close friends, partners, and a network of stakeholders, along with an invitation to purchase the same product (Dowling, 2002; Ha et al., 2011; Lawer & Knox, 2006). In addition, consumers who feel happy with the quality of the service and product of a company may also express their feelings directly to other people through social media that their followers view (Leckie et al., 2022; Wang & He, 2022; Wilk et al., 2020). For example, a story about delicious food that has gone viral attracts the curiosity of netizens, motivating them to share the story themselves through digital social media.

Market preference enhancement is the ability of a company to guide consumer trends to prioritize the preference for a particular product (Setiawan et al., 2022). Consumers have a wide selection of products to purchase, so a company needs to influence consumers to place its product on an alternative list. A company needs to ensure that a consumer understands the advantage and benefits

of a product so that it is prioritized over competitors' products (Alreck & Settle, 1999). Companies may regularly use promotions, telephone contact, and communication through digital media so that the consumer's perception of a company image remains positive (Juntunen et al., 2020). A company can design and present a catalog of its products at a strategic place and time to capture consumers' attention so that they decide to choose its products (Amoako et al., 2017).

Some marketing experts have declared the importance of market preference enhancement for increasing consumer loyalty. A company that is able to influence consumer choice indirectly has sufficient stamina to maintain customer loyalty (Setiawan et al., 2022; Uncles et al., 2003). A company can learn the prioritized consumer needs through a market research team, so various designs can be prepared for services to satisfy its dominant consumer segment (Juntunen et al., 2020). A company may also initiate the process in which consumers manage their own choice internally through the stages of cognition, affect, and conation so that consumer tendencies remain with the company's product (Alreck & Settle, 1999; Tangari et al., 2010).

A company's success in directing market preference is one of the main assets a marketing team can use to encourage consumers to support other potential consumers (Setiawan et al., 2022). When consumers position a product as an important area of preference in their mind, it enables them to easily share the satisfaction of their shopping experience with other people (Wang & He, 2022). Therefore, marketers need to continually increase positive messages about the benefit and excellence of a particular product so that consumers are keen to share the good news (Horn et al., 2015). Efforts to shape this positive attitude are, of course, supported by the visible quality of the marketing mix, including improved product quality, service, payment technology, complaint handling, and supply guarantee.

1.3. Touch power strengthening and consumer affinitive direction

Touch power strengthening refers to a company's activities that attract a consumer to give more attention to a company product in each stage of the

consumer purchasing decision (Chakraborty & Dash, 2022). Consumer purchasing decision has been expanded to include five stages (5As) that require intervention from a party external to the company to draw a consumer's attention to a product. Like a long journey to a particular destination, the temptation may appear from competitor companies, obscuring the way and directing the consumer's attention to another brand of product (Ha et al., 2021). Companies can invite consumers to join an informal forum to explain the benefits and importance of a product so that the consumers direct more attention toward a product.

Optimal management of touch power strengthening gives a company power to direct market preference. Touchpoints refer to consumer interaction with a product and include a series of observations about the benefits, strengths, and weaknesses that are deemed compatible with consumer needs (Wereda & Woźniak, 2019). Touchpoints are present in each stage of the process leading up to the consumption of a product, as seen in the concept of the 5As: aware, appeal, ask, act, and advocate (Kotler et al., 2017). Undoubtedly, a company that manages to attract the consumer's attention in a way that always leads to a positive perception of a product will find it easier to guide the market toward choosing the product concerned (Chakraborty & Dash, 2022).

Proper management of consumer touchpoints by a company is highly beneficial for preserving buyer loyalty (Chakraborty & Dash, 2022). A company's efforts to make consumers understand the importance of a product through advertising promotion, product demonstrations, or public relations activities will increase consumer awareness about the continued use of a product. Consumer experience, when a certain product brings satisfaction, provides input, which encourages consumer loyalty, and the company can further cultivate this positive behavior to enhance repurchasing interest (Setiawan & Hanfan, 2017).

Consumer affinitive direction is defined as a company's efforts to form a closer bond with a consumer, founded on the shared belief in the importance of a product (Garcia-Rivera et al., 2022; Setiawan et al., 2022). It can be easier for a consumer to know about a new product if a company makes an effort

to inform the public about the product's existence and benefits (Horn et al., 2015). Companies can use various online and offline promotion media to inform the public that a product or service has been launched (Waśkowski & Jasiulewicz, 2021). Online social media that can be used to introduce a product include Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter (Garcia-Rivera et al., 2022). Product brands that are familiar to the public are easier for consumers to remember, making messages about product expediency and benefits easily accepted (Bruyeron et al., 2010). On the contrary, brands that are less well-known to the public require repeated promotion efforts for the product to be recognized and accepted by consumers (Uncles et al., 2003).

Consumer affinitive direction can increase the effectiveness of efforts to enhance market preference. A company's openness to consumer criticism creates the power to direct market preference by positioning the product in an important area of the consumer's mind (Wereda & Woźniak, 2019). Various forms of promotion involving a consumer's cognitive and affective aspects help to develop a more positive attitude towards a product (Kim et al., 2008). Promotion activities that successfully convey the significance of company-consumer interaction will influence a consumer's perception to believe that the product concerned is a priority for public preference (Dehghanpouri et al., 2020; Fullerton, 2011; Ha et al., 2021).

A company that improves its affinitive capability has a greater chance of boosting market response (Setiawan et al., 2022). Promotion or advertising spending that is packaged to include consumer attitude will increase the consumer's interest in a product so that a consumer perceives the product as possessing high-quality features (Ha et al., 2011). If, in the process of introducing a product, a company manages to convey a message of intensive interaction between a product and a consumer, this means that a company has intervened in a consumer's mind about the importance of a product (Gau, 2019). Consumer criticisms of a product are understood not as an endeavor to undermine the company but as an indication that the consumer wishes to form a closer tie with the product (Garcia-Rivera et al., 2022). When a company is open to criticism in this way, it creates the power of persuasion to influence consumer decisions.

1.4. Aim and hypotheses

This study aims to analyze the compatibility between the stages of the strategic marketing process designed by a company, referred to as ConToMaLoE, and the stages of the consumer process in consuming a product or service, known as the 5As, as proposed by Kotler et al. (2017). The concept of ConToMaLoE needs to be tested empirically on online-based culinary business operators to discover the relationships between the variables. In Indonesia, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020, followed by the implementation of large-scale social restrictions, led to an increase in the trend of online culinary sales. Consumers feel safer and more comfortable buying food and drinks through food delivery applications because it reduces their fear about the potential spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pathway to achieving the final goal – e-advocacy leverage capacity – can be observed through the patterns of the relationships between the antecedent variables.

Based on a number of theoretical arguments explained in the literature review, this study formulates seven hypotheses and constructs the relationship between variables as described in the research model (Figure 1):

- H1: A company that maintains customer loyalty can encourage its consumers to refer to and persuade others to use its products through digital media.*
- H2: A company that uses its marketing power for market preference efforts can more easily maintain consumer loyalty.*
- H3: A company that controls its efforts to guide market preference can encourage its consumers to advocate its products.*
- H4: A company that optimizes touch power strengthening can more easily direct market preference.*
- H5: A company that empowers touch power strengthening can more effectively implement efforts to retain consumer loyalty.*
- H6: A company that generates consumer affinitive direction can use market preference enhancement more effectively.*
- H7: A company that can drive consumer affinitive direction has more leverage to implement touch power strengthening.*

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology section discusses three critical research stages: selecting research respondents, drafting the questionnaire, and reliability of the measuring instrument. Each stage is strictly controlled to produce high measurement validity.

2.1. Selection of research respondents

Based on data from the Department of Industry and Commerce in the Central Java province and the regional association of culinary business operators, between January and May 2020, 610 companies meeting a number of specified qualifications were contacted and asked to complete a research

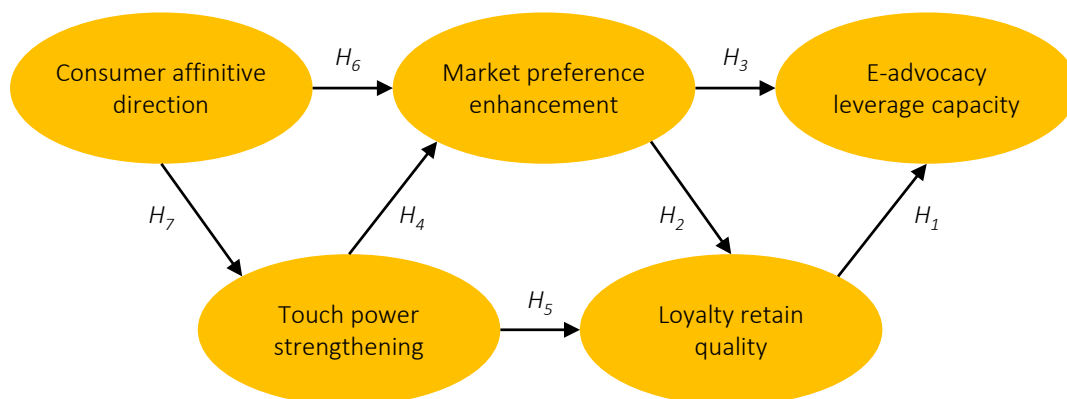


Figure 1. Research model

Table 2. Distribution of respondents

| No. | Type of culinary product | Number of respondents | % |
|-----|---|-----------------------|----|
| 1 | Chicken + processed chicken | 142 | 40 |
| 2 | Fish and beef + processed fish and beef | 82 | 23 |
| 3 | Noodles + noodle-based products | 64 | 18 |
| 4 | Sweet and savory pancakes | 35 | 10 |
| 5 | Juice and coffee | 32 | 9 |

questionnaire, either directly or in a format that could be uploaded online. A total of 406 respondents submitted their questionnaires. However, 51 of the questionnaires returned were eliminated during the next stage of processing because several question items were either incomplete or showed an indication of inconsistency and outlier tendencies.

The respondents were 355 culinary businesses in the Central Java province of Indonesia, all of which used online food delivery services such as Gofood, Grabfood, Shopeefood, or Maximfood. The criteria of the respondents, selected through purposive sampling, were companies that had a minimum of 3 years of operation, used a physical building as a sales base, worked together with online delivery services, and had an active social media account for the past two years, whether Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok or YouTube (Garcia-Rivera et al., 2022).

The types of culinary fields operated by the businesses were varied but could be categorized into five main types (Table 2). The distribution of respondents, based on the culinary types – chicken and processed chicken products, fish/beef and processed fish/beef products, noodles and noodle-based products, sweet and savory pancakes, and fruit juice and coffee drinks – was 40%, 23%, 18%, 10%, and 9%, respectively. The highest demand for online culinary services was rice and chicken or processed chicken products. The lowest demand for online culinary services was for juice and coffee. Respondents who provided culinary services in more than one of the types mentioned were grouped in the category in which their business was most dominant.

2.2. Drafting the questionnaire

Each variable was explained by its indicators, paying attention to the definition of each and the association of the variables with the concept of es-

tablished market strategies. For example, e-advocacy leverage capacity was measured by the four indicators related to the effectiveness of online media use in influencing other people in various ways, such as persuasion to buy (Fullerton, 2011), product appreciation, defense of criticism, and product preference (Wilk et al., 2020).

The concept of loyalty, from the point of view of the end user, states that buyers achieve loyalty if they reach a certain degree of satisfaction, make a repurchase order, and increase consumption of various types of products. Uncles et al. (2003) emphasized that loyalty to the brand results from repeated satisfaction. Loyalty retain quality is related to a company’s efforts to safeguard consumer loyalty measured by four indicators: maintaining loyalty, increasing satisfaction, and creating interest in repurchasing and consuming various products (Dowling, 2002; Uncles et al., 2003).

Several indicators of market preference enhancement were developed from understanding how companies direct consumer preferences. From the point of view of the end user, consumer preference is defined as a preference for something over another product in terms of importance, benefits, perceptions, and priorities (Amoako et al., 2017). Four indicators explain market preference enhancement: positioning the product as an essential choice, strengthening a positive consumer attitude, assigning high priority to a product, and intervening to provide more significant benefit than competitor products (Amoako et al., 2017; Setiawan et al., 2022).

A number of indicators of touch power strengthening were derived from an understanding of how companies increase consumer appeal by enhancing various media to contact consumers (Chakraborty & Dash, 2022). Consumer appeal will be formed if consumers are engaged in the process of product understanding. Touch power

strengthening has three indicators: involvement of consumer character in understanding a product (Uncles et al., 2003), intervention in understanding a product's importance, and persuasion of the consumer decision (Chakraborty & Dash, 2022).

Indicators of consumer affinitive direction start with the awareness to build a closer relationship, which makes consumers part of the marketing activity process by becoming more involved in the promotion process and more active in providing advice for improvement. Consumer affinitive direction is measured with four indicators: involvement of consumer attitude, response to consumer criticism, interaction with the consumer, and promoting a sympathetic approach to the consumer (Ha et al., 2011; Ho & Chung, 2020; Waśkowski & Jasiulewicz, 2021).

2.3. Validity and reliability of measuring instrument

The questionnaires tested for validity and reliability were then distributed to the selected respondents, 610 online-based culinary business operators. 255 were not processed any further due to incomplete answers and inconsistency problems. The remaining 355 respondents' answers to the research questions showed evidence of the reliability and validity of the questionnaire (Table A1). A number of indicators that have a factor loading below 0.7 are eliminated to improve Cronbach's α value (Hair et al., 2010). The multivariate normality value was above the cutoff of +2.548, with a value of 15.781. The partial normality value for each indicator, measured using critical ratios for skewness and kurtosis, was still in the controlled range of $-2.548 < \text{normality value} < +2.548$. Cronbach's α value for each variable was above 0.7, indicating that the questionnaire items had a high reliability level (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Meanwhile, the factor loading of each indicator was above 0.7, affirming that all the items on the questionnaire used as a measuring instrument had high validity and accountability. Therefore, the data collected were deemed fit for further processing using SEM-AMOS statistical software.

3. RESULTS

The AMOS conclusively confirms five supported hypotheses referring to an acceptable probability level of 0.05, demonstrating the adequacy of the

underlying theoretical arguments (Table 3). The relationship between loyalty retain quality, and e-advocacy leverage capacity has a standardized estimate of 0.613 and $p = 0.005$, which shows evidence of causality; thus, H1 is supported (Uncles et al., 2003; Wilk et al., 2020). The relationship between market preference enhancement and loyalty retain quality has a standardized estimate of 0.325 and $p = 0.016$, which confirms the close relationship between the two; H2 is supported (Ho & Chung, 2020; Setiawan et al., 2022). The relationship between touch power strengthening and loyalty retain quality, which has a standardized estimate of 0.567 and $p = 0.022$, shows evidence of cause and effect; H5 is supported (Chakraborty & Dash, 2022; Wereda & Woźniak, 2019). The standardized estimate and p-values between consumer affinitive direction and its two consequence variables, which are 0.292, 0.034 for market preference enhancement and 0.352, 0.000 for touch power strengthening, indicate that the two relationships are significant in the reality of culinary business; H6 and H7 are supported (Dehghanpouri et al., 2020; Fullerton, 2011).

The Amos result rejected two hypotheses that display some interesting phenomena. The hypotheses on the relationships between variables that were rejected were H3 and H4, showing the standardized estimate values and p-values of 0.225, 0.267 and 0.201, 0.231, respectively. Companies that rely on market preference enhancement alone cannot activate e-advocacy leverage capacity (H3 is rejected). Close competition between culinary businesses encourages business operators to develop a variety of strategies to direct consumer preference through online media promotions that are easy to access, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Path, Kaskus, Blogging, and Google+ (Garcia-Rivera et al., 2022). Most of the information about excellence and benefit that companies share may be perceived by consumers as one-sided propaganda and an attempt to promote awareness about the existence of a product. It may not be able to convince consumers to recommend a product to their family, friends, or community (Horn et al., 2015). Companies that display the role of touch power strengthening also fail to achieve market preference enhancement (H4 is rejected). Some consumers regard the intervention of culinary business operators on the touchpoints

Table 3. Structural relationship output

| No. | Relationships between the variables | | Standardized estimate | P | Result |
|-----|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Loyalty retain quality | → E-advocacy leverage capacity | 0.613 | 0.005 | H ₁ supported |
| 2 | Market preference enhancement | → Loyalty retain quality | 0.325 | 0.016 | H ₂ supported |
| 3 | Market preference enhancement | → E-advocacy leverage capacity | 0.255 | 0.167 | H ₃ rejected |
| 4 | Touch power strengthening | → Market preference enhancement | 0.201 | 0.231 | H ₄ rejected |
| 5 | Touch power strengthening | → Loyalty retain quality | 0.567 | 0.022 | H ₅ supported |
| 6 | Consumer affinitive direction | → Market preference enhancement | 0.292 | 0.034 | H ₆ supported |
| 7 | Consumer affinitive direction | → Touch power strengthening | 0.352 | 0.000 | H ₇ supported |

Note: Goodness of fit of model: $p = 0.05$; chi-square = 164.23, AGFI = 0.923, GFI = 0.814, CFI = 0.812, RMSEA = 0.035.

of consumer perception as interfering too much with their freedom to choose products according to their tastes (Ha et al., 2021). This phenomenon may occur because a company is too forceful in promoting its product on the social media account of the consumer (Horn et al., 2015). Such a condition may also be due to over-ambitious promotion content that ignores the true conditions, leading to consumer antipathy (Scheepers & Nijssen, 2018).

Based on the results of the structural relationships, the way to increase e-advocacy leverage capacity can be arranged as in Figure 2. The path to achieving e-advocacy leverage capacity always starts by entering a gate to consumer affinitive direction. The path must also pass through several mediation variables, such as market preference enhancement and loyalty retain quality. Meanwhile, touch power strengthening and market preference enhancement are mediation variables supporting various advocacy marketing interventions.

4. DISCUSSION

The consequence of the role of consumer affinitive direction as a gateway into product selection is that companies need to capture consumers' attention by involving their feelings and com-

ments about the importance of a product's existence. Consumers' testimonies should be presented in promotions to create an impression of the interaction between a company and a consumer. Companies should also be honest in their promotions by openly mentioning some consumer criticisms about product quality, accompanied, of course, by a description of how a company is dealing with the problem. In this way, consumers will recognize that a company has made an effort to attract their attention both slowly and naturally (Kim et al., 2008).

Company owners should optimize the use of online social media or recruit exceptional staff who update statuses, upload information, and respond to customers' comments (Setiawan et al., 2022). During the Covid-19 pandemic, people generally spent more time at home and were more inclined to browse for information online (Vázquez-Martínez et al., 2021). As a result, there is ever-increasing competition between websites and social media – especially culinary businesses in constant consumer demand – to present content worth reviewing. Up-to-date information, creative posting, and fast response to questions are the keys to managing social media to ensure a continued increase in friends and followers (Ha et al., 2021). Consumer response, shown with a “like” or an

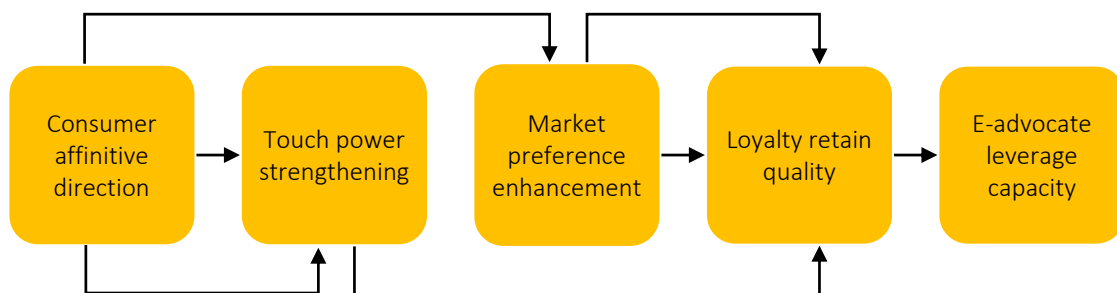


Figure 2. Corporate marketing response

emoji, tends to escalate if the picture design and narration of a product or service uploaded on a company's social media appear attractive and innovative.

Companies need to manage several online media or a variety of incentives that have the potential to develop consumer awareness of a product's existence (Horn et al., 2015). The initial process of a consumer purchasing a product includes growing awareness that a product or service has practical value and can fulfill consumer needs (Setiawan et al., 2022). This awareness not only emerges internally from inside the consumer's mind but can also be activated by external stimuli through various promotion media that a company controls. Companies should not leave it entirely up to the business environment to ensure that consumers become aware of a product's existence (Kim et al., 2008). If this awareness does not emerge internally, the only way is for a company to be more active in conveying information to the consumer about the existence of a product or service (Bruyeron et al., 2010).

It is necessary for all the various forms of company intervention, whether through promotion directed toward consumers in general or contact through personal online social media accounts of consumers, to display promotion normality and communication norms (Setiawan et al., 2022). The content of the promotion should pay attention to the objectivity of scenes and messages so that a consumer can accept it openly (Chakraborty & Dash, 2022). Although people currently spend more time browsing information during this period of working from home (WFH) as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, consumers will regard messages that are too bombastic as unnatural, which in turn creates a negative image for a brand or product (Horn et al., 2015). In addition, companies should ask the consumer's permission before contacting a personal online social media account to avoid misperception. The ease with which it is possible to make contact through online social media means that people can communicate with anyone they choose to, such as business operators publicizing their products by tagging other people's accounts, even though the person tagged may not necessarily respond in a positive way (Garcia-Rivera et

al., 2022). To deal with such conditions, companies should first contact consumers and request permission with a short message – for example, on Facebook Messenger – before sending more detailed information (Waškowski & Jasiulewicz, 2021).

The achievement of e-advocacy leverage capacity as the final goal of this model shows the vital role of personal consumer persuasion toward other people. This corresponds to the concept of the 5As, as explained by Kotler et al. (2017), who stated that the act of consumer alignment to a particular product – referred to as self- or own-awareness – needs to be stimulated further to become self-persuasion toward family members, friends, or members of the consumer's community, prompting them to notice and consume a product. Consumers may display these efforts by expressing appreciation when a product appears on social media, by clicking “like,” “subscribe,” “follow,” or leaving a positive comment in the relevant space (Virtanen et al., 2017; Wilk et al., 2020). Consumers can also persuade others by directly inviting them to use a particular product. Consumers will voluntarily advocate a product through online social media if a company makes continued efforts to maintain consumer loyalty (Ho & Chung, 2020; Schepers & Nijssen, 2018). This is achieved by a company's efforts to preserve product quality and service and by treating a consumer as part of a company, ensuring that a consumer always remembers the product, and making a consumer feel more valued (Leckie et al., 2022).

The series of marketing interventions carried out by companies, as outlined in the concept of ConToMaLoE, contribute to the wealth of theories about digital advocacy marketing (e-advocacy). Although some of the relationships between the variables are proven insignificant, which makes the company's marketing intervention run less smoothly, as seen in the 5A consumer process, in general, there is a conformity between the concepts of the 5As and ConToMaLoE (Figure 2). This follows the explanation of Kotler et al. (2017) that some of the stages of the 5As may be skipped or omitted, such as aware → appeal → act → advocate, without “ask” – a situation which often occurs in impulse buying transactions (Yang et al.,

2021). For example, the 5A process may ignore the “act” stage to become aware → appeal → ask → advocate if consumers prefer to advocate the product to other people rather than consuming it themselves. Therefore, the stages of ConToMaLoE, which follow a jumping path, may be due to an adjustment with the consumer purchasing process stages that have also skipped a particular stage (Chakraborty & Dash, 2022).

This paper has two limitations, which can be an opportunity for future research. First, most of the variables are explained by three indicators, so the steps of market intervention are not fully explored. Further research could elaborate on more indicators that can be developed through the reasoned

action theory to guide business operators about what needs to be done in each stage of market intervention. The greater the number of indicators used to explain each variable, the clearer the differences and unique characteristics will be for each step. Second, some goodness of fit values are in a marginal position (GFI and CFI), indicating that the model still has room for further development (Hair et al., 2010). Therefore, testing of the research model can be carried out in other business fields that are currently booming during the Covid-19 pandemic, such as the plant business, home furnishing business, house renovation materials, and electronic work tools such as mobile phones and laptops (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2021; Ha et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study proves that the marketing strategies of business operators are a response to the consumer stages in product consumption. Implementation of strategical digital marketing activities can achieve goals effectively if a company understands and adapts to consumer behavior. The consumer stages in using a product can be represented by the 5As: aware, appeal, ask, act, and advocate. Meanwhile, the marketing strategies in the management stage to execute this process include a company’s efforts to grow awareness, a company’s activities to increase appeal, a company’s power to direct consumer preference toward its products, a company’s exertion to retain consumer loyalty, and a company’s support for consumers to refer other people to purchase the company’s products. As a response to the 5A stages of consumer behavior, companies should develop the concept of strategical digital marketing, which consists of the five intervention activities: consumer affinitive direction, touch power strengthening, market preference enhancement, loyalty retain quality, and e-advocate leverage capacity. These marketing interventions are a theoretical research contribution obtained through development of antecedent variables of the e-advocacy concept from a strategic marketing perspective.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. Validity of measuring instrument

| Variable indicators | Initial test of indicators | | | | Final test of indicators | | |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| | Factor Loading | Cronbach's α | Result | Cr-skewness | Cr-kurtosis | Factor Loading | Cronbach's α |
| E-advocacy leverage capacity | | 0.720 | | | | | 0.764 |
| Encouraging the consumer to persuade others to purchase a product through online social media | 0.761 | | processed | -0.330 | 0.173 | 0.791 | |
| Persuading the consumer to express appreciation for the benefit of a product through online social media | 0.732 | | processed | -0.621 | -0.768 | 0.792 | |
| Influencing the consumer to defend a product from criticism by netizens through online social media | 0.702 | | processed | -1.191 | -0.771 | 0.718 | |
| Inspiring the consumer to refer a product to others through online social media | 0.612 | | eliminated | | | | |
| Loyalty retain quality | | 0.711 | | | | | 0.734 |
| Maintaining consumer loyalty | 0.701 | | processed | 0.752 | 2.386 | 0.729 | |
| Increasing consumer satisfaction | 0.700 | | processed | -0.892 | 2.231 | 0.746 | |
| Growing repurchasing interest | 0.707 | | processed | -0.319 | 1.201 | 0.729 | |
| Consuming a variety of similar products | 0.601 | | eliminated | | | | |
| Market preference enhancement | | 0.723 | | | | | 0.752 |
| Positioning a product as an essential choice | 0.727 | | processed | -0.532 | 1.099 | 0.773 | |
| Strengthening positive consumer attitude | 0.732 | | processed | -0.916 | 2.295 | 0.791 | |
| Making a product a high priority | 0.704 | | processed | -1.869 | 1.339 | 0.711 | |
| Intervening about the benefit of products more | 0.615 | | eliminated | | | | |
| Touch power strengthening | | 0.724 | | | | | 0.789 |
| Involving consumer character in product understanding | 0.728 | | processed | 0.372 | 2.309 | 0.727 | |
| Influencing understanding of product importance | 0.731 | | processed | 1.209 | 1.419 | 0.732 | |
| Persuading consumer decisions | 0.721 | | processed | 0.139 | 1.891 | 0.737 | |
| Consumer affinitive direction | | 0.723 | | | | | 0.712 |
| Including consumer attitude in promotion | 0.701 | | processed | -2.211 | 1.2975 | 0.741 | |
| Responding openly to consumer criticism | 0.703 | | processed | -2.498 | 1.332 | 0.722 | |
| Interacting intensively with consumers | 0.723 | | processed | -2.523 | 1.161 | 0.729 | |
| Promoting sympathy with consumers | 0.594 | | eliminated | | | | |
| Multivariate normality | | | | | 15.781 | | |