



## **FROM AWARENESS TO ADVOCACY: A CUSTOMER PATH 5A ANALYSIS OF MINISO CONSUMERS IN THE MARKETING 4.0 ERA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

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The development of internet technology has significantly transformed consumer purchasing behavior and accelerated the growth of e-commerce platforms in Indonesia. As one of the largest e-commerce platforms, Shopee has become an important marketing channel for various brands, including Miniso. This study aims to analyze the influence of Shopee e-commerce on the Miniso brand in the era of Marketing 4.0 using the Customer Path 5A model, which consists of Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act, and Advocate. A quantitative approach was employed, and primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed via Google Forms to 90 Shopee users selected using purposive sampling. The findings indicate that consumer awareness of the Miniso brand was predominantly generated through offline stores (76.7%), while Instagram and Shopee played important roles in stimulating consumer interest and information-seeking behavior. Although digital platforms significantly influenced purchasing decisions, most respondents still preferred purchasing products through offline stores (53.3%). Furthermore, 72.2% of respondents recommended Miniso products to others, indicating a high level of customer advocacy. The study concludes that Shopee contributes positively to the customer journey by supporting information dissemination, consumer engagement, and brand advocacy. However, offline stores remain an essential touchpoint in influencing purchase decisions, highlighting the importance of an integrated omnichannel marketing strategy in the Marketing 4.0 era

## A. INTRODUCTION

In this rapidly developing era of globalization, the marketing world has undergone significant changes. Philip Kotler, together with Hermawan Kartajaya and Iwan Setiawan, explained in their book entitled *Marketing 4.0: Moving from Traditional to Digital* that we are currently living in the Marketing 4.0 era. Marketing 4.0 integrates online and offline interactions to create stronger customer engagement and advocacy (Kotler et al., 2017). Digital marketing and traditional marketing coexist in Marketing 4.0 to achieve the ultimate goal of obtaining customer advocacy.

Today's market is no longer limited to physical interactions between sellers and buyers. It has evolved through online marketing innovations such as online shops, marketplaces, and e-commerce platforms. Consumers are increasingly accustomed to purchasing goods and services online without having to visit traditional markets or physical stores. Indonesia has recorded the highest e-commerce growth rate in Southeast Asia.

Therefore, it is not surprising that numerous large e-commerce and marketplace platforms have emerged in Indonesia, including Bukalapak, Lazada, Blibli, Tokopedia, Shopee, and many others. In addition to official shopping platforms, many e-commerce actors also utilize personal social media accounts such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and other platforms. The rapid growth of e-commerce has transformed consumer purchasing behavior through digital platforms and mobile applications (Laudon & Traver, 2023).

Based on these phenomena, the authors are interested in conducting a study to determine the extent of Shopee's influence on the Miniso brand in the Digital Marketing 4.0 era. Shopee is the first mobile platform in Southeast Asia that offers a wide range of products, supported by secure payment methods, integrated delivery services, and innovative social features that make online buying and selling more enjoyable, secure, and convenient.

Shopee entered the Indonesian market in May 2015 and officially began operations in June 2015. Shopee is a subsidiary of SEA Group, headquartered in Singapore. The platform has expanded across several Southeast Asian countries, including Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Shopee primarily targets young consumers who are accustomed to carrying out various daily activities through gadgets, including shopping.

## **B. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Marketing 4.0 Concept**

Marketing 4.0 is a marketing approach that combines online and offline interactions between sellers and consumers, integrates style with substance in brand building, and ultimately complements machine-to-machine connectivity with human-to-human engagement to strengthen customer involvement (Kotler et al., 2017). Marketing 4.0 adopts the 5A framework, consisting of Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act, and Advocate. This approach helps marketers transition into the digital economy by integrating online digital marketing with traditional offline marketing to gain customer advocacy.

Online marketing is designed to develop brand reputation through various digital media platforms. Consequently, marketers can no longer conceal information regarding the products they offer. For example, when consumers intend to purchase a product, they generally do not make an immediate purchase decision. Instead, they first seek information from the internet or reviews provided by friends, family members, or other consumers regarding the product they plan to buy.

### **Digital Marketing**

According to Coviello, Milley, and Marcolin, as cited in Fawaid (2001), digital marketing is the combination of internet usage and other interactive technologies to create and maintain communication between businesses and identified consumers. They further argue that e-marketing is a component of e-commerce. Digital marketing enables organizations to build long-term relationships with customers through interactive digital channels (Chaffey &

Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Social media platforms have become important marketing tools because they facilitate two-way communication between firms and consumers while increasing customer engagement and brand visibility (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

One of the most widely used e-commerce and marketplace platforms today is Shopee. Since its launch in 2015, Shopee has become one of the largest marketplace platforms in Southeast Asia, with the highest number of monthly active users. This achievement has encouraged both profit-oriented and non-profit organizations to utilize Shopee as an effective marketing tool. Ryan (2016) emphasizes that digital marketing enables firms to reach consumers more efficiently through personalized and data-driven communication strategies.

### **Customer Path 5A**

In digital marketing, the 5A model represents the stages consumers go through before becoming loyal advocates of a brand. As explained by Marketers.com, in April 2014, MarkPlus, Inc. introduced the latest Customer Path concept known as the 5A Model, consisting of Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act, and Advocate. This model replaced the previous 4A model, which consisted of Aware, Attitude, Act, and Act Again and had been widely applied across various industries.

The Customer Path 5A model consists of Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act, and Advocate, emphasizing customer advocacy as the ultimate marketing objective (Kotler et al., 2017). The Customer Path 5A concept provides a more comprehensive approach by encouraging customers not only to purchase a product but also to advocate for the brand. Customers are expected to recommend the brand and its products to their communities, thereby contributing to stronger brand loyalty and broader market reach.

### **E-Commerce**

E-commerce refers to the process of buying, selling, or trading data, goods, and services through the internet (Turban et al., 2018, p. 7). Laudon and Traver (2023, pp. 8–9) define e-commerce as commercial transactions

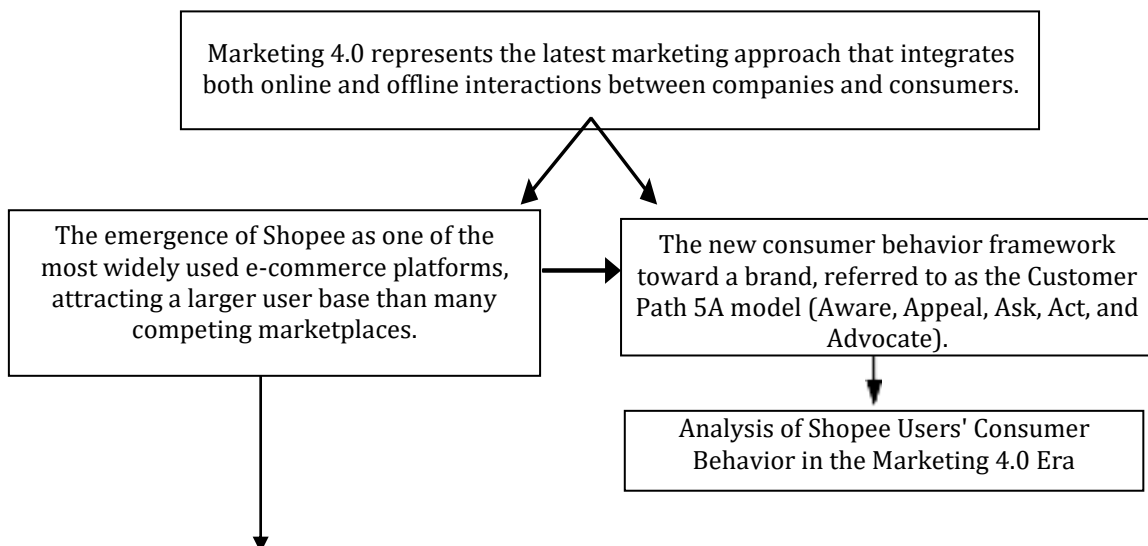
involving the exchange of value conducted through or enabled by digital technologies among individuals.

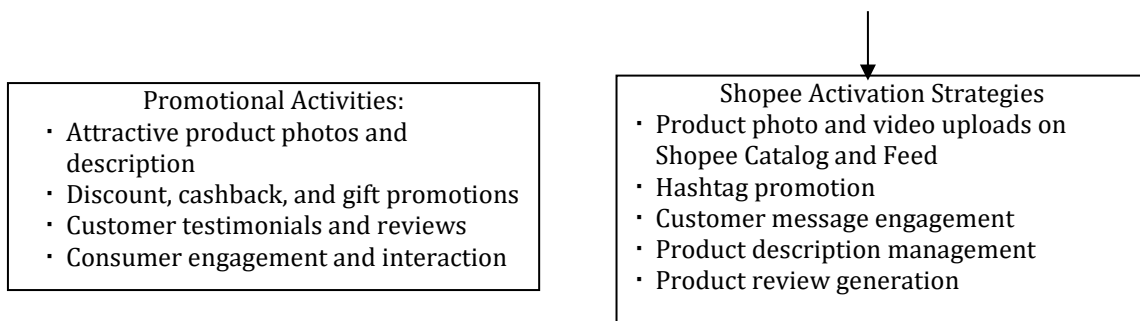
E-commerce activities involve the use of the internet, applications, or web browsers on mobile devices to conduct business transactions. In the early stages of e-commerce development, web browsers were the primary digital medium used for transactions. However, with technological advancements, mobile applications have become the dominant platform for e-commerce activities (Laudon & Traver, 2023, pp. 11–12).

### **The Influence of Product Attributes on Purchasing Behavior**

According to Kotler (2017, p. 84), a product is anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy specific needs or wants. A product encompasses not only physical attributes but also non-physical characteristics such as price, brand name, and other features that can attract consumer attention.

In selecting products, particularly those offered by Miniso, consumers consider not only the price but also factors such as product design, attractiveness, and quality. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), product attributes such as quality, design, features, and price significantly influence consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. These factors significantly influence purchasing decisions. When a brand offers products with appealing designs, high quality, and competitive value, consumers are more likely to make a purchase. Therefore, superior product attributes can positively influence consumer purchasing behavior and increase the likelihood of purchase decisions.





### C. METHOD

This study employed quantitative data as the primary type of data, while the source of data consisted of primary data collected through Google Forms distributed to respondents. The data collection method utilized a questionnaire technique distributed throughout East Java. A total of 90 Shopee e-commerce users participated as respondents in this study. The sampling technique applied was purposive sampling (Ferdinand, 2014, p. 178).

This study selected MINISO as the research object. MINISO is a Japanese retail store that offers a wide range of products, including household equipment, accessories, bags, cosmetics, and skincare products. MINISO represents a business model that integrates both traditional and digital interactions with consumers. Young people and millennial mothers constitute the primary target market in the Marketing 4.0 era.

### D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Kartajaya (2017) stated that consumers become familiar with brands through various channels, with advertising being one of the most influential sources. Based on the findings of this study, almost all respondents were familiar with the Miniso brand. Initially, respondents became aware of Miniso through its offline stores, while brand recognition increased significantly alongside the rapid growth of digital marketing. This finding suggests that consumer awareness is formed through the integration of offline and online touchpoints, which is consistent with the Marketing 4.0 concept proposed by Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan. The findings support the omnichannel marketing perspective, where online and offline channels complement one another throughout the customer journey (Verhoef et al., 2015).

Through the implementation of the Marketing 4.0 strategy using the Customer Path 5A framework (Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act, and Advocate), several important findings were obtained regarding consumer behavior toward the Miniso brand.



**Figure 1.** Customer Path of Miniso Consumers

### Aware

The Aware stage is the phase in which consumers recognize a need for products that are useful in their daily lives and become aware of the existence of a particular brand. Consumers increasingly seek information from digital communities and social media before making purchase decisions (Hajli, 2015). To strengthen consumer awareness, Miniso can provide comprehensive and up-to-date information through various digital channels, including social media, e-commerce platforms, and corporate websites.

**Table 1.** Sources of Brand Awareness for Miniso

| Source        | %    |
|---------------|------|
| Offline Store | 76.7 |
| Instagram     | 10   |
| Shopee        | 7.8  |

The findings show that 76.7% of respondents became aware of the Miniso brand through its offline stores. Meanwhile, 10% learned about Miniso through Instagram and 7.8% through Shopee. These results indicate that consumers become aware of a brand not only through social media or digital advertising but also through direct exposure to physical stores located in shopping malls.

Interestingly, this finding reveals that offline stores remain the dominant source of brand awareness despite the rapid expansion of digital marketing. This result contrasts with the common assumption that digital platforms dominate consumer journeys in the Marketing 4.0 era. Instead, it confirms that offline and online channels complement one another. Physical stores function as experiential touchpoints that allow consumers to discover products directly, while digital channels reinforce brand visibility and provide continuous engagement opportunities.

### **Appeal**

After becoming aware of Miniso products, consumers develop interest in the brand. Respondents stated that they were attracted to Miniso because of its unique product designs, wide product variety, durability, quality, availability of both online and offline stores, and affordable prices.

Furthermore, respondents followed Miniso’s social media accounts on Instagram and Shopee because they found the content attractive and wanted to stay informed about newly released products. This finding demonstrates the importance of digital content in stimulating consumer interest. Attractive visual displays, promotional campaigns, and product updates create emotional connections that encourage consumers to continue exploring the brand.

**Table 2.** Factors Influencing Consumer Interest in Miniso

| Factor          | Description                      |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Product Design  | Cute and attractive appearance   |
| Product Variety | Wide range of product categories |
| Product Quality | Durable and reliable products    |
| Affordability   | Reasonable prices                |

At this stage, promotional strategies such as discounts, cashback offers, flash sales, and free gifts play an important role in strengthening purchase intentions. Therefore, businesses should continuously develop engaging digital content to maintain consumer interest and encourage movement toward the next stage of the customer journey.

### **Ask**

Consumer interest naturally generates questions regarding Miniso products. When respondents required information about Miniso products, 65.6% used comment sections or direct messaging features on Instagram and Shopee to obtain answers.

The most frequently asked questions concerned discounts, cashback programs, free shipping offers, product availability, and flash sale promotions. This finding illustrates that consumers are increasingly active in searching for information before making purchasing decisions. Such behavior reflects the characteristics of consumers in the Marketing 4.0 era, who rely heavily on digital information and peer-generated content before committing to a purchase.

The Ask stage also highlights the importance of responsiveness in digital marketing. Fast responses to customer inquiries can increase trust, reduce uncertainty, and positively influence purchasing decisions. Consequently, businesses should ensure that customer service functions effectively across all digital platforms.

### **Act**

Once consumers have received satisfactory answers to their questions, they proceed to the Act stage by making purchasing decisions. At this stage, Miniso must ensure that all information communicated through digital channels accurately reflects the actual condition of its products. Failure to meet consumer expectations may result in dissatisfaction and reduced trust. Trust significantly influences consumers' willingness to purchase products through online platforms (Gefen et al., 2003; Pavlou, 2003).

According to the survey results, 53.3% of respondents preferred purchasing Miniso products directly from offline stores, while 46.7% preferred online purchases through digital platforms. These findings indicate that although digital channels significantly influence purchase decisions, physical stores remain highly relevant in the final purchasing process.

**Table 3. Purchase Preference**

| <b>Channel</b> | <b>%</b> |
|----------------|----------|
| <b>Offline</b> | 53.3     |
| <b>Online</b>  | 46.7     |

The findings provide empirical support for the Marketing 4.0 concept, which emphasizes the integration of online and offline interactions. Consumers frequently search for information online but still prefer to verify product quality, functionality, and appearance through direct physical experiences before making purchases. Therefore, an omnichannel strategy that integrates online and offline shopping experiences is essential for maintaining competitiveness and improving customer satisfaction.

### **Advocate**

The final stage occurs when consumers who are satisfied with their purchases voluntarily recommend products to others. Customer advocacy is often expressed through electronic word-of-mouth, which can influence the purchasing decisions of other consumers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Consumers may provide reviews, share experiences on social media, recommend products to friends and relatives, or create user-generated content that promotes the brand.

Miniso's Shopee rating was reported as 4.9 out of 5.0, indicating an excellent level of customer satisfaction. Furthermore, 72.2% of respondents stated that they had recommended Miniso products to friends, relatives, and family members through both offline interactions and social media platforms.

This finding demonstrates that Miniso has successfully transformed many customers into brand advocates. According to the Customer Path 5A framework, advocacy represents the ultimate goal of marketing activities

because loyal customers become voluntary promoters of the brand. Positive recommendations are particularly valuable in the digital era because they influence broader consumer communities through electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Erkan and Evans (2016) found that information shared through social media and online reviews significantly influences consumer purchase intentions and brand perceptions.

**Table 4.** Consumer Journey Analysis Based on the Customer Path 5A Model

| <b>Customer Path</b> | <b>Main Findings</b>   | <b>Supporting Evidence</b> |
|----------------------|--|----------------------------|
| <b>Aware</b>         | Consumers recognized Miniso through offline stores                     | 76.7%                      |
| <b>Appeal</b>        | Consumers were attracted by product design, affordability, and variety | Qualitative finding        |
| <b>Ask</b>           | Consumers searched information through Shopee and Instagram            | 65.6%                      |
| <b>Act</b>           | Consumers preferred purchasing through offline stores                  | 53.3%                      |
| <b>Advocate</b>      | Consumers recommended Miniso to others                                 | 72.2%                      |

Overall, the findings confirm Kotler’s Marketing 4.0 framework, which emphasizes the integration of online and offline channels throughout the customer journey. Although digital platforms such as Shopee and Instagram play an important role in delivering information, promoting products, and facilitating customer interactions, offline stores continue to be highly influential in creating awareness and supporting purchasing decisions.

The results also demonstrate that online and offline channels should not be viewed as competing alternatives but rather as complementary components of an effective omnichannel marketing strategy. Digital marketing enables rapid information dissemination and customer engagement, while offline stores provide tangible experiences that increase consumer confidence and satisfaction. Brynjolfsson et al. (2013) argue that firms can achieve greater competitive advantages by integrating online and offline channels into a seamless omnichannel experience.

### **Managerial Implications**

The findings suggest that Miniso should continue strengthening its omnichannel marketing strategy by integrating offline stores with digital platforms such as Shopee and Instagram. The company should prioritize interactive content, customer engagement, promotional campaigns, and user-generated reviews to encourage consumers to move from the awareness stage to the advocacy stage.

Consumers rely on both online and offline channels throughout their purchasing journey, supporting the omnichannel marketing perspective proposed by Marketing 4.0. The findings support the omnichannel marketing perspective, where online and offline channels complement one another throughout the customer journey (Verhoef et al., 2015).

**Table 5.** Comparison of Online and Offline Touchpoints

| <b>Customer Journey Stage</b> | <b>Dominant Channel</b> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Brand Awareness</b>        | Offline Store           |
| <b>Product Interest</b>       | Instagram & Shopee      |
| <b>Information Search</b>     | Shopee & Instagram      |
| <b>Purchase Decision</b>      | Offline Store           |
| <b>Product Recommendation</b> | Offline & Online        |

Table 2 highlights the dominant touchpoints utilized by consumers throughout their purchasing journey. The findings demonstrate that consumers interact with both online and offline channels at different stages of the Customer Path 5A model. Rather than functioning independently, these channels complement one another in influencing consumer decision-making.

At the awareness stage, offline stores emerged as the primary source of brand recognition. Most respondents reported becoming familiar with Miniso through physical stores located in shopping malls rather than through digital platforms. This finding suggests that physical retail presence remains an important factor in building brand visibility and consumer trust. The tangible nature of offline stores allows consumers to directly observe products and experience the brand environment, creating stronger initial impressions.

As consumers progress to the appeal and ask stages, digital platforms

become increasingly important. Instagram and Shopee serve as key sources of information, enabling consumers to explore product offerings, view promotional content, compare alternatives, and communicate directly with the brand. The interactive features available on these platforms facilitate information seeking and reduce uncertainty before purchase decisions are made. This finding reflects the characteristics of contemporary consumers, who actively search for information online before making purchasing decisions.

Interestingly, although digital platforms play a significant role in generating interest and providing information, the majority of respondents still preferred making purchases through offline stores. This indicates that consumers value the opportunity to physically examine products before purchasing. The ability to assess product quality, appearance, and functionality directly contributes to greater confidence in purchasing decisions. Therefore, digital marketing should not be viewed as a substitute for physical retailing but rather as a complementary channel that enhances the overall customer experience.

At the advocacy stage, both online and offline channels contribute to customer recommendations. Satisfied consumers share their experiences through direct word-of-mouth communication with friends and relatives as well as through online reviews and social media content. This demonstrates that advocacy in the Marketing 4.0 era is no longer limited to face-to-face interactions but is amplified through digital platforms, allowing positive customer experiences to reach a broader audience.

Overall, the findings support the Marketing 4.0 perspective proposed by Kotler et al. (2017), which emphasizes the integration of online and offline interactions throughout the customer journey. The results indicate that successful marketing strategies should adopt an omnichannel approach that combines the strengths of digital platforms and physical stores. By creating a seamless customer experience across multiple touchpoints, companies can improve customer engagement, increase purchase intentions, and strengthen brand loyalty.

These findings suggest that Miniso's competitive advantage lies not in choosing between online and offline channels, but in effectively integrating

both channels to create a seamless and consistent customer experience.

In addition, Miniso should maintain the quality of its offline shopping experience because physical stores remain a critical factor in attracting new customers and reinforcing purchase decisions. By combining effective digital marketing with strong offline experiences, Miniso can further enhance customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, and long-term business performance.



**Figure 2.** Customer Path of Miniso Consumers in the Marketing 4.0 Era

## E. CONCLUSION

In the Marketing 4.0 era, consumer behavior has evolved from the traditional 4A model (Aware, Attitude, Act, and Act Again) to the 5A model (Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act, and Advocate). Marketing activities have gradually shifted from conventional approaches toward digital platforms. The emergence of various social media platforms has significantly contributed to information dissemination throughout the marketing process. One of the most widely used platforms today is Shopee.

Miniso offers a wide range of products suitable for everyday use and has become particularly attractive to young consumers and millennial mothers.

The official Miniso Shopee account has approximately three million followers. Most respondents stated that they first became aware of Miniso through its offline stores and subsequently followed information about the brand through Instagram and Shopee.

A total of 88 out of 90 respondents were aware of the Miniso brand. Many respondents became interested in learning more about the brand and chose to follow the @minisoid account on Shopee. This behavior reflects the Appeal stage of the Customer Path 5A model. In addition to attractive products and informative content, respondents were also interested in Miniso because of the existence of physical stores, demonstrating that offline channels remain closely connected to online activities. Offline stores serve as confirmation points for information obtained online.

Almost all respondents considered the @minisoid account informative. Consequently, when consumers required information, they could obtain it through the content shared on the account while also accessing special purchase discounts available through Shopee. Approximately 66.7% of respondents had purchased Miniso products, with more than half preferring to shop directly at offline stores. Respondents reported that offline shopping was more enjoyable because it allowed them to inspect products directly and explore additional product options.

Miniso's Shopee rating of 4.9 out of 5.0 reflects a high level of customer satisfaction. Furthermore, 72.2% of respondents stated that they had recommended Miniso products to colleagues and acquaintances. This finding demonstrates that consumers had positive experiences with Miniso and wanted others to experience the same benefits. Therefore, Miniso continues to innovate and update its products to maintain consumer interest and satisfaction.

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