

# Advocacy Identifier Framework for Recognizing the Measurable Characters of Online Brand Advocate

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## Abstract

*The rise of digital technology has shifted marketing power from companies to customers, enabling them to express opinions, share experiences, and support brands on online platforms. This phenomenon, known as online brand advocacy, represents a powerful form of customer influence; however, the specific characteristics of advocacy behavior remain unclear, posing challenges for marketers aiming to identify and engage brand advocates effectively. This research seeks to establish a framework for recognizing measurable traits of online brand advocates, based on a systematic literature review identifying three key domains: expression, engagement, and expenditure. Expression reflects customer satisfaction through ratings and reviews; engagement is shown by actions such as sharing reviews and contributing to the online community; and expenditure highlights purchasing patterns, including purchase frequency and average order value. An expert panel validated this framework using the Content Validity Index (CVI) and Cronbach's alpha, confirming both its relevance and reliability. This framework provides a valuable tool for businesses, enabling them to analyze customer data, segment brand advocates, and leverage their support in the data-driven marketing landscape.*

**Keywords:** Online Brand Advocacy, Behavior Segmentation, Data-Driven Marketing, Analytical Customer Relation Management, Clustering Data.

## Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology and the rise of e-commerce have transformed the marketplace, shifting power from companies to consumers who now exercise greater control over brand interactions and access to information (Constantinides, 2004; Lawer & Knox, 2006). This transformation has birthed a new marketing paradigm where customers, no longer passive recipients, actively promote and advocate for brands they value. Advocacy now plays a critical role in brand growth and reputation, challenging traditional push-pull marketing strategies that struggle to engage today's empowered consumers (Bhati & Verma, 2020). To remain competitive, brands must now identify and engage these advocates—customers who not only display loyalty but also contribute to brand equity by influencing others (Roy, 2013).

Customer advocacy represents a strategic evolution within the loyalty framework, which has traditionally included customer satisfaction, loyalty, and relationship-building. Positioned at the peak of loyalty pyramid, advocacy goes beyond transactional loyalty, emphasizing trust, partnership, and long-term relationships over short-term gains (Urban, 2005). This aligns with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) approaches that prioritize transparency and personalized interactions, transforming loyal customers into trusted brand partners and building sustainable brand-consumer relationships (Lawer & Knox, 2006).

As part of this loyalty framework, advocacy signifies engagement beyond simple repeat purchases, encompassing behaviors like brand referrals, influence through word-of-mouth, and active social media endorsements (Bilro et al., 2019; Kumar, 2010). Advocacy as a customer-oriented, trust-based strategy fosters transparency and collaboration, aligning with economic principles that emphasize sustainable profit generation through long-term loyalty rather than immediate sales (Roy, 2015).

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In the digital age, customer engagement behaviors such as online reviews and recommendations have become central to advocacy, as they allow customers to shape brand perceptions directly (Van Doorn et al., 2010). Social media and Web 2.0 platforms have further amplified the reach and impact of brand advocacy, enabling brands to foster relationships with advocates who, in turn, actively promote and defend their brands, especially during heightened digital engagement periods like the COVID-19 pandemic (Sashi et al., 2019; Wilk et al., 2021).

A particularly impactful form of advocacy is Online Brand Advocacy (OBA), in which customers engage in non-incentivized, positive representation of brands across online platforms, enhancing the brand's reputation and credibility (Wilk et al., 2019, 2021). By fostering OBA through positive online conversations and transparent interactions, brands can cultivate advocates who actively shape brand loyalty and perception. Notably, trust and customer satisfaction are essential drivers of OBA, with research showing that higher trust levels lead to stronger advocacy (Bhati & Verma, 2020).

To foster customer advocacy effectively, brands increasingly rely on behavior-based segmentation and analytical CRM, aiming to identify potential advocates with greater precision (Abbasimehr & Bahrini, 2022). While traditional segmentation has evolved from static demographic categories to dynamic, behavior-based models, these frameworks still struggle to fully capture the complexities of brand advocacy. For instance, the Recency, Frequency, and Monetary (RFM) model, though widely adopted to categorize high-value customers based on purchasing behavior, often fails to account for relational factors essential to brand advocacy, such as customer engagement and emotional attachment (Wei et al., 2010). Similarly, Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) models, which prioritize high-value customer relationships and profitability, may overlook customers with strong advocacy potential who do not yet meet high-value criteria (Jain & Singh, 2002). These limitations suggest that RFM and CLV alone are insufficient for identifying and cultivating advocates who contribute significantly to brand influence through online engagement.

Addressing this gap, there is a need for advanced segmentation models that integrate behavioral, relational, and emotional metrics to more accurately identify online brand advocates. Enhanced CLV models, for instance, could incorporate engagement metrics alongside traditional financial metrics, while new frameworks could apply clustering algorithms specifically tailored to highlight advocacy potential. This approach would allow companies to prioritize and engage advocates more effectively, leveraging their influence for sustained brand growth. Thus, this research investigates the question: How can online brand advocates be identified using measurable characteristics?

## Literature Review

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is essential for cultivating strong customer relationships, traditionally focusing on increasing loyalty through transactional data analysis (Roy, 2013). While valuable, this approach primarily centers on sales and purchases, offering limited insights into deeper behavioral patterns that indicate advocacy (Bailey et al., 2009). With the rise of analytical CRM, companies now leverage data analytics to map the entire customer journey, providing a more comprehensive understanding of loyalty, advocacy, and engagement behaviors beyond transactions (Jayasimha & Billore, 2016). Analytical CRM supports not only relationship-building but also advocacy marketing, which encourages relational loyalty and customer investment in the brand (Wei et al., 2010).

Advocacy marketing promotes brands as trusted partners that prioritize transparency and loyalty, aiming to foster sustained engagement and advocacy (Lawer & Knox, 2006). Analytical CRM's role in mapping the customer journey enables companies to identify and nurture advocates, encouraging them to promote the brand's best interests within their networks (Urban, 2005). Online Brand Advocacy (OBA) is a powerful aspect of this strategy, where customers voluntarily promote and defend a brand in digital spaces without incentives (Wilk et al., 2019). This advocacy extends beyond satisfaction, as loyal customers actively share positive feedback, defend the brand online, and recommend it to others, becoming key ambassadors.

To effectively identify brand advocates, companies can focus on measurable, non-transactional engagement metrics, which capture the behavioral and emotional dimensions of customer support. These characteristics include expression, engagement, and expenditure—each offering concrete indicators of potential advocacy.

### *Expression*

Customer expression encompasses the ways consumers share their positive and negative experiences, thoughts, and feelings about products, services, or brands (Chelminski & Coulter, 2011). Among these expressions, ratings and reviews stand out as quantifiable indicators of customer sentiment, offering direct feedback that can influence prospective buyers and guide brands in addressing areas of concern.

**Ratings** — Ratings serve as a simplified, quantifiable measure of customer sentiment, providing immediate feedback that can significantly impact brand perception. Positive ratings enhance brand credibility and build trust, validating the experiences of satisfied customers. Conversely, low ratings serve as critical feedback, signaling areas for improvement. Strong emotions often drive these ratings; satisfied customers are likely to give high ratings as a form of advocacy, while dissatisfied customers may leave low ratings to express grievances or seek resolution (Jayasimha & Srivastava, 2017).

**Reviews** — Reviews, on the other hand, offer a narrative context for ratings, allowing customers to elaborate on their experiences. Detailed reviews provide concrete evidence of customer sentiment, influencing potential buyers' decisions and shaping overall brand perception (Kannan & Li, 2017). Positive reviews serve as endorsements, enhancing brand reputation, while negative reviews highlight concerns that brands must address to improve customer satisfaction. Additionally, Consumer-Brand Identification (CBI) plays a key role in influencing review behaviors. Customers with a strong sense of belonging to a brand are more likely to leave supportive reviews as a form of advocacy, while weak or negative CBI can lead to critical reviews if customers feel disappointed or misaligned with the brand experience (Wilk et al., 2021).

Ratings and reviews can be instrumental in gauging customer satisfaction levels. High ratings and positive reviews typically correlate with high customer satisfaction, indicating that consumers are pleased with their experiences (Fornell et al., 2010). In contrast, low ratings and negative reviews often signal dissatisfaction and areas where the brand needs to improve.

To fully leverage customer ratings and reviews, companies should adopt engagement strategies that encourage ongoing feedback and responsiveness. Monitoring review platforms, actively responding to feedback, and participating in market conversations can help companies address both positive and negative customer expressions (Constantinides, 2008). By understanding the motivations behind customer ratings and reviews, brands can enhance customer relationships, address potential issues, and foster a supportive community that promotes brand loyalty (Bilro et al., 2019).

In summary, customer expression through ratings and reviews offers brands valuable, quantifiable insights into consumer satisfaction, emotions, and brand advocacy. Recognizing the drivers behind these expressions and responding appropriately is essential for building loyalty and cultivating a community of brand advocates.

### *Engagement*

Customer engagement (CE) behaviors go beyond transactional interactions, encompassing a range of activities that add value to the brand, such as sharing products, providing reviews, and engaging in brand-related knowledge exchange (Van Doorn et al., 2010).

Engagement is particularly evident in online brand communities, where customers connect and share experiences related to the brand. Participation in these communities fosters a sense of belonging and enhances the likelihood of customers advocating for the brand. Engaged customers are more likely to share positive reviews, promote products, and provide valuable feedback, all of which contribute to a vibrant

ecosystem of brand advocacy (Brodie et al., 2011). Specific engagement behaviors can serve as measurable characteristics for advocacy:

**Useful Reviews** — Reviews that inform and guide other consumers enhance brand credibility and influence purchase decisions (Mathur, 2019). Positive, detailed reviews serve as social proof, reinforcing trust in the brand and positioning the customer as a reliable advocate.

**Product Sharing** — Customers sharing products on social media or through personal endorsements contribute to brand visibility, spreading awareness without direct marketing costs (Kumar, 2010). This type of word-of-mouth marketing is often a marker of advocacy, as customers recommend products they trust.

**Review Sharing** — Sharing others' reviews amplifies credible customer voices, adding layers of trust in online spaces where peer recommendations are highly valued (Lawer & Knox, 2006). By sharing reviews, customers expand brand visibility and credibility, fostering a trusted community of advocates.

**Knowledge Sharing** — Engagement in online brand communities (OBCs), where customers exchange product insights and expertise, also signals advocacy potential (Wirtz et al., 2013). By actively participating in brand conversations, these customers contribute to a supportive ecosystem that benefits both the brand and its community members.

Analyzing these engagement behaviors can provide a clearer view of customers who consistently support and promote the brand. Analytical CRM can track social media interactions, review shares, and product endorsements, helping companies pinpoint advocates and measure their impact within online communities.

### *Expenditure*

Customer expenditure offers crucial insights into advocacy, as purchase-related metrics often reflect a customer's commitment and loyalty to the brand. Customer expenditure embodies the concept of Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), which serves as a comprehensive measure of the total revenue a brand can expect from a customer throughout their relationship (Venkatesan & Kumar, 2004). High CLV indicates a strong customer relationship, showcasing a customer's ongoing loyalty and advocacy for the brand (Malthouse & Blattberg, 2005). By examining specific spending metrics, companies can better identify customers with high advocacy potential:

**Add-to-Cart and Time to Purchase** — High add-to-cart rates and short purchase times often signify a strong, confident connection between the customer and the brand (Zhao et al., 2021). Customers who feel secure in their decision-making are more likely to keep items in their carts without removing them, leading to faster conversions and fewer cart abandonments (Liao et al., 2022; Wen et al., 2022). This decisiveness reflects a high level of trust and loyalty toward the brand, suggesting these customers could potentially serve as brand advocates. Monitoring these behaviors can reveal a segment of loyal customers who, driven by their positive brand experience, are likely to recommend the brand to others.

**Average Order Value (AOV) and Average Selling Price (ASP)** — Brand advocates, characterized by their loyalty and trust, often display higher AOV and ASP metrics compared to average customers. By tracking elevated AOV and ASP levels, businesses can identify customers who are consistently purchasing at higher values (McCarthy & Fader, 2018). This data provides a measurable framework for pinpointing potential advocates - customers who are highly engaged, trust the brand, and may influence others in their network (Wirtz et al., 2013). Advocates are more receptive to upselling and cross-selling efforts, purchasing complementary or higher-priced products, which signals their confidence in the brand's quality and offerings (Kumar, 2010). By tracking these elevated AOV and ASP levels, businesses can pinpoint customers who are consistently purchasing at higher values, suggesting a segment of brand-loyal customers. This data provides a measurable framework for identifying potential advocates who are highly engaged, trust the brand, and may influence others in their network to support the brand as well.

Purchase Frequency and Number of Purchase Orders — Both the frequency and total number of purchase orders placed by a customer offer insights into brand loyalty and advocacy. High purchase frequency, especially when paired with a high average order value (AOV), suggests a strong alignment with the brand's values and products, making these customers more likely to advocate (Sashi, 2012; Zhang et al., 2016). Similarly, a high number of orders reflects not only repeat purchasing behavior but also sustained brand loyalty and satisfaction, as advocates tend to make frequent, consistent purchases that highlight their reliance on and satisfaction with the brand's offerings (Oliver, 1999).

By tracking these expenditure metrics, companies gain insights into customers who not only engage in repeat purchases but also show a willingness to invest more in the brand's products. When combined with engagement and expression metrics, expenditure provides a comprehensive view of potential advocates.

## Methodology

### *Research Design*

This study adopts an Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods approach (Fetters et al., 2013), which integrates qualitative and quantitative methods in sequential phases (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010) to develop, validate, and test a comprehensive framework for identifying and assessing the characteristics of online brand advocates. This approach is well-suited for studies that involve initial exploration and subsequent testing, allowing for an in-depth, rigorous investigation (Chiarini & Kumar, 2022).

By applying an Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods approach, this research design ensures a systematic, robust development and testing process. The integration of qualitative insights in the initial phase and quantitative validation and reliability testing in the later phases creates a well-rounded, validated framework for assessing online brand advocates' characteristics.

### *Phase 1: Framework Development*

In the first phase, qualitative methods are used to explore and analyze key aspects of online brand advocates through an in-depth review of existing literature. The goal is to gather relevant insights and systematically categorize data to inform the design of a preliminary evaluation framework for online brand advocates. Building on this literature review, data grouping, and content analysis techniques are employed to identify and organize essential traits and components of online brand advocates. This qualitative phase lays the groundwork for a structured, detailed framework, aligning each factor with the broader goal of understanding brand advocacy.

### *Phase 2: Content Validation*

In the second phase, quantitative methods are used to validate the framework. A questionnaire derived from the framework is administered to a panel of 25 experts in online branding and digital fields, including e-marketplace, digital marketing, and analytical CRM. These specialists assess each component for clarity, alignment, and relevance. To measure how well each item corresponds with the research concepts, the Item-Content Validity Index (I-CVI) is employed. Content validity was selected as the primary measurement for this phase, as it evaluates the adequacy and comprehensiveness of each item within the research model (Bernard, 2018).

This study prioritizes expert qualifications over sample size, emphasizing a knowledgeable panel to gather informed insights and assessments of the model. With over 17 experts on the panel, the study achieves a minimal error margin of 0.02, ensuring reliable evaluations (Macmillan, 1971). Additionally, the Kappa coefficient is calculated to assess inter-rater reliability, further reinforcing the framework's consistency and alignment with expert judgment. This phase ensures that the framework accurately represents the characteristics of online brand advocates, confirming its validity and reliability.



Experts for this phase were selected using snowball sampling, ensuring a balanced representation from industry professionals to capture diverse perspectives. This selection process ensured that each expert brought significant, specialized knowledge to the framework assessment, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings. To qualify, experts had to meet the following criteria:

**Experience:** A minimum of 10 years in fields related to online branding or digital industries, including areas like e-marketplace, digital marketing, and analytical CRM.

**Professional Competence:** Demonstrated expertise in online branding or digital fields, with relevant experience in marketing, marketing communication, customer relations management, order management, finance, accounting, or similar domains.

**Specialized Skills:** Active involvement in digital marketing and analytical CRM activities, such as behavioral segmentation, customer data analysis, targeted digital marketing campaigns, or product research and development based on customer insights.

To assess the model's validity, the study employed the Content Validity Index (CVI) and modified Kappa statistic, both of which are suitable for evaluating content validity through expert judgment. The research instrument used a 5-point ordinal scale (1 = not relevant, 2 = somewhat relevant, 3 = moderately relevant, 4 = highly relevant, 5 = very highly relevant). The Item-level CVI (I-CVI) was calculated for each item by dividing the number of experts rating the item as "4" or "5" by the total number of experts. Following Lynn (1986) guidelines, an I-CVI score above 0.80 was considered excellent, particularly given that more than ten experts participated in the study. This threshold helped ensure that each item met high content validity standards.

The modified kappa statistic ( $k^*$ ) indicates the level of agreement of experts by calculating the probability of chance agreement ( $P_c$ ) for each item then calculating kappa following these formulas (Polit et al., 2007):

$$P_c = [N! / A! (N-A)!] * 0.5N$$

Where N = number of experts, and A = number agreeing on good relevance (rating 4 or 5)

$$k^* = (I-CVI - P_c) / (1 - P_c)$$

The modified Kappa statistic was used to interpret the agreement level among experts. Scores above 0.74 were deemed excellent, 0.60–0.74 good, 0.40–0.59 fair, and below 0.40 poor. Following calculation, items with an I-CVI of 0.78 or higher were considered excellent, regardless of the number of experts (Polit & Beck, 2006). Additionally, the Scale-level CVI (S-CVI) was calculated to assess the validity of the overall model. According to Polit et al., (2007), the S-CVI/Ave (average of I-CVI scores) is computed as the sum of I-CVI scores divided by the total number of items. An S-CVI/Ave above 0.90 indicates strong content validity, while a minimum threshold of 0.80 is acceptable for new models or instruments (Davis, 1992; Grant & Davis, 1997).

Using a panel of experts and validating with CVI and the modified Kappa statistic are established methods for assessing content validity in competency models, such as user experience design frameworks. These methods allow experts to evaluate each item's relevance, transforming expert judgments into quantifiable insights for developing a competency model. The study concludes with an analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, leading to a comprehensive discussion of the findings.

### *Phase 3: Reliability Testing*

In the final phase, quantitative reliability testing is carried out using Cronbach's alpha to evaluate the framework's internal consistency. This measure ensures that the framework reliably assesses online brand advocate characteristics. Achieving a Cronbach's alpha score within an acceptable range supports the framework's stability and dependability, making it suitable for both future research and practical application.

In the context of content validation, Cronbach's alpha serves as a statistical measure for assessing the internal consistency and reliability of items or questions within the validation process. Content validation verifies whether items accurately reflect the intended construct or domain. During this process, experts rate each item's relevance and representativeness, ensuring that the content fully captures the targeted construct. Cronbach's alpha quantifies the consistency of these expert ratings, indicating the level of agreement and alignment among their judgments. The formula for Cronbach's alpha is as follows (Cronbach, 1951):

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left( 1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k \sigma_{y_i}^2}{\sigma_y^2} \right)$$

Where  $k$  is number of items,  $\sigma_{y_i}^2$  is the variance associated with each item, and  $\sigma_y^2$  is the variance associated with the total scores.

A high Cronbach's alpha value indicates strong internal consistency among expert ratings, suggesting that the items effectively represent the intended construct. In contrast, a low Cronbach's alpha may reveal inconsistencies, signaling a need to refine or remove ambiguous items to enhance coherence. Thus, Cronbach's alpha is instrumental in content validation, offering insights into the reliability and alignment of expert judgments, which in turn strengthens the validity of the assessment tool or questionnaire.

Cronbach's alpha can be interpreted in various ways. For this research, the criteria set by Hair et al., 2010 and Taber, 2018 are used: a score above 0.80 is considered Very Reliable, between 0.60 and 0.80 as Reliable, and below 0.60 as Unreliable. This interpretation provides a clear benchmark for evaluating the framework's consistency and determining its readiness for application.

#### *Institutional Review Board Statement*

This study was conducted in compliance with the Declaration of Helsinki and received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Mahidol University (protocol code MU-CIRB 2023/317.1910, approved on 6 November 2023). Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in the study, ensuring ethical standards were upheld throughout the research process.

## **Results**

### *Conceptual Framework*

The conceptual framework development, based on a thorough literature review, defines an E<sup>3</sup> Advocacy Identifier Framework that organizes customer interactions across three primary dimensions: expression, engagement, and expenditure. Each dimension encapsulates distinct facets of customer behavior and is divided into components representing key stages in the customer journey.

The expression dimension includes two components that capture customer feedback, such as ratings and reviews, which reflect customer sentiment and inform brand perception. The engagement dimension comprises four components that represent interactive behaviors like sharing products, reviews, and knowledge within the marketplace or on social networks, fostering community and trust. Finally, the expenditure dimension includes six components that reveal spending behavior and loyalty, such as add-to-cart actions, purchase frequency, average selling price (ASP), and average order value (AOV), offering insights into customer preferences and commitment. Table 1 provides a summary of each component, including definitions, common aliases, and key references, to highlight the core concepts of expression, engagement, and expenditure.

**Table 1. Key Components of E<sup>3</sup> Advocacy Identifier Framework across Expression, Engagement, and Expenditure Dimensions**

Component & Definition	Aliases	Key References
<i>Expression</i>		
<i>Rating</i> is a customer touchpoint to quickly show satisfaction with a product, often symbolized by stars, likes, or hearts. It helps others gauge the product’s quality at a glance.	Positive Expression, Opinion Seeking, Brand Positivity, Feeling	Abdelrazek & El-Bassiouny, 2023; Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024; Bilro et al., 2019; Breidbach & Brodie, 2017; Chelminski & Coulter, 2011; Fornell et al., 2010; Jayasimha & Srivastava, 2017; Kannan & Li, 2017; Kim & Yang, 2017; Luo et al., 2020; Mahmood & Haider, 2020; Mohanty & Dey, 2020; Wilk et al., 2019
<i>Review</i> allows customers to give detailed feedback on a product, helping others make informed purchase decisions.		
<i>Engagement</i>		
<i>Useful Review</i> is one that other customers have marked as helpful by liking or rating it, signaling its value in aiding purchase decisions.	Choice Transparency, Customer Decision Support, Positive Word of Mouth, Recommendation, Information Availability, Personalization, Intention to Share, Opinion Passing	Aljarah et al., 2022; Badenes-Rocha et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2010; Lawer & Knox, 2006; C.-R. Liu et al., 2019; Mathur, 2019; Phan et al., 2020; Sashi et al., 2019; Sussman et al., 2023; Terho et al., 2022; Urban, 2005; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Wirtz et al., 2013
<i>Product Sharing</i> refers to customers sharing product details from an e-marketplace to social networks.		
<i>Review Sharing</i> is when customers share other customers' reviews from an e-marketplace to social media.		
<i>Knowledge Sharing</i> involves customers providing answers and deeper insights about a product on the e-marketplace or social media, offering others valuable information from personal experience.		
<i>Expenditure</i>		
<i>Add-to-Cart</i> is when customers place a product in their online basket, signaling an intent to buy.	Higher Sales, Purchase Intention, Discretionary Purchase, Willing to pay more	Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024; Chen et al., 2009; Choi et al., 2021; Fornell et al., 2010; Juga et al., 2018; Kumglang & Khamwon, 2022; Lantz & Hjort, 2013; Lee & Lin, 2005; Y. Liu et al., 2021; Mathur, 2019; Venkatesan & Kumar, 2004; Wilk et al., 2021; Wirtz et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2021
<i>Time to Purchase</i> is the time from a customer’s first visit to a successful purchase, reflecting satisfaction and customer experience.		
<i>Average Order Value (AOV)</i> shows customer spending patterns, helping marketers promote products aligned with affordable values to boost brand advocacy.		
<i>Average Selling Price (ASP)</i> offers insights into customer behavior and preferences across products, aiding in customer segmentation and highlighting brand advocacy’s role in growth.		
<i>Purchase Frequency</i> measures the number of purchases within a period, indicating loyalty and brand advocacy through repeat buying.		
<i>Number of Purchase Orders</i> marks the moment a customer successfully buys a		

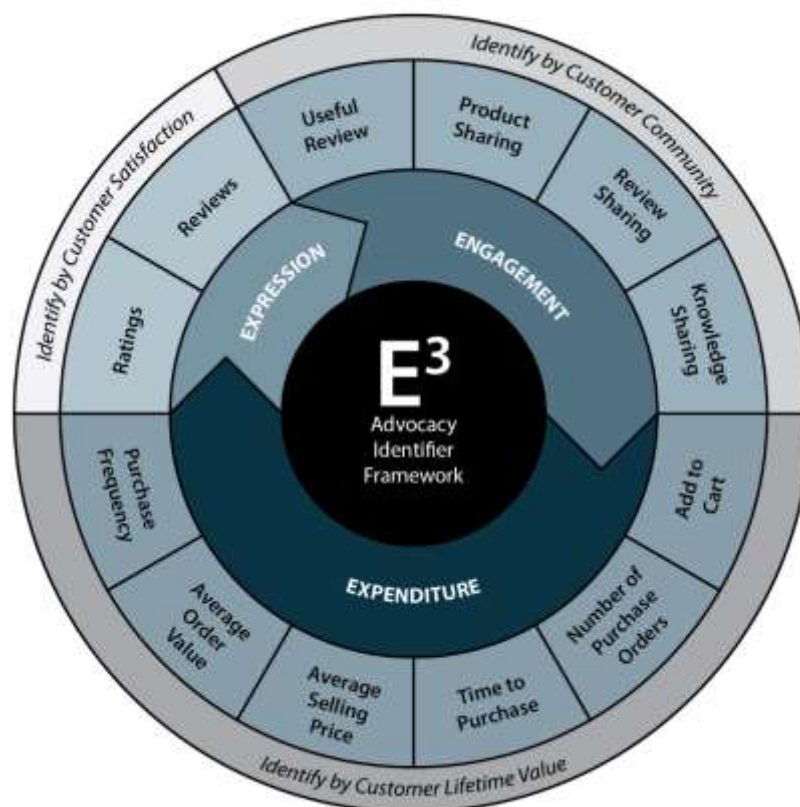


Component & Definition	Aliases	Key References
product on the e-marketplace, helping to identify purchase trends when analyzed with other metrics.		

Figure 1 illustrates the dimensions, components, and their mapping across the customer journey in the Advocacy Identifier Framework. Each dimension—expression, engagement, and expenditure—aligns with specific touchpoints in the customer journey, demonstrating how customers interact with products and the brand at various stages.

The expression dimension, mapped to the initial discovery and feedback stages, includes components such as ratings and reviews, where customers share their satisfaction and opinions. The engagement dimension spans discovery through post-purchase, capturing how customers share products, reviews, and knowledge across platforms, fostering community involvement and trust. The expenditure dimension aligns closely with purchase and loyalty stages, covering actions such as add-to-cart, purchase frequency, ASP, and AOV. Together, these dimensions and components provide a structured view of customer interactions, capturing how advocacy and loyalty build over time in the customer journey.

Figure 1. E<sup>3</sup> Advocacy Identifier Framework



#### *Demographic of Experts*

The study participants were chosen based on their substantial expertise, professional experience exceeding five years, and demonstrated proficiency in online marketplace platforms (E-marketplaces), digital marketing, and analytical customer relationship management (CRM). The primary objective of this research was to harness the expertise of these professionals to construct a comprehensive framework for identifying and assessing key attributes of customers who advocate for online businesses. This involved collecting and synthesizing pertinent data to design an evaluation framework.

A sample of 25 participants was engaged for the study. These experts were required to complete two rounds of structured questionnaires designed to gather their perspectives on the proposed characteristic evaluation framework. A total of 12 evaluative items formed the basis of the framework, reflecting critical elements identified in the literature.

All 25 questionnaires were fully completed, and the descriptive analysis of participant demographics is summarized in Table 2. The findings emphasize the diverse and extensive expertise of the selected participants, ensuring the reliability and validity of the evaluation framework.

**Table 2. Demographic of Experts**

Roles	Number	Average Years of Experience
<i>Analytical CRM</i>	7	16.14
– Vice President	1	
– Directors	4	
– Manager	1	
– Senior Officer	1	
<i>E-Marketplace Channel</i>	15	15.62
– CEO	1	
– Vice Presidents	2	
– Directors	3	
– Managers	5	
– Senior Officer	2	
<i>Digital Marketing Manager</i>	5	20.80
– Directors	2	
– Manager	1	
– Senior Officers	2	
<i>Total</i>	25	16.80 (Overall Average)

#### *Content Validation and Reliability Testing*

The reliability and validity of the framework were evaluated using the item-level content validity index (I-CVI), the scale-level content validity index with the averaging approach (S-CVI/AVE), and Cronbach's alpha. The results of the content validation and reliability analysis for each dimension—Expression, Engagement, and Expenditure—are presented in Tables 3, 4, and 5, respectively.

**Table 3. Results of Expression**

Dimension	Items	I-CVI	k*	Interpretation
Expression	Rating	0.800	0.800	Excellent
	Review	0.800	0.800	Excellent
	S-CVI/AVE (Expression)		0.800	Acceptable
	Cronbach's Alpha		0.892	Very Reliable

**Table 4. Results of Engagement**

Dimension	Items	I-CVI	k*	Interpretation
Engagement	Useful Review	0.960	0.960	Excellent
	Review Sharing	0.840	0.840	Excellent
	Product Sharing	0.800	0.800	Excellent
	Knowledge Sharing	0.800	0.800	Excellent
	S-CVI/AVE (Expression)		0.850	Acceptable
	Cronbach's Alpha		0.721	Reliable

**Table 5. Results of Expenditure**

Dimension	Items	I-CVI	k*	Interpretation
Expenditure	Add-to-Cart	0.880	0.880	Excellent
	Number of Purchase Orders	0.720	0.716	Good
	Time to Purchase	0.840	0.840	Excellent
	Average Order Value (AOV)	0.760	0.759	Good
	Average Selling Price (ASP)	0.800	0.800	Excellent
	Purchase Frequency	0.840	0.840	Excellent
	S-CVI/AVE (Expression)		0.807	Acceptable
	Cronbach's Alpha		0.690	Reliable

### *Expression*

The findings highlight the critical role of customer expression—encompassing both ratings and reviews—in influencing brand support, customer decision-making, and alignment with expectations. Customer expressions serve as key indicators of satisfaction and behavior, providing actionable insights that businesses can leverage to enhance products, services, and overall marketing strategies. Ratings, with an I-CVI of 0.80 and a kappa value of 0.80, reflect a strong level of agreement among experts regarding their relevance as indicators of consumer attitudes and actions. Positive ratings foster trust, validate product quality, and reinforce brand credibility, while high ratings signal customer satisfaction and encourage repeat purchases. Conversely, negative feedback, often stemming from dissatisfaction, identifies areas for improvement and allows businesses to refine their offerings, showcasing a commitment to quality and customer satisfaction.

Customer reviews complement ratings as they provide a deeper understanding of consumer experiences. Reviews significantly influence other customers by shaping perceptions of a product's credibility. Positive reviews act as endorsements, fostering trust and loyalty, while also attracting prospective customers. Negative reviews, while potentially discouraging purchases, are valuable for identifying shortcomings and offering opportunities for improvement. Responding authentically to feedback—whether positive or negative—not only helps in managing brand reputation but also strengthens customer trust and relationships.

On a broader scale, the Expression dimension, with an S-CVI of 0.80, highlights the collective agreement on the importance of feedback in data-driven marketing and customer segmentation. Expressions, through ratings and reviews, enable businesses to classify customers based on satisfaction levels, guiding tailored marketing efforts and personalized service delivery. This segmentation helps businesses cater more effectively to different customer groups, ensuring alignment with diverse expectations. Moreover, analyzing expression data allows firms to predict purchasing behaviors, refine marketing strategies, and foster brand loyalty through more focused campaigns.

According to experts, customer expressions are instrumental in shaping brand legitimacy and enhancing the overall perception of a company. Positive expressions inspire trust and encourage word-of-mouth endorsements, while constructive responses to negative feedback demonstrate accountability and a commitment to quality. Together, ratings and reviews form a cornerstone of customer expression, enabling businesses to bridge the gap between consumer needs and brand offerings, thereby fostering sustainable growth, enhanced customer loyalty, and improved competitive advantage.

### *Engagement*

Customer engagement serves as a fundamental pillar in shaping brand advocacy, trust, and loyalty. It encompasses a range of activities, including providing reviews, sharing product information, disseminating knowledge, and participating in discussions, all of which significantly influence purchasing decisions and brand perception. With an S-CVI/Ave score of 0.850 and a reliable Cronbach's alpha of 0.721, engagement

emerges as a robust construct for understanding customer behavior and fostering meaningful connections between brands and consumers.

Useful review, with an I-CVI score of 0.96, are universally acknowledged as critical to building brand credibility and guiding consumer decisions. Positive feedback enhances trust by offering authentic insights into product benefits, while negative reviews highlight areas for improvement. Beyond reflecting satisfaction, valuable feedback acts as an endorsement, promoting the brand through word-of-mouth advocacy. These insights allow businesses to refine their products and services, personalize marketing strategies, and foster deeper customer loyalty.

Review sharing validated by I-CVI and kappa scores of 0.84, amplifies the credibility and visibility of brands. Shared reviews, perceived as authentic and unbiased, hold more sway than traditional advertising, influencing consumer decisions and fostering trust. By encouraging this behavior, businesses not only strengthen brand-consumer relationships but also build vibrant online communities that support brand advocacy. Analyzing these reviews provides valuable data to identify trends and refine marketing strategies, further enhancing customer retention and acquisition.

Product sharing and knowledge sharing reflect high levels of customer involvement and advocacy. Both behaviors, supported by I-CVI scores of 0.80, demonstrate consumer satisfaction and trust, while contributing to user-generated content that reinforces brand legitimacy. Product sharing generates organic word-of-mouth recommendations, bolstering customer acquisition and loyalty. Meanwhile, knowledge sharing, such as participating in Q&A forums, builds a network of reliable, experience-based insights that guide potential buyers and strengthen the brand's reputation. Leveraging these interactions through CRM tools enables businesses to address consumer concerns, improve satisfaction, and refine their offerings. In addition, the knowledge management influences the sustainability marketing and product improvement (C.-H. S. Liu & Dong, 2021).

Overall, engagement emerges as a strategic asset for brands, serving both as a reflection of consumer loyalty and as a source of actionable insights. High levels of engagement indicate stronger brand trust and advocacy, providing businesses with the opportunity to enhance behavioral segmentation and data-driven marketing efforts. By analyzing engagement data, companies can develop targeted marketing campaigns, improve product offerings, and foster deeper customer connections. This not only ensures sustained customer satisfaction but also strengthens the brand's position in an increasingly competitive digital marketplace.

In essence, customer engagement, in all its forms, is a cornerstone of successful brand management. By leveraging the power of reviews, feedback, and shared knowledge, businesses can cultivate lasting relationships, drive advocacy, and achieve long-term success in the digital age.

### *Expenditure*

Expenditure is a critical behavioral metric for understanding customer interactions and brand support within online sales platforms. Experts emphasize that expenditure encapsulates key behavioral components, including purchase frequency, purchase orders, time to purchase, average order value (AOV), average selling price (ASP), and add-to-cart behavior. Together, these elements provide a comprehensive view of consumer preferences, purchasing patterns, and brand loyalty, offering actionable insights into the overall customer journey.

With a Cronbach's reliability coefficient of 0.690 and a Scale Content Validity Index (S-CVI/Ave) of 0.807, expenditure demonstrates a strong consensus among experts as a reliable measure of consumer behavior. This high level of agreement underscores its importance in shaping strategic marketing approaches and fostering brand growth.

Customer expenditure serves as a cornerstone for data-driven marketing, revealing insights into consumer habits and tendencies. Purchase frequency reflects customer satisfaction and trust, as frequent transactions

indicate a robust relationship with the brand. Purchase orders serve as indicators of customer endorsement, reflecting emotional and ethical alignment with the brand's values and offerings. The time customers take to make purchasing decisions reveals their confidence in the brand, where quick decisions signify trust, and extended deliberations highlight potential barriers. AOV and ASP provide further insights into the financial and emotional investment customers make in a brand. A higher AOV reflects trust and satisfaction, while ASP emphasizes perceptions of product value and quality. Add-to-cart behavior acts as an early indicator of consumer interest and intent, offering critical data for designing targeted promotions that convert interest into sales.

Expenditure analysis enables organizations to refine their marketing strategies and business operations. By categorizing customers based on spending patterns, businesses can achieve precise targeting and segmentation. Insights from expenditure inform the development of tailored promotions that enhance engagement and drive conversions. High expenditure is often linked to strong brand allegiance, providing opportunities to improve customer retention and foster advocacy. Furthermore, the analysis of spending behavior aids in product development, ensuring alignment with consumer expectations and competitiveness in the market. Expenditure trends also reveal emerging consumer behaviors, enabling firms to anticipate and respond to market dynamics effectively.

## Discussion

The rise of digital commerce and social media has transformed traditional marketing strategies. Industry leaders, such as Amazon, have significantly influenced consumer behavior, prompting physical retailers to adapt by prioritizing customer value, loyalty, and personalized experiences over short-term profit goals.

This research introduces the E<sup>3</sup> Advocacy Identifier Framework, which identifies and evaluates online brand advocates through measurable traits and behaviors. Brand advocates are essential in influencing purchasing decisions, serving as powerful ambassadors by amplifying marketing efforts through activities like social sharing, positive reviews, and product endorsements. The framework identifies three core dimensions—Expression, Engagement, and Expenditure—each offering actionable insights into customer advocacy.

Expression, as reflected in ratings and reviews, provides direct indicators of customer trust and satisfaction. Positive ratings enhance credibility, while negative feedback offers businesses an opportunity to improve. Reviews provide more in-depth consumer insights and influence other potential buyers, making them a powerful tool for shaping brand perception. Active engagement with customer reviews—by responding thoughtfully and integrating feedback into offerings—can strengthen relationships and foster customer loyalty.

Engagement represents active participation by customers, including behaviors such as sharing reviews, product information, and recommendations. These activities reinforce brand credibility and help establish deeper emotional connections between brands and consumers. For example, shared reviews are often perceived as more authentic and impactful than traditional advertising, significantly influencing customer decisions. By cultivating these engagement behaviors through personalized marketing and CRM tools, businesses can enhance customer retention, expand their reach, and bolster brand advocacy.

Expenditure offers a clear understanding of customer loyalty, and the value consumers place on a brand. Metrics like purchase frequency, average order value (AOV), and add-to-cart behavior provide actionable data for segmenting customers and crafting targeted marketing campaigns. High expenditure correlates with greater brand loyalty, indicating that customers who spend more are emotionally invested in the brand and likely to continue supporting it. Analyzing expenditure behavior enables businesses to predict customer trends, anticipate market changes, and develop promotions that drive further engagement.

The synergy between Expression, Engagement, and Expenditure provides a holistic view of customer behavior. While Expression offers real-time insights into satisfaction, Engagement fosters brand trust and advocacy, and Expenditure reflects customer commitment to the brand. Together, these dimensions guide businesses in refining their marketing strategies and driving long-term growth. The E<sup>3</sup> Advocacy Identifier



Framework enables companies to segment customers more precisely, tailor marketing efforts, and maximize customer lifetime value.

## Conclusion

Digital commerce has significantly disrupted traditional marketing strategies, making customer value a critical focus for brands. This research presents the E<sup>3</sup> Advocacy Identifier Framework as a systematic tool for identifying and evaluating online brand advocates. The framework bridges the gap between traditional and data-driven customer relationship management (CRM), helping businesses adopt a more personalized, long-term approach to customer engagement.

The E<sup>3</sup> Advocacy Identifier Framework identifies three core components—Expression, Engagement, and Expenditure—as key drivers of customer advocacy. Expression, through ratings and reviews, offers valuable insights into customer satisfaction and areas for improvement. Engagement, reflected in behaviors like sharing reviews and product information, enhances trust and promotes brand credibility. Expenditure provides insights into loyalty and customer commitment, further enabling businesses to tailor their marketing strategies and predict future behaviors.

Validated by experts in CRM, digital commerce, and e-marketing, the framework demonstrates high reliability and relevance for modern marketing practices. By utilizing measurable traits like frequent positive reviews, active social sharing, and purchasing behaviors, businesses can better segment their customer base and create targeted marketing strategies to build loyalty and advocacy.

This research highlights the shift from traditional CRM to more data-driven, personalized approaches that focus on long-term relationships. By leveraging the E<sup>3</sup> Advocacy Identifier Framework, brands can improve customer retention, foster trust, and drive sustainable growth in an increasingly competitive digital landscape. The framework offers businesses a valuable tool to navigate the complexities of digital marketing and maintain a competitive edge in an evolving market.

## Author Contribution

All authors contributed equally to this research. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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