

Social Media Marketing System: Conceptualization, scale development and validation

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Abstract

Purpose: Understanding what organizational factors enable a successful social media presence is a relevant issue for academics and practicing managers. The purpose of this investigation is to thus develop and validate a scale to measure a Social Media Marketing System (SMMS).

Design/methodology/approach: This paper follows a rigorous scale development process based on three stages: item generation, measurement development and instrument testing. The validity and reliability tests were conducted using data provided by social media managers and their supervisors.

Finding: The results validate a 25-item multidimensional SMMS scale that exhibits adequate internal consistency, reliability, construct validity and nomological validity. The results also show that the SMMS scale positively correlates with outcomes that are key to firm success (social media strategy success and marketing performance).

Originality: This paper conceptualizes SMMS through four dimensions: formalization, human resource management, co-creation, and marketing planning, and associates it to important firm outcomes. The newly developed measurement instrument adds to the small repository of research

scales relevant to social media and can serve as a springboard from which future work can understand social media from both an internal management perspective and an integrated outlook.

Research type: Research paper

1. Introduction

Over the last 20 years, researchers and professionals have witnessed a true marketing revolution. The digital transformation has fundamentally changed the marketing landscape, enriching the tools that firms use in their relationship with consumers and empowering consumers by facilitating their interaction with firms (Sridhar and Fang, 2019).

Social media and online communities, which are Internet-based collaborative systems, in which users consume, generate and exchange content whilst socially interacting beyond geographical boundaries, enable and encourage bidirectional communication between firms and customers (Steinhoff *et al.*, 2019). Consequently, social media has fundamentally changed the way customers and firms communicate (Liu *et al.*, 2016).

According to Hootsuite Digital (2021), the number of active social media users has grown more than 13% on average over the last year, reaching 53% of the global population as of 2020, which implies a rise of more than 1.3 million users each day, while the daily time devoted to social media has also increased. In particular, since the COVID-19 pandemic, social media usage has seen an explosive growth due to worldwide social distancing directives and lockdowns (Nabity-Grover *et al.*, 2020). As a result, nowadays, firms need to integrate social media marketing in their overall business strategy to stay competitive, as social media helps to create, nurture and maintain robust customer relationships, build brand awareness, impact consumers' attitudes and behaviors, obtain feedback, improve current products and services, and increase sales (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021).

Leung *et al.* (2013) conclude that the effective management of a firm's social media is key to achieving their desired performance, whilst McCarthy *et al.* (2014) argue that the effective management of a firm's social media presence has the potential to generate commercial value and brand equity. Therefore, it is necessary for firms to strategically use and leverage social media to obtain competitive advantages and achieve superior performance (Lamberton and Stephen, 2016). However, despite prior research emphasizing the potential benefits of firms' active presence on several digital platforms, critical questions remain unanswered (Borah *et al.*, 2020); in particular, those related to social media marketing management and the key success practices to strategically implementing social media (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021; Li *et al.*, 2021).

Whilst past conceptual studies and comprehensive qualitative reviews of social media marketing management (e.g., Effing and Spil, 2016; Malthouse *et al.*, 2013; Panagiotopoulos *et al.*, 2015; Weinberg *et al.*, 2013) provide valuable albeit mainly theoretical guidelines, the

literature has failed to provide any widely accepted and empirically validated tools to measure social media marketing management factors. This investigation therefore develops and empirically validates a scale for a Social Media Marketing System (SMMS). An SMMS is conceptualized as an integrated configuration of practices designed by the company or organization to create value for its stakeholders and achieve desirable marketing outcomes through social media technology. Several reasons justify the need for an SMMS scale that, from a holistic perspective, clearly defines the key practices for the strategic use of social media marketing.

First, there is a lack of research on social media marketing management from an overarching holistic standpoint (Felix *et al.*, 2017), likely because studying social media marketing management requires access to organizational managers, who are usually harder to access (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021), resulting in prior social media studies mainly having focused on the design of marketing messages and content (Chen *et al.*, 2020). In other words, investigations do not usually examine social media from an internal management perspective and an integrated outlook and, hence, do not explicitly identify the dimensions that comprise it and give it consistency in order to achieve high performance. This situation is surprising, given that adequate social media marketing management involves a complex and systemic mix, developed through a carefully designed process, as well as the appropriate resources and infrastructure to tackle it (Weinberg *et al.*, 2013). Correspondingly, prior investigations have shown that, when defining critical success practices for the implementation of information technology, research should take into consideration factors associated with people and processes (Chen *et al.*, 2013), not just the related technologies.

Second, the consumers of social media demand an equal amount of interactivity with firms as with peers (Berthon *et al.*, 2012; Hanna *et al.*, 2011; Rainie *et al.*, 2011); thus, social media requires a firm's constant attention, overstressing conventional organizational communication procedures. This shift in consumer expectations implies that organizational participation in social media requires the development of skills to enable more direct and personal customer-firm exchanges in (semi) public spaces (Andzulis *et al.*, 2012; Trainor, 2012).

Third, the need to manage (semi) public social media interactions has repercussions across internal processes and resources. For example, firms must establish the degree of investment and internal reorganization required to successfully engage in social media (e.g., to employ or relocate adequate employees), while internal learning procedures must incorporate training programs for social media usage and good practice, as well as to be rapidly formalized to help handle new social media challenges (Panagiotopoulos *et al.*, 2015).

The fourth and final consideration surrounds the interactive nature of social media, which means that consumers have currently become active value co-creators, i.e., they are no longer value takers (Hajli, 2013; Zwass, 2010). This co-creation environment enabled by social media

highlights the need for firms to enable and utilize consumers' active participation in the business process (Kaltcheva *et al.*, 2014). In other words, firms must prepare for and invest in their own capability to acquire, administer, and make the most of customer-generated content (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021).

A scale designed to identify key social media management factors will help understand how firms must adapt to reflect the peculiarities of this environment to positively impact their organizational outcomes. This new scale responds to professionals' need for a deeper understanding of the effective management of social media (Effing and Spil, 2016) and researchers' call to develop scales relevant to social media that capture and measure the complexity of this phenomenon (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021).

2. Conceptual background

2.1 The Social Media Marketing System definition

To conceptualize an SMMS, it is vital to first explore the definitions of the underlying terms. Previous literature reveals that there are multiple definitions for social media marketing and social media marketing strategy (see Table I). However, when analyzing the definitions of social media marketing (e.g., Felix *et al.*, 2017; Yadav and Rahman, 2017; Tuten and Solomon, 2017), two common claims appear: the use of social media technology and the need for social media marketing to have value for the organization's stakeholders. Additionally, definitions of social media marketing strategy (e.g., Ananda *et al.*, 2016; Effing and Spil, 2016; Li *et al.*, 2021) incorporate a single differential and common characteristic with respect to those of social media marketing: the need for actions, activities or processes to be integrated to achieve a common goal. [Insert Table I around here]

Since the definitions of social media marketing strategy highlight the complexity of managing social media marketing, systems theory (Kast and Rosenzweig, 1972) appears to be the appropriate theoretical background for its study, as this theory helps synthesize and analyze complexity. According to systems theory, a system is composed of interconnected parts or elements within a relationship designed to achieve a goal, where the whole cannot be explained as the sum of the parts but as a totality. A system is therefore more than work processes but involves management processes and structural arrangements shaped to direct the organization toward its goals. In this line, Deming (1986) argued that variations on firm performance result from the capability of the organizational system, so that individual workers or specific technologies only account for a minimal fraction of the variation. Consequently, managers should concentrate on designing a total system capable of attaining the preferred level of performance. This is in line with recent applications of systems theory, which consider concrete second-order systems that emphasize specific characteristics and relationships. The most prominent example thereof is seen in the field of strategic human resource management (e.g., Huselid, 1995; Boon *et al.*, 2019), where there has been a consensus on the need to study human resource systems rather

than individual practices. Other examples of a systems approach are demonstrated by Ravichandran and Rai (2000) in the field of total quality management, and Smith *et al.* (2009) in the examination of service recovery.

To define SMMS, the attributes identified in the definitions included in the previous section have been taken as a basis, while simultaneously incorporating the systems theory approach, which defines systems as organizational design endeavors. Thus, SMMS is conceptualized as an integrated configuration of practices designed by the company or organization to create value for its stakeholders and achieve desirable marketing outcomes through social media technology.

2.2 Social media marketing management research

Because the SMMS scale has not been operationalized in prior literature, a comprehensive literature review was carried out. Replicating the approach used by Olanrewaju *et al.* (2020), two prominent business/management databases were employed to source the literature: Business Source Complete (EBSCO) and Scopus. These databases offer a focus on business management, while indexing a variety of journals. Books, book chapters, reports and conference proceedings were removed due to the variabilities present in their peer review processes and more limited availability. On the other hand, journal articles were considered to be properly validated (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2005). This approach is coherent with prior review papers on social media that have also restricted their scope to journal articles (e.g., Ngai *et al.*, 2015). The keywords used were “social media management”, “social media strategy” and “social media marketing”, together with strategy, strategic, implementation or management. Consequently, in this first phase, the search returned 702 articles from EBSCO and 964 articles from Scopus published in English up to 2022.

In the second phase, duplicates were excluded. Moreover, after reviewing the articles' abstracts to ensure their relevance to the purposes of this research, most articles identified in the initial search were dismissed, since they did not focus on social media marketing management. Furthermore, several studies that focused on the specificities of a sector, such as B2B (e.g., Drummond *et al.*, 2020; Lashgari *et al.*, 2018; Wang *et al.*, 2017) were also removed. At the end of this procedure, only 54 articles remained. In the third phase, these articles were read in full to verify that they focused on the organizational practices necessary for the strategic implementation of social media marketing from a general perspective. Out of the 54 articles read, 17 met the established requirements. Based on the methodological stream, these 17 articles were classified into three groups: theoretical, empirical with qualitative methods and empirical with quantitative methods.

The first group incorporates theoretical articles that, based on the previous literature, develop frameworks or propositions. In this group, there are articles such as Kietzmann *et al.* (2011) which offer a guideline of how companies should develop strategies for social media,

called the 4 Cs: cognize, congruity, chase and curate (which implicates human resource management and policies). Next, Malthouse *et al.* (2013) present the components of the social-CRM house, which they identify as social-CRM strategy, data and information technology, the organization of people and the measuring of outcomes. Ananda *et al.* (2016) propose the N-REL framework for social media marketing activities, which divides social media strategy into three stages: strategic decisions and plans, tactical plans (social media mix decisions and networking) and social media strategic actions, which are then decomposed into three groups: representation, engagement and listening in. Moreover, Parsons and Lepkowska-White (2018) offer a framework that consists of four dimensions that summarize the actions managers perform when implementing and engaging with consumers on social media: messaging/projecting, monitoring, assessing and responding (which involves procedures and guidelines). Finally, Li *et al.* (2021) present a conceptual paper that identifies four distinct social media marketing strategies representing increasing levels of strategic maturity: social commerce strategy, social content strategy, social monitoring strategy and social CRM strategy. In the latter strategy, the firm's key activity is to empower and engage customers to obtain customer engagement and co-creation.

The second group contains articles that employ different types of qualitative methods, such as case studies, in-depth interviews or qualitative surveys. Since this is the larger set of articles, we have divided them into three subgroups attending to their main focus of analysis: strategic marketing planning, social media management and social media marketing management.

The strategic marketing planning subgroup comprises articles that primarily focus on elements related to a strategic approach to social media marketing communication but do not tackle other important management challenges, such as the people responsible for managing the firm's social media presence or the rules that must be established to achieve the successful management of social media marketing. In this group, there are articles such as Killian and McManus (2015), who through in-depth interviews conclude that there are four Cs of social media integration strategies or principles to approach customer engagement strategies for social platforms: (1) the need for consistency and integration across all marketing communications, (2) the need for customization to allow the brand messaging to feel personally crafted for individual audiences on each platform, (3) the need for commitment to relevant platforms and (4) the need for managers to respond with caution to consumer commentary in social media. More recently, Al-Essa and Yahia (2019) use a qualitative survey to detect 11 critical success factors of social media integration: understanding the variety of social media platforms, interacting with users, keeping an eye on user content, understanding the overall marketing plan, knowing the company's products/services and actions, harmonizing the brand identity between offline-online communications, having a specific social media budget, understanding the variety of audience profiles across platforms, understanding the variety of interaction tools across platforms, timing and, finally, choosing a suitable tone of voice.

The social media management subgroup involves articles that focus on the organizational pillars of a successful social media presence but do not consider the specific challenges related to a strategic approach to social media marketing planning, such as the need to integrate communication actions. In this group, there are articles such as Weinberg *et al.* (2013), from the study of one organization, identify several lessons to be learned from what they called a “social business”, which refers to an organization that has immersed itself in social media and suffered a significant organizational transformation to integrate these collaborative technologies. Later, Felix *et al.* (2017), based on the results of a qualitative survey, offer a framework of social media marketing that covers scope, culture, structure and governance.

The social media marketing management subgroup incorporates articles that employ a broader perspective, considering both strategic marketing planning success factors, as well as other relevant aspects of social media marketing management. In this group, there are articles such as Panagiotopoulos *et al.* (2015), who analyze five organizations and establish a framework of social media engagement structured around three topics: channels, audience and interactions (which includes a policies and resources subdimension). Subsequently, Choi and Thoeni (2016) employ in-depth interviews to identify four organizational processes (and their corresponding organizational activities) that firms need to adopt and implement to embrace social media, specifically: initiation, coordination, engagement and measurement. Similarly, Effing and Spil (2016) examine nine organizations and recognize three stages of social media development (initiation, diffusion and maturity), anchored in seven benchmark variables: target audience, channel choice, goals, resources, policies, monitoring and content activities. Additionally, Valos *et al.* (2017), based on in-depth interviews, telephone interviews and a qualitative survey, propose a social media marketing capability model, which presents a sequential decision-making process that integrates unique social media strengths and implementation enablers. Finally, Pour *et al.* (2021) employ qualitative content analysis to study focus group discussions and identify six success factors of social media marketing strategies, namely: strategy, process, technology, content, performance evaluation and people.

The final group of papers involves three articles that employ quantitative surveys to support their frameworks or to test their hypotheses. In this group, Chung *et al.* (2017) follow a stages-of-growth approach and recognize five stages of social media maturity (experimentation and learning, rapid growth, formalization, consolidation and integration, and institutional absorption) anchored across eight valid benchmark variables: strategy, business processes, structure, technologies adopted, application of technologies, impact on internal stakeholders, impact on external stakeholders and return on investment. Later, Tafesse and Wien (2018) argue that these staged models of social media maturity are unwieldy for operationalization; consequently, they conceptualize social media implementation as a construct integrated by four dimensions, namely: social media strategy, active presence, customer engagement initiatives and

social media analytics, but examine the impact of these dimensions separately. Finally, Marchand *et al.* (2021) discover that social media employee activities, social media measurement and social media budget impact social media performance; nevertheless, their work does not follow a systemic approach.

Table II shows a review summary of the approaches, methodologies and outcomes of the papers reviewed. As most of the reviewed papers provide only theoretical frameworks and/or use qualitative methodologies such as case studies, this investigation tries to validate a measurement instrument that integrates key management practices for the strategic use of social media marketing from a holistic and systemic standpoint.

[Insert Table II around here]

2.3 The Social Media Marketing System dimensions

The comprehensive literature review carried out shows that prior investigations focused on the organizational practices necessary for the strategic implementation of social media marketing have always considered them from a multidimensional perspective. However, the number and definition of these practices are different in each of the studies analyzed, although there are some common features.

As a result, based on the identification of the common features in the previous literature review (see Table III), this investigation considers an SMMS to be composed of four dimensions: formalization, human resource management, co-creation, and marketing planning.

[Insert Table III around here]

Formalization refers to the degree to which the firm's communication in social media is controlled by explicit rules, policies and guidelines that dictate its social media presence. This definition is adapted from similar constructs considered in the strategic planning systems (Papke-Shields *et al.*, 2002; Segars *et al.*, 1998) and organizational structure literatures (Hage, 1965; Pugh *et al.*, 1969).

Human resource management refers to the degree to which the firm has adopted a set of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable it to achieve desirable marketing outcomes through social media. This definition is adapted from the strategic human resource management literature (Boxall and Purcell, 2000; Collings *et al.*, 2021; Wright and McMahan, 1992).

Co-creation refers to the degree to which the firm provides opportunities of interaction to customers through social media to generate value. This definition is adapted from the co-creation literature (Paredes *et al.*, 2014; Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2018; Vargo and Lusch, 2008).

Marketing planning refers to the degree to which the firm employs social media strategically by means of an integrated pattern of activities, based on a careful assessment of the social media platforms and customers' motivations for brand-related social media use, to achieve its marketing objectives. This definition is adapted from the different conceptualizations of social

media marketing strategy put forward by the investigations identified in the literature review (Ananda *et al.*, 2016; Li *et al.*, 2021).

Previous investigations have evidenced that increasing levels of strategic social media maturity implicate incremental levels of formalization, resource commitment, customer involvement and collaboration, and activity planning (e.g., Chung *et al.*, 2017; Effing and Spil, 2016; Li *et al.*, 2021), thus supporting the idea that the proposed dimensions are related and a more developed SMMS entangles greater levels of all four dimensions: formalization, human resource management, co-creation, and marketing planification.

2.4 Hypotheses development for a nomological validity test

This investigation relates the SMMS construct to social media strategy success and marketing performance measurement. Social media strategy success refers to the degree to which the social media strategy achieves the corporate objectives associated with the social media presence. This definition is adapted from previous investigations into strategic information systems planning (e.g., Basu *et al.*, 2002), which have considered success a key consequence that needs to be studied. Moreover, current management and marketing literatures have made calls to account for marketing's contribution to firm performance to demonstrate its value to the firm (O'Sullivan and Abela, 2007). Marketing performance refers to the evaluation of "the relationship between marketing activities and business performance" (Clark and Ambler, 2001, p. 231). Since nowadays the marketing performance measurement is based on a multidimensional approach (Frösèn *et al.*, 2016; Morgan *et al.*, 2002) to provide a more complete description of marketing's contribution, we consider the consumer and financial metrics of marketing performance.

Based on the SMMS dimensions proposed, firms with a more developed SMMS have a social media presence ruled by greater degrees of formalization, human resource management, co-creation, and marketing planification. Furthermore, according to the results of the articles reviewed, greater degrees of the system's dimensions are related to greater degrees of social media implementation and maturity.

Formalization is critical to obtaining positive outcomes as a result of the firm's social media presence. Procedures and guidelines are necessary in social media management to help prevent inappropriate feedback and ignorance of use limits from social media managers, which could negatively impact firm reputation, brand value and consumer trust (Burkhalter *et al.*, 2014; Culnan *et al.*, 2010; DiStaso and McCorkindale, 2013; Leung *et al.*, 2013; Salkhordeh, 2009). Moreover, firm guidelines regarding social media use help ensure information accuracy and message consistency across the different channels used (Howard *et al.*, 2014; Panagiotopoulos *et al.*, 2015; Valos *et al.*, 2017). To facilitate this, guidelines and procedures must guide content development and interactions with users on social media (Killian and McManus, 2015; Felix *et al.*, 2017).

Moreover, previous research has highlighted that many of the difficulties associated with social media management are related to the inadequate allocation of resources (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2011; Järvinen *et al.*, 2012; Schultz and Peltier, 2013), both in terms of the number of personnel assigned to social media and the lack of up-to-date skills (Effing and Spil, 2016; Quinton and Fennemore, 2013). An active presence on social media constitutes a challenge for many firms due to the heterogeneity and rapid evolution of social media platforms, as well as the high volume and complexity of the data obtained from them, which impedes their management and analysis (Gibbs *et al.*, 2015; Hsu and Srivastava, 2011). Nevertheless, expert interviews and previous studies defend the notion that digital marketing and social media processes should not be outsourced (Dutta, 2010; Tiago and Veríssimo, 2014), since quick and effective responses to consumers can only be achieved when social media management is carried out by full time employees (Valos *et al.*, 2017). Howard *et al.* (2014) argue that firms must establish specific roles or positions, such as social media manager, to, among other motives, focus social media efforts on supporting the firm's strategic objectives. To employ personnel without strategic, digital and technical knowledge poses a great problem for the integration of the social media plan and for the alignment of related activities (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). As Felix *et al.* (2017) underline, without proper education and training of social media managers, the quality and professionalism of the actions carried out on social media can seriously decline.

Previous research has also shown that social media should not be a platform of information dissemination (Chen *et al.*, 2017), but rather a platform for participation (Kamboj and Sarmah, 2018). In this cocreation-coproduction process, online conversations offer great opportunities for firms to listen, learn and engage, and use what they have learned to innovate and provide solutions that consumers want (Weinberg *et al.*, 2013). In other words, social media has provided firms with a remarkable opportunity to determine customers' wants and needs and to invite customers to co-create new services with them (Luo *et al.*, 2015). For example, Rathore *et al.* (2016) and Zhang *et al.* (2020) have highlighted the fundamental role that social media plays in firms' product development processes and performance. As social media data enable firms to obtain customer insights to make sound business decisions (Gang *et al.*, 2020), firms should procure, communicate and reply to social media information and the products resulting from customer-firm co-creations (Chuang, 2020).

Finally, prior literature has shown that a successful social media presence entails significant levels of social media planification (e.g., Killian and McManus, 2015; Tafesse and Wien, 2018). Conducting a planned action on social media requires that the specific objectives to be achieved be properly aligned with both the firm's objectives (Dutta, 2010; Felix *et al.*, 2017) and with the general marketing strategy (Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011; Hootsuite, 2018), whilst simultaneously taking into consideration the fact that the choice of the most suitable social media platform(s) for the firm depends on the target audience and the content to be communicated

(Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Panagiotopoulos *et al.*, 2015; Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011; Zhu and Chen, 2015). Social media actions must therefore be congruent and consistent with those of other media used to reach consumers (Hanna *et al.*, 2011; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Killian and McManus, 2015), as well as with interventions carried out across the various social media platforms (Killian and McManus, 2015; Mergel and Bretschneider, 2013; Panagiotopoulos *et al.*, 2015; Valos *et al.*, 2017), avoiding contradictory messages and uncertainty about brand position, to improve consumers' experience. Moreover, firms must be especially careful with the frequency and scheduling of content updates on social media (Howard *et al.*, 2014; Panagiotopoulos *et al.*, 2015) to guarantee a constant and adequate presence on each platform (Barnes, 2014), whilst taking into consideration the notion that the level (or volume) of updates on each platform must be determined according to its characteristics and operating dynamics (Tafesse and Wien, 2018).

As a result, social media users that follow the social media of a firm with an SMMS are likely to engage in more failure-free effective interactions; similarly, firms with an SMMS are more aware of incipient market opportunities and more capable of developing new products/services in accordance with their customers' requirements. Thus,

Hypotheses: Firms with a more developed SMMS experience greater (1) social media strategy success, (2) consumer-related marketing performance and (3) financial-related marketing performance.

3. Instrument development

To produce a reliable and valid measurement instrument for SMMS, this investigation follows recent scale development studies in Internet and social media literature (e.g., Baldus *et al.*, 2015; Cheung *et al.*, 2020; Hille *et al.*, 2015; Walsh *et al.*, 2016). In the following sections we provide details on the entire process and its main phases (see Figure 1).

[Insert Figure 1 around here]

3.1 Phase 1: Item generation

A qualitative exploration of the conceptual domain of SMMS was used to generate an initial pool of 99 items. The opinions of practicing managers, obtained through personal interviews with them, were considered. Interviews with managers generally lasted 60 minutes and largely consisted of open-ended questions that had a starting point of the dimensions identified in the literature review. The rich information derived from the managers' opinions provided strong support for the dimensions obtained from the literature review.

3.2 Phase 2: Measurement development

Subsequently, the clarity and non-redundancy of the set of items generated was assessed by academics unrelated to the study, who also assigned the items to each of the four dimensions. In this stage, an item was also removed if half of the experts understood that it was made redundant by another item. To assign an item to any of the four dimensions, following DeVellis (2003), each

item had to be assigned by at least 70% of the experts to the same dimension to be maintained. Therefore, at the end of this stage, the SMMS measurement scale consisted of 31 items.

The initial review was followed by a pre-test carried out in the Madrid Tourism Fair in which 97 social media managers from different tourism firms participated in order to verify, at a general level, proper comprehension of the different items. After the pre-test, a number of items were modified to avoid possible confusion or doubt in their interpretation, whereas others were eliminated as redundant. As a result of this purification process, the final SMMS measurement scale consisted of 25 items. Table IV illustrates the set of 25 items used in the final version of the questionnaire, as well as the dimension to which each item was assigned.

[Insert Table IV around here]

3.3 Phase 3: Instrument testing

Most social media studies have employed data from social media users to test models and develop inferences. This investigation differs from such efforts in that the data used was obtained from social media managers and their supervisors.

According to “Hootsuite Barometer. Annual report on how companies use social media. 2018 SPAIN REPORT” (Hootsuite, 2018), the organizational management of social media is carried out by an internal centralized team or department in 79% of firms (this percentage is highest of all the European countries that participate in the barometer), in 14% by several internal teams or departments and in only 7% is it outsourced (5% partially and 2% fully). For this reason, social media managers from firms that have internalized this service are in a privileged position to inform researchers about both the design and the implementation of the firm’s social media management system.

Data collection was carried out over a year. We contacted 1892 Spanish firms in the tourism sector employing internal social media management personnel. Respondents were assured of the anonymity of their responses and the opportunity to receive feedback. To maximize the response rate, we contacted the companies a week after the initial distribution of the survey. Data were obtained from 190 manager-supervisor dyads (from 190 firms in the tourism sector).

The SMMS construct was measured by the previously presented 25 items using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = completely disagree to 7 = completely agree, with information provided by social media managers.

Regarding the profile of the firms, 44.21% had fewer than 49 employees, 37.37% between 50 and 250, and 28.42% more than 250. Regarding the social media managers’ characteristics, 66.84% were women and 33.16% were men, with an average age of 35.35 years, an average firm seniority of 5.28 years and an average experience as social media manager of 3.83 years and in the tourism sector of 8.94 years.

3.3.1 Exploratory factor analysis

Before carrying out the confirmatory factor analysis, the 25 items comprising the four dimensions of SMMS were subjected to an exploratory factor analysis using SPSS. The first step was to measure the sampling adequacy by employing the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity: the KMO measure achieved 0.935 and Bartlett's test 3332.94 ($gl=300$), with a significance level of $p<0.001$. These numbers suggest that the data is adequate to carry out the principal component analysis (Walsh *et al.*, 2016). A varimax rotated factor analysis using the eigenvalue-greater-than-one criterion (Table V) revealed, as expected, four distinct factors that corresponded to the four SMMS dimensions and that accounted for 66.35 percent of the variance.

Four problematic cross-loads (i.e., greater than 0.4) were identified in the rotated factors and one of the items that loaded on component 4 scored relatively low (i.e., lower than 0.55). Although removing these items could increase the dimensions' reliability, we decided to verify if there were problems in the confirmatory factor analysis before eliminating them, since we considered the information obtained from these items to be sufficiently relevant and different from that obtained from the other items.

[Insert Table V around here]

3.3.2 Confirmatory factor analysis

3.3.2.1 Testing competing models

Next, we performed several confirmatory factor analyses of SMMS using EQS 6.1 and the robust maximum likelihood estimation method. The first analysis consisted of loading the 25 items of the SMMS in a first-order reflective factor in order to check the goodness-of-fit of the one factor model to the data. The goodness-of-fit indices were unsatisfactory ($S-B\chi^2$: 864.68 (d.f. =275) $p < 0.01$; $\chi^2/d.f. = 3.14$; CFI = 0.77; IFI = 0.77; RMSEA = 0.11; AIC = 314.69; CAIC = -853.25).

The CFI and the IFI evaluate the proportional increase in the fit of the measurement model on a more restrictive base model (Bentler, 1990; Bollen, 1989); specifically, the CFI is one of the most reliable incremental adjustment indices and the most widely used in the marketing literature (McDonald and Ho, 2002). For CFI to indicate an acceptable fit, it must reach a cutoff value of 0.90 (Bentler, 1990). In addition, the RMSEA is an absolute fit index which indicates how well the model, with unknown but optimally chosen parameter estimates, would fit the population covariance matrix (Byrne, 1998). Indeed, it has recently been called 'one of the most informative fit indices' (Diamantopoulos and Sigauw, 2000, p. 85). Furthermore, RMSEA shows acceptable fit with values below 0.08 (Bentler, 1990). Finally, the AIC is used to compare competing non-nested models; the lower the AIC index, the better the fit (Akaike, 1987).

The second analysis consisted of correlating the four dimensions that constitute SMMS and checking the goodness-of-fit of the four factors model to the data. The goodness-of-fit indices were now satisfactory ($S-B\chi^2$: 507.46 (d.f.=269) $p < 0.01$; CFI = 0.91; IFI = 0.91; RMSEA = 0.07;

AIC = -30.55; CAIC = -1172.99), which supports the idea of SMMS as a multidimensional construct.

The next step to validate the SMMS scale was to determine the existence of a latent construct (second-order reflective factor) underlying the identified dimensions (first-order reflective factors): formalization, human resource management, co-creation and marketing planning, in line with the “systemic” view. The second-order confirmatory factorial analysis results show satisfactory goodness-of-fit indices (S-B χ^2 : 510.88 (d.f.=271) $p < 0.01$; CFI = 0.91; IFI = 0.91; RMSEA = 0.07; AIC = -31.12; CAIC = -1182.07). These results support the theoretical indication, since all dimensions indeed converged onto a single latent factor.

When analyzing the SMMS structure, it is vital to note that the second-order factor constitutes a way of explaining the covariance among the first-order factors more parsimoniously (Segars and Grover, 1998). Consequently, a second-order model can never present better goodness-of-fit indices than the correlated first-order model (Smith *et al.*, 2009). The efficacy of the second-order factor can be assessed using the target coefficient, which is computed by dividing the chi-square of the first-order factor by the chi-square of the second-order one (Marsh and Hocevar, 1985). The target coefficient represents the percent of variation in the first-order constructs explicated by the second-order construct. The upper limit of the target coefficient is 1.0, with higher numbers implying better representation. In our study, the target coefficient was 0.99, which lends support to the higher-order SMMS construct.

3.3.2.2 Reliability and convergent and discriminant validity

Construct reliability and convergent validity were supported for all dimensions, as well as the second-order factor, as they manifest a composite reliability and an average variance extracted (AVE) greater than the recommended threshold values of 0.6 and 0.5, respectively (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Moreover, all constructs show a Cronbach’s alpha greater than 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). In addition, all standardized lambda parameters were greater than 0.5 and thus significant, as recommended for newly developed items (Awang, 2015). Together, these tests (see Table VI) provide evidence of reliability and validity (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).

[Insert Table VI around here]

Finally, as displayed in Table VII, the discriminant validity was also supported, since correlations among all dimensions showed confidence intervals that did not include the unit value, and their squared value did not exceed the AVE (Boudreau *et al.*, 2001; Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

[Insert Table VII around here]

3.3.2.3 Predictive validity

To ensure the predictive validity of the SMMS construct, it is necessary to relate its scores to scores on theoretically associated outcome variables (Walsh *et al.*, 2016); in this study, this denotes social media strategy success, consumer-related marketing performance and financial-

related marketing performance (see Table VIII). Social media strategy success was measured in a range of 1 to 7 using four items adapted from Kuester *et al.* (2017). Consumer-related marketing performance metrics were evaluated in a range of 1 to 7 against the firms' objectives in the year prior to the study using three items commonly referred to in the literature (Furrer *et al.*, 2007): consumers' level of satisfaction, loyalty and staying with the firm and brand knowledge. The reference to firms' internal goals helps to control for variances across different tourism sectors; hence, making comparisons between individual firms in the sample more meaningful (Briggs *et al.*, 2020). Financial metrics include two items commonly referred to in the literature (O'Sullivan and Abela, 2007; Tippins and Sohi, 2003), namely sales and profitability, as prior investigations have indicated that managers counteract profitability and sales growth (McKee *et al.*, 1989; Slater and Narver, 1996). Financial-related marketing performance metrics were evaluated in a range from 1 to 7 against firms' main competitors to introduce an explicit reference to the attainment of competitive advantages (Weerawardena *et al.*, 2006) at the same time as decreasing the subjectivity of the response as it establishes a point of reference from which to make the comparison (Kraft, 1990). While perceptual judgments have a potential for self-reporting bias, prior research has also shown that perceived performance can serve as a reasonable substitute for objective measures and that it helps to increase response rates as managers prefer to avoid offering precise quantitative data (Taylor and Wright, 2003).

[Insert Table VIII around here]

Data for the independent variable – SMMS – were provided by social media managers, whereas data for the dependent variables – social media strategy success and marketing performance – were provided by their supervisors. Thus, data for the independent and dependent variables were provided by different informants in order to reduce the possibility of common-method biases (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).

The correlations between the average SMMS score and the average score of social media strategy success was positive and significant ($r = 0.43$, $p < 0.01$), as were the correlations between the average SMMS score and the average scores of consumer-related marketing performance ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.01$) and financial-related marketing performance ($r = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$). These results confirm strong relationships between the constructs and suggest criterion-related validity of the SMMS scale. However, to expand the study of the SMMS scale, we also analyzed the correlations between the average scores of the different dimensions of the SMMS scale and the outcome variables. The results inform the study that all dimensions of the SMMS were significantly and positively related to all outcome variables. Nevertheless, these relationships differ in their level of intensity, being marketing planning and formalization the dimensions with a greater effect on the outcome variables. Means, standard deviations and correlations appear in Table IX.

[Insert Table IX around here]

Next, to further provide evidence of criterion-related validity, SMMS was used as a predictor of these three outcomes (i.e., social media strategy success, consumer-related marketing performance and financial-related marketing performance) in a structural equation model using Stata 15.0 (Table X and Figure 2). We included social media investment, communication investment and firm size (all measured with data provided by supervisors) as control variables to isolate any potential systematic impact of these factors on the study variables, given their potential effect on these outcomes. Firms that have larger social media and communication budgets and size will have greater opportunities to finance social media marketing activities, such as social media advertising, develop their digital infrastructure and/or hire social media consultants, which could have a subsequent positive impact on social media strategy success and marketing performance.

[Insert Table X around here]

[Insert Figure 2 around here]

The goodness-of-fit indices are indicative of a satisfactory fit of the model to the data. SMMS was significantly and positively related to social media strategy success [$\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI (0.14, 0.41)] and consumer-related marketing performance [$\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI (0.21, 0.58)], thus supporting H1 and H2, but SMMS was not significantly related to financial-related marketing performance [$\beta = 0.01$, $p > 0.05$, 95% CI (-0.15, 0.17)]. However, strategy success has been associated with performance (Krush *et al.*, 2015) and social media with market value (Kim *et al.*, 2015); consumer metrics, such as loyalty and satisfaction, have also been shown to lead to financial ones, such as sales and profits (Lehmann and Reibstein, 2006; Otto *et al.*, 2020). Consequently, the indirect effect of SMMS on financial-related marketing performance was then computed using bootstrapped 95 percent confidence intervals (derived from 5,000 replications) in line with Preacher *et al.* (2007). Results show that the indirect relationship via social media strategy success and consumer-related marketing performance was positive and significant [$\beta = 0.02$, $p < 0.10$, bias-corrected 95% CI (0.01, 0.06)], as well as the indirect relationship through consumer-related marketing performance [$\beta = 0.04$, $p < 0.05$, bias-corrected 95% CI (0.01, 0.09)], partially supporting H3. Thus, SMMS has significant criterion validity with respect to these outcomes.

4. Discussion

The main purpose of this paper was to develop and validate a scale that uncovers firm SMMS that could potentially result in better firm outcomes. The findings demonstrate that SMMS consists of four dimensions: formalization, human resource management, co-creation, and marketing planning. The scale also exhibits acceptable validity and reliability. Additionally, the scale possesses predictive validity since it is positively correlated with key outcome indicators: social media strategy success, consumer-related marketing performance and financial-related marketing performance.

4.1 Theoretical implications

This research responds to the need for a deeper understanding of the strategic use of social media (VanMeter *et al.*, 2018), which will help practitioners act more effectively in this area, as well as to the call for validated scales specific to the social media domain (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021), which will help researchers test potential models on how a firm's management of social media marketing impacts behavior.

In current times, firms' competitiveness necessitates that they incorporate a systemic approach to social media marketing management to give an effective response to consumer needs. A systemic approach to social media marketing management implies that a firm accepts that the comprehensive management of firm-consumer interactions achieves a superior result than that obtained when using interventions that are independent or inconsistent with each other. This agrees with firms' ongoing interest in promoting integrated, systematic approaches in the search for operational excellence (Smith *et al.*, 2009).

To the best of our knowledge, this investigation constitutes the first empirical attempt to develop and validate a scale to measure interconnected social media management factors that contribute to firm outcomes. Utilizing a rigorous scale development process (Balduš *et al.*, 2015; Hille *et al.*, 2015; Walsh *et al.*, 2016), this investigation builds on prior qualitative studies (e.g., Effing and Spil, 2016; Malthouse *et al.*, 2013; Panagiotopoulos *et al.*, 2015; Weinberg *et al.*, 2013) which consider social media management to be a complex multidimensional endeavor. Given that a firm's social media managers are in a privileged position to report upon the design and implementation of the firm's social media management system, unlike many prior studies on social media that employ consumer data (see Busalim and Hussin, 2016, for a review), we use data provided by social media managers to validate the SMMS scale. Moreover, in line with DeVellis's (2016) proposal that it is key in scale development to obtain the concept definition of the rater, this investigation also incorporated the opinions of practicing managers in the elaboration of the initial pool of items, and later in the pre-test of the scale.

The SMMS scale extends the literature's theoretical understanding of the key factors of social media management. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis results support a four-dimensional structure for the scale items. At a general level, this investigation suggests the need for firms, when approaching social media management, to tackle it from a systemic perspective and simultaneously consider it from a multidimensional perspective in order to adequately address the different aspects related to effective social media management. The findings show that a more developed SMMS is related to greater social media strategy success and consumer-related marketing performance, and through these outcomes to greater financial-related marketing performance. Firms are focusing their social media presence on the improvement of brand evaluations (Naylor *et al.*, 2012) and the nurturing of closer connections with customers (Rapp *et al.*, 2013). Since these outcomes are enclosed in the consumer-related marketing performance

indicator, it seems reasonable that the successful management of social media marketing impacts financial-related marketing performance via consumer-related marketing performance.

Finally, the results obtained in relation to the dimensions that make up the SMMS construct show that marketing planning and formalization are the dimensions that load most strongly, followed by human resource management and, lastly, co-creation. These findings exhibit the special relevance of an integrated, consistent and adapted presence on social media, as well as clear procedures and guidelines on the development of a firm's social media presence, bringing clarity to its social media marketing management. Likewise, they facilitate a greater understanding of and better practice of social media marketing management by firms.

4.2 Managerial implications

Managerially, this investigation has relevant implications for firms. First, the findings show that an SMMS positively correlates with key organizational performance indicators. Consequently, digital marketing courses could focus not only on the impact of different social media content or strategies on social media success, but also consider organizational factors. Universities and employment counseling agencies should consider the four dimensions of an SMMS when designing social media courses, emphasizing the relevance of marketing planning and formalization, as well as human resource management and customer co-creation.

Second, managers can use the SMMS scale as a diagnostic tool. In this line, any firm can compare its social media marketing management system with the system defined in this work. By using the dimensions identified in the SMMS as a reference, it can assess whether its current management system is complete or should be modified to include dimensions not yet integrated within it. Likewise, those firms that are starting out in this environment and even those that are not yet present on social media can use this conceptualization of the SMMS to establish the guidelines and fundamental bases that will govern their social media marketing management model. Our findings confirm that to successfully engage in social media firms need to increase the availability of the appropriate procedures and guidelines, in addition to other regulations.

4.3 Limitations and future lines of research

Despite the contributions made, this research is not without its limitations. The validation of the SMMS was carried out using firms from the tourism sector only. Even though it is one of the activity sectors in which social media has the most presence and relevance (Leung *et al.*, 2013) – and even though only a few empirical investigations in the hospitality industry examine the impact of using social media on firm performance (Tajvidi and Karami, 2021) – focusing only on this sector limits the generalizability of the results obtained. Thus, a more comprehensive investigation into the SMMS is needed to evaluate how the four dimensions defined here (formalization, human resource management, co-creation, and marketing planning) play out across different contexts and sectors. Furthermore, this study employs individual SMMS perceptions at the social media manager level. This represents a positive development since most

studies on social media have been carried out with consumer or general management data. Nevertheless, further research is needed using data in and across firm levels; for example, SMMS perceptions of middle or senior management may vary.

The core objective of this study was to propose an acceptable scale for social media marketing management, not to develop a nomological network. Future investigations could employ this new scale as a basis on which to test a broader net of interrelations. Identifying the antecedents of an SMMS could help the literature understand why some firms show a more developed SMMS. Likewise, future studies should analyze through which processes the SMMS construct impacts social media strategy success and marketing performance.

5. Conclusion

To understand the critical success practices that impact social media implementation, this paper defines an SMMS as an integrated configuration of practices designed by the company or organization to create value for its stakeholders and achieve desirable marketing outcomes through social media technology. Based on this conceptualization, it proposes a four-dimensional scale that correlates positively with social media strategy success, consumer-related marketing performance and financial-related marketing performance. In particular, the results show that marketing planning and formalization are the most important dimensions, followed by human resource management and co-creation. Therefore, firms need to tackle social media marketing management from a systemic and multidimensional perspective to adequately address the different aspects needed to be successful in social media.

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Table I. Social media marketing and social media marketing strategy definitions

Social media marketing	
Felix <i>et al.</i> (2017, p. 123)	An interdisciplinary and cross-functional concept that uses social media (often in combination with other communications channels) to achieve organizational goals by creating value for stakeholders.
Yadav and Rahman (2017, p. 1296)	A process by which companies create, communicate, and deliver online marketing offerings via social media platforms to build and maintain stakeholder relationships that enhance stakeholders' value by facilitating interaction, information sharing, offering personalized purchase recommendations, and word of mouth creation among stakeholders about existing and trending products and services.
Tuten and Solomon (2017, p. 18)	The utilization of social media technologies, channels, and software to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that have value for an organization's stakeholders
Social media marketing strategy	
Ananda <i>et al.</i> (2016, p. 173)	The integrated means and set of actions by which a company or organization expects to achieve its marketing objectives and meet the requirements of its target market through the use of social media tools.
Effing and Spil (2016, p. 2)	A goal-directed planning process for creating user generated content, driven by a group of internet applications, to create a unique and valuable competitive position.
Li <i>et al.</i> (2021, p. 54)	An organization's integrated pattern of activities that, based on a careful assessment of customers' motivations for brand-related social media use and the undertaking of deliberate engagement initiatives, transform social media connectedness (networks) and interactions (influences) into valuable strategic means to achieve desirable marketing outcomes

Table II. A summary of the literature review on social media marketing management

Study	Group	Approach	Methodology	Outcome
Kietzmann <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Theoretical	Not specified	Based on bloggers ideas	Theoretical framework
Malthouse <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Theoretical	Not specified	Literature review	Theoretical framework
Weinberg <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Qualitative – social media management	Community approach (Tönnies, 1887)	Case study. 1 organization	Theoretical framework
Killian and McManus (2015)	Qualitative – strategic marketing planning	Not specified	In-depth interviews. 7 senior managers responsible for the digital strategy of brands and agency managers responsible for the digital strategy of a firm	Theoretical framework
Panagiotopoulos <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Qualitative – social media marketing management	Responsiveness approach (Meehan and Dawson, 2002)	Case study. 5 organizations	Theoretical framework
Ananda <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Theoretical	Marketing organization theory (Hult, 2011)	Literature review	Theoretical framework
Choi and Thoeni (2016)	Qualitative – social media marketing management	Organizational process approach	In-depth interviews. 17 managers, executives or owners of 14 organizations	Theoretical framework
Effing and Spil (2016)	Qualitative – social media marketing management	Stages-of-growth approach	Case study. 9 organizations	Stage of evolution
Chung <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Quantitative	Stages-of-growth approach	Survey. 52 managers (mainly upper management not directly involved in social media implementation)	Stage of evolution
Felix <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Qualitative – social media management	Discovery-oriented, theories-in-use approach	Qualitative survey. 50 social media marketing experts	Theoretical framework
Valos <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Qualitative – social media marketing management	Resource-based theory (Barney, 1991)	Interviews. 20 senior executives. Qualitative survey. 20 new senior executives.	Theoretical framework
Parsons and Lepkowska-White (2018)	Theoretical	Not specified	Literature review	Theoretical propositions
Al-Essa and Yahia (2019)	Qualitative – strategic marketing planning	Not specified	Qualitative questionnaire. 90 business personnel	Theoretical framework
Tafesse and Wien (2018)	Quantitative	Not specified	Survey. 141 marketing, brand, commercial, communication or information managers	Social media performance, marketing performance
Li <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Theoretical	Customer engagement theory (Harmeling <i>et al.</i> , 2017) and stages-of-growth approach	Conceptual paper	Theoretical framework
Marchand <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Quantitative	Resource-based theory (Barney, 1991)	Survey. 165 brands and 198 social media, marketing or communication managers	Social media performance
Pour <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Qualitative – social media marketing management	Not specified	Focus group. 9 social media marketing managers	Theoretical framework

Table III. The common practices of existing research on social media marketing management

	FORMALIZATION		HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT			CO-CREATION		MARKETING PLANNING					
	<i>Corporate regulations</i>	<i>Interaction guidelines</i>	<i>Human resource provision</i>	<i>Training</i>	<i>Recognition</i>	<i>Promoting participation</i>	<i>Using feedback</i>	<i>Audience monitoring</i>	<i>Communication consistency</i>	<i>Platform adaptation</i>	<i>Strategy alignment</i>	<i>Set and monitor objectives</i>	<i>Content planning</i>
Kietzmann <i>et al.</i> (2011)		X	X			X	X	X		X	X		
Malthouse <i>et al.</i> (2013)	X	X	X	X								X	
Weinberg <i>et al.</i> (2013)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Killian and McManus (2015)		X				X	X	X	X	X			X
Panagiotopoulos <i>et al.</i> (2015)	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X			X
Ananda <i>et al.</i> (2016)						X	X	X			X	X	
Choi and Thoeni (2016)	X	X	X					X			X	X	
Effing and Spil (2016)	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
Chung <i>et al.</i> (2017)				X		X	X					X	
Felix <i>et al.</i> (2017)	X			X		X	X						
Valos <i>et al.</i> (2017)		X	X	X				X	X	X	X		
Parson and Lepkowska-White (2018)	X	X				X	X	X		X			X
Tafesse and Wien (2018)						X		X			X	X	X
Al-Essa and Yahia (2019)								X	X	X	X		
Li <i>et al.</i> (2021)						X	X					X	
Marchand <i>et al.</i> (2021)	X										X	X	
Pour <i>et al.</i> (2021)			X					X		X	X	X	X

Table IV. Dimensions and items of the SMMS scale

Formalization
FORM1- There are written guidelines and protocols that regulate corporate communication on social media (e.g., employee's code of conduct).
FORM2- The firm's guidelines for interacting on social media indicate what content is appropriate.
FORM3- The firm's guidelines for interacting on social media establish how to manage different situations (e.g., negative and positive comments).
FORM4- A formal description of the brand positioning is provided to employees empowered to act in social media to guide their communication.
Human resource management
RRHH1- This firm assigns full time employees with professional experience to manage social media.
RRHH2- Employees receive specific training for the use of social media.
RRHH3- Social media managers receive training to have the skills and knowledge necessary to work on social media.
RRHH4- Social media managers are rewarded for successful interactions on social media.
Co-creation
COCRE1- Consumers social media participation is encouraged to identify desirable currently unavailable characteristics for products/services.
COCRE2- The firm asks consumers through social media their opinions and feedback for the development of new products/services.
COCRE3- The firm allows consumers to get actively involved through social media in the development of communication campaigns (e.g., message design, ads choice, etc.).
COCRE4- The firm asks social media users to provide information about its new products/services to other potential consumers.
COCRE5- The firm uses communication among social media users as feedback to develop/improve its products/services.
Marketing planning
PLAN1- Before committing to a social platform, this firm identifies in which social platforms its main audiences are.
PLAN2- Before committing to a social platform, the firm carefully analyzes the types of consumers and conversations held on said platform.
PLAN3- Before choosing a social platform, the firm considers the different characteristics, advantages, and limitations of the various platforms available.
PLAN4- The social media strategy is closely aligned with the firm's marketing strategy.
PLAN5- The firm's interaction with consumers through social media is consistent with that it has in other contact points (e.g., customer service).
PLAN6- Interactions through social media are consistent in content and tone of message (e.g., a tweet and a Facebook).
PLAN7- The firm's presence in social media (e.g., content, design, communication style) is adapted to the different platforms.
PLAN8- The firm's presence in social media is adapted to different access devices (e.g., smartphones).
PLAN9- The different motivations of the users of the various social platforms are considered when defining their presence in them.
PLAN10- In social media planning, concrete and measurable objectives are set.
PLAN11- Social media updates are carefully planned.
PLAN12- The firm periodically assesses whether its social media objectives have been reached.

Table V. Rotated factor loadings for the 25-item SMMS scale

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
FORM1	0.21	0.23	0.69	0.30
FORM2	0.34	0.12	0.83	0.17
FORM3	0.38	0.14	0.80	0.12
FORM4	0.45	0.24	0.58	0.27
RRHH1	0.54	0.01	0.08	0.45
RRHH2	0.22	0.17	0.16	0.84
RRHH3	0.18	0.21	0.18	0.82
RRHH4	0.22	0.17	0.28	0.63
COCRE1	0.36	0.69	0.12	0.04
COCRE2	0.21	0.74	0.12	0.26
COCRE3	0.04	0.82	0.13	0.08
COCRE4	0.07	0.76	0.17	0.09
COCRE5	0.38	0.69	0.04	0.26
PLAN1	0.75	0.16	0.23	0.13
PLAN2	0.81	0.15	0.23	0.19
PLAN3	0.80	0.18	0.12	0.15
PLAN4	0.77	0.03	0.16	0.16
PLAN5	0.66	0.33	0.13	0.17
PLAN6	0.64	0.16	0.26	0.11
PLAN7	0.66	0.11	0.16	0.14
PLAN8	0.62	0.29	0.23	0.06
PLAN9	0.64	0.44	0.15	0.09
PLAN10	0.65	0.23	0.35	0.29
PLAN11	0.78	0.12	0.26	0.23
PLAN12	0.68	0.17	0.41	0.21

NOTE: FORM1-FORM4 reflect the formalization dimension; RRHH1-RRHH4 reflect the human resource management dimension; COCRE1-COCRE5 reflect the co-creation dimension; PLAN1-PLAN12 reflect the marketing planning dimension.

Table VI. Reliability and convergent validity of the second order SMMS scale

Item	Standardized factor loading	Composite reliability	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
Dimension 1: Formalization		0.88	0.66	0.88
FORM1	0.71*			
FORM2	0.90*			
FORM3	0.88*			
FORM4	0.74*			
Dimension 2: Human resource management		0.81	0.53	0.79
RRHH1	0.51*			
RRHH2	0.88*			
RRHH3	0.84*			
RRHH4	0.61*			
Dimension 3: Co-creation		0.86	0.54	0.86
COCRE1	0.72*			
COCRE2	0.78*			
COCRE3	0.71*			
COCRE4	0.67*			
COCRE5	0.79*			
Dimension 4: Marketing planning		0.94	0.59	0.94
PLAN1	0.79*			
PLAN2	0.88*			
PLAN3	0.83*			
PLAN4	0.75*			
PLAN5	0.72*			
PLAN6	0.68*			
PLAN7	0.65*			
PLAN8	0.67*			
PLAN9	0.71*			
PLAN10	0.81*			
PLAN11	0.85*			
PLAN12	0.83*			
Second-order SMMS		0.85	0.60	0.95
Formalization	0.82*			
HR management	0.69*			
Co-creation	0.67*			
Marketing planning	0.89*			

* p < 0.05

NOTE: AVE: Average variance extracted.

Table VII. Discriminant validity of the SMMS dimensions

	AVE	1	2	3	4
1. Formalization	0.66	0.81	[0.46-0.70]	[0.35-0.64]	[0.64-0.83]
2. Human resource management	0.53	0.58	0.73	[0.40-0.66]	[0.48-0.70]
3. Co-creation	0.54	0.49	0.53	0.74	[0.48-0.74]
4. Marketing planning	0.59	0.74	0.59	0.61	0.77

NOTE: AVE: Average variance extracted. Bolded diagonal elements are the square roots of AVE for the constructs. Values below the diagonal correspond to the correlations whereas values above the diagonal correspond to the confidence intervals.

Table VIII. Items for examining predictive validity of the SMMS scale

Item	Standardized Lambda parameters	Composite reliability	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
Social media strategy success		0.96	0.86	0.96
In overall terms, the social media strategy has met or exceeded its target goals	0.88*			
The results of the social media strategy have been satisfactory	0.95*			
The social media strategy has succeeded in achieving its main objectives	0.94*			
We are pleased with the results of the social media strategy	0.92*			
Consumer-related marketing performance		0.79	0.56	0.79
Consumer satisfaction	0.82*			
Consumer loyalty	0.73*			
Brand knowledge	0.69*			
Financial-related marketing performance		0.89	0.81	0.89
Sales	0.87*			
Firm profitability	0.93*			

* $p < 0.05$

NOTE: AVE: Average variance extracted.

Table IX: Predictive validity of the SMMS scale: Correlations and descriptive statistics

	SMMS	Formalization	Human resource management	Co-creation	Marketing planning	Mean	S.D.
Social media strategy success	0.43**	0.41**	0.28**	0.26**	0.49**	5.26	1.36
Consumer-related marketing performance	0.39**	0.35**	0.21**	0.30**	0.45**	5.54	.98
Financial-related marketing performance	0.28**	0.23**	0.18*	0.23**	0.29**	5.29	1.14
Mean	4.70	4.63	3.97	4.80	5.40		
S.D.	1.26	1.68	1.69	1.44	1.31		

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Table X. Predictive validity of the SMMS scale: Results of structural equation model

Variables	Coef.	OIM S.D.	z	95% Conf. Interval	
Social media strategy success (CD = .49)					
SMMS	0.28**	0.07	4.02	0.14	0.41
Communication investment	0.34**	0.08	4.05	0.17	0.50
Social media investment	0.21*	0.09	2.27	0.03	0.38
Ln_company size	0.08	0.06	1.48	-0.03	0.19
Consumer-related marketing performance (CD = .48)					
SMMS	0.40**	0.09	4.16	0.21	0.58
Communication investment	0.47**	0.10	4.88	0.28	0.66
Social media investment	-0.05	0.11	-0.47	-0.26	0.16
Ln_company size	-0.06	0.06	-0.98	-0.19	0.06
Financial-related marketing performance (CD = .39)					
SMMS	0.01	0.08	0.15	-0.15	0.17
Communication investment	0.39**	0.09	4.16	0.21	0.58
Social media investment	0.26*	0.10	2.50	0.06	0.46
Ln_company size	0.09	0.06	1.35	-0.04	0.21
Log likelihood: -11089.907					
Fit indexes: $\chi^2_{ms} = 1070.28$ (d.f. = 607) $p < .01$; $\chi^2_{bs} = 5564.12$ (d.f. = 663) $p < .01$; RMSEA = 0.06; CFI = 0.91					

**p < .01; *p < .05

NOTE: CD: Coefficient of determination; χ^2_{ms} : test of target model against saturated model; χ^2_{bs} : test of baseline model against saturated model; OIM S.D.: observed information matrix standard deviation.

Figure 1. Scale development process

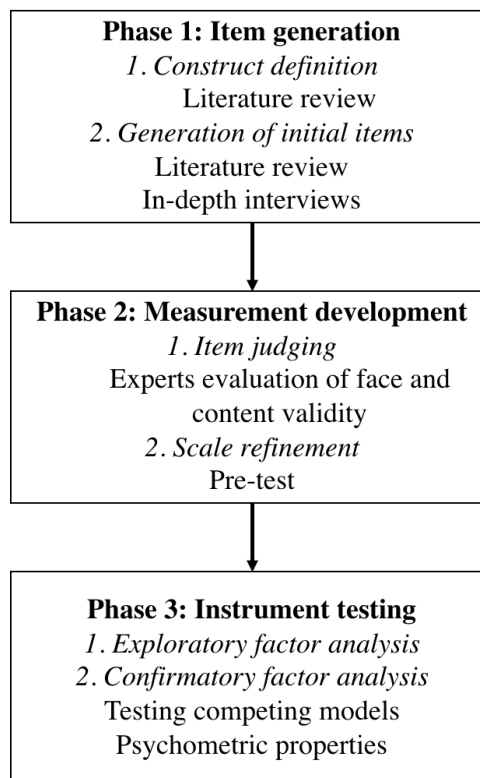
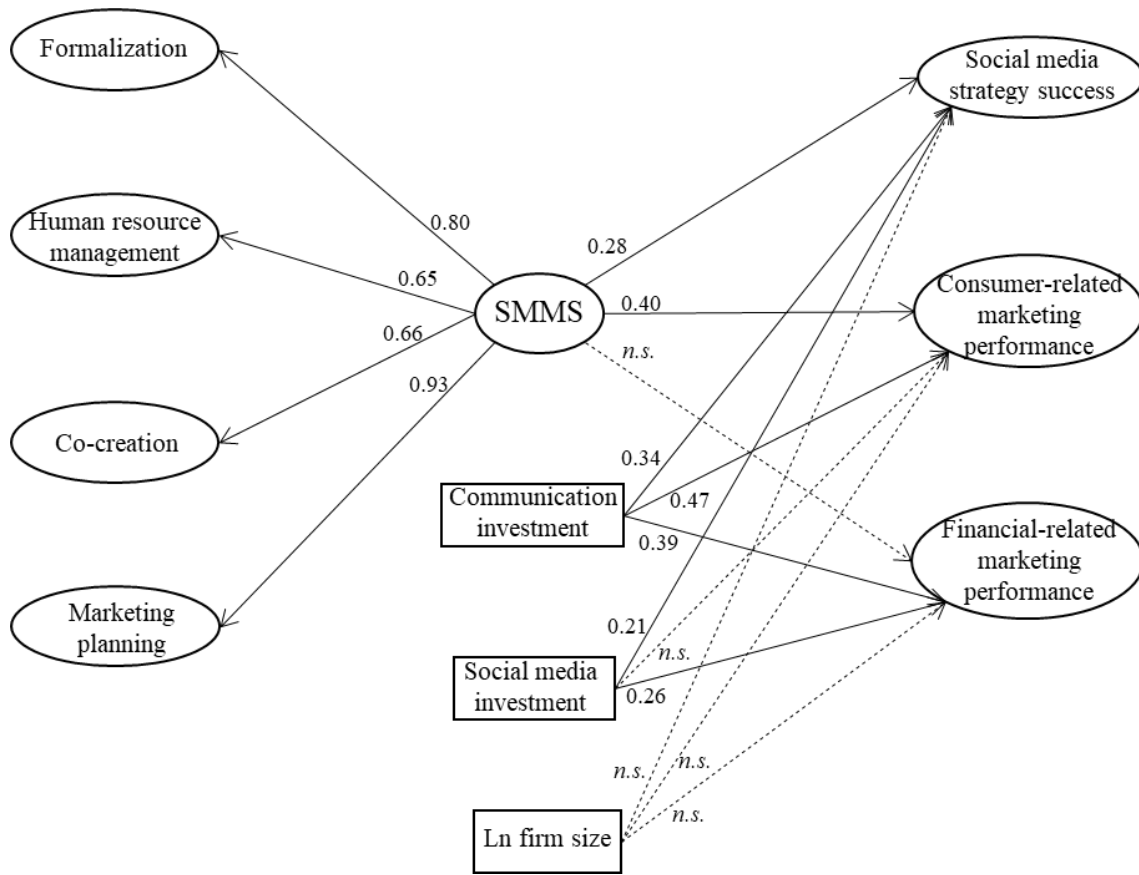


Figure 2. Predictive validity for the SMMS scale: Results of structural equation model



Note: Covariances among variables are not depicted. *n.s.*: indicates a non-significant effect.