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Social media marketing system: conceptualization, scale development and validation

Authors: Varela Neira, Concepción; Dwivedi, Yogesh Kumar; Camoiras Rodríguez, Zaira

Cite:

Varela-Neira, C., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Camoiras-Rodriguez, Z. (2023). Social media marketing system: conceptualization, scale development and validation. Internet Research, 33(4), 1302-1330. <https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-06-2021-0393>



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Journal:	<i>Internet Research</i>
Manuscript ID	INTR-06-2021-0393.R3
Manuscript Type:	Research Paper
Keywords:	Social media, Management, Scale development, Firm outcomes

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Social Media Marketing System: Conceptualization, scale development and validation

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

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3 (Nabity-Grover *et al.*, 2020). As a result, nowadays, firms need to integrate social media
4 marketing in their overall business strategy to stay competitive, as social media helps to create,
5 nurture and maintain robust customer relationships, build brand awareness, impact consumers'
6 attitudes and behaviors, obtain feedback, improve current products and services, and increase
7 sales (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021).
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11 Leung *et al.* (2013) conclude that the effective management of a firm's social media is
12 key to achieving their desired performance, whilst McCarthy *et al.* (2014) argue that the effective
13 management of a firm's social media presence has the potential to generate commercial value and
14 brand equity. Therefore, it is necessary for firms to strategically use and leverage social media to
15 obtain competitive advantages and achieve superior performance (Lamberton and Stephen, 2016).
16 However, despite prior research emphasizing the potential benefits of firms' active presence on
17 several digital platforms, critical questions remain unanswered (Borah *et al.*, 2020); in particular,
18 those related to social media marketing management and the key success practices to strategically
19 implementing social media (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021; Li *et al.*, 2021).
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23 Whilst past conceptual studies and comprehensive qualitative reviews of social media
24 marketing management (e.g., Effing and Spil, 2016; Malthouse *et al.*, 2013; Panagiotopoulos *et al.*,
25 2015; Weinberg *et al.*, 2013) provide valuable albeit mainly theoretical guidelines, the
26 literature has failed to provide any widely accepted and empirically validated tools to measure
27 social media marketing management factors. This investigation therefore develops and
28 empirically validates a scale for a Social Media Marketing System (SMMS). An SMMS is
29 conceptualized as an integrated configuration of practices designed by the company or
30 organization to create value for its stakeholders and achieve desirable marketing outcomes
31 through social media technology. Several reasons justify the need for an SMMS scale that, from
32 a holistic perspective, clearly defines the key practices for the strategic use of social media
33 marketing.
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37 First, there is a lack of research on social media marketing management from an
38 overarching holistic standpoint (Felix *et al.*, 2017), likely because studying social media
39 marketing management requires access to organizational managers, who are usually harder to
40 access (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021), resulting in prior social media studies mainly having focused on
41 the design of marketing messages and content (Chen *et al.*, 2020). In other words, investigations
42 do not usually examine social media from an internal management perspective and an integrated
43 outlook and, hence, do not explicitly identify the dimensions that comprise it and give it
44 consistency in order to achieve high performance. This situation is surprising, given that adequate
45 social media marketing management involves a complex and systemic mix, developed through a
46 carefully designed process, as well as the appropriate resources and infrastructure to tackle it
47 (Weinberg *et al.*, 2013). Correspondingly, prior investigations have shown that, when defining
48 critical success practices for the implementation of information technology, research should take
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3 into consideration factors associated with people and processes (Chen *et al.*, 2013), not just the
4 related technologies.
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6 Second, the consumers of social media demand an equal amount of interactivity with
7 firms as with peers (Berthon *et al.*, 2012; Hanna *et al.*, 2011; Rainie *et al.*, 2011); thus, social
8 media requires a firm's constant attention, overstressing conventional organizational
9 communication procedures. This shift in consumer expectations implies that organizational
10 participation in social media requires the development of skills to enable more direct and personal
11 customer-firm exchanges in (semi) public spaces (Andzulis *et al.*, 2012; Trainor, 2012).
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14 Third, the need to manage (semi) public social media interactions has repercussions
15 across internal processes and resources. For example, firms must establish the degree of
16 investment and internal reorganization required to successfully engage in social media (e.g., to
17 employ or relocate adequate employees), while internal learning procedures must incorporate
18 training programs for social media usage and good practice, as well as to be rapidly formalized
19 to help handle new social media challenges (Panagiotopoulos *et al.*, 2015).
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22 The fourth and final consideration surrounds the interactive nature of social media, which
23 means that consumers have currently become active value co-creators, i.e., they are no longer
24 value takers (Hajli, 2013; Zwass, 2010). This co-creation environment enabled by social media
25 highlights the need for firms to enable and utilize consumers' active participation in the business
26 process (Kaltcheva *et al.*, 2014). In other words, firms must prepare for and invest in their own
27 capability to acquire, administer, and make the most of customer-generated content (Dwivedi *et*
28 *al.*, 2021).
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31 A scale designed to identify key social media management factors will help understand
32 how firms must adapt to reflect the peculiarities of this environment to positively impact their
33 organizational outcomes. This new scale responds to professionals' need for a deeper
34 understanding of the effective management of social media (Effing and Spil, 2016) and
35 researchers' call to develop scales relevant to social media that capture and measure the
36 complexity of this phenomenon (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021).
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39 **2. Conceptual background**

40 **2.1 The Social Media Marketing System definition**

41 To conceptualize an SMMS, it is vital to first explore the definitions of the underlying terms.
42 Previous literature reveals that there are multiple definitions for social media marketing and social
43 media marketing strategy (see Table I). However, when analyzing the definitions of social media
44 marketing (e.g., Felix *et al.*, 2017; Yadav and Rahman, 2017; Tuten and Solomon, 2017), two
45 common claims appear: the use of social media technology and the need for social media
46 marketing to have value for the organization's stakeholders. Additionally, definitions of social
47 media marketing strategy (e.g., Ananda *et al.*, 2016; Effing and Spil, 2016; Li *et al.*, 2021)
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3 incorporate a single differential and common characteristic with respect to those of social media
4 marketing: the need for actions, activities or processes to be integrated to achieve a common goal.
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6 [Insert Table I around here]
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8 Since the definitions of social media marketing strategy highlight the complexity of
9 managing social media marketing, systems theory (Kast and Rosenzweig, 1972) appears to be the
10 appropriate theoretical background for its study, as this theory helps synthesize and analyze
11 complexity. According to systems theory, a system is composed of interconnected parts or
12 elements within a relationship designed to achieve a goal, where the whole cannot be explained
13 as the sum of the parts but as a totality. A system is therefore more than work processes but
14 involves management processes and structural arrangements shaped to direct the organization
15 toward its goals. In this line, Deming (1986) argued that variations on firm performance result
16 from the capability of the organizational system, so that individual workers or specific
17 technologies only account for a minimal fraction of the variation. Consequently, managers should
18 concentrate on designing a total system capable of attaining the preferred level of performance.
19 This is in line with recent applications of systems theory, which consider concrete second-order
20 systems that emphasize specific characteristics and relationships. The most prominent example
21 thereof is seen in the field of strategic human resource management (e.g., Huselid, 1995; Boon *et*
22 *al.*, 2019), where there has been a consensus on the need to study human resource systems rather
23 than individual practices. Other examples of a systems approach are demonstrated by
24 Ravichandran and Rai (2000) in the field of total quality management, and Smith *et al.* (2009) in
25 the examination of service recovery.
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36 To define SMMS, the attributes identified in the definitions included in the previous
37 section have been taken as a basis, while simultaneously incorporating the systems theory
38 approach, which defines systems as organizational design endeavors. Thus, SMMS is
39 conceptualized as an integrated configuration of practices designed by the company or
40 organization to create value for its stakeholders and achieve desirable marketing outcomes
41 through social media technology.
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46 **2.2 Social media marketing management research**

47 Because the SMMS scale has not been operationalized in prior literature, a comprehensive
48 literature review was carried out. Replicating the approach used by Olanrewaju *et al.* (2020), two
49 prominent business/management databases were employed to source the literature: Business
50 Source Complete (EBSCO) and Scopus. These databases offer a focus on business management,
51 while indexing a variety of journals. Books, book chapters, reports and conference proceedings
52 were removed due to the variabilities present in their peer review processes and more limited
53 availability. On the other hand, journal articles were considered to be properly validated
54 (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2005). This approach is coherent with prior review papers on social media that
55 have also restricted their scope to journal articles (e.g., Ngai *et al.*, 2015). The keywords used
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3 were “social media management”, “social media strategy” and “social media marketing”, together
4 with strategy, strategic, implementation or management. Consequently, in this first phase, the
5 search returned 702 articles from EBSCO and 964 articles from Scopus published in English up
6 to 2022.
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10 In the second phase, duplicates were excluded. Moreover, after reviewing the articles’
11 abstracts to ensure their relevance to the purposes of this research, most articles identified in the
12 initial search were dismissed, since they did not focus on social media marketing management.
13 Furthermore, several studies that focused on the specificities of a sector, such as B2B (e.g.,
14 Drummond *et al.*, 2020; Lashgari *et al.*, 2018; Wang *et al.*, 2017) were also removed. At the end
15 of this procedure, only 54 articles remained. In the third phase, these articles were read in full to
16 verify that they focused on the organizational practices necessary for the strategic implementation
17 of social media marketing from a general perspective. Out of the 54 articles read, 17 met the
18 established requirements. Based on the methodological stream, these 17 articles were classified
19 into three groups: theoretical, empirical with qualitative methods and empirical with quantitative
20 methods.
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24 The first group incorporates theoretical articles that, based on the previous literature,
25 develop frameworks or propositions. In this group, there are articles such as Kietzmann *et al.*
26 (2011) which offer a guideline of how companies should develop strategies for social media,
27 called the 4 Cs: cognize, congruity, chase and curate (which implicates human resources and
28 policies). Next, Malthouse *et al.* (2013) present the components of the social-CRM house, which
29 they identify as social-CRM strategy, data and information technology, the organization of people
30 and the measuring of outcomes. Ananda *et al.* (2016) propose the N-REL framework for social
31 media marketing activities, which divides social media strategy into three stages: strategic
32 decisions and plans, tactical plans (social media mix decisions and networking) and social media
33 strategic actions, which are then decomposed into three groups: representation, engagement and
34 listening in. Moreover, Parsons and Lepkowska-White (2018) offer a framework that consists of
35 four dimensions that summarize the actions managers perform when implementing and engaging
36 with consumers on social media: messaging/projecting, monitoring, assessing and responding
37 (which involves procedures and guidelines). Finally, Li *et al.* (2021) present a conceptual paper
38 that identifies four distinct social media marketing strategies representing increasing levels of
39 strategic maturity: social commerce strategy, social content strategy, social monitoring strategy
40 and social CRM strategy. In the latter strategy, the firm’s key activity is to empower and engage
41 customers to obtain customer engagement and co-creation.
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45 The second group contains articles that employ different types of qualitative methods,
46 such as case studies, in-depth interviews or qualitative surveys. Since this is the larger set of
47 articles, we have divided them into three subgroups attending to their main focus of analysis:
48 strategic marketing planning, social media management and social media marketing management.
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3 The strategic marketing planning subgroup comprises articles that primarily focus on
4 elements related to a strategic approach to social media marketing communication but do not
5 tackle other important management challenges, such as the people responsible for managing the
6 firm's social media presence or the rules that must be established to achieve the successful
7 management of social media marketing. In this group, there are articles such as Killian and
8 McManus (2015), who through in-depth interviews conclude that there are four Cs of social media
9 integration strategies or principles to approach customer engagement strategies for social
10 platforms: (1) the need for consistency and integration across all marketing communications, (2)
11 the need for customization to allow the brand messaging to feel personally crafted for individual
12 audiences on each platform, (3) the need for commitment to relevant platforms and (4) the need
13 for managers to respond with caution to consumer commentary in social media. More recently,
14 Al-Essa and Yahia (2019) use a qualitative survey to detect 11 critical success factors of social
15 media integration: understanding the variety of social media platforms, interacting with users,
16 keeping an eye on user content, understanding the overall marketing plan, knowing the company's
17 products/services and actions, harmonizing the brand identity between offline-online
18 communications, having a specific social media budget, understanding the variety of audience
19 profiles across platforms, understanding the variety of interaction tools across platforms, timing
20 and, finally, choosing a suitable tone of voice.

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

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32 The social media marketing management subgroup incorporates articles that employ a
33 broader perspective, considering both strategic marketing planning success factors, as well as
34 other relevant aspects of social media marketing management. In this group, there are articles
35 such as Panagiotopoulos *et al.* (2015), who analyze five organizations and establish a framework
36 of social media engagement structured around three topics: channels, audience and interactions
37 (which includes a policies and resources subdimension). Subsequently, Choi and Thoeni (2016)
38 employ in-depth interviews to identify four organizational processes (and their corresponding
39 organizational activities) that firms need to adopt and implement to embrace social media,
40 specifically: initiation, coordination, engagement and measurement. Similarly, Effing and Spil
41 (2016) examine nine organizations and recognize three stages of social media development
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(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.

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3 [Insert Table III around here]
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5 Formalization refers to the degree to which the firm's communication in social media is
6 controlled by explicit rules, policies and guidelines that dictate its social media presence. This
7 definition is adapted from similar constructs considered in the strategic planning systems (Papke-
8 Shields *et al.*, 2002; Segars *et al.*, 1998) and organizational structure literatures (Hage, 1965; Pugh
9 *et al.*, 1969).
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12 Human resource management refers to the degree to which the firm has adopted a set of
13 planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable it to achieve desirable
14 marketing outcomes through social media. This definition is adapted from the strategic human
15 resource management literature (Boxall and Purcell, 2000; Collings *et al.*, 2021; Wright and
16 McMahan, 1992).
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19 Co-creation refers to the degree to which the firm provides opportunities of interaction to
20 customers through social media to generate value. This definition is adapted from the co-creation
21 literature (Paredes *et al.*, 2014; Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2018; Vargo and Lusch, 2008).
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24 Marketing planning refers to the degree to which the firm employs social media
25 strategically by means of an integrated pattern of activities, based on a careful assessment of the
26 social media platforms and customers' motivations for brand-related social media use, to achieve
27 its marketing objectives. This definition is adapted from the different conceptualizations of social
28 media marketing strategy put forward by the investigations identified in the literature review
29 (Ananda *et al.*, 2016; Li *et al.*, 2021).
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33 Previous investigations have evidenced that increasing levels of strategic social media
34 maturity implicate incremental levels of formalization, resource commitment, customer
35 involvement and collaboration, and activity planning (e.g., Chung *et al.*, 2017; Effing and Spil,
36 2016; Li *et al.*, 2021), thus supporting the idea that the proposed dimensions are related and a
37 more developed SMMS entangles greater levels of all four dimensions: formalization, human
38 resource management, co-creation, and marketing planification.
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44 **2.4 Hypotheses development for a nomological validity test**

45 This investigation relates the SMMS construct to social media strategy success and marketing
46 performance measurement. Social media strategy success refers to the degree to which the social
47 media strategy achieves the corporate objectives associated with the social media presence. This
48 definition is adapted from previous investigations into strategic information systems planning
49 (e.g., Basu *et al.*, 2002), which have considered success a key consequence that needs to be
50 studied. Moreover, current management and marketing literatures have made calls to account for
51 marketing's contribution to firm performance to demonstrate its value to the firm (O'Sullivan and
52 Abela, 2007). Marketing performance refers to the evaluation of "the relationship between
53 marketing activities and business performance" (Clark and Ambler, 2001, p. 231). Since
54 nowadays the marketing performance measurement is based on a multidimensional approach
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3 (Frösén *et al.*, 2016; Morgan *et al.*, 2002) to provide a more complete description of marketing's
4 contribution, we consider the consumer and financial metrics of marketing performance.
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6 Based on the SMMS dimensions proposed, firms with a more developed SMMS have a
7 social media presence ruled by greater degrees of formalization, human resource management,
8 co-creation, and marketing planification. Furthermore, according to the results of the articles
9 reviewed, greater degrees of the system's dimensions are related to greater degrees of social media
10 implementation and maturity.
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14 Formalization is critical to obtaining positive outcomes as a result of the firm's social
15 media presence. Procedures and guidelines are necessary in social media management to help
16 prevent inappropriate feedback and ignorance of use limits from social media managers, which
17 could negatively impact firm reputation, brand value and consumer trust (Burkhalter *et al.*, 2014;
18 Culnan *et al.*, 2010; DiStaso and McCorkindale, 2013; Leung *et al.*, 2013; Salkhordeh, 2009).
19 Moreover, firm guidelines regarding social media use help ensure information accuracy and
20 message consistency across the different channels used (Howard *et al.*, 2014; Panagiotopoulos *et*
21 *al.*, 2015; Valos *et al.*, 2017). To facilitate this, guidelines and procedures must guide content
22 development and interactions with users on social media (Killian and McManus, 2015; Felix *et*
23 *al.*, 2017).
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30 Moreover, previous research has highlighted that many of the difficulties associated with
31 social media management are related to the inadequate allocation of resources (Edosomwan *et*
32 *al.*, 2011; Järvinen *et al.*, 2012; Schultz and Peltier, 2013), both in terms of the number of
33 personnel assigned to social media and the lack of up-to-date skills (Effing and Spil, 2016;
34 Quinton and Fennemore, 2013). An active presence on social media constitutes a challenge for
35 many firms due to the heterogeneity and rapid evolution of social media platforms, as well as the
36 high volume and complexity of the data obtained from them, which impedes their management
37 and analysis (Gibbs *et al.*, 2015; Hsu and Srivastava, 2011). Nevertheless, expert interviews and
38 previous studies defend the notion that digital marketing and social media processes should not
39 be outsourced (Dutta, 2010; Tiago and Veríssimo, 2014), since quick and effective responses to
40 consumers can only be achieved when social media management is carried out by full time
41 employees (Valos *et al.*, 2017). Howard *et al.* (2014) argue that firms must establish specific roles
42 or positions, such as social media manager, to, among other motives, focus social media efforts
43 on supporting the firm's strategic objectives. To employ personnel without strategic, digital and
44 technical knowledge poses a great problem for the integration of the social media plan and for the
45 alignment of related activities (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). As Felix *et al.* (2017) underline,
46 without proper education and training of social media managers, the quality and professionalism
47 of the actions carried out on social media can seriously decline.
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58 Previous research has also shown that social media should not be a platform of
59 information dissemination (Chen *et al.*, 2017), but rather a platform for participation (Kamboj
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3 and Sarmah, 2018). In this cocreation-coproduction process, online conversations offer great
4 opportunities for firms to listen, learn and engage, and use what they have learned to innovate and
5 provide solutions that consumers want (Weinberg *et al.*, 2013). In other words, social media has
6 provided firms with a remarkable opportunity to determine customers' wants and needs and to
7 invite customers to co-create new services with them (Luo *et al.*, 2015). For example, Rathore *et*
8 *al.* (2016) and Zhang *et al.* (2020) have highlighted the fundamental role that social media plays
9 in firms' product development processes and performance. As social media data enable firms to
10 obtain customer insights to make sound business decisions (Gang *et al.*, 2020), firms should
11 procure, communicate and reply to social media information and the products resulting from
12 customer-firm co-creations (Chuang, 2020).
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19 Finally, prior literature has shown that a successful social media presence entails
20 significant levels of social media planification (e.g., Killian and McManus, 2015; Tafesse and
21 Wien, 2018). Conducting a planned action on social media requires that the specific objectives to
22 be achieved be properly aligned with both the firm's objectives (Dutta, 2010; Felix *et al.*, 2017)
23 and with the general marketing strategy (Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011; Hootsuite, 2018), whilst
24 simultaneously taking into consideration the fact that the choice of the most suitable social media
25 platform(s) for the firm depends on the target audience and the content to be communicated
26 (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Panagiotopoulos *et al.*, 2015; Weinberg and
27 Pehlivan, 2011; Zhu and Chen, 2015). Social media actions must therefore be congruent and
28 consistent with those of other media used to reach consumers (Hanna *et al.*, 2011; Kaplan and
29 Haenlein, 2010; Killian and McManus, 2015), as well as with interventions carried out across the
30 various social media platforms (Killian and McManus, 2015; Mergel and Bretschneider, 2013;
31 Panagiotopoulos *et al.*, 2015; Valos *et al.*, 2017), avoiding contradictory messages and
32 uncertainty about brand position, to improve consumers' experience. Moreover, firms must be
33 especially careful with the frequency and scheduling of content updates on social media (Howard
34 *et al.*, 2014; Panagiotopoulos *et al.*, 2015) to guarantee a constant and adequate presence on each
35 platform (Barnes, 2014), whilst taking into consideration the notion that the level (or volume) of
36 updates on each platform must be determined according to its characteristics and operating
37 dynamics (Tafesse and Wien, 2018).
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49 As a result, social media users that follow the social media of a firm with an SMMS are
50 likely to engage in more failure-free effective interactions; similarly, firms with an SMMS are
51 more aware of incipient market opportunities and more capable of developing new
52 products/services in accordance with their customers' requirements. Thus,
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55 *Hypotheses:* Firms with a more developed SMMS experience greater (1) social media strategy
56 success, (2) consumer-related marketing performance and (3) financial-related marketing
57 performance.
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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,

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3 social media managers from firms that have internalized this service are in a privileged position
4 to inform researchers about both the design and the implementation of the firm's social media
5 management system.
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8 Data collection was carried out over a year. We contacted 1892 Spanish firms in the
9 tourism sector employing internal social media management personnel. Respondents were
10 assured of the anonymity of their responses and the opportunity to receive feedback. To maximize
11 the response rate, we contacted the companies a week after the initial distribution of the survey.
12 Data were obtained from 190 manager-supervisor dyads (from 190 firms in the tourism sector).
13

14
15 The SMMS construct was measured by the previously presented 25 items using a seven-
16 point Likert scale ranging from 1 = completely disagree to 7 = completely agree, with information
17 provided by social media managers.
18

19
20 Regarding the profile of the firms, 44.21% had fewer than 49 employees, 37.37% between
21 50 and 250, and 28.42% more than 250. Regarding the social media managers' characteristics,
22 66.84% were women and 33.16% were men, with an average age of 35.35 years, an average firm
23 seniority of 5.28 years and an average experience as social media manager of 3.83 years and in
24 the tourism sector of 8.94 years.
25

26 27 28 *3.3.1 Exploratory factor analysis* 29

30 Before carrying out the confirmatory factor analysis, the 25 items comprising the four dimensions
31 of SMMS were subjected to an exploratory factor analysis using SPSS. The first step was to
32 measure the sampling adequacy by employing the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and
33 Bartlett's test of sphericity: the KMO measure achieved 0.935 and Bartlett's test 3332.94
34 ($gl=300$), with a significance level of $p<0.001$. These numbers suggest that the data is adequate
35 to carry out the principal component analysis (Walsh *et al.*, 2016). A varimax rotated factor
36 analysis using the eigenvalue-greater-than-one criterion (Table V) revealed, as expected, four
37 distinct factors that corresponded to the four SMMS dimensions and that accounted for 66.35
38 percent of the variance.
39

40
41 Four problematic cross-loads (i.e., greater than 0.4) were identified in the rotated factors
42 and one of the items that loaded on component 4 scored relatively low (i.e., lower than 0.55).
43 Although removing these items could increase the dimensions' reliability, we decided to verify if
44 there were problems in the confirmatory factor analysis before eliminating them, since we
45 considered the information obtained from these items to be sufficiently relevant and different
46 from that obtained from the other items.
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49 [Insert Table V around here]
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51 52 *3.3.2 Confirmatory factor analysis* 53

54 55 *3.3.2.1 Testing competing models* 56

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58 Next, we performed several confirmatory factor analyses of SMMS using EQS 6.1 and the robust
59 maximum likelihood estimation method. The first analysis consisted of loading the 25 items of
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3 the SMMS in a first-order reflective factor in order to check the goodness-of-fit of the one factor
4 model to the data. The goodness-of-fit indices were unsatisfactory (S-B χ^2 : 864.68 (d.f. =275) $p <$
5 0.01; χ^2 /d.f. = 3.14; CFI = 0.77; IFI = 0.77; RMSEA = 0.11; AIC = 314.69; CAIC = -853.25).
6
7

8 The CFI and the IFI evaluate the proportional increase in the fit of the measurement model
9 on a more restrictive base model (Bentler, 1990; Bollen, 1989); specifically, the CFI is one of the
10 most reliable incremental adjustment indices and the most widely used in the marketing literature
11 (McDonald and Ho, 2002). For CFI to indicate an acceptable fit, it must reach a cutoff value of
12 0.90 (Bentler, 1990). In addition, the RMSEA is an absolute fit index which indicates how well
13 the model, with unknown but optimally chosen parameter estimates, would fit the population
14 covariance matrix (Byrne, 1998). Indeed, it has recently been called ‘one of the most informative
15 fit indices’ (Diamantopoulos and Sigauw, 2000, p. 85). Furthermore, RMSEA shows acceptable
16 fit with values below 0.08 (Bentler, 1990). Finally, the AIC is used to compare competing non-
17 nested models; the lower the AIC index, the better the fit (Akaike, 1987).
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24 The second analysis consisted of correlating the four dimensions that constitute SMMS
25 and checking the goodness-of-fit of the four factors model to the data. The goodness-of-fit indices
26 were now satisfactory (S-B χ^2 : 507.46 (d.f.=269) $p <$ 0.01; CFI = 0.91; IFI = 0.91; RMSEA = 0.07;
27 AIC = -30.55; CAIC = -1172.99), which supports the idea of SMMS as a multidimensional
28 construct.
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31 The next step to validate the SMMS scale was to determine the existence of a latent
32 construct (second-order reflective factor) underlying the identified dimensions (first-order
33 reflective factors): formalization, human resource management, co-creation and marketing
34 planning, in line with the “systemic” view. The second-order confirmatory factorial analysis
35 results show satisfactory goodness-of-fit indices (S-B χ^2 : 510.88 (d.f.=271) $p <$ 0.01; CFI = 0.91;
36 IFI = 0.91; RMSEA = 0.07; AIC = -31.12; CAIC = -1182.07). These results support the theoretical
37 indication, since all dimensions indeed converged onto a single latent factor.
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43 When analyzing the SMMS structure, it is vital to note that the second-order factor
44 constitutes a way of explaining the covariance among the first-order factors more parsimoniously
45 (Segars and Grover, 1998). Consequently, a second-order model can never present better
46 goodness-of-fit indices than the correlated first-order model (Smith *et al.*, 2009). The efficacy of
47 the second-order factor can be assessed using the target coefficient, which is computed by
48 dividing the chi-square of the first-order factor by the chi-square of the second-order one (Marsh
49 and Hocevar, 1985). The target coefficient represents the percent of variation in the first-order
50 constructs explicated by the second-order construct. The upper limit of the target coefficient is
51 1.0, with higher numbers implying better representation. In our study, the target coefficient was
52 0.99, which lends support to the higher-order SMMS construct.
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58 *3.3.2.2 Reliability and convergent and discriminant validity*
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3 Construct reliability and convergent validity were supported for all dimensions, as well as the
4 second-order factor, as they manifest a composite reliability and an average variance extracted
5 (AVE) greater than the recommended threshold values of 0.6 and 0.5, respectively (Bagozzi and
6 Yi, 1988). Moreover, all constructs show a Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978).
7
8 In addition, all standardized lambda parameters were greater than 0.5 and thus significant, as
9 recommended for newly developed items (Awang, 2015). Together, these tests (see Table VI)
10 provide evidence of reliability and validity (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).
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13 [Insert Table VI around here]

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15 Finally, as displayed in Table VII, the discriminant validity was also supported, since
16 correlations among all dimensions showed confidence intervals that did not include the unit value,
17 and their squared value did not exceed the AVE (Boudreau *et al.*, 2001; Fornell and Larcker,
18 1981).
19
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21 [Insert Table VII around here]

22 3.3.2.3 Predictive validity

23
24 To ensure the predictive validity of the SMMS construct, it is necessary to relate its scores to
25 scores on theoretically associated outcome variables (Walsh *et al.*, 2016); in this study, this
26 denotes social media strategy success, consumer-related marketing performance and financial-
27 related marketing performance (see Table VIII). Social media strategy success was measured in
28 a range of 1 to 7 using four items adapted from Kuester *et al.* (2017). Consumer-related marketing
29 performance metrics were evaluated in a range of 1 to 7 against the firms' objectives in the year
30 prior to the study using three items commonly referred to in the literature (Furrer *et al.*, 2007):
31 consumers' level of satisfaction, loyalty and staying with the firm and brand knowledge. The
32 reference to firms' internal goals helps to control for variances across different tourism sectors;
33 hence, making comparisons between individual firms in the sample more meaningful (Briggs *et al.*
34 *et al.*, 2020). Financial metrics include two items commonly referred to in the literature (O'Sullivan
35 and Abela, 2007; Tippins and Sohi, 2003), namely sales and profitability, as prior investigations
36 have indicated that managers counteract profitability and sales growth (McKee *et al.*, 1989; Slater
37 and Narver, 1996). Financial-related marketing performance metrics were evaluated in a range
38 from 1 to 7 against firms' main competitors to introduce an explicit reference to the attainment of
39 competitive advantages (Weerawardena *et al.*, 2006) at the same time as decreasing the
40 subjectivity of the response as it establishes a point of reference from which to make the
41 comparison (Kraft, 1990). While perceptual judgments have a potential for self-reporting bias,
42 prior research has also shown that perceived performance can serve as a reasonable substitute for
43 objective measures and that it helps to increase response rates as managers prefer to avoid offering
44 precise quantitative data (Taylor and Wright, 2003).
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58 [Insert Table VIII around here]

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3 Data for the independent variable – SMMS – were provided by social media managers,
4 whereas data for the dependent variables – social media strategy success and marketing
5 performance – were provided by their supervisors. Thus, data for the independent and dependent
6 variables were provided by different informants in order to reduce the possibility of common-
7 method biases (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).
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11 The correlations between the average SMMS score and the average score of social media
12 strategy success was positive and significant ($r = 0.43$, $p < 0.01$), as were the correlations between
13 the average SMMS score and the average scores of consumer-related marketing performance (r
14 $= 0.39$, $p < 0.01$) and financial-related marketing performance ($r = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$). These results
15 confirm strong relationships between the constructs and suggest criterion-related validity of the
16 SMMS scale. However, to expand the study of the SMMS scale, we also analyzed the correlations
17 between the average scores of the different dimensions of the SMMS scale and the outcome
18 variables. The results inform the study that all dimensions of the SMMS were significantly and
19 positively related to all outcome variables. Nevertheless, these relationships differ in their level
20 of intensity, being marketing planning and formalization the dimensions with a greater effect on
21 the outcome variables. Means, standard deviations and correlations appear in Table IX.
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24 [Insert Table IX around here]

25
26 Next, to further provide evidence of criterion-related validity, SMMS was used as a
27 predictor of these three outcomes (i.e., social media strategy success, consumer-related marketing
28 performance and financial-related marketing performance) in a structural equation model using
29 Stata 15.0 (Table X and Figure 2). We included social media investment, communication
30 investment and firm size (all measured with data provided by supervisors) as control variables to
31 isolate any potential systematic impact of these factors on the study variables, given their potential
32 effect on these outcomes. Firms that have larger social media and communication budgets and
33 size will have greater opportunities to finance social media marketing activities, such as social
34 media advertising, develop their digital infrastructure and/or hire social media consultants, which
35 could have a subsequent positive impact on social media strategy success and marketing
36 performance.
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39 [Insert Table X around here]

40 [Insert Figure 2 around here]

41
42 The goodness-of-fit indices are indicative of a satisfactory fit of the model to the data.
43 SMMS was significantly and positively related to social media strategy success [$\beta = 0.28$, $p <$
44 0.05 , 95% CI (0.14, 0.41)] and consumer-related marketing performance [$\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.05$, 95%
45 CI (0.21, 0.58)], thus supporting H1 and H2, but SMMS was not significantly related to financial-
46 related marketing performance [$\beta = 0.01$, $p > 0.05$, 95% CI (-0.15, 0.17)]. However, strategy
47 success has been associated with performance (Krush *et al.*, 2015) and social media with market
48 value (Kim *et al.*, 2015); consumer metrics, such as loyalty and satisfaction, have also been shown
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3 to lead to financial ones, such as sales and profits (Lehmann and Reibstein, 2006; Otto *et al.*,
4 2020). Consequently, the indirect effect of SMMS on financial-related marketing performance
5 was then computed using bootstrapped 95 percent confidence intervals (derived from 5,000
6 replications) in line with Preacher *et al.* (2007). Results show that the indirect relationship via
7 social media strategy success and consumer-related marketing performance was positive and
8 significant [$\beta = 0.02$, $p < 0.10$, bias-corrected 95% CI (0.01, 0.06)], as well as the indirect
9 relationship through consumer-related marketing performance [$\beta = 0.04$, $p < 0.05$, bias-corrected
10 95% CI (0.01, 0.09)], partially supporting H3. Thus, SMMS has significant criterion validity with
11 respect to these outcomes.
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14 **4. Discussion**

15
16 The main purpose of this paper was to develop and validate a scale that uncovers firm SMMS that
17 could potentially result in better firm outcomes. The findings demonstrate that SMMS consists of
18 four dimensions: formalization, human resource management, co-creation, and marketing
19 planning. The scale also exhibits acceptable validity and reliability. Additionally, the scale
20 possesses predictive validity since it is positively correlated with key outcome indicators: social
21 media strategy success, consumer-related marketing performance and financial-related marketing
22 performance.
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25 **4.1 Theoretical implications**

26
27 This research responds to the need for a deeper understanding of the strategic use of social media
28 (VanMeter *et al.*, 2018), which will help practitioners act more effectively in this area, as well as
29 to the call for validated scales specific to the social media domain (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021), which
30 will help researchers test potential models on how a firm's management of social media marketing
31 impacts behavior.
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35 In current times, firms' competitiveness necessitates that they incorporate a systemic
36 approach to social media marketing management to give an effective response to consumer needs.
37 A systemic approach to social media marketing management implies that a firm accepts that the
38 comprehensive management of firm-consumer interactions achieves a superior result than that
39 obtained when using interventions that are independent or inconsistent with each other. This
40 agrees with firms' ongoing interest in promoting integrated, systematic approaches in the search
41 for operational excellence (Smith *et al.*, 2009).
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45 To the best of our knowledge, this investigation constitutes the first empirical attempt to
46 develop and validate a scale to measure interconnected social media management factors that
47 contribute to firm outcomes. Utilizing a rigorous scale development process (Baldus *et al.*, 2015;
48 Hille *et al.*, 2015; Walsh *et al.*, 2016), this investigation builds on prior qualitative studies (e.g.,
49 Effing and Spil, 2016; Malthouse *et al.*, 2013; Panagiotopoulos *et al.*, 2015; Weinberg *et al.*,
50 2013) which consider social media management to be a complex multidimensional endeavor.
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3 Given that a firm's social media managers are in a privileged position to report upon the design
4 and implementation of the firm's social media management system, unlike many prior studies on
5 social media that employ consumer data (see Busalim and Hussin, 2016, for a review), we use
6 data provided by social media managers to validate the SMMS scale. Moreover, in line with
7 DeVellis's (2016) proposal that it is key in scale development to obtain the concept definition of
8 the rater, this investigation also incorporated the opinions of practicing managers in the
9 elaboration of the initial pool of items, and later in the pre-test of the scale.
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14 The SMMS scale extends the literature's theoretical understanding of the key factors of
15 social media management. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis results support a four-
16 dimensional structure for the scale items. At a general level, this investigation suggests the need
17 for firms, when approaching social media management, to tackle it from a systemic perspective
18 and simultaneously consider it from a multidimensional perspective in order to adequately address
19 the different aspects related to effective social media management. The findings show that a more
20 developed SMMS is related to greater social media strategy success and consumer-related
21 marketing performance, and through these outcomes to greater financial-related marketing
22 performance. Firms are focusing their social media presence on the improvement of brand
23 evaluations (Naylor *et al.*, 2012) and the nurturing of closer connections with customers (Rapp *et*
24 *al.*, 2013). Since these outcomes are enclosed in the customer-related performance indicator, it
25 seems reasonable that the successful management of social media marketing impacts financial-
26 related marketing performance via customer-related marketing performance.
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35 Finally, the results obtained in relation to the dimensions that make up the SMMS
36 construct show that marketing planning and formalization are the dimensions that load most
37 strongly, followed by human resource management and, lastly, co-creation. These findings
38 exhibit the special relevance of an integrated, consistent and adapted presence on social media,
39 as well as clear procedures and guidelines on the development of a firm's social media presence,
40 bringing clarity to its social media marketing management. Likewise, they facilitate a greater
41 understanding of and better practice of social media marketing management by firms.
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46 **4.2 Managerial implications**

47 Managerially, this investigation has relevant implications for firms. First, the findings show that
48 an SMMS positively correlates with key organizational performance indicators. Consequently,
49 digital marketing courses could focus not only on the impact of different social media content or
50 strategies on social media success, but also consider organizational factors. Universities and
51 employment counseling agencies should consider the four dimensions of an SMMS when
52 designing social media courses, emphasizing the relevance of marketing planning and
53 formalization, as well as human resource management and customer co-creation.
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58 Second, managers can use the SMMS scale as a diagnostic tool. In this line, any firm can
59 compare its social media marketing management system with the system defined in this work. By
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3 using the dimensions identified in the SMMS as a reference, it can assess whether its current
4 management system is complete or should be modified to include dimensions not yet integrated
5 within it. Likewise, those firms that are starting out in this environment and even those that are
6 not yet present on social media can use this conceptualization of the SMMS to establish the
7 guidelines and fundamental bases that will govern their social media marketing management
8 model. Our findings confirm that to successfully engage in social media firms need to increase
9 the availability of the appropriate procedures and guidelines, in addition to other regulations.
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12 **4.3 Limitations and future lines of research**

13
14 Despite the contributions made, this research is not without its limitations. The validation of the
15 SMMS was carried out using firms from the tourism sector only. Even though it is one of the
16 activity sectors in which social media has the most presence and relevance (Leung *et al.*, 2013) –
17 and even though only a few empirical investigations in the hospitality industry examine the impact
18 of using social media on firm performance (Tajvidi and Karami, 2021) – focusing only on this
19 sector limits the generalizability of the results obtained. Thus, a more comprehensive
20 investigation into the SMMS is needed to evaluate how the four dimensions defined here
21 (formalization, human resource management, co-creation, and marketing planning) play out
22 across different contexts and sectors. Furthermore, this study employs individual SMMS
23 perceptions at the social media manager level. This represents a positive development since most
24 studies on social media have been carried out with consumer or general management data.
25 Nevertheless, further research is needed using data in and across firm levels; for example, SMMS
26 perceptions of middle or senior management may vary.
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30 The core objective of this study was to propose an acceptable scale for social media
31 marketing management, not to develop a nomological network. Future investigations could
32 employ this new scale as a basis on which to test a broader net of interrelations. Identifying the
33 antecedents of an SMMS could help the literature understand why some firms show a more
34 developed SMMS. Likewise, future studies should analyze through which processes the SMMS
35 construct impacts social media strategy success and marketing performance.
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38 **5. Conclusion**

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

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. Literature review summary

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 et al., 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. Common practices for a strategic implementation of social media marketing

	FORMALIZATION		HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT			CO-CREATION		MARKETING PLANNING					
	Corporate regulations	Interaction guidelines	Human resource provision	Training	Recognition	Promoting participation	Using feedback	Audience monitoring	Communication consistency	Platform adaptation	Strategy alignment	Set and monitor objectives	Content planning
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. Exploratory factor analysis of the SMMS scale: Rotated component matrix

	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

Table VI. Reliability and convergent validity of the SMMS scale

Variables	Standardized Lambda parameters	Composite reliability	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
Formalization		0.88	0.66	0.88
FORM1	0.71*			
FORM2	0.90*			
FORM3	0.88*			
FORM4	0.74*			
Human resource management		0.81	0.53	0.79
RRHH1	0.51*			
RRHH2	0.88*			
RRHH3	0.84*			
RRHH4	0.61*			
Co-creation		0.86	0.54	0.86
COCRE1	0.72*			
COCRE2	0.78*			
COCRE3	0.71*			
COCRE4	0.67*			
COCRE5	0.79*			
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*			
SMMS		0.85	0.60	0.95
Marketing planning	0.89*			
Co-creation	0.67*			
Formalization	0.82*			
HR management	0.69*			

* p < 0.05

NOTE: AVE: Average variance extracted.

Table VII. Discriminant validity of the SMMS scale

	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. Predictive validity of the SMMS scale: Dependent measures' scales and properties

Variables	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, means and standard deviations

	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

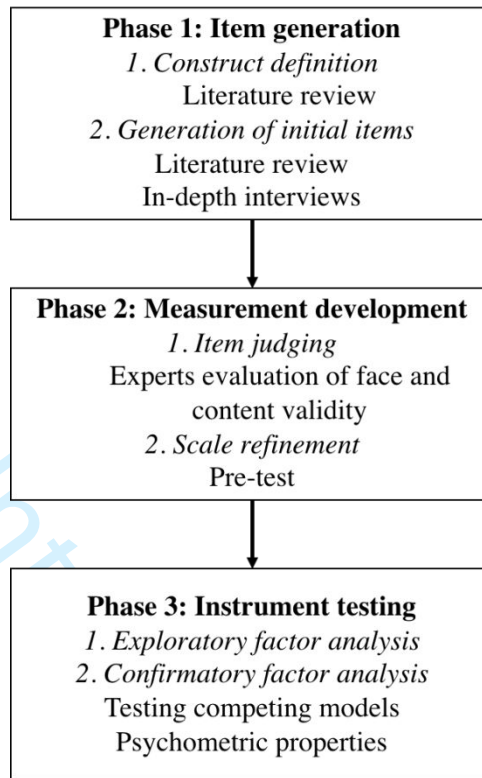
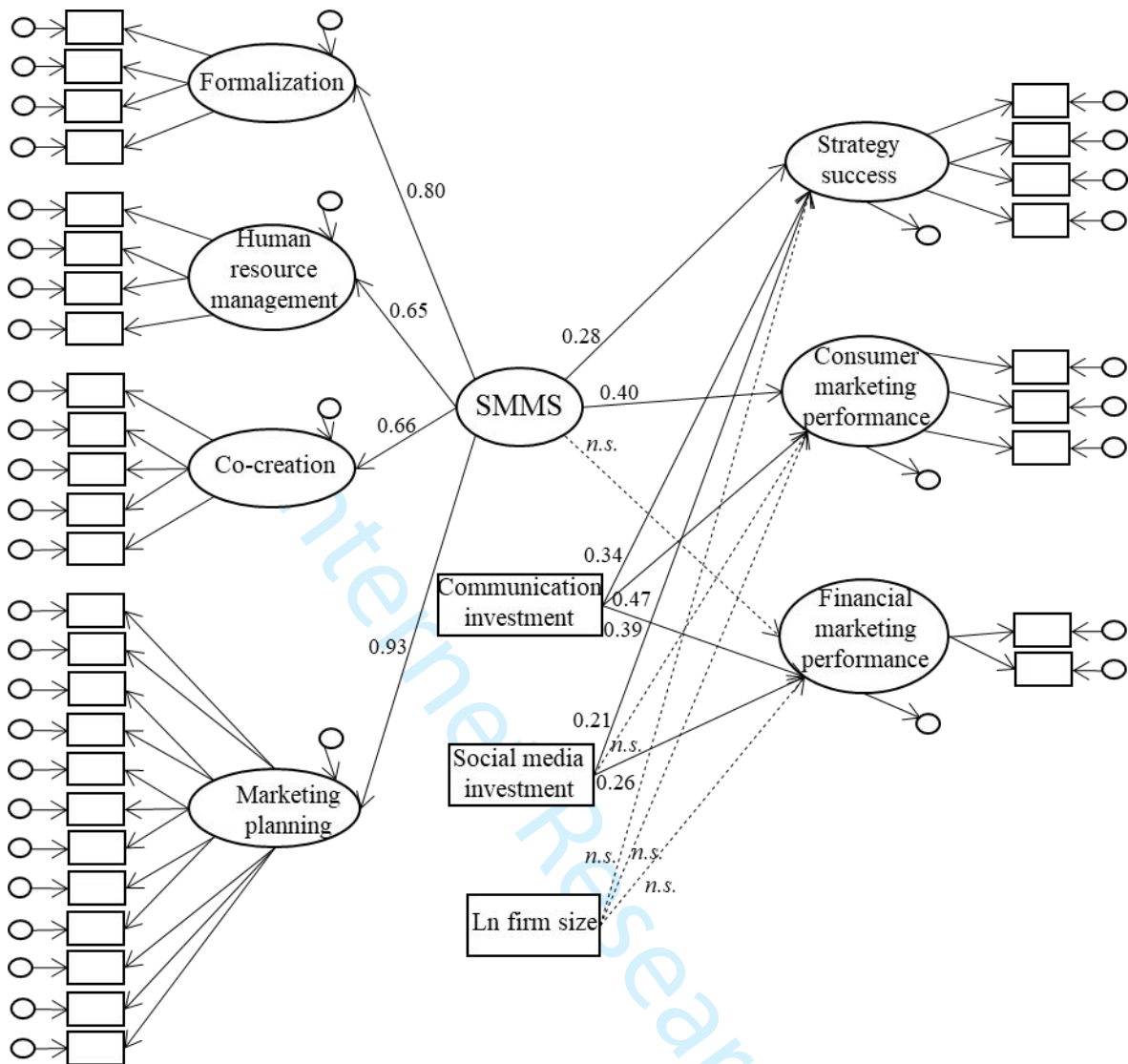


Figure 2. Predictive validity for the SMMS scale: Results of structural equation model



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