

Social Media Marketing – A Systematic Review of Quantitative Empirical Studies

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Abstract

Purpose – *The main purpose of this paper is to review the available research in the area of social media marketing and provide an overview of the research potential to identify research gaps and define specific areas for further research.*

Method – *Through various reading and structuring loops, we examined 355 peer-reviewed quantitative empirical articles according to key themes, research objectives, research perspective, statistical method, and data collection method. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze research foci and identify research gaps.*

Findings – *We were able to identify four research periods within social media marketing research: (1) emergence of SMM research, (2) growing interest, (3) underpinning of the theories, and (4) paradigm shift in research. We also identified the most interesting (e.g., 'success with SMM') and underrepresented social media marketing research topics (e.g., 'B2B influence factors'). In addition, the lack of a two-way research orientation (customer and provider) is evident and should be addressed in the future. Finally, we uncovered the need for further exploratory research in SMM.*

Limitations – *Because we focused on quantitative empirical research, we cannot provide insights into the entire SMM research body. In addition, we cannot guarantee the completeness of the data because relevant publications may not have been retrieved due to the limitation of the search terms. Moreover, there is a potential loss of information, as we have summarized information to present it better.*

Implications – *Future research should focus on two-sided research dealing with manager responses in SNS and customer loyalty and comparing manager responses and consumer reviews on social media performance. In addition, future research could include exploratory research questions. Research on the effects of social media marketing in a business-to-business context is also of great importance in the future.*

Originality – *There has been no systematic review of the quantitative literature on social media marketing. Therefore, we attribute originality to our approach and results.*

Keywords: social media marketing; literature review; empirical research; quantitative research

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Introduction

Social media marketing (SMM) still represents a young but valuable field of marketing (Ahmed *et al.*, 2019), having emerged in the last decades along with information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Wan *et al.*, 2020). Due to its ability to reach a large number of people in a short period, social media marketing can be a powerful tool for announcing product innovations, presenting product variations (Wang *et al.*, 2016; Wu, 2020), connecting and maintaining contact with customers and users (Cho & Sutton, 2021; Wu *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, with social media marketing, companies can increase brand awareness, existing brand acceptance, and the related attitude toward the brand (Wu, 2020; Yee *et al.*, 2021; Zahoor & Qureshi, 2017). According to Huh (2018) and Thao and van Anh (2020), social media is one of the most important tools to increase knowledge. It implies a shift to a digital world where social media communication is indispensable. In this context, social media marketing is gaining importance for companies and becoming an important research topic for academics and scientists (Felix *et al.*, 2016; Koszembar-Wiklik, 2016; Thao & van Anh, 2020). Therefore, much research has already been conducted in social media and SMM. Nevertheless, several researchers postulate the need for further (empirical) research (Felix *et al.*, 2016; Keegan & Rowley, 2017; Wu *et al.*, 2020).

To fill the research gaps, the relevant literature must be reviewed to establish a solid foundation, uncover topics and areas needing further investigation, and define promising research directions (Webster & Watson, 2002). In this article, we gain insight into the current state of social media marketing to facilitate the search for appropriate and relevant research opportunities. As the digital world is subject to volatile dynamics in technology and usage, continuously updating research needs is crucial for marketing science to stay in touch with the field's current state. Despite its scientific importance, social media marketing practitioners rely on the latest insights into its dynamics and state of the art to quickly adapt their company's strategies and gain a competitive advantage. Aware of the scientific and practical importance of updating the knowledge about the current state of social media marketing, we attempt to answer the following research questions with this literature review:

- What are the main topics of social media marketing research?

- What research opportunities and challenges emerge from the state of the art?

According to these questions, the analysis of the latest insights from the relevant literature reviews dealing with social media marketing (e.g., Arrigo, 2018; Buratti *et al.*, 2018; Alves *et al.*, 2016; Hester & Vargo, 2013) already reveals the need for further literature reviews. For example, Alves *et al.* (2016) proclaim the need for a complementary analysis to confirm their findings.

Overall, the literature reviews examined use the full range of empirical and conceptual articles, and in some cases focusing on specific topics such as brand equity (e.g., Zahoor & Qureshi, 2017) or luxury brands (e.g., Arrigo, 2018). In terms of content and subject of study, we have grouped these literature reviews into six thematic areas: (1) luxury brands; (2) B2B services; (3) brand equity; (4) digital, social media, and mobile marketing; (5) attitude-behavior theories; and (6) general overview. The literature reviews also differ in terms of data source and methodology.¹

In the most limited review in our sample, Arora and Sanni (2019) limit their data source to only one specific journal, the *Journal of Promotion Management*. This approach is insufficient to provide a comprehensive overview of social media research. Lamberton and Stephen (2016) also limit their literature review to specific journals. However, unlike the aforementioned authors, Lamberton and Stephen (2016) use five marketing-related journals for their meta-analysis. In addition, the authors focus on three main topics: digital, social media, and mobile marketing. In contrast, Hester and Vargo (2013), Dwivedi *et al.* (2015), and Alves *et al.* (2016) use large databases such as EBSCO (in the case of Hester and Vargo), Scopus (in the case of Dwivedi *et al.*) and Web of Science (in the case of Alves *et al.*) for their literature reviews.

From a methodological point of view, the literature reviews show a great variety in terms of literature analysis and content. Although some literature reviews use interesting and comparatively rare methods, they have limitations regarding data sources, and none addresses the quantitative empirical perspective.

In summary, the literature reviews relevant to social media marketing provide scholarly contributions by providing detailed information on specific topics or analyzing the link between conceptual research and empirical observation. However, they do not adequately address quantitative empirical research to uncover possible further research questions (Alves *et al.*, 2016). This study addresses this shortcoming and aims to advance knowledge on the current state and development of quantitative empirical research to identify potential research gaps and derive implications for future research. To achieve this, we examine different thematic clusters, statistical methods, and research trends based on the existing scope of scientific quantitative empirical social media marketing

¹ For details, see Appendix A, which provides an overview of the literature reviews we scrutinized.

literature (publications from 2004 to 2021), thus complementing the scope of recent social media marketing literature reviews.

We examined 355 peer-reviewed quantitative empirical articles on SMM to achieve this goal. This database, combined with the subsequent quantitative research review, provides a solid foundation for identifying research gaps and implications for future research (Webster & Watson, 2002). Consequently, this article is organized as follows: The second section outlines the methodology we used to prepare this literature review. Next, the third section summarizes the findings of the previous analysis and discusses its potential limitations. Finally, the study concludes with implications for future research in social media marketing.

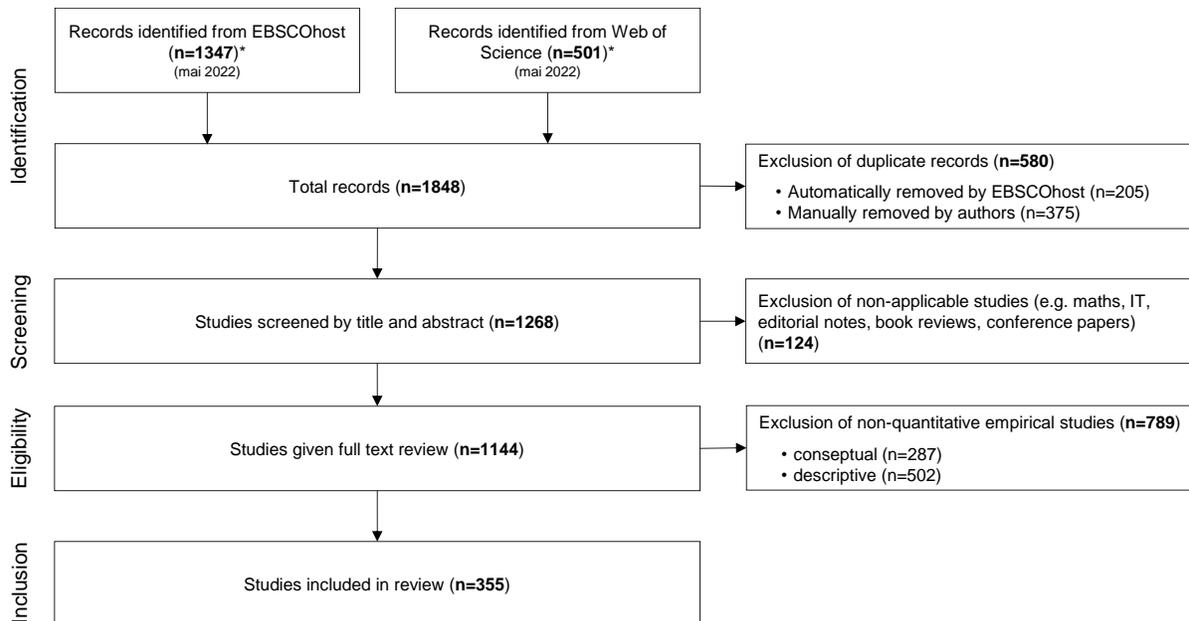
Methodology

In line with Hester and Vargo (2013) and Alves *et al.* (2016), this literature review focuses on peer-reviewed articles published in scientific, academic journals in order to consider high-quality and recent research (Webster & Watson, 2002). Therefore, our analysis is based on the EBSCOhost Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, and EconLit databases, using a systematic four-step approach proposed by Webster and Watson (2002) for literature search and selection. First, we searched the databases for the terms 'social media marketing' or 'social network marketing' in either the title, abstract, or subtitle, limiting the literature selection to peer-reviewed academic journals written in English. The same approach was applied to the Web of Science database. We excluded editorial notes or author comments and duplicates in the second step. The third step was to obtain full-text access to the articles through the library system. Finally, in the fourth step, we clustered the articles according to the methodology used, using three categories: (a) conceptual studies that provide frameworks or only describe the current state of the art; (b) descriptive empirical studies that use case studies, basic empirical methods, qualitative interviews, content analysis or descriptive statistics; and (c) multivariate empirical studies that use quantitative empirical methods such as structural equation modeling, simple and multiple regression, causal analysis and factor analysis.

Because previous meta-analyses and literature reviews have comprehensively covered both qualitative and quantitative research, we excluded conceptual and descriptive studies from further consideration to focus on quantitative research. With 445 research publications identified in the literature review, descriptive SMM research appears well-researched (see Figure 1). Furthermore, as SMM is a highly application-oriented and rapidly changing topic, application- and practice-oriented research is crucial for further empirical development. Quantitative research provides more applicable insights from practitioners than conceptual or theoretical studies by providing empirical facts and observed data. In addition, focusing on the body of quantitative research in SMM helps to classify different research topics according to their state of development in

basic research. Since quantitative confirmatory research always requires basic theories and qualitative preliminary studies, a large body of quantitative research is based on a deep theoretical foundation. In contrast, a thin body of quantitative research implies a lack of a basic understanding of causality, effects, and properties. Therefore, this article's limitation to quantitative research allows for identifying gaps in qualitative and quantitative research.

As a result of the above four-step approach, our literature base includes 355 relevant peer-reviewed quantitative empirical articles. To illustrate our approach, we have created a flowchart of the review phases (see Figure 1), which shows the individual steps of the literature search. A flowchart is an important research protocol that helps to ensure the traceability and transparency of the process undertaken by researchers (Liberati *et al.*, 2009).



*Limitation to articles in English language in peer-reviewed academic journals

Figure 1: Flow Diagram of the Review Phases

Regarding the search term and the different steps of the identification process, there is no guarantee that all relevant publications dealing with social media marketing quantitatively have been identified. Other articles dealing with social media marketing may not use the above search terms in their title, subtitle, or abstract and, therefore, may have escaped our scrutiny. However, we are confident that our database provides a sound basis for our research and identifies research gaps. We followed a structured and systematic approach and used two reliable online databases with high-quality standards, as explained and suggested in the scientific literature (Webster & Watson, 2002). We also used several independent rounds of reading, clustering, summarizing, and comparing. In detail, this means that both authors independently analyzed the literature, compared

their results, and, in case of disagreement, reviewed the publications again. In doing so, we followed the approach of several other authors and considered the resulting body of literature to be a robust and valid representation of SMM research.

Figure 2 illustrates the evolution of peer-reviewed empirical publications in social media marketing. Because of the gap between the first publications (2004 and 2009) and to illustrate the expansion of the research field, we do not show the appearance of the first publications and focus on the field's evolution from 2010 to 2021. Considering this evolution of research, social media marketing still appears as a young branch of marketing research gaining momentum in 2011. Most empirical research (40%) has been published in the last three years and more than 70% of the total body of research dates from 2016 to 2021. Thus, the evolution of SMM research indicates that the empirical study of social media marketing is a new research activity still gaining scientific interest.

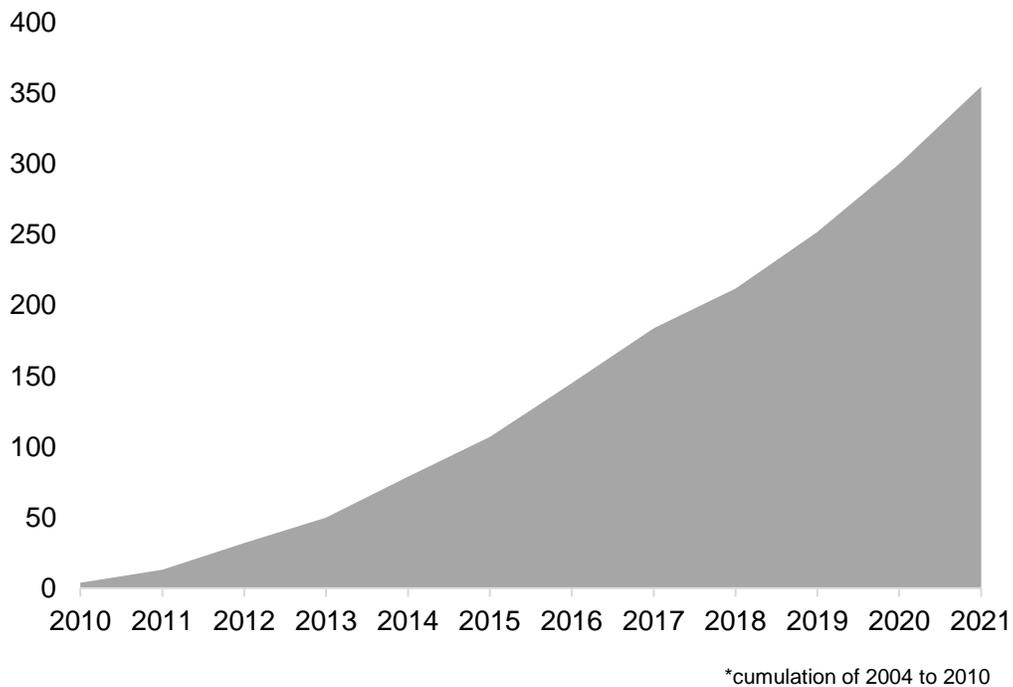


Figure 2: Number of Quantitative Empirical Research Studies

To identify the key topics or specific research areas, the reviewed studies were read several times to create useful and clear clusters of key topics for this literature review. On this occasion, each article was analyzed and added to a thematic cluster according to the study's research question. We reviewed the articles again to consolidate the thematic clusters and looked for similarities. We repeated this process several times until further summarization no longer produced meaningful clustering. However, because a few studies addressed multiple topics, assigning these articles to one of these clusters posed a significant challenge to the process. We carefully read the studies for these special cases

to determine their categorization by identifying the article's focus. As a result, we could classify the entire set of 355 articles according to their identified key themes, research objective, perspective, statistical method used, and data collection. Table 1 provides an overview of the final classification criteria.

Table 1: Final Classification Criteria

Category	Components
Key Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B2B Influence Factors • Brand Attitude • Customer Relationship Management • Customer Loyalty • Diffusion Process • Effects on Consumer Review • Manager Responses in SNS • Motivation/ Attitude/ Acceptance/ Sharing • Relevance for Firms • Success with SMM
Research goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmatory • Exploratory
Research perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both • Consumer • provider
Statistical method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANOVA & MANOVA • Cluster/ Conjoint Analysis • Factor analysis • Simple & multiple Regression • CB SEM • PLS SEM
Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field study • Interview • Questionnaire • Secondary Data • Combination of data collection methods

ANOVA= Analysis of Variance; MANOVA = Multivariate Analysis of Variance; CB SEM = Covariance Bases; Structural Equation Modeling; PLS SEM = Partial Least Squared Structural Equation Modeling

In total, the procedure resulted in ten key topics by describing the main content and main objectives of the relevant literature. Consequently, articles dealing with social media in business-to-business (B2B) marketing and its influencing factors are classified into the 'B2B influence factors' group. 'Brand attitude' includes all articles discussing aspects of SNS communication related to brand awareness, brand loyalty, and influence factors of SMM on brand attitude. 'Customer-relationship management (CRM)' includes published papers that examine how social media marketing influences customer relationship management. Publications dealing with the effects on customer loyalty and the results of customer loyalty are summarized in 'customer loyalty'. 'Diffusion process' as a key topic mostly represents articles using network analysis as an empirical method, while publications dealing with the effects of consumer reviews, e.g., the influence on the intention to buy a product, are summarized in the corresponding topic. In contrast, the

'manager responses in SNS' topic includes research evaluating manager messages' effects. 'Motivation/Attitude/Acceptance/Sharing' includes published papers that explore motivation to use, the attitude toward social network sites, acceptance of social media marketing by different companies, and motivation to share information on SNS. Articles discovering the relevance of SMM for companies are presented in 'relevance for firms'. Tips on implementing SMM and the results of social media marketing campaigns are presented in 'Success with SMM'.

'Research goal' as a criterion is divided into two clusters: (1) confirmatory, for articles that follow a hypothesis-testing approach; (2) exploratory studies, where the goal is to uncover structures in the database. 'Research perspective' classifies the object of study, i.e., whether the study is provider- or consumer-oriented or pays heed to both sides. The quantitative method used to achieve the research goal is classified under the 'statistical method'. Since some articles use multiple statistical methods, we have chosen the most relevant to the study's intended research objectives. Finally, 'data collection' refers to the process by which studies collect data for research.

An Overview of Research on Social Media Marketing

Evolution of SMM and Its Definitions

Before we start with the research review, we briefly describe the development of SMMs and their definitions. The development of social media and social networks is inextricably linked to changes in the Internet and, thus, to changes in information and communication technology (ICT). With the increasing availability of the Internet, web surfing has become increasingly popular among the general public. This, in turn, led to the introduction of social media and social media networks in 2003 (MySpace) and 2004 (Facebook) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The number of available Web 2.0 applications is still increasing (Arora & Sanni, 2019; Popesku, 2014), and the available social network sites are growing in diversity and scope (Ahlquist, 2014; Yadav & Rahman, 2018).

Since representation on social networks is not limited to private use, brands, public administrations, universities, and businesses are free to use social media as a promotional platform. In this context, marketing through social networks is becoming increasingly important (Brocato *et al.*, 2015; Crittenden & Crittenden, 2015; Yang *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, this trend attracts the academic community's interest and poses new challenges for practitioners (Yang *et al.*, 2019; Yang *et al.*, 2016).

Due to the growing importance of social media as a marketing tool for various companies, there is an acute need to provide a detailed definition of social media marketing. Therefore, Table 2 provides an overview of definitions that explain social media marketing and the opportunities that arise from using social communities as a marketing tool.

Table 2: Definitions and Characteristics of Social Media Marketing

Author(s)	Definition
Ang (2011)	"[...] social media strategy, at a basic level, means companies adopting a configuration of activities using SM to create value and set themselves apart from their competitors."
Petrescu and Korgaonkar (2011)	" Social-media advertising uses social communities , such as social networks and virtual worlds as an advertising medium, just as traditional advertising focuses on the television platform. Social media have become the new advertising channels."
Järvinen <i>et al.</i> (2012)	"[...] we regard social media as integrated elements, platforms, and tools of digital marketing that facilitate social interaction between business and customer networks. Accordingly, digital marketing refers to the use of all kinds of digital and social media tools that allow companies to foster interactions with customers."
Mahesh and Amulya (2013)	"[...] it is the methodical use of marketing with other technological concepts and techniques to achieve specific goals for a company. [...] social marketing, means building a business through many different media, like viral videos, ad films, ad copies, and blogs."
Abbott (2014)	"Social media marketing involves the use of Web 2.0 tools , including social networking sites, to increase the awareness of an enterprise's brand, products, and services. For example, [...] share tips on Twitter, announce special promotions on Facebook, and post pictures of new products on Instagram."
Dwivedi <i>et al.</i> (2015)	"[...] Social Media Marketing (SMM) can rather be defined as a dialogue often triggered by consumers/audiences , or a business/product/service that travels in a circle amongst the stated parties to set in motion revealing communications on some promotional information, or to learn from one another's use experiences, eventually benefitting either or all of the involved parties."
Keinänen and Kuivalainen (2015)	"Social media marketing is a term which describes the actual acts of using social networks for marketing purposes. "
Valos <i>et al.</i> (2015)	" Social Media (SM) [...] have the ability to integrate promotion and sales in a way that previous physical promotion and sales channels could not. [...] SM allow organizations to combine sales, selling and promotion in new ways . SM also connect organizational departments in ways that were previously impossible, thus creating unique benefits as well as unanticipated challenges. "
Felix <i>et al.</i> (2016)	"Social Media Marketing is an interdisciplinary and cross-functional concept that uses social media (often in combination with other communication channels) to achieve organizational goals by creating value for stakeholders. "

In 2011, Ang (2011) and Petrescu and Korgaonkar (2011) presented the first definitions of SMM. Ang (2011) aimed to identify a good social media strategy, which is why he first needs to create a notion of social media strategy. In contrast, Petrescu and Korgaonkar (2011) attempt “to clarify and analyze the concept of viral advertising in social media [...] [and] to provide a definition to reduce the prevailing ambiguities” (p.210). Therefore, they analyze previous definitions of social media activities according to purpose, platform, object, and direction. In conclusion, they present a comprehensive definition that summarizes existing viral concepts.

Järvinen *et al.* (2012) have a similar goal. Their intention behind formulating a definition of SMM is to distinguish digital, Internet, and online marketing, which provides a good foundation for comparing B2B marketing activities. In order to incorporate the new field of social media marketing into business language studies, Abbott (2014) identifies the importance of defining social media marketing.

Mahesh and Amulya (2013) take a different approach. They look at social media and social media marketing and its benefits in the regionally limited context of India. For this purpose, they also need to define SMM. The same applies to Keinänen and Kuivalainen (2015), who define social media marketing in order to “put the projected contribution of [their] study into context” (p.712).

The definition presented by Valos *et al.* (2015) is based on an extensive literature review and serves as a basis for further scientific research. In contrast, Felix *et al.* (2016) defined SMM at the end of their research article after providing a holistic and strategic framework for SMM.

In compiling an overview of existing social media marketing studies, Dwivedi *et al.* (2015) also compare different SMM definitions and summarize them into a detailed definition that includes the important aspects. To the extent that this approach is very purposeful and popular, this detailed definition is one of the well-known definitions.

As shown in Table 1, most definitions refer to social media marketing using social media applications or social network sites for advertising and marketing campaigns. Social media marketing extends existing advertising strategies, including television (Petrescu & Korgaonkar, 2011) or other physical advertising and sales channels (Valos *et al.*, 2015). Following this conclusion, Petrescu and Korgaonkar (2011) define social media advertising instead of social media marketing, referring to social networks as new and important advertising channels but not as an innovative form of marketing per se. This designation is in line with Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), who state that virtual social worlds offer “a multitude of opportunities for companies in marketing (advertising/communication, virtual product sales/v-commerce, marketing research) and human resource and internal process management” (p. 64).

To better understand the issue, the following brief examples of SMM provide further insights: In their study, Trihas *et al.* (2013) analyze the impact of SMM via Facebook on tourism in Greek municipalities. Several authors dealt with the effectiveness of SMM on specific brands or market areas, e.g., Üçok Hughes *et al.* (2016) analyzing the effects of a story-giving tool on Tiffany, Santomier *et al.* (2016) placing their research in the area of sports brands, or Keat (2012) focusing on the use of Facebook for elections.

These definitions and examples of social media use illustrate the relevance of SMM as an important marketing tool. In this context, companies and users present their products, services, or themselves on social network sites (SNS) and benefit from community members sharing, liking, or retweeting by community members within the provider's network presence. In addition, the community can comment on the offers and present their individual experiences with the products. These facts open up new research possibilities, such as trust in consumer responses to SNS (Hahn *et al.*, 2016), the effects of electronic word of mouth in SMM (Goel, 2013) or customer loyalty through SNS (Gamboa & Gonçalves, 2014). In summary, there is already an extensive body of research on social media marketing. The following section provides a brief overview of the main developments in research published in peer-reviewed journals.

The first publication dealing with SMM appeared in 2004 (LaRose & Eastin, 2004), followed by another publication in 2009 (Trusov *et al.*, 2009). LaRose and Eastin (2004) mainly focus their research on media attendance with an emphasis on the medium of the Internet and its regular use for a wide range of activities, such as online shopping. In contrast, Trusov *et al.* (2009) investigate word-of-mouth in social networking sites as a major influence on online shopping. The authors compare word-of-mouth on social networking sites with traditional marketing in this context. However, academic interest in social media marketing remained low until 2011, when a linear increase in the number of publications was observed. While there was only one publication on SMM in 2010, there were already nine publications in 2011. These include a publication analyzing the response to different forms of marketing on Facebook (Lee *et al.*, 2011) and the first research on the differential impact of advertising in brand communities and other social media advertising (Chi, 2011).

Main Research Topics and Research Perspectives in the SMM Literature

After this brief description, we now begin with the results of our literature review of 355 SMM publications. First, we overview the most common key topics and their research perspectives. 74 out of the 355 relevant publications deal with the motivation and acceptance of using social media, the intention to share something on SNS, and attitudes towards social media in general (see Table 3). Nearly two-thirds of the studies are consumer-oriented, indicating a need for more provider-oriented research. However, if we look at the total share of each orientation (consumer and provider), we see that the

ratio is almost completely balanced. Although this reveals a lack of comparative studies using both perspectives, only 8% of the studies address this issue.

Table 3: Key Topics According to Research Perspective

Key topic	Provider-oriented	Consumer-oriented	Both	Total	
B2B Influence Factors	9	2	2	13	4%
Brand Attitude	17	33	6	56	16%
Customer Relationship Management	10	2	2	14	4%
Customer Loyalty	5	19	0	24	7%
Diffusion Process	10	8	3	21	6%
Effects on Consumer Review	6	16	3	25	7%
Manager Responses in SNS	6	1	0	7	2%
Motivation/ Attitude/ Acceptance/ Sharing	14	53	7	74	21%
Relevance for Firms	30	10	2	42	12%
Success with SMM	42	32	5	79	22%
Total	149	176	30	355	100%
	42%	50%	8%	100%	

The most common key topic of the reviewed publications is the success of social media marketing campaigns and how to implement them to increase their success (e.g., Kamal *et al.*, 2013; Xie & Lee, 2015; Jones *et al.*, 2018). In contrast to the previously considered topic (motivation/attitude/acceptance/ sharing) (e.g., VanMeter *et al.*, 2018), this topic considers more provider-oriented research. The results show a more pronounced distribution of research perspectives for studies dealing with customer relationship management and studies exploring the relevance of social media marketing for companies. In contrast, the other topics do not show such significant differences.

Summarizing the research foci of the different publications, it is clear that articles dealing with the success factors of SMM are of central importance for SMM research. Articles analyzing the motivation to use and the attitude towards SMM, as well as its acceptance and the intention to share by users, come in second place in the ranking of famous research topics (some examples here are Wang *et al.*, 2019; Şahin *et al.*, 2019 or Witkemper *et al.*, 2012).

Against this background, Table 3 illustrates the lack of empirical SMM research on managers' responses in SNS, B2B influence factors, CRM, effects of consumer reviews, customer loyalty, and diffusion process. Each topic accounts for less than 10% of the total research, and together these topics account for only 30% of the body of quantitative empirical social media marketing research.

Several research questions can be derived from these findings: As one of the most important issues for practitioners, it would be interesting to investigate the return on investment of SMM. Understanding the return on investment of SMM could help companies assess the extent to which they need to pay attention to their social media presence. Furthermore, more research is needed on manager responses, which could also be combined with issues raised by the effects of consumer reviews, e.g., a comparison of the effectiveness of manager responses and consumer reviews. In doing so, research may be able to identify implications for social media marketing strategies and efforts.

Since B2B influence factors are also among the topics that lack an empirical foundation, research questions regarding the actual influence of social media on other companies are possible for future research. These research questions may also consider the return on investment, but beyond that, the importance of specific B2B social media sites is of particular interest to managers and practitioners. Considering the numerous possibilities and different ways of marketing offered by social media, their comparison offers a huge research potential while providing added value to practitioners. By presenting these comparisons, it is possible to differentiate between research perspectives, e.g., comparing the most attractive customer applications with those for suppliers.

For this reason, the analysis and comparison of scientific questions in SMM marketing reveals a great potential for quantitative empirical research. In addition to the topics already presented, it can be stated that research could be expanded in the future to include both provider-oriented and consumer-oriented research perspectives. For example, comparing the most important usage criteria or analyzing the most appealing content from the provider's and user's points of view indicates promising avenues for further research.

Research Goals of SMM Literature

Apart from the current research potential, there is room for improvement regarding the nature and goals of the SMM literature (see Table 4). More than two-thirds of all reviewed studies (74%) are confirmatory (e.g., Milewicz & Saxby, 2013; Hahn *et al.*, 2016; Huh, 2018). Moreover, the number of confirmatory studies is higher than the number of their exploratory counterparts in all key topics. This result is atypical; on the contrary, there are surprisingly many confirmatory publications for such a young research field as SMM and its innovative aspects. In the first ten years after the emergence of a new field, extensive exploratory approaches appear, aiming to find new analytical facts. In contrast, confirmatory research follows exploratory research to verify or falsify the results of previous research. However, these exceptional results for social media marketing may be explained by the focus on quantitative research and the dominance of structural equation modeling in international double-blind peer-reviewed journals.

Table 4: Key Topics and Research Goals of the Investigated Quantitative Empirical Studies

Key topic	Confirmatory	Exploratory	Total
B2B Influence Factors	9	4	13
Brand Attitude	47	9	56
Customer Relationship Management	11	3	14
Customer Loyalty	20	4	24
Diffusion Process	11	10	21
Effects on Consumer Review	21	4	24
Manager Responses in SNS	6	1	7
Motivation/ Attitude/ Acceptance/ Sharing	61	13	74
Relevance for Firms	22	20	42
Success with SMM	55	24	79
Total	263	92	355
	74%	26%	100%

Thus, the dominance of confirmatory research in the areas of motivation, attitude, acceptance, sharing, and success with SMM may be explained by the frequent use of covariance-based structural equation models to study these topics (e.g., Minton *et al.*, 2012; Anderson *et al.*, 2014; Shareef *et al.*, 2019). Although the quantitative empirical research in social media marketing seems to be well-studied according to this result, the variance in some key topics between confirmatory and exploratory publications is not too high in some key topics, and the need for more exploratory research remains. This is particularly the case for the effects on consumer reviews. Confirmatory research also dominates this focus (e.g., Choi *et al.*, 2016). However, it provides an example of a key topic that does not sufficiently address social media marketing theories. For example, exploratory interviews can build a comprehensive exploratory base with managers or social media representatives. A similar approach can be taken for managers of SNS and customer relationship management.

For those cases that exemplify a balance between confirmatory and exploratory research, it is also appropriate to conduct further exploratory research. For example, research questions in the area of B2B influence factors could address the influence of network size on marketing success or the influence of the network on like and share behavior.

Examining the evolution of the various key topics over time, we found an upward trend in the number of publications dealing with the success of SMM and publications analyzing its motivation, acceptance, and attitudes toward it. In addition, we identify brand attitude as the most recent area of SMM research to emerge in recent years.

Statistical Methods Used in SMM Literature

Next, we turn to the analytical methods used in empirical SMM research. Most publications use simple and multiple regression and covariance-based structural equation modeling (e.g., Sohail *et al.*, 2020; Chawla & Chodak, 2021). Partial least squares structural equation modeling (e.g., Keinänen & Kuivalainen, 2015; Yee *et al.*, 2021) ranks third in usage and is less popular among scholars than the CB SEM. Nevertheless, regressions and structural equation modeling are the preferred approaches in 79% of the reviewed studies (see Figure 3).

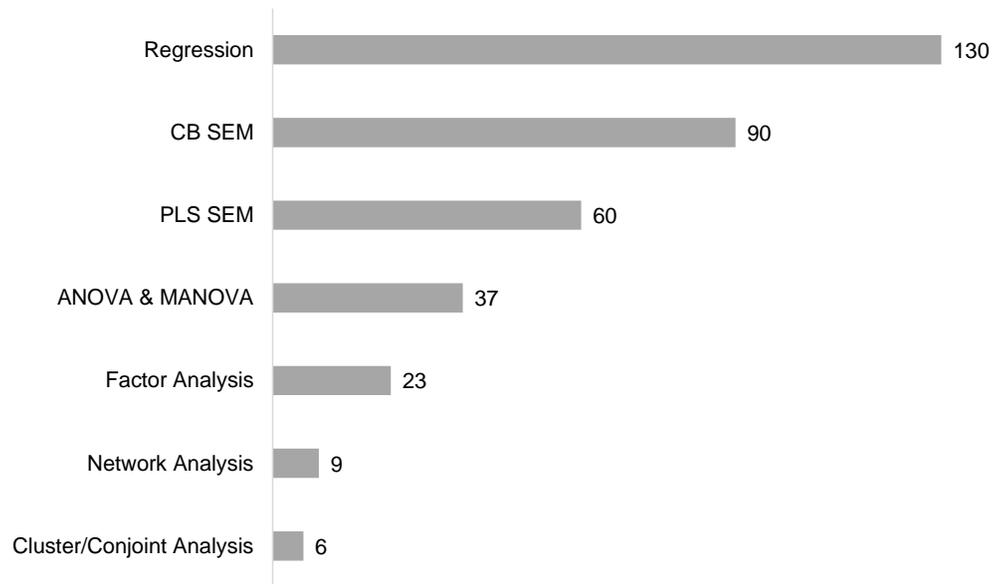


Figure 3: Number of Studies According to the Applied Statistical Methods

Data Collection Methods Used in the SMM Literature

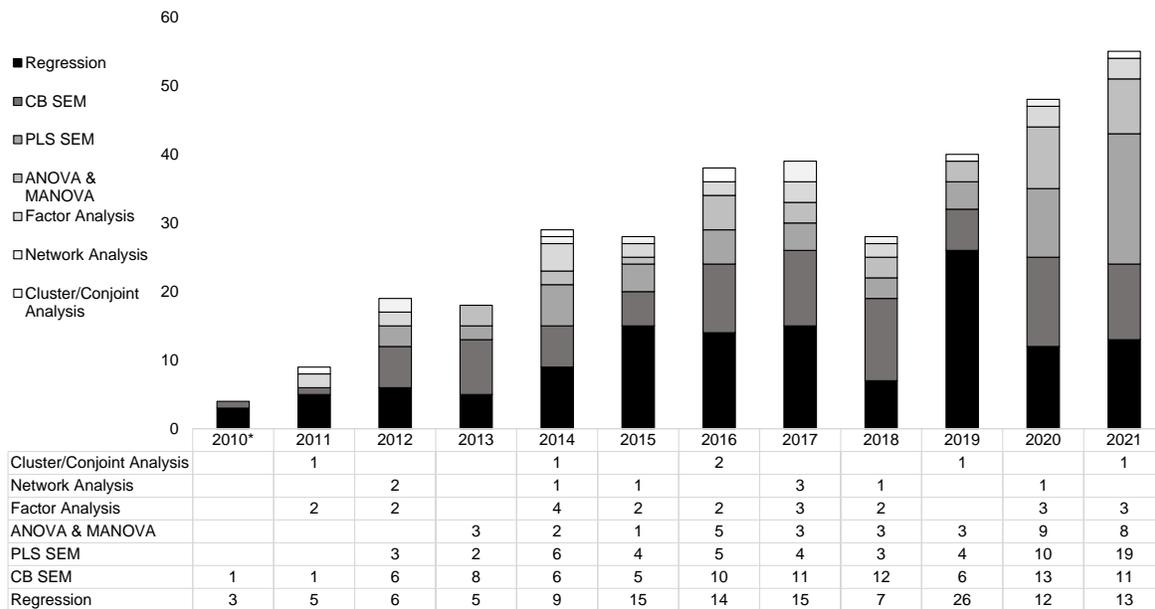
In addition to statistical methods, it is important to consider the type of data collection used in previous research. Regarding data collection, 216 out of 355 studies rely on a questionnaire, while 175 conduct confirmatory research (e.g., Thao & van Anh, 2020; S. Wu, 2020; Vinerean & Opreana, 2021). Furthermore, 48 out of 355 articles use a field study to collect the necessary data (e.g., Delbaere *et al.*, 2021), and 54 articles base their research on secondary data (e.g., Besana & Esposito, 2019), including 21 articles that pursue exploratory objectives (e.g., Vagianos & Koutsoupias, 2021). Surprisingly, only seven articles based their work on interviews (e.g., Badi *et al.*, 2017), even though SMM offers a wide range and excellent accessibility of respondents. In addition, conducting interviews is described as a useful way to collect data and generate foundational knowledge that can be used for further research. Moreover, the interviews' exploratory

nature helps lay the foundation for further exploratory research efforts and further research to confirm the findings.

Finally, 30 articles used a combination of different data collection strategies for their research. The most preferred combinations are field study and questionnaire (e.g., Kumar *et al.*, 2016) and questionnaire and secondary data (e.g., Mathur, 2019). Overall, these findings suggest that questionnaires and field studies are the most popular methods for data collection in the context of SMM and confirmatory research. In contrast, secondary data is preferred for exploratory approaches. It should be noted, however, that combining different exploratory data collection methods increases the explanatory power of a young field of research by allowing new aspects to be uncovered. Therefore, these data collection methods should not be underestimated but used more often in future SMM research.

Research Periods in the Area of SMM

In summary, it can be stated that quantitative empirical research focusing on SMM gained momentum in 2012 and has been growing steadily since then, resulting in an average of 36 peer-reviewed empirical publications per year. At the same time as the increase in publications, empirical SMM research faces an increase in articles using structural equation modeling, especially covariance-based structural equation modeling, and simple or multiple regression, while factor analysis has not grown in importance in the same way (see Figure 4).



*cumulation of 2004 to 2010

Figure 4: Method-Related Evaluation of Quantitative Empirical Articles About Social Media Marketing²

In addition to the methods used, we also looked at the key topics and the theories used within the different years. In this way, we identify a total of four research periods within SMM research: (1) the emergence of SMM research from 2004 to 2011; (2) the growing interest from 2011 to 2014 with the first developments regarding preferred theories; (3) the underpinning of the theories with further research from 2014 to 2016; and (4) the paradigm shift in research from 2016 onward. Especially in the last year of each period, SMM research undergoes a major transformation, with more and more publications showing characteristics of the new period. Therefore, we avoid naming a clear delineation of the years and refer to overlaps that illustrate a fluid transition to the next period.

The first period (2004 to 2011) contains the smallest number of publications and primarily refers mainly to the first analyses within the research field of SMM. These first papers mainly deal with diffusion and electronic word of mouth (WOM). As can be seen in Figure 4, research during this period relied heavily on regression analysis. For example, Trusov *et al.* (2009) compare the effects of online and offline WOM and identify monetary and other incentives that encourage customers to give positive recommendations. This finding accounts for both online and offline WOM. In addition, the authors highlight the importance of WOM for their customer acquisition. These results illustrate the growing importance of SMM during the first period.

From 2011 to 2014, research interests and activities in SMM gained momentum, resulting in a dynamic research field. During this period, SMM research began diversifying regarding research foci and applied methodologies. At the same time, researchers favored basic theories within behavioral research, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). By examining organizational leaders' use of social media for inbound customer communication, Milewicz and Saxby (2013) use the Theory of Planned Behavior with the Technology Acceptance Model to formulate their conceptual and hypotheses. The authors hypothesize that the perceived usefulness (of social media for inbound customer communications) represents one of the main factors in the Technology Acceptance Model and influences satisfaction with social media for marketing communications, influencing the intention to use social media for inbound customer communications. The results of an OLS regression support these hypotheses and thus strengthen the Technology Acceptance Model in combination with the Theory of Planned Behavior.

² Master search May 2022

The subsequent third research period, 'the underpinning of the theories' (2014 to 2016), is characterized by a fragmentation of research foci. For example, the first research on using SMM to increase brand loyalty appeared during this period. Meanwhile, research on successful SMM has made tremendous progress, leading to a near leap in its insights. The three theories have proven themselves in research. Research in the period between 2014 and 2016 supports these theories and shows their validity in the field of social media marketing. However, none of the theories has prevailed over the others. Due to the overall increase in the amount of research on SMM, the use of quantitative empirical methods increased significantly during this period, showing a great emphasis on regression analysis in the third period. The research provided by Siamagka *et al.* (2015) represents one of the very specific research foci, namely the use of social media marketing in the B2B marketing field. The authors use the Technology Acceptance Model and the Resource-Based View for their conceptual model. Following this theoretical combination and using structural equation modeling, perceived usefulness and organizational innovativeness can be identified as the most important drivers for adopting social media for B2B marketing.

Starting in 2016, the last period shows a paradigm shift within SMM research. The research focus shifts from the acceptance of social media to the benefits of using different social media applications. Corresponding to this development, there is a change within the theoretical perspectives, such that the Uses & Gratifications approach appears as the most frequently used theoretical model in the recent history of SMM research. At the same time, structural equation modeling and regression analysis have become more prominent in empirical research. Future literature reviews could use these findings as a basis for their research and highlight further developments within SMM research, as the paradigm above shift may lead to further changes in research foci and corresponding changes in the underlying theoretical basis. Against this background, Vale and Fernandes (2018) apply the Uses and Gratifications Theory to identify information (need), integration, and social interaction as the main drivers of sports page consumption on Facebook. Based on a regression analysis of follower decisions of top UEFA soccer clubs, the authors claim that information (need) influences page consumption more than integration and social interaction.

Google Scholar Citations in SMM Literature

In line with the other systematic reviews in SMM, we decided to enrich the quantitative analysis of our literature review with meaningful data from articles collected in the Google Scholar Citations (GSC). These results allowed us to gain insight into the scientific impact of specific research areas and their importance to the scientific community. The Google Scholar Citation Score is designed to count the number of articles that cite a specific publication. By referring to this score, it is possible to benchmark the

impact of a study in the scientific literature (Google, 2018). Table 5 shows the results for GSC.³

Table 5: Google Scholar Citation Research Area Analysis

Key topic	Sum of Average GSC per year	Sum of Average GSC per year in %	Number of Publications	Number of Publications in %	Sum of Average GSC per year / Number of Publications
B2B Influence Factors	305.2	3.8%	13	3.7%	23.5
Brand Attitude	1144.1	14.3%	56	15.8%	20.4
Customer Relationship Management	371.6	4.7%	14	3.9%	26.5
Customer Loyalty	292.6	3.7%	24	6.8%	12.2
Diffusion Process	317.7	4.0%	21	5.8%	15.1
Effects on Consumer Review	621.8	7.8%	25	7.0%	24.9
Manager Responses in SNS	321.8	4.0%	7	2.0%	46.0
Motivation/ Attitude/ Acceptance/ Sharing	1681.6	21.1%	74	20.8%	22.7
Relevance for Firms	952.9	11.9%	42	11.8%	22.7
Success with SMM	1978.7	24.8%	79	22.3%	25
Total	7987.9	100%	355	100%	22.5

We used average GSC scores to reduce the biasing effects of different publication periods. Therefore, we divided the total number of citations (GSC score) by the years since the article was published. Based on these calculations, we could compare the importance of the different research areas.

The GSC analysis reveals a high relevance of those key topics where the number of publications and the average number of citations per publication differ significantly. This is especially the case for research dealing with manager responses in SNS. In this case, each of the seven publications is cited an average of 46 times. Although these seven articles represent only 4% of all SMM publications, they seem highly important due to their citation frequency (e.g., Kumar *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, it can be concluded that this topic represents an important and expandable avenue for further research. This finding confirms the need for further exploratory research on manager responses in SNS. Another key topic, according to the GSC, is the exploration of CRM (as there is, for example, Wang and Kim, 2017). This key topic has the second-highest average number of citations per publication (26.5 citations on average for 14 articles) and is, therefore, also of high scientific relevance.

Although success with SMM has the highest sum of average GSC per year at 24.8%, the average number of citations per article is below that of manager responses in SNS.

³ The data was collected on 12th August 2022.

Nevertheless, this topic represents a scientifically relevant area of research as it is an important reference for SMM research.

Customer loyalty ranks last in the average number of citations per article, with 12.2 citations for 24 publications, which does not mean this key topic is unimportant. Since the 24 publications represent only 3.7% of all publications, research is needed despite the low number of citations. However, its importance is not as great as for manager responses in SNS.

Apart from manager responses in SNS, the GSC analysis confirms the abovementioned results. The results show that a large number of publications does not necessarily imply high importance of the topic, which might be the case in some cases of motivation/attitude/acceptance/sharing. Figure 5 illustrates this phenomenon by plotting the average annual GSC and the number of publications over time.

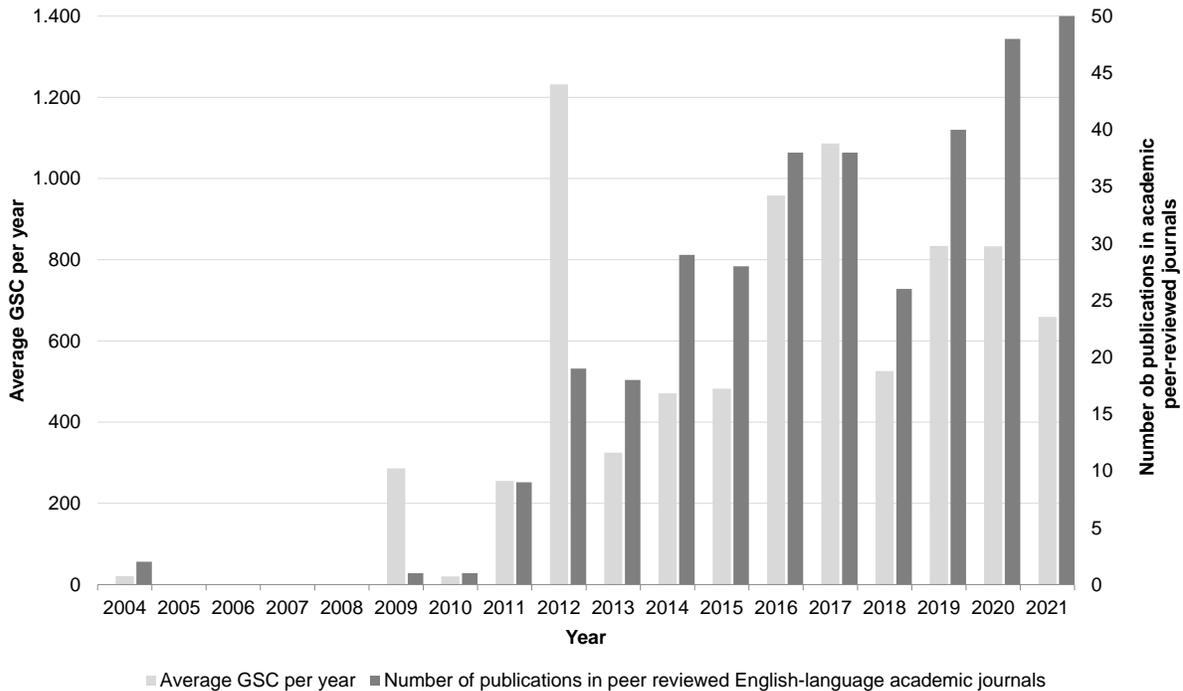


Figure 5: Comparison of Average Google Scholar Citations and Number of Publications Over Time

Looking at the results shown in Figure 5, the scientific efforts from the years 2009 and 2012 seem to be of high interest, as for these years, some highly cited outliers had a significant impact on the average GSC score. In 2009, one of the first articles focusing on SMM (Trusov *et al.*, 2009) was published and received 3,722 citations. In 2012, the article published by Kim and Ko (2012) gained great attention from the scientific community (2,779 citations), followed by Vries *et al.* (2012) with (2,649 citations). Both articles are of quantitative empirical nature and follow a confirmatory research approach.

Journals in SMM Literature

Finally, we look at the journals containing social media marketing literature. Our literature database contains 179 journals, with 117 appearing only once in our list and another 28 appearing only twice. This result is consistent with the findings presented by Hester and Vargo (2013) in their literature review: the literature on SMM is very diverse and difficult to find in specific journals, even though it is a marketing topic. Most papers were published in *Industrial Marketing Management* (10 publications each) (e.g., Wang *et al.*, 2016). This journal mainly covers the field of marketing research dissemination. The most used journal that pursues specific issues, but mostly with a marketing background, is the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* (10 publications) (e.g., Shareef *et al.*, 2019). Other journals refer to marketing and advertising topics in their names and focus on the dissemination of marketing. For example, the *Conference Proceedings of the American Academy of Advertising* (e.g., Lee *et al.*, 2011), the *Journal of Interactive Advertising* (e.g., Chi, 2011), and the *Journal of Marketing* (e.g., Kumar *et al.*, 2016) each contribute eight publications to the field of SMM. On the other hand, the *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* focuses on the link between marketing and higher education (6 publications) (e.g., Shields and Peruta, 2019). In contrast to the aforementioned journals, *Decision Support Systems* deals with decision theory, computer-supported collaborative work, and psychology (5 publications) (e.g., Chang *et al.*, 2018), illustrating a combination of different research topics in marketing research. Today, social media marketing represents a diverse field of research that goes beyond a limited number of scientific marketing journals. Consequently, a comprehensive view into different directions within SMM research could help assess the contemporary dimension of this research field.

Discussion and Conclusion

Summary of Research Approach and Findings

The starting point of this study was to provide an adequate overview of the existing literature base of articles focusing on SMM to uncover research gaps. A review of previous attempts to scrutinize the current state of SMM research revealed that most of the available literature reviews on this topic are limited in terms of topic coverage and database. To our knowledge, no literature review has yet focused on quantitative empirical SMM research, leading to an urgent need to address this deficiency. Therefore, this literature review explicitly clusters and analyzes quantitative empirical research systematically according to its key topics, research objectives, empirical methodology, data collection, and research orientation.

First, we noticed a growing interest in social media marketing over the years, as the number of articles published per year focusing on social media marketing tripled

from 2011 to 2014. Although social media is a relatively young research topic, 355 quantitative empirical publications are available.

Furthermore, we were able to identify four distinct SMM research periods. Our first two periods correspond to the second and third eras Lambertson and Stephen (2016) identified in their analysis. The period, as well as the research foci, are almost identical. However, Lambertson and Stephen (2016) analyzed both conceptual and empirical literature on social media and digital and mobile marketing. However, these are why we could not recognize the first period of Lambertson and Stephen (2016). Moreover, our results of the following periods confirm the predictions made by Lambertson and Stephen (2016) according to the connection with psychological theories and the combination of several data sources.

Our findings are also consistent with Alves *et al.* (2016), who identifies the consumer perspective as a focus of research and success with SMM for companies. They also call for further research “exploring the perspectives of companies” (p. 1036). In addition, we identified similar future research questions as Arora and Sanni (2019) regarding the impact of user-generated content or the factors influencing companies’ use and behavior in social media. In summary, we were able to confirm the previous findings of the literature reviews, and, in addition, we were able to provide further insights into the SMM literature, which allows us to provide more precise suggestions for future research.

Although this study provides an adequate overview of the existing literature, our analysis is subject to several limitations. First, although the present literature review provides clues and systemic guidance for empirical SMM research, it only partially reflects the literature and neglects conceptual and theoretical studies. Therefore, the present study does not provide insights into social media marketing research. Second, as already mentioned, we cannot confirm that all relevant publications dealing with quantitative empirical research in social media marketing have been identified. However, using various search terms and a large online database, we are confident that the final database adequately represents all published articles. Third, we know the potential loss of information due to the aggregation clustering of publications. However, this method is particularly helpful in providing structured results. As stated in Section 2, we confirm that careful filtering and aggregation of the available data reduces the risk of information loss to an acceptable minimum.

Implications For Future Quantitative Empirical Research

Given the findings and limitations of this systematic literature review, quantitative empirical research in social media marketing is becoming increasingly important and remains an open research area. Therefore, the field offers several avenues for further research.

The lack of a both-sided research orientation (customer and provider) provides a foundation for future research, especially regarding manager responses in SNS and customer loyalty. These two topics represent interesting areas of research, especially for practitioners. This finding is confirmed by the citation frequency of the related publications and reveals manager responses in SNS as a key topic for empirical SMM research. The seven publications in the manager responses in the SNS section have the highest average number of citations per publication, illustrating high research interest and relevance.

Although Arrigo (2018) limited her study to publications on luxury brands, her findings also identified a lack of work on marketing outcomes. Our results confirm these findings, as SMM success reflects high importance in the scientific community and can therefore be considered an important research topic. In this case, research on manager responses compared to the impact of consumer reviews helps managers optimize their social media performance and plan further social media marketing strategies. These goals must be achieved through explorative interviews, as the existing base of explorative research work is not sufficiently grounded. In these cases, it is also interesting to identify the most appealing content for users or managers. In addition, usage criteria can be explored and compared between users and providers, thus closing the research gap between the two sides.

The average number of citations per publication indicates a strong interest in research on the impact of CRM and success with SMM. Although the latter's publications are remarkably high, the papers show high scientific relevance. As an indication of research potential, further exploratory research could uncover innovative research questions in this context. A combination of data collection methods suggests another viable approach. Manager interviews combined with user surveys could provide insights into successful SMM policies.

In addition, little research on social media marketing in a business-to-business context is available, which again is important for companies trying to use social media marketing to connect with other companies. In this context, the return on investment analysis is of great interest. This is also the case for “normal” non-business customers, as Alves *et al.* (2016) explained. In this context, our results also confirm the proclaimed importance of both perspectives, i.e., customer-oriented and provider-oriented perspectives. Since Buratti *et al.* (2018) have dealt extensively with B2B-related work, the authors were able to derive statements about regions where little B2B research has taken place so far. Although the present approach does not consider a geographical analysis of research contributions, the results presented above broadly point to the same research gaps, such as identifying B2B as an under-researched topic in the case of social media. A comparison between the most popular applications of companies and customers is also one of the possibilities for future research on this key topic.

Since more than half of the articles analyze the motivation, attitude, acceptance, and sharing of social media from the consumer's point of view, few researchers aim to work on this opportunity from the provider's perspective, e.g., barriers that arise for companies implementing SMM. It would be interesting to elaborate on the specifications and implications of these SMM barriers and discover ways to overcome them. Analyzing the influence of specific SMM applications is a promising approach to start research in this direction of thought. Considering the large number of publications concerning this topic and the low citation rate per article, more research on this topic is less important than manager responses in SNS or the effects of consumer reviews. Since the research on manager responses is already widespread, the scientific and practical added value is not expected to be as extensive as the other topics.

In addition, comparisons of different social media applications may interest researchers and practitioners. Examining the audiences reached by specific applications is helpful and also opens up an innovative avenue for further research, as different applications use different ways of communicating with customers. Instagram mainly uses images, while Facebook and Twitter focus on text messages. In this respect, we again agree with Arrigo (2018), who also criticizes the small number of publications dealing with the most advantageous social media platforms. In this context, it is also possible to compare the evolution of different social media applications since social media are prone to constant change and progress (Ahlquist, 2014). In this regard, the findings of this literature review could provide valuable guidance for the study of social media applications.

By summarizing the demands for further research (e.g., Alves *et al.*, 2016; Felix *et al.*, 2016; Keegan & Rowley, 2017) and the results of our literature review, we identified a vast research potential for SMM for interested researchers. Given the results of the clustering and classification of empirical quantitative SMM research and the associated GSC analysis, the prospective research avenues derived from cluster analysis, as well as the associated statements about the expected significance of the topics based on the GSC, provide valuable guidance for research aimed at expanding the frontiers of SMM. Table 6 summarizes the potential future research topics identified in this analysis. The implications in Table 6 are clustered according to the key to which they relate. We named the research area within the key topics, sorted them according to their perspective, and assessed the research need using a Harvey Balls representation. To facilitate the formulation of research questions for future researchers, we have briefly described the research area and formulated some research questions.

Table 6: Summary of Research Implications

Prospects for Further Research			
Research Area	Research Perspective	Description of Research Need	Top-relevant Research Questions
Success with SMM & Effects on Consumer Reviews			
Successful SMM activities 3	Both (User and Provider)	describes the need for further research examining the factors positively or negatively influencing SMM for companies in order to give managers well-founded recommendations for future SMM activities, i.e. preparing a To-Do or Not-To-Do-List for SMM actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which factors influence SMM activities in a positive way? What kind of consumer review impacts a SMM campaign in a positive manner? What kind of consumer review impacts a SMM campaign in a negative manner?
Identification of application 2	Provider	describes the need for further research to explore the right SM application for different target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which are the most popular SM applications across countries? How do different SM applications vary according to their mode of communication? Given a specific target area or target group, which SM applications do customers prefer the most?
B2B Influence Factors			
Return on Investment 4	Both (User and Provider)	describes the need for further research focusing the return on investment of using SM for specialized campaigns to address other firms, and the identification of useful criteria to create special B2B marketing campaigns in the context of SMM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the preparation of specialized B2B SMM campaigns affect the intended return on investment? To what extent should companies use SM in order to draw the attention of other firms? What are characteristics of a successful B2B marketing campaign on SNS?
Identification of application 3	Provider	describes the need for further research to identify the most popular SM applications in B2B marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the most popular SM applications used in B2B markets? Do popular SM applications in B2B markets differ across business sectors or countries? Given a specific market structure, which SM applications do companies prefer the most?
Motivation/ Attitude/ Acceptance/ Sharing			
Barriers for SMM 3	Provider	describes the need for further research to uncover the barriers that companies face in implementing SM in their marketing strategy and how companies might cope with these barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which barriers deter companies from implementing SMM in their business conduct? Are the characteristics of different SMM applications decisive for the extent of these barriers? What is the most efficient way for companies to overcome these barriers?
Development of SM applications 1	Both (User and Provider)	describes the need for further research to elaborate on the evolution of SM applications during the past decade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For what reasons and to what extent did the various SM applications change in the past decade? What is the impact of fluctuating popularity on design and features of SMM applications? Are there tendencies towards convergence in the evolution of SMM applications?
Manager Responses in SNS			
Influencing SMM campaigns 2	Both (User and Provider)	describes the need for further research dealing with the effects of managerial responses on SNS concerning associated marketing activities, as well as with the impact of consumer reviews on managerial decisions upon SMM strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent do manager responses to customer feedback on SNS affect SMM campaigns? What are the characteristics of the most appealing managerial content on SNS and which impact does this content pose to a SMM campaign?

Research need mentioned in the literature: 0 : < 2 Studies ; 1 : 3 – 7 Studies ; 2 : 8 – 12 Studies ; 3 : 13 – 17 Studies; 4 : >18 Studies

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Appendix A: Overview of Social Media Marketing Literature Reviews

Author(s)	Year	Title	Subject area	Analysed article types
Arora, A. S. and Sanni, S. A.	2019	Ten Years of 'Social Media Marketing' Research in the Journal of Promotion Management: Research Synthesis, Emerging Themes, and New Directions	General overview	Conceptual & empirical
Arrigo, E.	2018	Social media marketing in luxury brands	Luxury brands	Conceptual & empirical
Buratti, N.; Parola, F. and Satta, G.	2018	Insights on the adoption of social media marketing in B2B services	B2B services	Conceptual & empirical
Zahoor, S. Z. and Qureshi, I.H.	2017	Social Media Marketing and Brand Equity: A Literature Review	Brand equity	Conceptual & empirical
Alves, H., Fernandes, C. and Raposo, M.	2016	Social Media Marketing: A Literature Review and Implications	General overview	Conceptual & empirical
Lamberton, C. and Stephen A. T.	2016	A Thematic Exploration of Digital, Social Media, and Mobile Marketing: Research Evolution from 2000 to 2015 and an Agenda for Future Inquiry	Digital, social media, and mobile marketing	Conceptual & empirical
Dwivedi, Y.; Kapoor, K. and Chen, H.	2015	Social media marketing and advertising	General overview	Conceptual & empirical
Teng, S., Khong, K. W. and Goh, W. W.	2015	Persuasive Communication: A Study of Major Attitude-Behavior Theories in a Social Media Context	Attitude-Behavior Theories	Conceptual & empirical
Hester, J. B. and Vargo, C. J.	2013	Social Network Sites and Social Media: A new Research Paradigm for Strategic Communication?	General overview	Conceptual & empirical

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Isabell Balzer is a PhD candidate of Information and Communication Management at the German University of Administrative Sciences in Speyer. She holds a Master's Degree in Sociology from the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz. Her research focuses on social media marketing and the factors that influence its use.