The long journey of social media marketing in the fashion industry

From companies' strategies to consumer responses
Rationale
...is a driver of transformation
• Collaborative
• Social
• Co-creation
• Exchanges

• Personal
• Individual
The Journey: From companies to consumers

- Social Media Marketing Strategies (Step 1)
- Social Media Marketing Strategic Actions (Step 2)
- Marketing Outcomes (Consumer Behavior) (Step 3)
Step 1. Understanding companies
Defining the framework

Baseline

- Industry reports
- Search keywords
  - social media (and) marketing
  - social media (and) business,
  - Additional searches include adoption
- Search engines (only peer-reviewed articles)
  - ISI Web of Science
  - Scopus
  - ScienceDirect
  - Google Scholar
- 147 research articles
Defining the framework

Social media

“A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, allowing the creation and exchange of user generated contents.”

Objectives of social media as a marketing tool (eMarketer, 2010)

• Increasing brand awareness
• Generating word-of-mouth
• Developing brand loyalty
• Creating closer relationships with customers
• Managing customer service issues
• Educating media and public about company-related issues
Defining the framework

Refining

- Additional search keywords
  - Strategy
  - Action
  - Activity
  - Tactic

- 43 research articles
Defining the framework

Conceptualization: Social Media Marketing Strategy (SMMS)

“*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.*”

Adapted from Olson & Slater (2011)

Consequently, global strategic decisions of the firm drive their SMMS.
Defining the framework: SMMS Actions

Mergel (2013)

1. **Representation**: Representation of the agency on social media channels (“push”).
2. **Engagement**: Interaction between the audience and the agency (“pull”).
3. **Networking and “mingling”**: Measured voice and listening to the citizens (passive).

Constantinides (2009, 2014)

1. **Public relations and direct marketing tools**.
2. **Engaging personalities as a means to influence customers and as product/brand advocates**.
3. **Personalizing customer’s online experience and allowing product customization**.
4. **Engaging the customer in the co-creation and innovation process, as well as in product reviews or advertising concepts**.
5. **Listening-in**.
Defining the framework
Initial proposal (Ananda et al., 2014)
Defining the framework
Initial proposal (Ananda et al., 2014)

1. Representation
   1. Public relations.
   2. Promotion and sales.
2. Engagement/value-added proposition
   1. Engaging online opinion leaders, key influencers, and personalities.
   2. Personalizing customer/user experience and product/service customization.
   3. Engaging customers in product/service development and innovation processes.
   4. Calls to action for participatory promotion.
   5. Interacting with competitors.
   6. Customer support.
   7. Engaging (with) suppliers and business partners.
3. Listening-in
   1. Market intelligence.
Step 2. Analyzing companies
Validating Ananda et al. (2014)

Case studies (Ananda et al., 2015a)
- 2 Spanish SMEs (Non-luxury)
- Method:
  - Semi-structured interviews
  - CEO
  - Marketing/communication manager
  - FB content analysis (1 year)
  - Facebook Graph API (posts)

Case studies (Ananda et al., 2015b)
- 2 Italian luxury fashion companies (SME & Large)
- Method:
  - FB/Twitter content analysis (3 months)
    - Fashionbi (FB/Twitter API)
  - Consumer responses (like, comment, share, retweet, reply)
  - Expanded to 6 companies in Ananda et al. (2017).
  - Luxury & Non-luxury
Findings

Ananda et al. (2015a)
- Mostly pictures.
- Main objective: brand awareness.
- Predominant actions:
  - Medium brand: promotion and sales (e.g. link to online catalog).
  - Premium brand: public relations (e.g. offline social meetings and events).
- New actions found.
- Some actions not used.

Ananda et al. (2015b)
- Main objective: branding.
- Predominant actions:
  - Large: product sneak-peeks, links to online shop and show live-streaming (Twitter).
  - SME: links to online shop, offline events and brand values and culture.
- Strong emphasis on “Made in Italy”
- Higher response from consumers to links to catalog.
Further findings

Drivers of SMM adoption in companies [1, 2, 3, 4].

**Perceived benefits of SMM.**

**Perceived risks of SMM.**
Representation (Transaction)

Engagement (Relationship)
Are companies harnessing the potential of social media?
The framework revisited: N-REL (Ananda et al., 2016)
Step 3. N-REL and SM users
How do consumers respond?
Study 1: Research question

Does consumers’ perception of the type and frequency of fashion brands’ SMM activities match the observed type and frequency of said SMM activities?
Study 1: Consumer perceptual process

“The perceptual process is the means by which individuals select, organize and interpret physical sensations –sight, hearing, smells– into a meaningful whole.”

(Solomon and Rabolt, 2009)

Factors:
1. Exposure to the stimulus (frequency/intensity).
2. Attention the stimulus generates.
3. Interpretation of the stimulus by the individual.
Study 1: Research design

- 36 SMM Actions from N-REL.
- Convenience sample.
- Members of at least one fashion brand’s SM “official” community.
  - Indonesia, Spain, France, Italy.
- 2 questionnaires (Likert-7):
  - Text (Q1, N=45)
  - Examples (Q2, N=43)
- Comparison with company data (C).
- Correlation (Spearman’s rho).
### Study 1: Results

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<th>Rank</th>
<th>(C)</th>
<th>(Q1)</th>
<th>(Q2)</th>
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<td>Apologies to customers</td>
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<td>Sharing competitors’ social media contents</td>
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</table>

- $r_s=0.702\ (p<0.01)\ (C-Q1)$
- $r_s=0.654\ (p<0.01)\ (C-Q2)$
- $r_s=0.700\ (p<0.01)\ (Q1-Q2)$
- $r=0.759$.
- Mann-Whitney’s U (27 similar).

High differences in:
- Brand’s expertise.
- Publishing purchases.
- Brand achievements.
- Apologies to customers.
Study 1: Findings

• Higher exposure to social shopping activities (product promotion, links to online shop).

• Consumers are mostly aware of representation actions, but not engagement actions.
  • Important implication: fashion brands may be missing an opportunity to reach a wider audience, by favoring fashion involvement over brand engagement.

• Six actions that rank consistently high are potential indicators to measure SMM activities.

• The results suggest the removal of the seventeen items that are rare/infrequent from both brand and consumer perspectives.
Study 2: Research questions

1. *Which SMM actions are perceived by Indonesian fashion consumers as most frequently used by fashion brands?*

2. *Which SMM actions by fashion brands drive the most eWoM engagement in Indonesian fashion consumers in terms of (a) pass-on, (b) endorsement, and (c) overall eWoM engagement?*

3. *What is the relation between Indonesian fashion consumers’ perceived frequency of fashion brands’ SMM actions and their eWoM engagement behaviors?*
Study 2: Why Indonesia?

1. Convenience.
2. Test N-REL in a different setting.
   • Companies are using social media as sales channels (e.g. direct sales via Instagram).
3. Low Internet penetration rate (34%) but quickly embracing SM (79M active users, 80% of them using mobile devices). 4th largest FB user base in the world.
4. Nongkrong (“hanging-out”) fits with the idea of eWOM engagement.
Study 2: Basic (new) concepts

• Social media consumer response:
  • “The behavioral dimension of consumer brand engagement that occurs as a consequence of social media brand community interactions and manifests as a behavioral response to a post.”

• WoM:
  • “Any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet.”
  • SNS facilitate eWOM.

• Two SM eWOM engagement behaviors:
  • ‘Pass-on’ or ‘recommendation’ behavior (sharing a post in Facebook or a video in YouTube, retweeting, or re-posting in a blog, etc.).
  • ‘Endorsing’ behavior (liking a FB post, a ‘gram’, a YouTube video, faving a tweet, pinning, etc.).
Study 2: Research design

- 19 (6+13) SMM Actions from N-REL.
- Self-administered questionnaire (3rd party, N=250, N_{valid}=241)
- Random stratified sampling method.
- Member of any SM fashion brand community.
- Real examples as stimuli.
- Measures:
  - Perceived frequency: Likert-7
  - Likelihood to have a pass-on (sharing/retweeting/reposting) or endorsing (liking/favoriting/pinning) and aggregate (any) response.
- Point-biserial correlation and Mann-Whitney U-test.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of action</th>
<th>Highly recommended</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Require further testing</th>
<th>Code</th>
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<td>Providing access to the brands’ e-commerce/e-shop site</td>
<td>Highly recommended</td>
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<td>Providing upcoming product sneak-peeks</td>
<td>Highly recommended</td>
<td>SMMA3</td>
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<td>Providing exclusive campaign previews</td>
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<td>Offering free products or price discounts</td>
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Study 2: Research design
## Study 2: Results

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<th>SMM action</th>
<th>Frequency scale (average)</th>
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<tr>
<td>SMMA11</td>
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<td>25%</td>
<td>.236**</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<td>59%</td>
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<td>69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMMA4</td>
<td>3.905</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>.280**</td>
<td>113%</td>
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<td>54%</td>
<td>.91**</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMMA13</td>
<td>3.842</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<td>16%</td>
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<td>SMMA7</td>
<td>3.577</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMMA15</td>
<td>3.303</td>
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<td>SMMA5</td>
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<td>37%</td>
<td>.78**</td>
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</table>

*Significant at p<0.05

**Significant at p<0.01
Study 2: Findings (I)

• Representation actions perceived as more frequent than engagement.
• Pass-on engagement (avg. 22%)
  • >40%: “free products/price discounts”, “giveaway contests”.
• Endorsement engagement (avg. 51%)
  • >60%: “access to e-commerce site/e-shop”, “free products/price discounts”.
• Aggregate eWOM engagement (avg. 62%)
  • >70%: “free products/price discounts”, “giveaway contests”, “access to online shop”, “casual socialization contents”.
  • Contents about the brand (expertise, values, culture, achievements) >66%.
Study 2: Findings (II)

• Positive but moderate/low correlations between perceived frequency and eWOM engagement.

• Variance explained by perceived frequency:
  - 41% of aggregate.
  - 47% of endorsement.
  - Only nearly 11% of pass-on.

• Top actions (as perceived by consumers):
  1. Access to e-commerce/e-shop site.
  2. Free products/price discounts.
  3. Casual socialization.
  4. Product promotion.
Study 2: Findings (III)

• Pass-on engagement relates not to frequency, but to specific types of action (cognitive-inducing, i.e. information).

• Socialization, brand stories and images around the community generate eWOM (part of shared rituals and traditions).

• Pass-on and endorsement are different in nature and purpose.
  • Is pass-on stronger? (boundary trespassing).
  • Cognitive vs Affective.
Study 2: Findings (IV)

• Two ways to enhance engagement:
  • Increase reach by enhancing cognitive-inducing actions (e.g. pre-purchase information).
  • Improve focus on brand and fostering sense of community by leveraging frequency.
    • Creation of loyalty and brand love.
    • Creation of friendly atmosphere.
Study 2: Limitations and further research

- Interpretation.
- Individual characteristics.
- Role of involvement.
- Investigate if and how eWoM engagement in SM translates to other behaviors.
Ongoing research

- Brand
- Fashion
- Social Media

Engagement

SM CBE

Response

- Brand love
- Loyalty
- Purchase Intention
Related publications


• Ananda, A. S., Hernández-García, Á., & Lamberti, L. (accepted for publication). SME fashion brands and social media marketing: From strategies to actions. *International Journal of Web Based Communities*.


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in the fashion industry. From companies' strategies to consumer responses. Dean’s

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