
Conceptualizing involvement in fashion social media brand communities

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Abstract: This study addresses the lack of understanding of the different elements (fashion products, fashion brands, social media platforms) and types of involvement (enduring and situational) that interplay in the development of involvement with fashion brands in social media communities. The research revises the concept of involvement in fashion social media brand communities from a multidimensional approach, with three different dimensions: fashion involvement, fashion brand involvement (enduring) and involvement with social media brand communities (situational). The revised conceptualization of involvement is empirically tested using a sample (N=451) of members of different luxury fashion and fast-fashion international brands in Indonesia, a country with one of the largest social media audiences in the world. The results show that a multidimensional view provides a more adequate framework to study involvement in social media, even though further investigation is required to fully understand the concept of involvement in social media brand communities.

Keywords: involvement, fashion brands, social media, social media marketing, social media communities.

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1 Introduction

Social networking sites, or social media, focus on content and enable end-users to take an active role in content creation. Social media have become key marketing tools to support market-driven, consumer-oriented organizations, due to their interactivity and emphasis on user-generated content. Widespread use of social media has transformed the marketing landscape of many industries, and fashion is not an exception.

Fashion brands regularly use social media to communicate their image and marketing messages, and have the largest median social media audience (White, 2016). Fashion reflects the latest and cutting-edge trends, and social media are tools that capture evolving trends; thus, social media are perfect tools for fashion brands and for consumers to reflect their styles (McCrea, 2013).

Consequently, fashion brands have rapidly adopted social media, creating brand communities in different platforms. Members of a brand community usually comprise brand admirers who share a common interest in the brand (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001), which closely relates to the idea of involvement. Zaichkowsky (1985) defines involvement with an object in general as “a person’s perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests” (p. 342). Involvement is key to understand engagement (Hollebeek et al., 2014), a central aspect of social media. Fashion Brands must use social media, among other channels, to foster involvement with their brand if they want to engage with consumers effectively (Harrigan et al., 2017), because consumers highly involved with fashion brands want to engage and further develop strong relationships with the brand (Park et al., 2011). Furthermore, fashion involvement has a positive effect on consumers’ intention to adopt new fashion (Rahman et al., 2014), and consumers with high fashion involvement are more likely to purchase fashion products (Kim et al., 2005).

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Understanding and measuring involvement in fashion social media brand communities (SMBCs) is a critical issue for researchers and, more importantly, for marketing practitioners. Aside from the most visible outcomes of involvement, such as purchasing intention, brand loyalty or brand advocacy (Naderi, 2013), consumers who are highly involved with fashion are seen as the drivers of the fashion adoption process (Goldsmith et al., 1993; O’Cass, 2004). Therefore, highly involved fashion shoppers constitute an important group for fashion marketers (Szczepaniak, 2015).

However, marketing research on involvement has mainly focused on a single object – namely, either product involvement or brand involvement–, except for some examples that depart from the above definition –e.g. Wolny and Muller (2013). Moreover, the emergence of new interactive, two-way media, such as social networking sites, has changed the way companies and brands connect, interact and communicate their messages to their current and potential customers. Prior studies might not capture the multifaceted aspects of involvement in fashion SMBCs, including involvement with fashion products, with fashion brands and with social media. Furthermore, marketing research rarely acknowledges the distinction between enduring involvement –stable and gained over time– and situational involvement –immediate and occurring in a particular situation– (Chun & Lee, 2016).

Research on social media marketing has generally not addressed the revision of the concept or dimensions of involvement in a social media context, instead focusing on arbitrarily selecting some of its facets or treating involvement as a unidimensional concept. By so doing, the study of the relationship between involvement and other marketing outcomes may be limited and incomplete. Considering that fashion SMBCs pivot around the notion of connection and interaction between brands and consumers, the revision of the concept is necessary because relationship marketing and how individuals ascribe specific meanings to products can be clarified by the construct of involvement (O’Cass, 2004). Addressing the lack of a consistent view of involvement in the era of social media is vital for marketers, because only with a clear understanding of the different aspects of involvement may fashion brands better connect with their customers, allocate the necessary resources and direct their marketing effort toward specific strategic actions in social media networks.

This study addresses that limitation by proposing an updated and multi-dimensional conceptualization of involvement for new digital contexts, such as social media –and, more specifically, in fashion SMBCs. The results from the study will help researchers and practitioners to better understand involvement in social media and its different dimensions, and will be useful for marketers aiming to improve consumer involvement in social media.

The structure of this study is as follows. Section 2 highlights the relevance of social media use in fashion, focusing on involvement in SMBCs, and develops a theory-grounded multidimensional characterization of involvement in SMBCs. Section 3 details the methodology of the study, and Section 4 presents the results of the data analysis. Section 5 discusses the main findings from the study, while Section 6 addresses the main limitations of the study. Finally, concluding remarks are summarized in Section 7.

2. Involvement, fashion and social media brand communities

2.1. Fashion and social media

The advent of Web 2.0 facilitates the creation of user-generated content, fosters user participation and drives consumers to join social networks and be part of communities where they share their hobbies and interests. This new participatory culture transforms the concept of consumption into information exchanges (Beer & Burrows, 2010) and changes how people experience fashion (Hope, 2016). New actors are emerging in the market, such as influencers and fashion bloggers, who are gaining power and can generate important electronic word-of-mouth about brands and products, designers and retailers, sharing fashion tips and advice with their followers (Kulmala, et al., 2013).

Fashion brands have rapidly embraced social media as marketing tools and to timely identify consumer trends and engage with customers. Social media has transformed the world of fashion, and the future of fashion is democracy and the ability to adapt to, and together with, consumers. Fashion brands use social media in different, new and creative ways to create brand awareness, enhance and reinforce the identity and image of the brand, and to provide immediate information about their products, aiming to drive consumers into purchasing them (Phan et al., 2011; Ng, 2014; Kontu and Vecchi, 2014; Godey et al., 2016).

2.2. Social media brand communities

The popularity of social media forces companies to adapt their marketing practices and changes consumer behavior along the whole shopping process, which is now seen as a customer journey that focuses on enhancing the consumer's shopping experience in every stage of the process. Because social media is all about user participation, social media networking sites attract like-minded people, who join groups where they discuss and share information about their interests. When a company takes the lead and creates one group around the brand to attract followers, the result is a group or community of brand admirers (Habibi et al., 2014). The creation of such groups helps brands to increase their presence in social media and form SMBCs (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014) that function as marketing and sales channels for companies, and where companies communicate their marketing messages in the form of content posted on brand communities in various social media networking sites.

Brand communities are "specialized, non-geographically bound communities, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand" (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001, p. 412), and "enduring, self-selected groups of consumers, sharing a system of values, standards and representations, who accept and recognize bonds of membership with each other and with the whole" (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009, p. 316). A particular type of brand communities in social media are SMBCs. Social media-based brand communities are a special case of online or virtual brand communities (Habibi et al., 2014) established on social media platforms (Habibi et al., 2016). Therefore, SMBCs are online network-based communities (Vernuccio et al., 2015) that companies use as platforms to facilitate interaction with and among consumers (Brodie et al., 2013). Jang et al. (2008) differentiate between consumer-initiated and company-initiated communities.

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The latter, which are the focus of this study, include brand pages in social networking sites –e.g. Facebook fan pages (Zaglia, 2013)–, where brands can share their stories, communicate their messages and connect with their target audience. In turn, consumers join an SMBC to satisfy information needs, look for solutions or have access to special deals (Brodie et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2014).

2.3. Involvement and fashion social media brand communities

Involvement refers to “a state of motivation, arousal, or interest” (Rothschild, 1984; p. 214). We can differentiate two types of involvement –enduring and situational (Chun & Lee, 2016)– because there are both intrinsic and situational determinants of involvement (Bennett et al., 2005). Enduring involvement relates to the intrinsic determinant, and it reflects an individual’s general and long-term consideration of the object in relation to one’s knowledge, experience, interests, values and goals, gained over time and stored in long-term memory; as such, enduring involvement is stable (Naderi, 2013; Chun & Lee, 2016). In contrast, situational involvement may occur in a particular situation and refers to an individual’s immediate and transitory consideration of the object when he or she is in a temporary condition (Chun & Lee, 2016). Situational involvement usually relates to perceived risk, whereas enduring involvement is usually a result of prior experience (Bennett et al., 2005).

Considering the different types of involvement at play in a social media context for fashion companies, this research considers two enduring types of involvement –fashion involvement and fashion brand involvement– and one situational involvement –involvement with the SMBC.

2.3.1. Fashion involvement

In relation to the object of involvement, different objects may be the focus of involvement, leading to different types of involvement: message involvement (Kokkinaki & Lunt, 1999), advertisement involvement, purchase decision involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1986), etc. In advertising, involvement is seen as the perceived relevance of the commercial message for an individual, based on inherent needs, values, and interests (Zaichkowsky, 1985; 1986). When the focus object is a product, involvement refers to the relationship between a person and the product. Product involvement then represents how relevant or important a person perceives the product or product category. Therefore, product involvement represents the relevance of the product in relation to the needs and values of the consumer (Zaichkowsky, 1986). Involved consumers exhibit feelings of interest, pleasure and enthusiasm towards relevant product categories (Kim et al., 2002). In the case of fashion, clothing and apparel, the products are likely to induce high involvement (Kim, 2005). Therefore, ‘fashion involvement’ indicates involvement with the product category of apparel and fashion in general (Kim et al., 2002).

The more important fashion activities are in a consumer’s life, the greater his or her fashion involvement (Hourigan & Bougoure, 2012). Therefore, fashion involvement is defined in this study as “the extent to which a consumer views fashion, clothing and apparel products as a central part of his or her life, and meaningful and important to him/her”.

The importance of fashion involvement is capital for brands, as consumers with enduring involvement towards fashion have more potential to be fashion opinion leaders or influencers, who tend to discuss and be positive towards advertising media, read more fashion magazines, and have significantly more affinity with such media than non-opinion leaders. Opinion leaders also tend to like to discuss products with their immediate environment (Verette, 2004). Fashion involvement is positively correlated to mingling –socializing and bonding with others during shopping– and browsing –in-store examination for informational and/or recreational purposes without an immediate intent to buy– behaviors (Jantarat et al., 2010). Fashion involvement is also key in driving younger audiences into experiencing the brand and its products; for example, Millennials who are more involved with shopping fashion and clothing products tend to check a wider variety of resources in different media (Kinley et al., 2010).

2.3.2. Fashion brand involvement

Analogously to product involvement, individuals may develop involvement with a particular brand, or brand involvement –also referred to as ‘brand commitment’. Brand involvement represents positive feelings of attachment to a brand and is characterized by a tendency to resist changes (Wolny & Mueller, 2013). An individual’s involvement with a company or brand would then represent an enduring involvement (Chun & Lee, 2016).

Affective or emotional attachment to a brand is particularly relevant in fashion, as fashion brands rely strongly on emotional differentiation (Wolny & Mueller, 2013). Most consumers join a brand community in social media after an actual consumption of the brand’s product (Kim et al., 2014), and brand involvement influences consumers’ intention to subscribe to and continuously promote the brands’ social media page (Chun & Lee, 2016). Brand involvement is one of main key motivators for fashion brand-related social media electronic word-of-mouth engagement (Wolny & Mueller, 2013), and online brand engagement mediates the relation between fashion brand involvement and purchase intention (Smith et al., 2016).

2.3.3. Involvement with social media brand communities

Involvement with social media networking sites and applications represents the perceived relevance of social media tools and applications for an individual (Lim et al., 2013); in other words, involvement with social media indicates how motivated an individual is about using social media tools and applications, and then processing the information of user-generated content from those social media sites. (Lim et al., 2013) Consumers who are highly involved with social media are more interested in, and willing to spend more time using social media to learn more about products (Cheung & To, 2016). They may even use social media as their primary means of sharing their experiences or suggestions about products and services. Contrary to brand involvement, involvement with social media is a kind of situational involvement because online activities are immediate and temporary (Chun & Lee, 2016). As such, situational involvement with a company’s social media page can be seen as the user’s transitory consideration of the company’s page or community when one engages in online activities such as reading content, watching videos, clicking links –e.g. like or share button–, and writing comments on that page (Chun & Lee, 2016).

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Involvement with social networking sites is comparable to message involvement in advertising (Mazaheri et al., 2011). Individuals highly involved with an advertising message are more likely to pay attention to claims made about the product, exert more mental effort in examining these claims, and persist in this mental activity, more so than individuals with lower involvement (Kokkinaki & Lunt, 1999). In the context of social media communities, involvement with an SMBC has a direct and positive effect on individual's social media satisfaction, which in the end positively impacts social media usage intention (Lim et al., 2013). Situational involvement –in this case, involvement with an SMBC– also has a positive influence on consumers' intention to subscribe to and continuously promote the brands' social media page (Chun & Lee, 2016).

From all the above, the study proposes the following research hypothesis: *A model of involvement as a second-order, three-dimensional construct that incorporates enduring – fashion involvement, fashion brand involvement– and situational –involvement with social media– involvement will fit the data better than a unidimensional conceptualization of involvement.*

3. Materials and methods

3.1. Sample demographics and data collection

The empirical validation of the measurement instrument designed for the study includes a questionnaire administered to 500 members of different luxury and non-luxury international fashion brands in Indonesia, a country with one of the largest social media audiences in the world. This study collects the data using an online questionnaire. The unit of analysis of the study are Indonesian fashion consumers participating in global European fashion brand-initiated social media communities. Even though the choice of a single country might raise some concerns regarding the external validity of the study, the study assumes that the scales used to measure involvement are valid in different cultural settings, in line with the findings of Flynn, Goldsmith and Kim (1993). Fashion involvement is all about the personal characteristics of the consumer, and involvement in a fashion context reflects an individual's subjective knowledge of fashion (O'Cass, 2004), making it less subject to cultural influences. Furthermore, social media has a globalization effect that trespasses cultural and national boundaries and leads to members of fashion SMBCs sharing the assimilated "culture of the community", with each community having their own distinctive community markers (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), and where the values shared and accepted in the community are primarily those pertaining to the community.

The different brands include both luxury –Chanel and Gucci– and non-luxury, fast-fashion brands –H&M and Zara– with high activity in different social media networking sites. All four brands are among the most-followed fashion companies in Facebook (data from Socialbakers¹) and Instagram (data from Iconosquare²). The choice of large

¹ <https://www.socialbakers.com>

² <https://pro.iconosquare.com>

multinational brands purposely aims to mitigate the potential effect of cultural influences, by focusing on global communities. Participants are members of at least one social media community of one of the four fashion brands. For brand-related questions –i.e. fashion brand involvement– participants were asked to choose the SMBC they followed more closely.

Jakpat, one of the leading market research companies in Indonesia, helped with the sample selection, following a random stratified sampling method from a panel of 2420 consumers and selecting 125 respondents who were followers of each brand. The characteristics of the sample (Table 1) ensured representativeness of the Indonesian social media and online shopping audiences (HKTDC, 2014; BMI Research, 2014; Anestia, 2015; eMarketer, 2015; Roberts, 2015).

Table 1. Sample demographics

		Overall
Gender	Female	246 (55%)
	Male	205 (45%)
Age	18-20	38 (8%)
	21-30	277 (61%)
	31-40	107 (24%)
	>40	29 (6%)
Province of residence	DKI Jakarta	89 (20%)
	West Java	87 (19%)
	Central Java	46 (10%)
	DI Yogyakarta	24 (5%)
	East Java	91 (20%)
	Banten	26 (6%)
	North Sumatera	22 (5%)
	South Sumatera	12 (3%)
	East Kalimantan	7 (2%)
	South Kalimantan	4 (1%)
	South Sulawesi	6 (1%)
	Bali	7 (2%)
Others	30 (7%)	
Purchasers of the brand		358 (79%)

After examination of the responses, a total of 49 invalid responses –including incomplete responses, data that showed response-set behavior, and careless responses– were dropped, for a total of 451 valid responses (90.2% response rate).

3.2. Measurement instrument

The measurement instrument for fashion involvement adopts the definition and measurement instrument of O’Cass (2000), which develops the measurement items specifically to measure involvement with categories of products. The instrument uses a Likert-7 scale (with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree with the different statements). The definition and measurement items of fashion brand involvement and

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involvement with the SMBC are adapted from Zaichkowsky (1985; 1994), based on the Personal Involvement Inventory, which uses a semantic differential scale. The advantage of this approach is the measurement items are context-free, requiring specification of the object of involvement. The choice of a semantic differential facilitates higher generalizability (Zaichkowsky, 1985) and is therefore more appropriate to measure context-free PII items. Table 2 summarizes the definition and items used to measure each dimension of involvement in fashion SMBCs.

Table 2. Measurement instrument

Dimension	Definition	Items	References
Fashion involvement (FIn)	The extent to which a consumer views fashion, clothing and apparel products as a central part of his/her life, and meaningful and important to him/her.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fashion means a lot to me 2. Fashion is a significant part of my life 3. I consider fashion to be a central part of my life 4. I think about fashion a lot 5. I am not interested in fashion* 6. I am very much involved with fashion 7. Fashion is unimportant to me* 8. I find fashion a very relevant product in my life 	O’Cass (2000); Hourigan and Bougoure (2012).
Fashion-brand involvement (BIn)	The consumer’s individual perceived relevance of a focal fashion brand based on inherent needs, values, and interests.	<p>“For me, [brand] is ... [7-point semantic differential scale]:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unimportant/Important” 2. Boring/Interesting” 3. Irrelevant/Relevant” 4. Exciting/Unexciting*” 5. Worthless/Valuable” 6. Uninvolving/Involving” 7. Needed/Not needed*” 	Zaichkowsky (1994); Chun and Lee (2016)
Involvement with social media brand communities (SMIn)	A consumer’s individual transitory consideration of a brand’s social media community.	<p>In regard to [brand]’s social media page/account, “The social media page/account of [brand] is... [7-point semantic differential scale]:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. unimportant/important to me” 2. irrelevant/relevant to my needs” 3. not worth/ worth paying attention to” 4. worth/not worth remembering*” 	Adapted from Mazaheri et al. (2011), Lim et al. (2013).

*: Reversed item

Figure 1 summarizes the measurement model for this study.

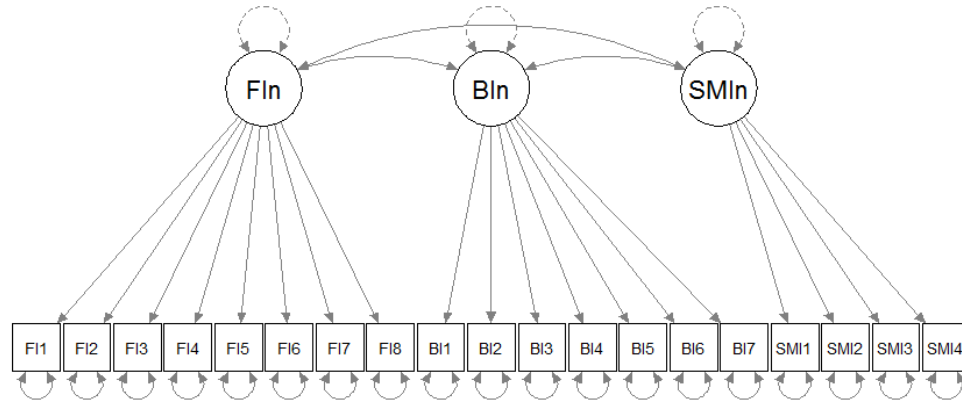


Figure 1. Measurement instrument

3.3. Analysis technique

The study uses confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the measurement instrument of involvement in fashion SMBCs in a nomological network and compares the three-dimensional model with a single factor definition. CFA is an adequate statistical procedure to cover the research objective because it offers a way of testing how well measured variables represent a smaller number of constructs, where researchers make the assignment of variables to factors based on theory prior to obtaining any results (Hair et al., 2014). CFA therefore provides a confirmatory test of the measurement theory, which is exactly the main objective of this study. Data analysis is conducted with the help of the *lavaan* package in R (Roseel, 2012), and follows the general guidelines of Hair et al. (2014).

4. Data analysis

4.1. Preliminary analysis

Prior to proceeding with the CFA, the analysis includes a test of differences for every indicator between the responses for fast-fashion and luxury brands to discard potential influence of the type of brand in the analysis. The results show no significant differences between both groups, even assuming unequal variances, and therefore responses for both groups are incorporated as part of the same total dataset.

The results from the CFA show poor fit for both the initial single factor and three-dimensional measurement models (see Table 3 in section 4.2). Upon inspection of the data, very low standard loadings were observed in reverse-worded items. Inclusion of reversed items may have unintended consequences on response styles, such as respondent's acquiescence, inattention and confusion due to item-verification difficulty (Van Sonderen et al., 2013). Therefore, reversed items often have lower item-total correlations than regular items, leading to lower scale reliability. This is especially

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harmful for the analysis of factor models, where reversed items generally lead to poorer fit indices and smaller factor loadings (Weijters & Baumgartner, 2012). As dropping these manifest variables from the analysis would not lead to model identification issues, all reversed items were removed from the analysis. Furthermore, after observation of the correlations among the indicators of fashion brand involvement, the results suggest removal of two items (BInv2 and BInv5) with similar correlations across items of fashion brand involvement and involvement with SMBCs, and significant improvement of average variance extracted of fashion brand involvement after removal. It is worth noting that these two indicators have relation with hedonic (BInv2, “boring/interesting”) and utilitarian (BInv5, “worthless/valuable”) aspects of involvement, and not with the relevance of the fashion brand for the individual *per se*.

4.2. Model validity assessment

Table 3 summarizes the results of model fit assessment. From Table 3, as mentioned in section 4.1, the initial single-factor model offers a bad fit, whereas the multi-dimensional approach has a better, yet mediocre, fit. The results are quite different after item deputation. Thus, while the single factor conceptualization still has a bad fit, the multi-dimensional approach presents a much better fit. Furthermore, information criteria indices perform much better in the case of the multi-dimensional approach, suggesting the superiority of this type of model (other fit indices of this model not included in Table 3: NNFI=0.959; RNI=0.968; GFI=0.940; AGFI=0.911). The subsequent analysis will therefore focus on the assessment of the multi-dimensional approach, after item deputation.

Table 3. Model fit assessment

Fit index	Recommended value	Single factor (all items)	Multi-dimensional (all items)	Single factor (after item removal)	Multi-dimensional (after item removal)
χ^2		1972.985	836.187	1293.269	145.256
df		151	149	64	51
χ^2/df		13.06	5.61	20.20	3.05
CFI	>0.95	0.618	0.856	0.688	0.973
TLI	>0.95	0.567	0.835	0.620	0.965
SRMR	<0.05	0.123	0.089	0.131	0.040
RMSEA	<0.05-0.08	0.162	0.100	0.204	0.064
RMSEA IC		[0.156,0.168]	[0.094,0.107]	[0.195,0.214]	[0.052,0.076]
AIC	The lower, the better	29428.380	28295.582	19017.832	16255.307
BIC	The lower, the better	29589.498	28464.962	19129.376	16366.316

4.3. Construct validity assessment

Upon observation of the unstandardized path estimates, all values are positive and significant ($p < 0.001$). Additionally, all standard loadings are above 0.7 and significant (Table 4), and the values of average variance extracted (FIn = 0.652, BIn = 0.705, SMIn = 0.623) are above 0.5, confirming convergent validity.

Table 4. Standardized factor loadings and average variance extracted

Indicator	FIn	BIn	SMIn
FIn1	0.828		
FIn2	0.816		
FIn3	0.810		
FIn4	0.817		
FIn6	0.817		
FIn8	0.754		
BIn1		0.809	
BIn3		0.885	
BIn6		0.824	
SMIn1			0.782
SMIn2			0.856
SMIn3			0.726
AVE	0.652	0.705	0.623

Regarding discriminant validity (Table 5), the results show high correlation between fashion brand involvement and involvement with SMBCs. Although item intra-correlations are higher than item inter-correlations, from the results, and using the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion, discriminant validity would not be established. A different result emerges when performing a chi-square difference test of the constrained and unconstrained models –where the correlation between fashion brand involvement and social media brand involvement is constrained to a value of 1.0– as the results show significantly lower chi-square value for the unconstrained model, suggesting that discriminant validity is established (Anderson & Gerbing, 1984). Alternatively, we explore in this study Henseler et al.’s (2015) HTMT criterion for variance-based analysis –even though the principles applying to covariance-based analysis are the same–, finding that all values fall below the most restrictive value of 0.85, and hence discriminant validity would be established.

Table 5. Discriminant validity analysis (top-half: diagonal elements are construct AVEs, values below the diagonal are correlation estimates among constructs and values above the diagonal are squared correlations; bottom half: diagonal elements are construct variances, values below the diagonal represent the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations)

Fornell & Larcker (1981)			
Indicator	FIn	BIn	SMIn
FIn	0.652	0.285	0.268
BIn	0.534	0.705	0.637
SMIn	0.518	0.798	0.623

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HTMT (2015)			
Indicator	FIn	BIn	SMIn
FIn	1		
BIn	0.557	1	
SMIn	0.527	0.813	1

5. Discussion of results

The results of the analysis support the research hypothesis and suggest the adequacy of a multidimensional view of involvement in SMBCs, and more particularly in the fashion sector, as a first step to understand the role of involvement in social media marketing. From the results, the most important dimensions of fashion SMBCs focus on aspects associated with the brand.

The good fit of the model proposed in this study suggests that research on involvement, especially in fashion and social media, should consider the different dimensions or components of involvement to fully understand the essence of such a complex and multifaceted concept. The study finds potential discriminant validity issues between fashion brand involvement and involvement with SMBCs, depending on the method and criteria used for validation. Even though two different methods confirm discriminant validity of the second-order conceptualization, the exploration and possible explanations of this finding are especially thought-provoking, as the reasons behind this result open interesting avenues of future research. A more detailed discussion of the findings, main contributions and implications of this research follows next.

5.1. Enduring and situational involvement

The conceptual framework clearly differentiates between enduring –fashion involvement and fashion brand involvement– and situational –involvement with SMBCs– dimensions of involvement. The questionnaire specifically situated involvement with SMBCs in the context of specific brands, suggesting that involvement with a given SMBC could also develop and sustain over time. The results would then suggest that the frontier between enduring and situational involvement might be blurry and that, even though online activities are immediate and temporary, the users' consideration of the brand's community in social media is not transitory, but rather enduring. This finding evidences the importance of adequately deploying the brand's social media strategy, and the use of social media networks not as transitory but rather as a long-term virtual space to interact with current and potential customers. Consequently, and considering that consumers highly involved with the brand in social media may be more interested in and willing to spend time using social media to learn more about products, the effectiveness of marketing communications using these media might be enhanced by strategically planning social media marketing strategies.

5.2. Understanding involvement with social media as part of involvement with fashion social media brand communities

The questionnaire did not ask for different social media networking sites; users might also be more involved with some platforms than others and could potentially associate some attributes of the different platforms to the existing SMBC in that platform.

Two straightforward implications of this finding, if confirmed by future studies, are that a careful selection of the social media platform where the brand is present is an strategic issue for fashion brands, and that the presence of a brand in a given social media platform may be considered a direct extension of the brand; consequently, brands willing to maintain existing customers and attract potential customers should carefully align their branding global strategies with their social media marketing strategy. Further, the results might suggest that a feedback loop might be involved between branding strategies and social media presence. Thus, instead of just translating the branding strategy to the social media network, brands would do well in collecting and analyzing the data collected from the brand's page in different social media networks and use them as a source of actionable information when defining their branding strategy.

The results leave an open door to further exploration and refinement of the conceptualization provided in this study, as involvement with social media might be dissociated into two different components. The first component would be linked to the brand's presence in a given social media platform, as followers and other social media users might associate and transfer their general perception of the brand and their involvement with the brand to the presence and operation of the brand in social media, and vice versa; this component would therefore pertain to the domain of fashion brand involvement. The second component, unexplored in this study, should focus on consumers' involvement with specific social media networking sites, regardless of the brand under study. Most fashion brands have a presence in Facebook and Twitter, but fashion consumers are migrating to more visual content-centered platforms, such as Pinterest or Instagram, where they find a more "natural space" to interact with fashion brands. Future research on involvement in a social media context, and more particularly in the case of fashion SMBCs, should investigate how involvement with these social media networks emerges and develops, in order to provide a broader understanding of involvement.

5.3. Measuring involvement in fashion social media brand communities

While the measurement instrument used for fashion involvement uses a scale of agreement with the different statements, the scales for fashion brand involvement and involvement with SMBCs use a semantic differential. Despite presenting the different items in random order, the results might be an indicator of method bias that should be further investigated.

Further, while the proposal of the measurement instrument for fashion brand involvement incorporates several aspects of Zaichkowsky's Personal Involvement Instrument, the results suggest that some of them –e.g. those related to value or playfulness– might not be adequate indicators to measure involvement in this context.

The different results found during the discriminant validity assessment using Fornell and Larcker (1981), and both the chi-square difference of the constrained and unconstrained model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1984) and the HTMT (Henseler et al., 2015)

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criteria are quite surprising. Although Henseler et al. (2015) proposed their method for variance-based structural equation modeling, the same principles might apply to covariance-based methods. Interestingly, while Henseler et al.'s (2015) results confirmed that HTMT could identify discriminant validity problems in stances where Fornell-Larcker could not, the results from this study confirm the opposite. Henseler et al. (2015) indicate that future research should assess whether their findings can be generalized to covariance-based SEM techniques, and the results of this study are a fresh addition to this ongoing debate.

6. Limitations of the study

The study is not exempt from some limitations. First, the study uses a sample of respondents from a single country, Indonesia. The importance of this choice lies in the fact that Indonesia has currently one of the largest social media audiences in the world, and hence its interest for research purposes. Following the argument in Section 3.1, prior studies support the use of scales to measure involvement in cross-cultural settings, and the very nature of involvement as an individual characteristic in the context of a global social media community makes it less likely that other cultural influences may have an effect on the results. Also note that the purpose of this study is to test the adequacy of a multidimensional approach to conceptualize and measure involvement, without investigating its relationship with any other variable, a situation where the effect of cultural aspects as a mediating or moderating role could be of relevance. In addition, the sample in almost half of the studies on involvement in the past decade mainly comprises respondents from the United States and college students, or the studies investigate gender-focused samples (Naderi, 2013). The sample in this study includes a representative population of Indonesian fashion consumers participating in global European fashion brand-initiated social media communities, offering a more general view of the phenomenon under study. Nonetheless, the results of this research, along with some ideas discussed earlier –e.g. measurement of involvement with fashion media–, should be confirmed by further research in different cultural settings.

Second, the sample includes both luxury fashion and fast-fashion brands. Because the objective of this research was to provide a general validation of the multidimensional characterization of involvement, the study did not differentiate between these two types of fashion. Further, no significant differences were found across indicators in both groups. However, the reader must be aware that consumers may make very different uses of social media networks to cover their informational and affective fashion needs, and also that there are significant differences in how luxury and non-luxury brands implement their social media marketing strategy and in how much consumers may be involved with luxury fashion and fast-fashion brands; for instance, the former cover aspirational needs in social media, not necessarily connected with their current target market (Kennedy and Bolat, 2017), while the latter usually covers utilitarian needs. These differences might influence some of the aspects related to the measurement of involvement with social media and fashion brand involvement, respectively. Additionally, literature on fashion involvement generally focuses on luxury fashion, a high-involvement product. In the context of social media, the results suggest that further research is necessary to identify differences in the development of involvement in social media contexts in luxury and fast-fashion brands.

7. Concluding remarks

Understanding involvement is essential for marketing research, especially in the fashion sector, and the concept needs to be revised in the context of social media. The results of the study give support to the idea of a multidimensional conceptualization of involvement in fashion SMBCs. As a somewhat unexpected relevant contribution of the study, the results provide two additional insights on this topic: first, that there is still room for further investigation on how to better conceptualize involvement in fashion SMBCs, especially regarding the dimension of involvement with social media, which might be observed under a dual lens: brand-oriented and/or platform-oriented; and second, that involvement with the fashion SMBCs is tightly linked to involvement with the fashion brand, up to a point where they might be difficult to dissociate in the consumer's mind.

The findings of the research are especially provocative regarding the development of an appropriate conceptualization of involvement. While this study focused on two competing models –single-factor and multidimensional, with the whole set of indicators and after item depuration–, the results suggest the need for further exploration of better fitting models that could then be applied to study the influence of involvement, and its different components or elements, in social media marketing outcomes, such as engagement, purchase intention, purchasing behavior or brand loyalty. It is worth noting that, although the revised conceptualization of involvement in this study applies to fashion brands in social media, similar approaches may be applied to other contexts in order to confirm the results from this study.

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