Ten Years of 'Social Media Marketing' Research in the Journal of Promotion Management: Research Synthesis, Emerging Themes, and New Directions

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Ten Years of 'Social Media Marketing' Research in the Journal of Promotion Management: Research Synthesis, Emerging Themes, and New Directions

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ABSTRACT

The study synthesizes research in emerging social media marketing domains by analyzing published articles on social media marketing in the **Journal of Promotion Management** published since 2007. We utilized interpretation and synthesis based assessment for examining the usage of social media marketing concepts with a focus on social media, social networking sites' utilization by firms, social media metrics and social media measurement, consumer decision making, consumer perceptions, and utilizing social media marketing across countries and cultures. We found a fair balance of application of social media variables across studies, even though most of these studies were quantitative. After studying the gaps presented in social media based studies of recently published articles, we present emerging social media marketing themes, new research foci and directions, and tried to build on research implications for both theory and practice.

Introduction

Emerging digital media technologies, particularly the Internet, social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat), blogs and microblogs (e.g., Twitter), content community sites (e.g., YouTube, Flickr), collaborative social media sites (e.g., Wikipedia), virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life) and all of digital, social media, and mobile (DSMM) platforms (based on Web 2.0 principles) have changed market and business dynamics by creating a shift in the firms' competitive positions (Porter, 2001) and increasing consumer power. Social media has changed the rules of the game for marketers struggling to understand online consumer behavior on social networks and trying to maneuver business strategy for survival in interconnected computer mediated social environments (CMSEs) (Yadav, De Valck,

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Hennig-Thurau, Hoffman, & Spann, 2013), as well as, for consumers through power of information at their fingertips and providing numerous ways of buying goods and services with ample (and often, endless) buying and consumption choices, behaviors, and decision making patterns (Albors, Ramos, & Hervas, 2008; Shen & Bissell, 2013). Growing usage of social media across cultures and countries have seen an exponential rise in online communication levels worldwide (Arli 2017; Arli & Dietrich, 2017), which ranges from consumer-to-consumer interactions, consumer-to-firm interactions, firm-to-consumer interactions, and firm-to-firm interactions in CMSEs (Yadav & Pavlou, 2014).

Social media is defined as "a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p.61). In addition to enormous user generated content (UGC) created during consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-firm interactions in CMSEs, firms try to engage with their consumers through firm generated content (FGC) underlining firm-to-consumer and firm-to-firm interactions in social media. Consumers tend to value UGC more than FGC, and they consider information on social media more reliable than the one relayed directly by firms (Constantinides, Alarcón del Amo, & Lorenzo Romero, 2010). Amidst this explosive growth of social media technologies, firms are looking at ways to leverage UGC and generate subsequent value by creating reliable FGC for consumer engagement in social media. There is a growing evidence of how social media can be used for building and managing brands, improving and sustaining brand loyalty, and customer relationship management, thereby providing benefits to companies worldwide (Alhabash, McAlister, Quilliam, Richards, & Lou, 2015; Alves, Fernandes, & Raposo, 2016; Luo & Zhang, 2013; Kumar, Bhaskaran, Mirchandani, & Shah, 2013; Tang, Ni, Xiong, & Zhu, 2015; Qazi, Raj, Tahir, Cambria, & Syed, 2014; Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilne, 2010); yet many companies still doubt the potential of social media in marketing and selling products (Yadav, De Valck, Hennig-Thurau, Hoffman, & Spann, 2013), and many companies have not fully embraced social media into their marketing / branding / selling strategies (Alves, Fernandes, & Raposo, 2016).

With the emerging potential of social media marketing for companies worldwide and prevalent gaps in social media research with an eye on both consumers and firms, the purpose of this article is three-fold. First, we investigate all articles in the Journal of Promotion Management since 2007 outlining 'social media marketing' as research area where social media strategies have been studied and applied. Second, we try to find out emerging themes and new directions from the social media marketing research in the Journal of Promotion Management. Finally, we present implications for the research foci in terms of current research, future directions, and important research questions pertaining to each emerging research focus. We hope to add value to both management theory and practice through our research synthesis in social media marketing domain. Our hope is to enable future researchers, marketers and policy makers to focus on emerging research themes

through our research synthesis for new directions in social media domain, and subsequently strengthen social media marketing strategies.

Methodology

Conducting the evidence-based research interpretation and assessment

Following the methodology suggested by Petticrew and Roberts (2006), (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003), and (Alves, Fernandes, & Raposo, 2016), we conducted the research synthesis in the domain of social media marketing with emphasis on interpretation and synthesis based assessment by combining evidence based managerial practices as suggested by researchers (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003; Macpherson & Holt, 2007; Alves, Fernandes, & Raposo, 2016; Thorpe, Holt, Mac-Pherson, & Pittaway, 2005). While there may be many proceedings, newspaper reports, and magazines that carry out research in social media, researchers have validated journal articles over other periodicals and publications (Podsakoff, MacKenie, Bachrach, & Podsakoff, 2005).

Utilizing a step-by-step process as used in any meta-analysis (Sierra, Hyman, & Heiser, 2012), we conducted our evidence and interpretation based research synthesis in three phases. In the first phase, we performed a keyword search and looked at the articles published in the Journal of Promotion Management (JPM) since 2007 with titles, abstracts, and keywords containing words "social media marketing". We found around 129 articles published in JPM with words – "social", "media", and "marketing" – integrated in either the title, abstract, keywords, and/ or the main body of the articles. In the second phase, we investigated thoroughly with content analysis procedure and realized that some articles have all three words – "social", "media", and "marketing" – but the words were not connected together as "social media marketing". This phase weeded out many articles resulting in 71 JPM articles. We further investigated these 71 articles and tried finding out details on social media marketing in each of these articles. Our systematic and synthesized search resulted in 41 relevant articles on social media marketing published (since 2007) in JPM. Out of these 41 articles, 26 were quantitative and 15 were qualitative. In our analysis of these articles, we found that JPM studies on social media marketing measure an array of variables like marketing, culture, consumer engagement, consumer intentions, consumer behavior, viral advertising, public relations, para social theory, social media networking sites, Website promotions, consumer generated marketing, online shopper reviews, electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), product reviews, corporate social responsibility (CSR) in social media, etc. Figure 1 presents a representation of top 100 words used in JPM articles on social media.

Finally, we conducted a thorough investigation and interpretation using in-depth content analysis and thereby summarized our data in categories of emerging research themes in the field of social media marketing, current research, variables and theories used, and main conclusions. Table 1 presents our research synthesis –

Figure 1. A representation of most used words in the articles analyzed from the Journal of Promotion Management (10 year period – 2007 until 2017).

ten years of social media marketing research – published in JPM from 2007 (until present) highlighting the numbers of articles with relevant keywords, whereby 'social media marketing' as a 'domain' or 'research focus' or 'research theme' was highlighted. Since social media marketing is an emerging area of research with research happening in all directions and dimensions, we didn't find any consistent variables under study for social media marketing research in JPM articles. Table 1 highlights number of relevant social media marketing articles published in JPM in a decade along with keywords / concepts / variables used in these studies and the study types (i.e., qualitative / quantitative methods utilized).

Emerging research foci and directions

Upon completion of third phase, we were able to group articles on the basis of similarity of words used with reference to social media marketing, resulting in cluster analysis of articles published in JPM spanning over a decade. We found three clusters emerging through cluster analysis. The first cluster became our first research focus – *Firm Interactions in Social Media*. The second cluster was related to consumer interactions and we defined it as *Consumer Interactions in Social Media*. The third cluster that emerged as a part of this process was 'broad' covering international perspectives across countries and cultures with respect to social media usage and marketing. We called this research focus as *Cultural and International Perspectives in Social Media*. In terms of types of analyses utilized across these clusters, we found most of these articles were quantitative in nature utilizing linear and multiple regressions along with structural equation modeling. Quantitative studies were more prevalent in articles incorporating cultural and international perspectives with studies conducted in Australia, India, Korea, and the United States. In the next section, we focus on research foci, research implications, and future directions. Table 2 presents our research synthesis in terms of emerging

Table 1. Numbers of articles with relevant keywords on 'social media marketing' as a 'domain' or 'research focus' or 'research theme' (Research Synthesis in JPM since 2007).

Year	Number of Articles with the word "social media" mentioned	Number of Relevant Articles with Details on "Social Media Marketing"	Relevant Keywords Used in Articles on "Social Media Marketing"	Study Type	
				Quantitative	Qualitative
2017	23	13	Social Media, Brand, Online, Consumer, Online Reviews, Social media marketing, Facebook, Twitter, Corporate, CSR, social networks	8	5
2016	14	5	Social networking sites, Social media, Consumer intentions, Relations, Digital media, Para social theory, Corporate, Consumer	3	2
2015	10	5	Social media, Consumer behavior, Engagement, Authenticity, Credibility, Public relations	3	2
2014	9	6	Social media, Index, Culture, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Corporate, Company, User generated content	5	1
2013	6	6	Advertising, Ethics, Cross-cultural, Viral, Branding, Marketing, Brand Attitude	4	2
2012	6	3	Marketing public relations, Social media, Promotion, Consumer generated marketing	0	3
2011	1	1	Consumer recommendations, Online shopper reviews, Online word-of-mouth, Perceived credibility, Product reviews, Website promotion	1	0
2010	2	2	Culture, Internet, GenY, iYGeneration, Media meshing, Multi-tasking, Virtual social networks	2	0
Total	**71 articles**	**41 (relevant articles with keywords related to social media marketing)**		**26**	**15**

Table 2. Overview of Research Foci, Variable Used, Theories Utilized, Main Findings & Conclusions, and Relevant Studies (Research Synthesis in JPM since 2007).

Research Focus	Variables Used - Independent Variables (IVs), Dependent Variables (DVs), Moderating and Other Variables	Theories Utilized	Main Conclusions	Relevant Studies
RESEARCH FOCUS 1:	– Number of "likes," "comments," and "shares" on Facebook	– Theories in social presence, media richness, self-presentation, and self-disclosure.	– The effect of promotion in the marketing concept of a firm can be boosted by Marketing Public Relations (MPR)	Papasolomou and Melanthiou (2012);
FIRM RELATED INTERACTIONS IN SOCIAL MEDIA	– Legitimate dialogue, ease of interface, conservation of visitors, generation of return visits and useful information on Social media sites	– Para social interaction theory	– With social media, MPR can be used to enhance customer-firm relationships.	Shen and Bissell (2013);
• Social Media and Social Networking Sites' utilization by Firms	– Time of the posting on firm's Facebook or Twitter page and time of response	– Diffusion of Innovation theory	– MPR can be employed in enhancing the use of traditional marketing and promotion tools.	Belch and Belch (2013);
• Social Media Metrics and Measurement	– Account adoption, stakeholder willingness to engage, and social media best practices	– Source credibility and warranting theory	– Understanding of brand's value proposition is crucial to marketers' success.	(Waters, Ghosh, Griggs, & Searson, 2014);
	– Market size and the number of television households, amount of pinning and repining, and number of followers	– Public relations theory	– Two-way communication between consumers and firms on social media and blogging sites increases market development, brand loyalty, and firm value.	Becker and Nobre (2014);
	– Independent Variables (IVs): Blogger credibility and expertise	– Analytic Hierarchy Process	– The speed of response and message content by firms on social network sites is related to the firm's size.	Melanthiou (2014);
	– Dependent Variables (DVs): Brand attitude, purchase intentions, Firm product Improvement		– Increased firm value, positive reviews, and support intentions from consumers and stakeholders is related to the message interactivity, genuineness, and friendliness of the firm's social media platforms.	Distaso, McCorkindale, and Agugliaro (2015);
	– More variables - Primary social network used, number of friends or followers, amount of time they		– Informed and efficient company strategic plans in relation with the developing trends in social media	Ferguson and Greer (2015);

spent reading and viewing information on these online platforms in an average day – Control Variables (CVs): age of the firms in years	can be developed using the social media index.	Hayes and Carr (2015);
– Dummy Variables: Social Networks and Web 2.0 usage, mobile application usage, firm's CRM strategies or ethics approach	– The social media index can be employed in company comparison and benchmarking, especially in the IT industry.	Pressrove and Pardun (2016);
– Four social media indicators of a company	– A key content in marketing communications is creativity and would always be vital.	Fiore, Vrontis, Silvestri, and Contò (2016); Loureiro and Gomes (2016);
– Economic indicators (Revenue, operating expenses, net income, earnings per share, and assets)		
– Social indicators (Number of hours of customer engagement on social media networking sites, number of "likes" and comments on SNS, total charitable contributions, employee turnover rate)		Angelini, Ferretti, Ferrante, and Graziani (2017);
– Technological indicators (CRM, other tech, widgets)		Lou and Alhabash (2017);
– Ethical Indicators (Regulations, protection, violations)		Cruz-Ros (2017);
RESEARCH FOCUS 2:		Go and Bortree (2017) Arora, Arora, and Palvia (2014) Luck and Mathews (2010);
– Consumer rating of media advertising (out-of-home, print, television, and internet)		
– Media uses and gratification theory	– Innovative and ethical online advertising approaches are crucial in fostering positive relationships with millennials.	

Table 2. (*Continued*)

Research Focus	Variables Used - Independent Variables (IVs), Dependent Variables (DVs), Moderating and Other Variables	Theories Utilized	Main Conclusions	Relevant Studies
CONSUMER RELATED INTERACTIONS IN SOCIAL MEDIA	– IVs: Blogger credibility and expertise	– Source credibility and warranting theory	– The advent of digital technologies drives and influences product quality development decisions by the firm.	Tanyel, Stuart, and Griffin (2013);
• Consumer Decision Making	– DVs: Firm product improvement, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions	– Public relations theory	– Company's history could be negatively related to its product improvement decisions.	Pant, Hsieh, Lee, and Shen (2014);
• Consumer Perceptions and Impact on Firm's Decision Making	– CV: age of the firms in years	– Communication theory	– Understanding consumer needs and interactions through digital strategies can enhance product improvement.	Hayes and Carr (2015);
	– Demographics of the participants (Gender, age, ethnic background, marital status, major, academic class membership, enrollment, housing, and employment status)	– Theory of buyer behavior	– Consumer and stakeholders' level of social interaction and time spent online influences their perceptions, attitudes to brands, and purchase intention.	Schramm and Knoll (2015);
	– Dummy Variables: Social Networks and Web 2.0 usage, mobile application usage, and firm's CRM strategies or ethics approach	– The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) theory	– Awareness on how millennials use social media, what platforms they use and when they use it, is essential in targeting and communicating with them.	Fiore, Vrontis, Silvestri, and Contò (2016);
		– Dialogic theory of public relations	– There exists a positive significant relationship between the firm's social media marketing strategies, consumer interactions, and their purchase intentions.	Pressrove and Pardun (2016);
			– Negative social media message contents are more likely to gather negative word-of-mouth.	Loureiro and Gomes (2016);
		– Consumer Behavior	– Consumer and stakeholders' level of social interaction and time spent online influences their perceptions, attitudes and purchase intention.	Gautam and Sharma (2017);

Research Focus	Variables	Theory	Findings	Citations
RESEARCH FOCUS 3:	IVs: Hofstede's original cultural dimensions (power distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance; and three of Schwartz's cultural domains (mastery, intellectual autonomy, and egalitarianism)	– Theory of cultural values	-The type of social networking sites and functionalities influence the differences in time spent on SNS across cultures.	Arli and Dietrich (2017); Angelini; Ferretti, Ferrante, and Graziani (2017); Lou and Alhabash (2017); Arli (2017); Tesfom, Birch, and Culver (2017); Arteaga Sánchez, López, García Ordaz, Sánchez-Franco, & Yousafzai (2017); Lee and Ahn (2017); Calderon-Monge (2017); Chakraborty and Bhat (2017); Dodoo (2017) Baack, Singh, and Baack (2013);
CULTURAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIAL MEDIA	DVs: Average amount of time spent (ATS) on specific SNSs by country Control variables: median age in population and national level of e-readiness	– Hofstede Cultural Dimensions	– Cultural differences remains an element that impacts the use social media platforms, specifically the type of platform, friendly or professional.	Shneor and Efrat (2014);
• Influence of National Culture on Social Media			– Information seeking as a motivation for using SNS is similar across the different cultures.	Melanthiou (2014);
• Cross-Cultural Social Media Motivations		– Schwartz Cultural Dimensions	– Cultural differences should be taken into consideration in SNS marketing strategies.	Loureiro and Gomes (2016); Park and McMillan (2017)

research foci, theories and variables used in the context of social media marketing, main conclusions, and relevant studies published in the Journal of Promotion Management in a Decade.

Research focus 1: Firm related interactions in social media

This domain of firm interactions in social media includes firm's strategies and plans towards the utilization of social media and social networking sites. Research efforts in this area have been focused on: (1) social media and social networking sites' utilization by firms, and (2) social media metrics and measurement for companies worldwide. Firm related interactions in social media include firm-to-consumer and firm-to-firm interactions, benefitting both firms and consumers.

Current research

Social media and social networking sites' utilization by firms

Over the years, the use of social media and social networking sites (SNS) has increased exponentially and has resulted in social media advertising as a strategy for firms to increase prominence, sales, value, and communication with consumers. Hence, social media has become a key component in marketing, advertising, and communications (Distaso, McCorkindale, & Agugliaro, 2015; Ferguson & Greer, 2015). However, firms have been faced with multiple challenges of how to utilize these networking sites for sales and customer reach. Hence, research related to social media and SNS utilization have focused on examining the effect of social media on public relations and marketing practices (Papasolomou & Melanthiou, 2012), the use of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc. by companies for increased brand loyalty, awareness, creativity in marketing communications, and consumer engagement (Belch & Belch, 2013; Distaso, McCorkindale, & Agugliaro, 2015; Ferguson & Greer, 2015; Shen & Bissell, 2013; Waters, Ghosh, Griggs, & Searson, 2014), and the effect of social media or networking sites' management on the online reputation of the companies (Becker & Nobre, 2014) globally.

Studies have also investigated communications and interactions on blogs. Blogs are viewed as a two-way communication platform between firms and customers. In recent times, corporate blogs have been used as one-way communication, in which the firm provides information to consumers, but doesn't provide the functionality needed for consumer feedback or firm level interactions. Studies have employed public relations and source credibility, along with warranting theories for investigating the effect of one-way communication on bloggers' credibility, firm-consumer relationship, and brand stories (Waters, Ghosh, Griggs, & Searson, 2014; Hayes & Carr, 2015). Several variables and moderating factors have been considered in the investigation of firms' online presence, communication, and social media optimization strategies. The variables include number of active followers on social platforms, the firm's

active response to communication on the sites, amount of time spent by viewers on the firm's site, market and industry size, and brand attitudes. Other characteristics considered are the social platform functionality and improvement, as well as, the firm's ethical approaches.

The opportunities of marketing public relations (MPR) have been increased by social media. MPR activities can be directed towards creating stronger bonds, dialogue, and connections between people on social media, enhancing consumer-firm relationships, marketing and promotion concepts, and increased brand and product awareness (Papasolomou & Melanthiou, 2012). Content analysis evaluation of active blogs of 125 American companies on the Fortune 500 list has indicated that two-way communication between consumers and firms on blogging sites increases market development, brand loyalty, and firm value (Waters, Ghosh, Griggs, & Searson, 2014). Hayes and Carr (2015) emphasized the importance of bloggers' and marketers' understanding of the brand value proposition for increased credibility on account of increased social interaction and awareness in consumers and stakeholders. In similar vein, Go and Bortree (2017) investigated the relationship between message interactivity, CSR communication, modality interactivity, and social media credibility of the organization. Their study found that CSR communications, promotions and interactive content on social media platforms lead to greater organizational credibility. As a result, the organization is perceived as being open and genuine in their social media messaging. Pressrove and Pardun (2016) further stressed that firms should create friendly and parasocial relationships with their stakeholders (including customers) on social media and SNS because this could result in increased support intentions from the stakeholders. Hence, it is crucial that the firms, marketers, and bloggers display credibility, expertise, and enhanced message interactivity for increased social media optimization for better brand loyalty, consumer loyalty, positive reviews, and overall firm reputation and value over time. Creating a friendly and genuine social media content and experience for stakeholders and consumers is also vital for an organization's success in social media.

Social media metrics and measurement

Research in social media metrics and measurement have examined four dimensions of social media evaluation. The dimensions are technological, social, economic, and ethical. Arora, Arora, and Palvia (2014) developed a mathematical model for obtaining the 'social media composite index number' using analytic hierarchy process for a firm's social media index valuation, thus providing an insight into the firm's social media performance in relation to social media trends; and utilizing the composite number to serve as an 'industry benchmark' for comparing the firm's commitment to social media with respect to (industry) competition. It has been shown that firm's speed and content of response on social media is related to the firm's size. Large firms tend to respond faster to comments and questions from consumers and with more details than smaller firms on social media. This indicates that more efforts is needed in monitoring, engaging, and leveraging social media (Becker & Nobre, 2014).

Table 3. Future Research Questions in Research Focus 1 – Firm Related Interactions in Social Media.

Research Questions	Relevant Studies	Implications
RQ 1	What factors influence firm's online presence, social media marketing strategies, and social media optimization?	Becker and Nobre (2014); Belch and Belch (2013); Distaso, McCorkindale, and Agugliaro (2015); Ferguson & Greer (2015); Shen and Bissell (2013); Waters, Ghosh, Griggs, and Searson (2014)	With increasing growth of social commerce, firms need to re-evaluate and upgrade their traditional promotion and marketing strategies to incorporate the social media promotion mix so as to exploit the power of social commerce.
RQ 2	Is two-way communication on social platforms more advantageous to the firm than one-way communication?	Papasolomou and Melanthiou (2012); Waters, Ghosh, Griggs, and Searson (2014); Hayes and Carr (2015); Pressrove & Pardun (2016)	Efficient use of social media promotion mix would enhance the creation of brand stories by firms (through FGC) and consumers (through UGC). This will promote effective two-way communications between firms and consumers, positive online reviews, and brand loyalty.
RQ 3	What are the crucial dimensions in measuring a firm's social media performance?	Arora, Arora, and Palvia (2014)	Innovation, creativity, and targeted promotion strategies by firms would boost their social media performance across different social media platforms.
RQ 4	Does the significance of research dimensions vary across different industries and countries?	Arora, Arora, and Palvia. (2014)	Resourceful organizational structure and internal control is required for optimal social media presence, initiatives, and promotions.
RQ 5	Is there a (significant) relationship between the firm size and its online (social media related) presence and activity?	Becker and Nobre (2014)	

Based on our discussions in the first research focus area of firm related interactions in social media, we propose the following research questions, as shown in Table 3 – highlighting questions, relevant studies, and implications.

Research focus 2: Consumer related interactions in social media

The consumer related research in social media encompasses consumer behavior, consumer perceptions, and decision making processes utilized by consumers in the context of social media platforms used by firms, social media marketing strategies, and SNS advertising and communication with consumers. Consumer related interactions in social media include consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-firm interactions, benefitting both consumers and firms.

Current research

Consumer decision making

The increased growth of social media has increased the power of consumers by providing them the ability of interacting with products and brands through social media

platforms and online social networks, resulting in user generated content (UGC). UGC involves consumer online reviews, ratings, comments, feedback, as well as, interactions with the firm and other consumers. Consumers' feedback could be negative or positive. Negative reviews impact the firm more negatively than positive reviews. Hence, companies are continuously striving to develop strategies that lead to satisfactory products, consumer satisfaction, positive reviews, and consumer loyalty (Ott, Vafeiadis, Kumble, & Waddell, 2016). Studies have shown that effective communication between firms and consumers on social media, influences consumers' perceptions about the company's reputation. Gautam and Sharma (2017) utilized structural equation modeling of consumers' purchase intentions in luxury fashion brands to demonstrate that effective firm-consumer relationship (as a component of social media marketing) positively impacts consumers' purchase intentions.

Consumers do not only interact with businesses on social media but, also with a range of other consumers. Consumers interact with one another on social media platforms using social media technologies. They share experiences with other consumers, which can be both positive and negative experiences resulting from the use of a product or service. Hence, research has focused on the study of consumer behavior, decision making processes, attitudes and perceptions, and social media usage across different ages (Luck &Mathews, 2010; Ott, Vafeiadis, Kumble, & Waddell, 2016; Arli & Dietrich, 2017). Studies on effects of social media marketing activities of firms revealed that negative reviews and word-of-mouth have the potential of harming the firm's reputation. Negative customer attitudes can cause harm to marketing, advertising, and ethical activities of the firm (Arli & Dietrich, 2017; Tanyel, Stuart, & Griffin, 2013).

Consumer behavior studies have also classified consumers based on their ages and level of social interactions and connections. For example, the younger generation (i.e. millennials) generally engage in many social media platforms for information access, connection, and socialization. It has, hence, become a challenge for marketing professionals to understand the behavior and social media usage of the younger generation, for the purpose of communicating with them. Luck and Mathews (2010) studied the behavior of the youths in Australia. They recommended that this market can be targeted by firms by gaining insights on the media platforms mostly preferred by the youths, and when and how they use these online social networks. Tanyel, Stuart, and Griffin (2013) further stressed this by conducting a comparative study on how millennials engage with digital media compared to traditional media. It was observed that firms can forge positive relationships with millennials through more innovative and ethical social media based advertising strategies.

Consumer perceptions and impact on firm's decision making

The significance of consumer-firm interactions has fostered product and service improvement. Fiore, Vrontis, Silvestri, and Contò (2016) conducted an exploratory survey and found that the advent of digital technologies have led to increased product quality development decisions. Most especially, the understanding of consumer needs and interactions through SNS enhances product improvement.

Today, consumers have a lot of information sources on the internet. It has been observed that the time they spend 'online' influences their perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions. Hence, it is crucial that the firm, marketers, and bloggers show credibility and expertise. Pressrove and Pardun (2016) studied the effect of nonprofit stakeholders' social interactions, time spent online, and support intentions for nonprofits. They observed that the more time stakeholders spend on social media, their behavioral intentions towards supporting the organizations decreases. Likewise, higher online social connections result in lower support intentions. Hence, it is recommended that firms create friendly, interactive, and parasocial relationships with their stakeholders and consumers on social media and other networking sites.

Based on our discussions in the second research focus area of consumer related interactions in social media, we propose the following research questions, as shown in Table 4 – highlighting questions, relevant studies, and implications.

Table 4. Future Research Questions in Research Focus 2 – Consumer Related Interactions in Social Media.

Research Questions	Relevant Studies	Implications
RQ 1	How can negative (versus positive) online consumer reviews be used as a 'tool' for increasing brand loyalty, consumer loyalty, and improving firm value?	Luck and Mathews (2010); Ott, Vafeiadis, Kumble, & Waddell (2016); Arli and Dietrich (2017)	Adverse effects of consumer negative consumer reviews could be mitigated by effective social media promotion strategies along with prompt and sensitive firm responses to consumers on social media platforms.
RQ 2	Are negative (versus positive) online reviews on social media platforms always damaging (versus worthwhile)?		
RQ 3	Are consumer-to-consumer interactions on blogs and social media networking sites crucial in filtering out dishonest 'brand stories' (as well as any 'false' or 'unethical' firm generated or firm sponsored content) created by the firms?	Tanyel, Stuart, and Griffin (2013)	User Generated Contents (UGC) on blogs and discussion forums give consumers insights into other consumers' experiences and perceptions (of a product or service).
RQ 4	Positive versus Negative online consumer reviews – Which of these are more frequent on social media, and what factors influence consumers to post online reviews (whether positive or negative)?	Ott, Vafeiadis, Kumble, & Waddell (2016)	Genuine and honest firm generated / sponsored content promotes positive reviews. Hence, firms should be ethically cautious and responsive to consumer reactions shared on social media.
RQ 5	Does forming friendly connections with stakeholders and consumers on social media increase positive reviews and support intentions from the stakeholders and consumers?	Pressrove & Pardun (2016) Yadav, De Valck, Hennig-Thurau, Hoffman, and Spann (2013)	Social media based communications play a vital role in the optimization of social commerce for improved stakeholder-firm relationships. This influences stakeholder intentions positively.

Research focus 3: Cultural and international perspectives in social media

Extant research has pointed out that social media and social networking sites (SNS)' usage has been driven by cultural differences (Vasalou, Joinson, & Courvoisie, 2010; Dwyer, Hiltz, & Passerini, 2007; Westlund, 2010; Laroche, Habibi, Richard, & Sankaranarayanan, 2012; Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012). It has been suggested that culture is a key influence in people's motivation of using social media and engaging in virtual communities. The increasing use of social media and SNS has made it essential that multinational companies take into account cultural characteristics of consumers in their social media marketing strategies (Shneor & Efrat, 2014). Hence, the domain of cultural and international perspectives in social media and SNS can be categorized into two main areas: (1) influence of national culture on social media, and (2) cross-cultural social media motivations.

Current research

Influence of National Culture on Social Media

In the field of marketing and consumer behavior, cross-cultural studies have been carried out based on Hofstede's (1984, 2003) cultural dimensions and the cultural framework proposed by Schwartz (1994, 1999, & 2007). Hofstede (1984, 2003) categorized cultures into dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and masculinity/femininity. Power distance is defined as the extent to which a society and its people tolerate unequal distribution of power or hierarchy. Uncertainty avoidance describes the degree to which a society tolerates uncertain conditions. Individualistic societies are societies where people identify more as individuals than as a group. In such societies, people care more about themselves and their close relations, as opposed to collectivistic societies, where individuals act based on their loyalty to a group and the group's interest. Finally, masculinity describes a society where citizens are very assertive and achievement driven. In contrast, a feminine society focuses on nurturing people's quality of life; while a masculine society is driven by power and achievement. Seven cultural components were proposed by (Schwartz 1994; 1999; 2007). They include mastery, intellectual autonomy, egalitarianism, harmony, conservatism, hierarchy, and affective autonomy. Mastery promotes the act of being successful and competitive. A society that encourages autonomy inspires people to express their unique intellectual abilities, ideas, emotions, and feelings. A harmonious society fosters peace and order while avoiding self-assertion or acts that disrupt peace in the society. In essence, conservatism is encouraged by avoiding behaviors that could disrupt the status-quo. Hierarchy, which is similar to power distance as proposed by Hofstede (1984, 2003), is the reception of external control while the roles and resources are allocated internally. Lastly, egalitarianism describes a society where moral equality and deliberate collaborations are encouraged and accepted.

Shneor and Efrat (2014) incorporated these cultural dimensions in studying the impact of the national culture of developed economies on average time spent on

social media and SNS between 2010 and 2011. The study considered the average amount of time spent on SNS in different countries, median age of the population, and the national level of exposure to internet and social media (e-readiness). Shneor and Efrat's (2014) study concluded that culture is a key component that drives the use of social media, and firms should consider cultural differences and influences while formulating and implementing their own social media marketing strategies. However, the extent to which 'culture' influences time spent by individuals on social media sites can be strengthened or weakened by the relationship orientation of SNS. For rich media SNS, egalitarianism has a positive influence on the time spent on social media; whereas, time spent on friendship-oriented sites are positively impacted by individualism and masculinity. Intellectual autonomy and uncertainty avoidance positively influence professional-oriented sites (Shneor & Efrat, 2014).

Cross-Cultural social media motivations

Researchers have tried to navigate the question of 'why people engage in virtual communities' in order to better understand cross-cultural differences in online communities. Park and McMillan (2017) investigated the motivation of internet usage across cultures. Why do people join online brand communities? What are the cross-cultural differences in social media motivations? Park and McMillan's (2017) cross-cultural study focused on members of the South Korean Automobile Online Brand Communities (KAOBC) and the American Online Brand Communities (AAOBC). It was found that both groups had similar motivational levels. That is, across cultures, people are highly motivated to join online communities because they seek information. The study revealed that KAOBC social network is stronger and more motivated by business and communications, as compared to AAOBC network. We observed a significant rise on cross-cultural and country-based consumer acceptance studies dealing with social and/or mobile media usage (e.g., Dix, Phau, Jamieson, & Shimul, 2017; Arli & Dietrich, 2017); yet there are limited studies available in cross-cultural and international arena of social media usage, participation, influence, involvement, engagement, and motivations.

Based on our discussions in the third research focus area of cultural and international perspectives in social media, we propose the following research questions, as shown in Table 5 – highlighting questions, relevant studies, and implications.

Discussions – Toward a new communications paradigm

Our ten-year research synthesis in the field of social media marketing yielded three research themes: firm related interactions in social media, consumer related interactions in social media, and cultural and international perspectives in social media. We strongly feel, much progress has been made given the fact that there has been an exponential increase in social media related articles over the past few years; yet there are existent gaps that need to be addressed by future researchers. On the basis

Table 5. Future Research Questions in Research Focus 3 – Cultural and International Perspectives in Social Media.

Research Questions	Relevant Studies	Implications	
RQ 1	Does culture impact social media and SNS engagement in developing and under-developed economies?	Shnoer and Efrat (2014); Park and McMillan (2017)	With globalization, cultural and international perspectives along with consumer differences have emerged as very significant moderators in social media promotion management. For global brand promotion on social media platforms, firms should take this moderating factor into consideration.
RQ 2	Should the national cultural differences be used in country comparisons with respect to social media usage, engagement, and motivations? Should one consider 'individual and group level cultural differences' across nations while studying the impact of social media?	Shnoer and Efrat (2014)	
RQ 3	What are research and managerial implications of cross-cultural consumer interactions, policies, infrastructures, and perceptions?	Shnoer and Efrat (2014); Park and McMillan (2017)	Cultural awareness and knowledge could give firms a competitive edge in global marketing, and reputation through social networking sites.
RQ 4	With increase in social media engagement, what is the strongest motivation for social media use and participation across cultures? Are information seeking, brand and products' interaction, and socialization important factors to consider while studying social media marketing across countries and cultures? How can firms leverage these factors?	Park and McMillan (2017)	
RQ6	Which economies are most 'active' in social media usage and engagement? What are the significant contributing factors?	Shnoer and Efrat (2014); Park and McMillan (2017)	With an exponential increase in social media worldwide, consumers across different countries and cultures have started interacting with brands and firms on a regular basis. This provides an opportunity for firms to convert this population to loyal customers through efficient use of social media promotion mix.
	Are businesses operating in (heavily consumer engaged) social media prevalent societies effectively optimizing social media utilization for developing their global (customized and targeted) social media strategies?		

of existent research in the field of social media marketing, we provide our new social media based communications paradigm, as given in Figure 2.

We have identified three research themes in this article, of which two are related to firm related interactions in social media, and consumer related interactions in social media. These interactions result in brand stories which can be both consumer and firm generated (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, & Wiertz, 2013).
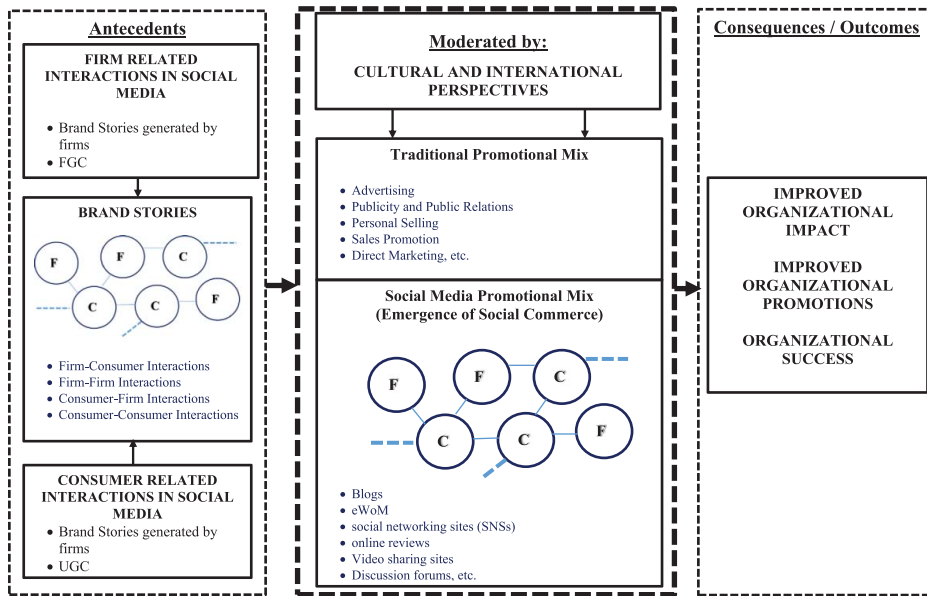
Figure 2. Emergence of New Social Media Based Communications Paradigm.

Firms pay a close attention to consumer generated brand stories (or UGC) and often merge them with their own firm generated brand stories (or FGC), especially if these brand stories are positive and can improve / build company image in the minds of consumers for overall organizational success. Most of the time, these brand stories are promoted through traditional promotion mix channels (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Today companies use a mix of traditional and social media promotional strategies, thereby harnessing the power of social media and social networking in order to facilitate consumer-to-consumer, consumer-to-firm, firm-to-consumer, and firm-to-firm interactions. Our new social media based communications paradigm (see Figure 2) gives power to consumers and marketing managers by recognizing these consumer-to-consumer, consumer-to-firm, firm-to-consumer, and firm-to-firm interactions. Researchers have pointed that consumers trust social media to be more trustworthy (as a source of information) concerning products and services as compared to traditional promotion mix used by organizations, such as advertising, publicity, sales promotions, direct marketing, public relations, etc. (Foux, 2006). Social media promotion mix can be illustrated through blogs, electronic-Word-of-Mouth (eWoM), Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.), online reviews about products and services on various social media sites, Video sharing sites (e.g., YouTube, Vine, etc.), and discussion forums supported by social media technologies. This leads to an emergence of social commerce[1] (Yadav, De Valck, Hennig-Thurau, Hoffman, & Spann, 2013). The antecedents of firm-related and consumer-related interactions in social media result in an organizational impact (outcome / consequence) through improved promotional mix supported by social media, and moderated by Cultural and International perspectives, which is our

research theme 3 (see figure 2). Managers should subtly use the global and cultural power of social media as a part of their promotional strategy to create a global organization impact and reach out to consumers around the world directly through open communication channels supported by social media technologies; thus facilitating stronger, powerful, and impactful consumer-to-consumer, consumer-to-firm, firm-to-consumer, and firm-to-firm interactions.

In general, there is an existing limitation on providing research questions and future directions in social media marketing field. We tried to provide future directions through research questions (RQs) in each emerging research focus in this article. However, there is a need to develop an impactful program in social media marketing. While firm-related, consumer-related, cross-cultural and international issues in social media marketing domain have been discussed in the literature, there is a growing need of examining the following questions in the realm of social media marketing:

a) How can firms benefit from the domain of social media marketing through the emerging field of 'social commerce' and social commerce optimization (Yadav, De Valck, Hennig-Thurau, Hoffman, & Spann, 2013);

b) How can marketers leverage the potential of 'social capacitance'[2] by utilizing social media's influence on organizational absorptive capacity within organizations through internal social media networks, and across organizations with partners, collaborating firms, and consumers through external social networks (Arora & Sivakumar, 2017); and

c) How can consumers and firms use social capacitance and social commerce to tie into the emerging research areas of digital, social media, and mobile (DSMM) marketing research (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016), Internet of Things (IoT) research (Hoffman & Novak, 2016), and digital (social and mobile) marketing policy perspectives.

The field of social media marketing research is growing with valuable research being conducted in both developed and developing economies. However, the field of social media marketing "policy' is conspicuous in its absence as academic researchers have not contributed enough to government and public forums (e.g., U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Communications, Technology and the Internet; U.S. House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Communications and Technology) (Yadav & Pavlou, 2014). We strive for a future where social media marketing researchers, managers and policy makers will collectively engage and work together for advancing the next generation of scholarship in this significant marketing domain.

Conclusion

In this article, we presented emerging research foci in social media marketing domain by organization, synthesis, review, and critique of existing social media

marketing literature in the Journal of Promotion Management in a decade. Through our proposed social media based communications paradigm (Figure 2), we have tried to highlight the research focus themes based on the past, current, and emerging trends in the field of social media marketing. Also integrated is the traditional promotional mix along with social media promotional mix leading to social commerce, and further resulting in organizational success. The re-evaluation and upgrade of the firm's traditional promotion mix to social media based communications paradigm framework incorporates the use of social media blogs, discussion forums, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), consumer online reviews, functional social media networks with video sharing capabilities, and open channels of communications between firms and consumers resulting in firm-to-consumer, consumer-to-consumer, consumer-to-firm, and firm-to-firm interactions in social media. The creation of brand stories (through FGC and UGC) provides marketing practitioners, researchers, and firms with information and insights on the critical factors and strategies required in strengthening social media marketing. However, cultural and international perspectives is a crucial moderating factor that should be placed into consideration for effectively optimizing social media based promotions, social media marketing, social commerce, and social capacitance for increased (global) brand loyalty and firm value.

Notes

1. Social commerce is defined as "exchange-related activities that occur in, or are influenced by, an individual's social network in computer-mediated social environments, where the activities correspond to the need recognition, pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages of a focal exchange" (Yadav et al., 213, p. 312).
2. Social capacitance is defined as "knowledge assimilation, knowledge transformation, and knowledge exchange–related activities in CMSEs. It is a dynamic and developmental organizational-level construct that enables customers, employees, companies, clients, partners, governments, nongovernmental organizations, and other organizations to view, create, share, and use knowledge repositories and databases stored in virtual communities and networks" (Arora & Sivakumar, 2017).

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