



Article

Social Media Managers' Performance: The Impact of the Work Environment

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Abstract: The continuous growth of social media is causing significant modifications in the business strategies developed by organizations. Using a structural equation modeling approach, this research analyzes how the work environment affects the social media managers thriving at work and task performance. The proposed model is tested using a sample of 190 social media managers and 190 supervisors from 190 companies in the tourism sector. The results highlight the importance of proper design and implementation of social media marketing planning and top management support to enhance both thriving at work and the performance of social media managers. This research contributes to the literature on social media by examining how and when the work environment influences the attitudes and performance of social media managers, whose role is crucial in organizational performance. Simultaneously, it expands the literature on thriving, as knowledge about the impact of contextual factors on thriving is still limited. The results also demonstrate that managers can compensate for the lack of certain contextual or personal resources with other resources, providing insights into when the work environment is more beneficial in shaping positive attitudes and behaviors in employees.

Keywords: social media; marketing planning; thriving at work; top management support; task performance



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1. Introduction

According to Hootsuite Digital [1] the number of active users on social media reached 4.76 billion in January 2023, representing 59% of the global population and reflecting a 3% growth compared to 2022, with an additional 137 million users. Consequently, companies must increasingly incorporate social media marketing into their business strategies to remain competitive [2,3].

However, most previous empirical research on social media has focused on how to adapt a company's marketing mix to this digital environment [4]. In particular, most research analyzes which and how social media content impacts firm performance and customer attitudes and behaviors (e.g., [5]). This is possibly because analyzing the internal management of social media marketing requires access to organizational executives, who are typically harder to reach [2]. Consequently, Salo [6], after reviewing social media marketing research, pointed out the need to study the internal management of resources, capabilities, and skills in the context of social media. In a similar vein, recently, Varela-Neira et al. [7] carried out a comprehensive literature review of the social media literature with a strategic or managerial perspective and found that very few investigations followed this approach, and most research on the topic was theoretical or qualitative. To bridge this research gap, this work focuses on internal organizational elements, specifically the impact of the work environment on the performance of social media managers.

This is a critical question both theoretically and empirically. While digital marketing-related positions are currently in high demand, with 61% of companies planning to incorporate such roles in their teams [8], there is still a lack of studies focused on the role

of social media managers. This is remarkable, as social media managers play a vital role in a company's performance since they are responsible for configuring, implementing, and evaluating the effectiveness of the brand's communication strategy on social media, creating communities, achieving internal and external engagement, analyzing and developing customer relationships, collaborating internally, testing technologies, identifying and managing crises, and defining governance-focused strategies that delineate the professional and personal uses of these social networks [9–11]. Thus, social media managers differ from traditional customer service employees as they play a more significant role in the organizational context. Therefore, this research contributes to the literature on social media by studying how and when the work environment affects their attitudes and performance.

Furthermore, this study is integrated into the literature on thriving at work, defined as "the psychological state in which individuals experience both a sense of vitality and a sense of learning in the workplace" [12], (p. 538). In the current work environment, thriving plays a particularly important role in companies, allowing them to achieve a competitive advantage and sustainable performance [13], as individuals now need to manage highly changing careers [14], maintain their performance, well-being, and health over time [15], and reduce burnout [16]. This is especially crucial for social media managers, as employees in this role often experience high levels of burnout [9].

Although, according to the socially embedded model of thriving at work, thriving depends on the organizational context [12], the role of the work environment still needs to be developed theoretically and examined empirically [17]. For example, "the role of leaders or supervisors in promoting thriving at work has been under-researched in the existing thriving literature" [18], (p. 443). With this premise, this research explores how two contextual factors (social media marketing planning and top management support) promote the thriving of social media managers at work. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first attempt to study the impact of these variables on thriving at work. In doing so, we contribute to the literature in this area, as the current knowledge about the impact of contextual factors on thriving at work is limited [19].

Finally, it is essential to understand the conditions surrounding the relationship between internal factors and outcomes. In particular, the question is whether the relationship between the work context and thriving at work, and between thriving at work and the task performance of social media managers, is universal. This is relevant to both theory and practice. Managers, for example, would benefit from having a better understanding of the conditions under which social media marketing planning produces better results. Therefore, the final contribution of this study lies in examining the moderating role of top management support in both the relationship between social media marketing planning and thriving at work, and between thriving at work and task performance.

Consequently, this work—which is based on the socially embedded model of thriving at work [12] by combining it with the conservation of resources theory [20]—reveals that employees can compensate for the lack of certain contextual or personal resources with other contextual resources. This result helps us to understand when the work context can be more beneficial in shaping social media managers' positive attitudes and behaviors.

2. Literature Background and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Social Media Manager Research

To identify the gaps in the research regarding the social media manager's role, a comprehensive literature review was carried out. Replicating the approach used by Olanrewaju et al. [21], two prominent business/management databases were employed to source the literature: Business Source Complete (EBSCO) and Scopus. These databases offer a focus on business management, while indexing a variety of journals. Books, book chapters, reports, and conference proceedings were removed due to the variabilities present in their peer review processes and more limited availability. On the other hand, journal articles were considered to be properly validated [22]. This approach is coherent with prior review papers on social media that have also restricted their scope to journal articles

(e.g., [23]). The keyword used was “social media manager”. Consequently, in this first phase, the search returned 10 articles from EBSCO and 94 articles from Scopus published in English up until 2024.

In the second phase, duplicates were excluded. Moreover, after reviewing the articles’ abstracts to ensure their relevance to the purposes of this research, some articles identified in the initial search were dismissed, since they did not focus on the social media manager (e.g., [24]). Furthermore, several studies that focused on the specificities of a sector (e.g., [25]) were also removed. At the end of this procedure, only 26 articles remained. In the third phase, these articles were read in full to verify that they focused on the organizational role of the social media manager. At the end of this phase, 13 were removed (e.g., [26]), and only 13 remained that met the established requirements.

Appendix A shows a review summary of the methodologies and goals of the papers reviewed. Most of the reviewed articles use qualitative methodologies, such as in-depth analysis. Thus, this research contributes to the social media manager’s literature since it examines the social media manager by proposing a theoretical model with hypotheses that are later analyzed using a quantitative approach. At the same time, the majority of the previous papers focus on identifying the key characteristics, skills, and competences of the social media manager’s role. In this vein, the two prior investigations that follow a similar methodological approach to this investigation have a similar goal to these qualitative studies, as they examine how some characteristics of the social media manager (the customer orientation—[27], and the PR role—[28]) relate to customers’ attitudes. This research, on the one hand, tries to understand how the social media managers’ organizational context affects their internal psychological state, subsequently impacting their task performance. Despite the obvious contribution of previous research, no investigation that the authors could find tries to understand what organizational characteristics lead to a better job performance of the social media manager, nor tries to comprehend the internal process of individuals in such demanding job roles.

2.2. Research Model

In today’s work environment, it is crucial for companies to focus on thriving at work to gain a competitive edge and maintain consistent performance [13]. Numerous studies emphasize the relevance of thriving at work for individuals to navigate dynamic career changes, uphold their performance, well-being, and health, and mitigate burnout [14–16]. This becomes particularly critical in the case of social media managers, given the elevated job demands and risk of burnout experienced by professionals in this role [9].

Thriving is a positive psychological state characterized by a sense of progressing or advancing in self-development [12]. It goes beyond overcoming difficulties [29] or mere survival [30]; it involves flourishing [31] and following an upward trajectory [32,33]. Thriving at work has two dimensions: vitality, representing a positive sense of possessing energy [34] and enthusiasm for the work being performed [35], and learning, involving a sense of skill acquisition and the potential for applying skills and knowledge [36,37]. The absence of either dimension limits thriving at work [12].

Researchers primarily rely on Spreitzer et al.’s [12] socially embedded model to study thriving at work [38]. This model explains how specific individual characteristics (e.g., knowledge), interpersonal/relational characteristics (e.g., support), contextual characteristics (e.g., trust climate), and agents’ work behaviors (e.g., task focus and exploration) lead to thriving and subsequently to employee development. This investigation follows this trend and studies two antecedents and one consequence of social media managers’ thriving.

Since there is a growing awareness of the relevance of employees’ discretionary behaviors for organizational performance [39], this research adopts an individual three-dimensional model of task performance as the outcome of thriving. The three dimensions of individual job performance proposed by Griffin et al. [40] are proficiency, adaptability, and proactivity. Proficiency refers to the degree to which an employee fulfills the

formalized requirements and expectations of their role. Adaptability reflects the extent to which employees confront, support, and respond to variations that occur and affect their individual roles. Proactivity measures the extent to which an employee engages in self-initiated future-focused behaviors with the goal of changing the work situations they face, their job roles, or themselves.

Regarding the precursors of thriving, this study emphasizes the significance of studying positive context characteristics, which have not been sufficiently analyzed in the literature [17]. The contextual characteristics within an individual employee's work environment encompass expectations, work practices, and operational procedures [12], (p. 541). According to Spreitzer et al. [12], reducing workplace stressors alone is not a sufficient stimulus for employees to thrive; instead, their model presents favorable contextual conditions as crucial motivators for thriving at work. They argue that these factors play a pivotal role in fostering individuals as active agents, leading to the generation of increased knowledge, positive meaning, and resources, i.e., to a heightened state of thriving. Therefore, this study focuses on two positive workplace factors: social media marketing planning and top management support for social media.

The limited academic interest in social media from a managerial approach has resulted in a lack of conceptualization of social media marketing [41]. In fact, investigations have frequently used the concepts social media marketing, social media management, social media marketing strategy, and social media marketing management almost interchangeably. For example, Yadav and Rahman [42], (p. 1296) define social media marketing as "a process by which companies create, communicate, and deliver online marketing offerings via social media platforms to build and maintain stakeholder relationships that enhance stakeholders' value by facilitating interaction, information sharing, offering personalized purchase recommendations, and word of mouth creation among stakeholders about existing and trending products and services". Similarly, Parsons and Lepkowska-White [43], in their conceptual framework of social media marketing management, propose four dimensions that summarize the actions performed when implementing and engaging consumers in social media and refer to social media marketing management as managing a firm's social media marketing strategies. Analogously, Effing and Spil [44], (p. 2) refer to social media marketing strategy as "a goal-directed planning process for creating user generated content, driven by a group of internet applications, to create a unique and valuable competitive position". Finally, Medjani et al. [45], (p. 291) define social media management as "the process of designing a programme of creation, timings, analysis, and engagement with content posted on social media platforms to meet business objectives".

Since the focus of this research is not to conceptualize social media marketing management, we adopt Varela-Neira et al.'s [7] recent approximation as the basis for our investigation. According to these authors, managing social media marketing is a very complex process, and, consequently, they propose a systems approach with interconnected organizational practices designed to create value and achieve desirable outcomes through social media. This social media marketing system is defined as "an integrated configuration of practices designed by the company or organization to create value for its stakeholders and achieve desirable marketing outcomes through social media technology", (p. 1303). Specifically, the organizational practices that these authors highlight as fundamental for the successful use of social media are formalization, human resource management, co-creation, and marketing planning.

While their research shows the positive relationship between this social media marketing system and an organization's performance and social media success, no study has yet analyzed the individual impact of any of the system's dimensions. This investigation therefore concentrates on the organizational practice of marketing planning, defined as "the degree to which the firm strategically employs social media through an integrated pattern of activities, based on a careful assessment of the social media platforms and customers' motivations for brand-related social media use, to achieve its marketing objectives" [7], (p. 1309). We believe that, out of

the four dimensions proposed in the social media marketing system, this organizational practice is the closest to the social media manager’s role.

Additionally, this investigation incorporates top management support as the other relevant antecedent to thriving at work. The top management of an organization is responsible for the most critical decisions regarding the organization’s structure and strategies, employee management, the organization’s response to different competitive pressures, etc. [46]; hence, top management support is crucial to ensure the successful implementation of distinctive technologies and competencies [47,48].

In this research, top management support for social media refers to the extent to which top management understands the importance of social media and is involved in technological activities related to its success [49]. In other words, it highlights the importance top management places on project management and its stakeholders [50], as well as the resources available to support innovation adoption [51], not only in terms of financial and organizational resources but also in terms of advocating for innovation [52]. Rydén et al. [53] assert that a company’s top management must understand social media and support its use.

However, our theoretical framework not only examines how the organizational context relates to thriving at work and subsequently to the social media manager’s task performance. By integrating Hobfoll [20,54]’s conservation of resources theory into Spreitzer et al.’s [12] socially embedded model, it also examines the interaction between these constructs. This will enable us to understand not only why but also when this organizational context’s characteristics are relevant.

The conservation of resources theory, similarly to Spreitzer et al.’s [12] model, is a motivational framework that examines constructs that have a relevant impact on employees’ well-being [55]. The conservation of resources theory suggests that employees strive to acquire, maintain, and develop resources that are valuable for meeting the demands associated with their roles and for protecting against resource depletion. Hence, the conservation of resources theory posits that individuals invest resources to protect them from resource loss, aid in recovery from loss, and gain new resources [54]. Under this perspective, resources are defined as objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are relevant to adaptive functioning [20]. Perceived organizational support, opportunities for development and learning, etc., are considered job resources [56–58], while intrinsic motivation, optimism, etc., are considered personal resources [59,60]. Therefore, from the conservation of resources perspective, social media marketing planning, top management support, and thriving at work can be considered resources. The research model proposed is depicted in Figure 1.

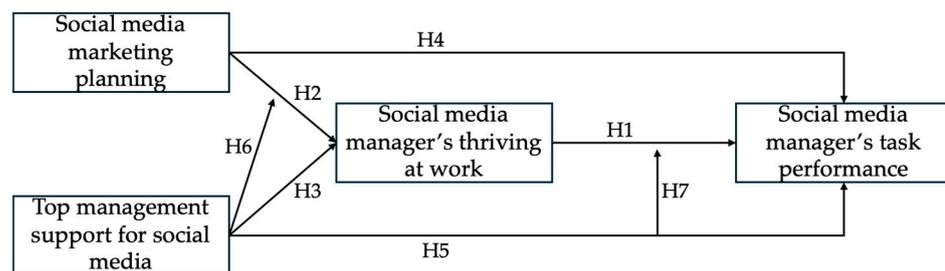


Figure 1. Proposed model.

2.3. Research Hypotheses

Thriving at work involves feeling both energized (vitality) and gaining knowledge (learning) for personal growth (e.g., [31,61]). High thriving is fueled by personal energy [12], a key resource for workplace performance and well-being [62]. Energetic individuals show more effort and commitment to their work [63], leading to increased activity and persistence [64]. On the learning side, acquiring knowledge about one’s job enhances performance [64,65]. Employees who experience more learning are better equipped to

address challenges and identify new ways to perform their work [66], increasing their cognitive and behavioral complexity [64]. Hence, higher thriving levels generate better understanding, enabling employees to monitor their activities almost in real time, anticipate problems, respond flexibly to challenges [65], and improve the handling of unexpected situations in the workplace [67]. Thus, the following hypotheses were proposed.

H1: *The thriving of social media managers at work is positively related to their task performance.*

Spreitzer et al. [12] proposed a social embedded model of thriving at work, emphasizing the significance of contextual characteristics within an individual employee's work environment. In the context of social media, being part of a company with a well-defined marketing plan is crucial. This social media marketing planning implies that the company employs an integrated pattern of activities designed to achieve marketing objectives specific to the role of a social media manager [7]. Thus, a company with more extensive social media marketing planning will assist social media managers in understanding the essential tasks required for effective job performance. Furthermore, it will help to reduce or eliminate burnout while creating a conducive learning environment within the workplace.

H2: *Social media marketing planning is positively related to the thriving of social media managers at work.*

Top management plays a role in providing necessary funds and committing to technological programs. They promote a proactive technological stance, develop strategies supporting technology, and fund training programs for employees in this regard [68]. Additionally, top management support helps employees to access external knowledge and establish communication channels with other organizations, fostering absorptive capacity [69]. Moreover, supportive organizational environments contribute to safe work contexts that allow social media managers to take risks [70,71] and engage in development activities [72–74], leading to valuable learning experiences. Finally, when top management supports a specific project, it sends a signal to employees about its importance for the organization [75]. This, in turn, promotes the perception of work meaningfulness in the employees working on the project, resulting in a greater sense of vitality [71,76].

H3: *Top management support for social media is positively related to the thriving of social media managers at work.*

The careful planning of social media involves aligning objectives with company goals [77] and the overall marketing strategy [78] and choosing suitable platforms based on the target audience and the type of content to be communicated [2]. Attention to the frequency and scheduling of content updates is also vital for a consistent presence on each platform [79]. This social media marketing planning ensures consistency across various media channels [80], preventing conflicting messages and uncertainty about the brand's positioning to enhance the consumer experience. Hence, a company that prioritizes extensive marketing planning demonstrates a notable commitment to social media. This dedication is expected to influence and impact the provision of suitable social media content by the company and, specifically, by the social media manager, a crucial factor for a successful social media presence [80,81]. Similarly, an integrated social media marketing plan aligning with the company's overall strategy, ensuring planned, coherent, and tailored communication across different media and platforms, should yield superior results compared to non-integrated approaches [82]. Ultimately, a company with comprehensive marketing planning enhances social media managers' understanding of tasks and procedures, promoting proper implementation, and improving their ability to address the evolving needs of social media users.

H4: *Social media marketing planning is positively related to the task performance of social media managers.*

In line with the principles advocated by social learning theory [83], prior studies (e.g., [84]) have emphasized that the behavioral patterns adopted by top management in an organization affect the behavior of its employees and, consequently, the outcomes of the organization itself. Support from top management improves consistency in messages and helps employees to better understand organizational activities and projects, guiding them toward achieving the organization's goals [85–90]. When employees perceive top management support, they are likely to increase their efforts in project execution, ensuring successful implementation [91–93]. Additionally, top management support provides legitimacy, fostering knowledge exchange and communication among different units and teams within the organization, promoting optimal knowledge utilization [94]. Finally, by investing in technological training programs and creating a stimulating work environment [49], top management support is expected to significantly impact employee performance.

H5: *Top management support for social media is positively related to the task performance of social media managers.*

According to the replacement hypothesis of the conservation of resources theory [20], when one resource is scarce (e.g., social media marketing planning), employees can use another resource (e.g., top management support) to compensate for it. For social media managers, having top management support allows them to work in safe work environments where they feel motivated to take risks [70], contributing to their learning and enhancing the quality of their work relationships and the meaning of their work [71], thus promoting their vitality [76,95]. Therefore, top management support, by contributing to the learning and vitality of social media managers, could compensate for the effect of underdeveloped social media marketing planning on the thriving of social media managers at work. Conversely, when top management support is lacking, social media managers may need the company to have highly developed social media marketing planning to experience well-being in terms of thriving at work. Therefore, the relationship between social media marketing planning and the thriving of social media managers at work may vary at different levels of top management support. Similarly, top management support is likely to compensate for lower levels of thriving at work in the case of the task performance of social media managers. Top management support enhances employee skills through training programs and the promotion of stimulating work environments [49]. It also helps employees to better understand projects [85] and put more effort into the execution of important projects [93], which improves their performance. On the other hand, as the level of top management support decreases, social media managers will need to experience higher levels of thriving at work to increase their task performance.

H6: *Top management support moderates the effect of social media marketing planning on the thriving of social media managers at work; such that the higher the support, the lesser the influence of social media marketing planning on the thriving at work of managers.*

H7: *Top management support moderates the effect of thriving at work on the task performance of social media managers; such that the higher the support, the lesser the influence of thriving at work on the task performance of managers.*

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Sample

Most research conducted in the field of social media uses consumer data to develop inferences and test models. This research differs from those efforts in that the data used were obtained from social media managers and their supervisors. The data collection

period spanned from January 2017 to February 2018, involving surveys with structured questionnaires. Outreach efforts targeted 1892 companies identified from various tourism organization databases, using personal interactions, telephone calls, and online communication. With a response rate of 10.04%, a convenience sample of 190 social media managers and 190 supervisors was obtained from 190 tourism sector companies with a presence on social media and whose management is internalized. Companies with internalized social media management were chosen because, in most companies, social media management is carried out internally and is not outsourced [96], and to control any potential systematic impact of contextual differences with specialized communication agencies. Appendix B provides a description of the sample used.

The duration of the investigation, which extends over one year, can generate non-response bias. In this line, the potential for non-response bias was assessed following Armstrong and Overton's [97] guidelines, comparing early and late respondents. Early responses constituted the first 75% of returned questionnaires, while the last 25% represented late responses, intended to be reflective of users who did not participate in the survey [98]. A battery of tests was carried out on these two groups, examining various key respondent and organization characteristics, such as the company's communication investment ($p = 0.419$) and social media investment ($p = 0.813$), the supervisor's age ($p = 0.832$) and gender ($p = 0.863$), and the social media manager's age ($p = 0.979$), gender ($p = 0.497$), and workplace seniority ($p = 0.227$). The results indicated no significant differences, suggesting that non-response bias was not a concern.

3.2. Measures

The constructs used in this research were measured using 7-point Likert-type multi-item scales. Thriving at work constitutes a second-order construct with two dimensions, vitality and learning [12,61,99]. Following Prem et al. [14], to shorten the questionnaire, we used abbreviated scales to measure vitality and learning; hence, from the five items contained in the original scale for each dimension [99], four items were used to measure vitality and three items were used to measure learning. Social media marketing planning was measured using a scale of twelve items, in line with Varela-Neira et al. [7]. Support from top management was measured using four items adapted from the scales used by Jaworski and Kohli [100] and by Trainor et al. [101]. The social media manager's task performance was treated as a second-order construct with three dimensions, proficiency, adaptability, and proactivity, measured through three items each adapted from Griffin et al. [40]. Appendix B shows the scales' measures. Four control variables were included in the model: the age and gender of the social media manager, communication investment, and social media investment.

Social media marketing planning, thriving at work, age, and gender were measured using information from social media managers, since social media managers from firms that have internalized this service are in a privileged position and are able to inform researchers about both the design and the implementation of the firm's social media management system. On the other hand, supervisors measured support from top management, task performance, and investments in communication and social media. Thus, data for the independent and dependent variables were provided by different informants to reduce the possibility of common-method biases [102].

To ensure the proper use of the scales employed, a two-stage process was carried out. In the first stage, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (α) was calculated. The results are considered satisfactory (see Appendix C) since all constructs have a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient higher than 0.7 [103]. In the second stage, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to confirm the reliability and validity of the constructs, following the guidelines set forth by Gerbing and Anderson [104], Hair et al. [105], and Hu and Bentler [106]. To avoid data normality issues, robust maximum likelihood was used in the analysis of the results. Appendix B presents the results of the CFA. General fit indices reflect a good fit of the model to the data (χ^2 : 631.2844 (df = 461) $p < 0.05$; CFI: 0.938; IFI: 0.938; RMSEA: 0.044; NNFI: 0.933). Following the recommended approach of considering a combination of key

indices, the fit indices were within the recommended thresholds, and the estimated CFA model was considered acceptable [105,107]. Regarding reliability, all constructs demonstrate composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) higher than the recommended thresholds of 0.6 and 0.5, respectively [108]. Concerning validity, convergent validity is confirmed as standardized loadings are above 0.5 and statistically significant [109]. Discriminant validity was confirmed using two procedures, the approach proposed by Fornell and Larcker [110] (the correlations between variables have confidence intervals that do not include unity, and the squared values do not exceed the AVE of the involved factors), as shown in Appendix D, and the criterion suggested by Henseler et al. [111] (the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) is significantly less than 1), as shown in Appendix E. These results provide evidence of the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments used [112].

4. Results

Next, we proceeded to test the proposed hypotheses using path analysis with robust maximum likelihood estimators using Stata. Path analysis offers the possibility to model the relationships among multiple independent and dependent constructs simultaneously, showing a more complete picture of the whole model [113], whilst eliminating the complexity of using latent variables in a large model like the one in this investigation. Thus, we substituted the latent constructs with the average score of the indicators, grouping them in a single measure. Moreover, to avoid problems when interpreting some coefficients, given the measurement scales of some of the considered variables (which do not include the value zero), the latent variables were centered on the mean.

The results obtained (see Table 1) reveal that the effect of thriving at work on the task performance of social media managers is positive and significant, supporting hypothesis H1. The results also show that social media marketing planning has a positive and significant effect on the thriving of social media managers at work and on their task performance, supporting hypotheses H2 and H4, respectively. Furthermore, the results reveal a positive and significant effect of top management support for social media on the thriving of managers at work and on their task performance, supporting hypotheses H3 and H5, respectively.

Table 1. Path analysis results.

Variables	Thriving at Work	Task Performance
	Coefficients	Coefficients
Thriving at work (T)		0.144 *
SM marketing planning (MP)	0.351 **	0.116 *
Top management support (S)	0.154 **	0.127 *
MP × S	−0.129 **	0.021
T × S		−0.134 **
Ln Age	0.205	0.−381
Gender	0.345 **	0.093
Communication investment	0.001	0.147 *
Social media investment	−0.114	−0.040

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. Note: probability log: −2517.5555.

Regarding the hypotheses related to the moderating effect of top management support on the relationships between social media marketing planning and thriving at work, and between thriving at work and task performance, the results obtained reflect their significance, thus supporting hypotheses H6 and H7. The negative moderating effect of top management support for social media on the relationship between social media marketing planning and thriving at work is confirmed, as well as the negative moderating effect of top management support for social media on the relationship between thriving at work and the task performance of social media managers. Using the process employed by Dawson [114], Figures 2 and 3 present the interactions. This way, it is evident that high levels of top man-

agement support for social media will reduce the positive effect of social media marketing planning on the thriving of managers at work and also reduce the positive effect of thriving at work on the task performance of managers. Table 2 summarizes the hypotheses tested.

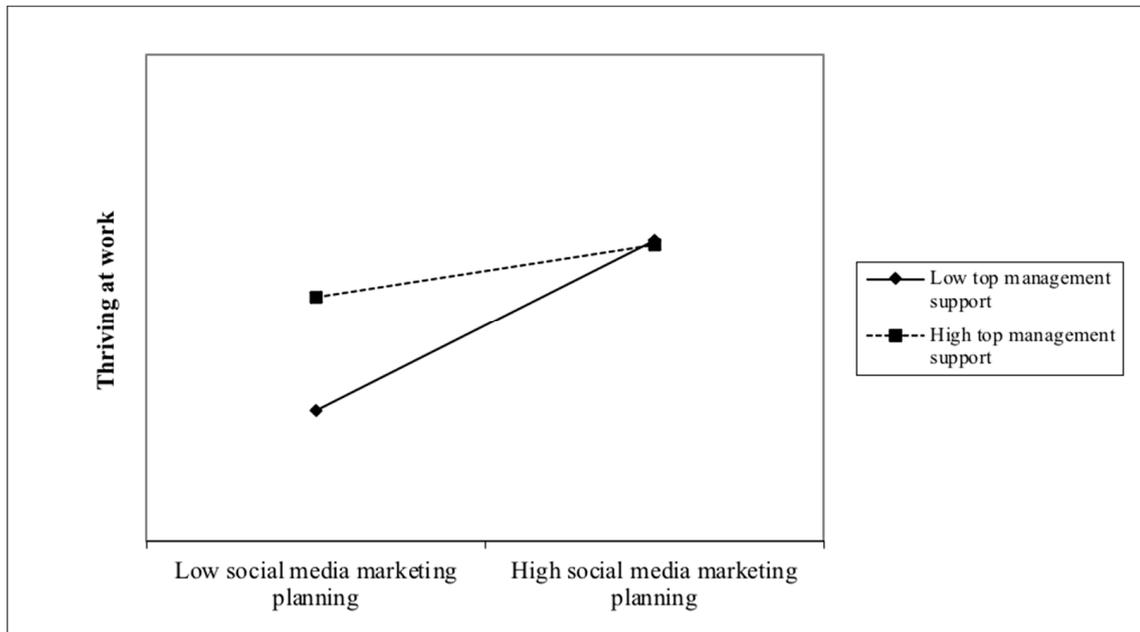


Figure 2. Interaction top management support—social media marketing planning.

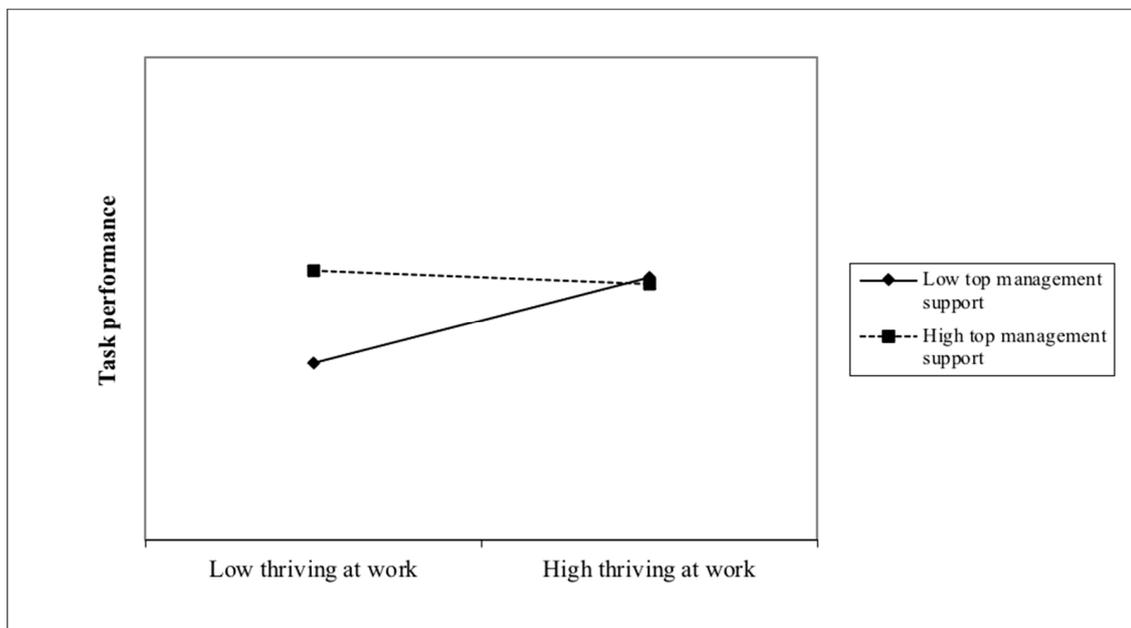


Figure 3. Interaction top management support—thriving at work.

Table 2. Summary of hypothesis testing.

Hypotheses	Supported
H1: <i>The thriving of social media managers at work is positively related to their task performance.</i>	Yes
H2: <i>Social media marketing planning is positively related to the thriving of social media managers at work.</i>	Yes
H3: <i>Top management support for social media is positively related to the thriving of social media managers at work.</i>	Yes
H4: <i>Social media marketing planning is positively related to the task performance of social media managers.</i>	Yes
H5: <i>Top management support for social media is positively related to the task performance of social media managers.</i>	Yes
H6: <i>Top management support moderates the effect of social media marketing planning on the thriving of social media managers at work, such that the higher the support, the lesser the influence of social media marketing planning on the thriving at work of managers.</i>	Yes
H7: <i>Top management support moderates the effect of thriving at work on the task performance of social media managers, such that the higher the support, the lesser the influence of thriving at work on the task performance of managers.</i>	Yes

5. Discussion

This research aimed to analyze the influence of the work context on the behaviors and attitudes of social media managers. Specifically, this study sought to understand how social media marketing planning and top management support impact the performance of social media managers. To achieve this, a model that relates the mentioned contextual factors to the performance of managers through their thriving at work was used. Additionally, it was predicted that the relationships between social media marketing planning and the thriving of social media managers at work, and between thriving at work and the performance of social media managers, are moderated by top management support. To test the proposed model in this study, data from two sources were used: social media managers and their supervisors. The results obtained support the proposed model, providing interesting business implications and contributions to existing knowledge.

The results obtained show a positive and significant effect of social media marketing planning on the task performance of social media managers. This result is consistent with previous research that has highlighted the need for a high level of social media planning for successful social media presence [7,80,81]. The efforts and involvement of organizations in developing an appropriate social media marketing strategy—which also promotes the use of social media for effective market orientation and positioning [115]—contribute to creating a work environment where social media managers understand their role clearly and have the necessary resources and procedures to improve their ability to meet the needs of social media users. As a result of this, they can perform their functions effectively, contributing to the successful presence of the organization on social media.

The results obtained also show the positive influence of top management support on the task performance of social media managers. This result is consistent with previous research that argues for the influence of patterns of behavior adopted by the top management of an organization on the behavior developed by its employees (e.g., [84]). Top management support for social media will allow employees to see that these activities are motivated by executives [116,117] and will lead employees to better understand the project under development, promoting consistent decision-making [118] and increasing their efforts to achieve its correct execution [93], contributing to the achievement of higher performance.

Previous empirical research has focused on adapting the marketing mix to the social media environment, emphasizing the need to advance the study of internal resource

and capability management in this context [4]. Therefore, these findings contribute to the literature on social media by analyzing the influence of the work context on the performance of social media managers. Additionally, despite the key role of social media managers, there is still limited research focusing on employees in this position. In this regard, this study advances knowledge about the role of the social media manager by analyzing how the work context, specifically social media marketing planning and top management support, affects their attitudes and behaviors. The findings suggest that organizational support and the dedication of resources and efforts to develop an effective social media marketing strategy generate positive behaviors and attitudes in social media managers. These results reinforce arguments from previous research (e.g., [119]) that posit that employees' positive attitudes and behaviors depend on their perception of the organization's level of commitment to them.

Moreover, this research contributes to the literature on the antecedents of thriving at work in the context of social media. This study has focused on work context antecedents that had not been previously analyzed, specifically social media marketing planning and top management support. These results imply that it is crucial to pay attention to the internal management of resources, capabilities, and skills in the context of social media to obtain higher performance from social media managers, who play a key role in organizational performance. Despite organizations increasingly using social media in their business strategies and the importance of achieving thriving at work, especially in jobs with high levels of burnout such as social media managers, the role of the work context in thriving at work is not sufficiently developed theoretically and empirically [17], with very few studies examining the role of leaders or supervisors in fostering thriving at work [18]. In this sense, our study is the first attempt that shows how contextual factors (social media planning and top management support) can contribute to improving the thriving of social media managers at work.

The results reflect that social media marketing planning has a positive and significant influence on the thriving of social media managers at work. When an organization dedicates resources and efforts to develop its social media marketing strategy properly, managers will perceive this commitment from the organization and will build high-quality relationships with managers, thereby improving their learning and vitality, which will increase their thriving at work. Likewise, the results indicate a positive influence of top management support on the thriving of these managers at work. This result is in line with studies that emphasize the positive impact of organizational support on individuals' work attitudes, such as thriving at work [38,120]. In this sense, top management support, perceived as a contextual facilitator, can contribute to increasing employees' sense of thriving at work [121,122]. We also determined that top management support for social media compensates for an organization's lack of social media planning regarding the thriving of its social media managers at work. When a social media marketing strategy is not adequately developed, managers can feel well-being in terms of thriving if they perceive high support from top management. These results reflect that when employees have different resources available, they can compensate for the deficit of one resource with their reserves of another to achieve well-being, protect themselves, and meet work demands. Companies should consider these results when organizing their internal resources and capabilities and developing their social media strategies, as they provide a better understanding of situations in which the work context can be more beneficial for shaping positive employee attitudes and behaviors.

The results also show a positive relationship between the thriving of social media managers at work and their task performance. This is in line with previous research which has shown that the components of thriving at work, learning and vitality, are relevant predictors of behavior at work [123] and contribute to increasing knowledge about the importance of thriving at work in achieving work-related outcomes. This is important for the company because it highlights the need to create work environments that favor high levels of employee thriving, contributing to better performance in their activities and better results for the company. This study also extends knowledge by considering moderating effects in the relationship between thriving at work and the performance of social media

managers. The results suggest that top management support for social media compensates for a lack of thriving at work. At the same time, the results obtained reflect that when social media managers experience high levels of thriving at work, it is likely that they will achieve high task performance without the need for high top management support. Consequently, possessing high levels of one resource can compensate for the deficit of another resource to achieve well-being in terms of thriving at work.

5.1. Managerial Implications

The fact that social media marketing planning influences thriving at work, a variable that precedes adequate job performance by social media managers, reflects the importance of designing and implementing social media marketing planning. Promoting effective social media marketing planning will facilitate the execution of daily tasks by managers, reducing the potential for burnout and providing a more pleasant and manageable work environment, ultimately helping to enhance their performance.

Organizations must dedicate significant efforts to carefully plan their presence on social media to achieve good performance in organizational social media. It is essential for the organization to actively engage in setting specific objectives for social media, aligned with the company's overall goals and strategy, to select the most appropriate platforms for their target audience, to maintain consistency in their actions, carefully selecting the content and posting frequency on each platform, and more. This will increase the managers' capacity to meet the needs of social media users.

On the other hand, the positive effect that top management support has on thriving at work and job performance underscores the critical role of top management in achieving positive results in social media management. It is crucial for the top management of organizations to recognize the importance of social media for the organization's success and to explicitly support the company's participation in social media. Their active involvement in social media management, emphasizing the vital role of social media managers and their relevance to the organization, will contribute to compensating for situations where the social media marketing strategy is not adequately developed or when social media managers' levels of thriving at work are low. In this way, social media managers can achieve satisfactory levels of job performance.

These findings are valuable for businesses embarking on their social media journey or seeking to enhance their social media performance. They offer insights into the practices to implement and highlight relevant organizational characteristics. Teachers of digital marketing courses can also benefit from these results, gaining an understanding of the organizational factors influencing social media success, transcending specific content or post frequency considerations. Additionally, this study aims to contribute significantly to the existing literature, offering guidance for novice researchers interested in exploring the roles of social media managers.

5.2. Limitations and Future Lines of Research

This research has some limitations that could lead to new research avenues in the future. First, the sample size, consisting of 190 managers and 190 supervisors from 190 companies, could be considered relatively small and may limit the generalizability of the results. While previous studies with a similar approach have employed comparable sample sizes [7,124], in future research, efforts should be made to increase the sample size to allow for larger-scale comparisons. Second, the focus exclusively on companies in the tourism sector limits the extrapolation of results. It would be interesting to replicate the study by including companies from other sectors to compare potential variations in results based on the company's industry. Third, the study's one-year duration poses a potential risk of non-response bias. To assess this, early and late respondents were compared, following guidelines by Armstrong and Overton [97]. Various tests were conducted on respondent and organizational characteristics, and the results revealed no significant differences between the two groups, indicating that non-response bias was not a significant

concern. Fourth, the companies’ effective response rate was 10.04%, falling below the recommended 20% threshold for questionnaire-based research of this nature [125]. This lower response rate could be attributed to the significant time commitment required for each company to fully complete both the social media manager’s and supervisor’s questionnaires. Additionally, companies may exhibit reluctance in participating due to reservations about divulging information regarding their organizational characteristics, practices, and internal procedures, as requested in this study. Fifth, the cross-sectional nature of the data, collected at a single point in time, restricts this research from making causal inferences. In the future, it would be valuable to replicate the study using longitudinal data.

Considering the continuous increase in the number of social media users and companies’ social media use over the years, limited understanding of the internal management of resources, capabilities, and skills in the context of social media highlights the need to continue studying the impact of internal organizational elements on performance. Future studies could examine the role of key dimensions for comprehensive social media management, such as formalization, human resource management, or co-creation [7], to explain the performance of social media managers. The crucial role that social media managers play in organizational performance demonstrates the great importance of advancing the study of factors that impact their attitudes and performance. While this research focused on the impact of the organizational context on the performance of these managers, future studies could examine its effect on other individual outcomes, such as creativity. Additionally, although our study considers the mediating role of thriving at work, future research could analyze alternative transmission factors of contextual elements, such as intrinsic motivation or perceived relationship investment. Finally, our research showed that the relationship between internal factors and outcomes was moderated by top management support. This highlights the possibility that other contextual factors could also play a moderating role, providing a better understanding of the conditions under which internal factors contribute to achieving better results.

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Appendix A

Table A1. A summary of the literature review on the social media manager.

Study	Methodology	Sample	Study Goal
[27]	Survey. Path analysis	20 social media managers, 20 supervisors and 200 social media followers	To relate the social media manager’s customer orientation and the organization’s service climate to the customer’s perception of brand authenticity and willingness to pay a price premium
[126]	Survey. Descriptive analysis	35 departments in charge of social media management	To identify the professional profiles responsible for social media management and the most valued skills and competences
[127]	In-depth interviews	20 social media managers	To study how social media managers build their personal brand and how personal branding is used

Table A1. *Cont.*

Study	Methodology	Sample	Study Goal
[128]	Content analysis. Descriptive analysis	1543 digital and online marketing job advertisements	To identify the skills and competences demanded in digital marketing job advertisements
[129]	In-depth interviews	PR professionals	To study the impact of the SM managers on trust
[28]	Survey. Multivariate linear regression	204 social media managers and 400 consumers	To relate the PR roles to dialogue-oriented communication, brand equity, and relationship quality
[9]	In-depth interviews	7 social media managers	To study the role of social media managers in organizational communication
[130]	Survey. Descriptive analysis	80 social media and marketing enthusiasts	To identify relevant social media marketing skills
[45]	In-depth interviews	10 marketing managers	To identify how marketing managers from emerging economies set goals and measure their use of social media
[131]	In-depth interviews	16 experienced managers from various departments	To identify the objectives, capabilities, and levels of maturity in using social media in the innovation process
[132]	Content mining. Examples	5 companies' social media comments and replies	To study how listening skills foster dialogue
[133]	In-depth interviews	20 community managers	To identify the most significant characteristics for community managers
[134]	Survey. Descriptive analysis	399 business students	To identify the traits, skills, and competences relevant in social media positions

Appendix B

Table A2. Descriptive characteristics of the sample.

Variable		Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Companies	Number of employees	Less than 9	16	8.42%
		From 10 to 49	68	35.79%
		From 50 to 250	71	37.37%
		More than 250	35	18.42%
	Gender	Women	127	66.84%
	Men	63	33.16%	
Social media managers			Mean	Standard deviation
		Age	35.35	8.50
		Career in the company *	5.28	6.11
		Experience as manager *	3.83	2.72
		Marketing experience *	5.59	5.83
Supervisors	Gender	Women	89	46.84%
		Men	101	53.16%
			Mean	Standard deviation
		Age	41.20	8.87

* in years.

Appendix C

Table A3. Psychometric properties of the variables.

Dimension Variables	Standard Loading (λ)
Social media marketing planning (CR = 0.943; AVE = 0.583; α = 0.943) Before committing to a social platform, this company identifies which social networks its core audiences are on	0.794 *

Table A3. Cont.

Dimension Variables	Standard Loading (λ)
Before committing to a social platform, the company carefully analyzes the types of consumers and the conversations held on that platform.	0.884 *
Before choosing a social platform, the company considers the different features, advantages and limitations of the various platforms available.	0.840 *
The social media strategy is closely aligned with the company’s marketing strategy	0.749 *
The company’s interaction with consumers through social networks is consistent with that it has at other points of contact (e.g., customer service)	0.715 *
Interactions through social networks are consistent in content and tone of the message (e.g., a tweet and a Facebook post)	0.677 *
The presence (e.g., content, design, communication style) on social networks is adapted to the different platforms	0.644 *
The presence on social networks is adapted to the different access devices (e.g., mobile phones)	0.664 *
The different motivations of the users of the various social networks are taken into account when defining their presence in them	0.704*
When planning social networks, specific and measurable objectives are set	0.790 *
Social media updates are carefully planned	0.846 *
The company periodically evaluates whether the objectives set for its presence on social networks have been achieved	0.814 *
Top management support (CR = 0.905; AVE = 0.706; α = 0.893)	
Top management explicitly supports the company’s presence on social networks	0.789 *
Top management often tells employees that social media is an integral part of the company	0.881 *
Top management actively participates in social networks	0.781 *
Top management emphasizes the importance of the company’s participation in social networks	0.903 *
Thriving at work (CR = 0.827; AVE = 0.706; α = 0.938)	
Learning	
In my work I often learn new things	0.923 *
In my work I continue to learn over time	0.940 *
In my job I continually improve my skills	0.826 *
Vitality	
In my work I feel alive and full of vitality	0.940 *
In my work I have energy and spirit	0.951 *
At work I feel alert and awake	0.873 *
I am excited to go to work every day	0.841 *
Task performance (CR = 0.969; AVE = 0.912; α = 0.952)	
Task proficiency	
Carried out the core parts of your job well	0.869 *
Completed your core tasks well using the standard procedures	0.795 *
Ensured your tasks were completed properly	0.870 *
Task proactivity	
Initiated better ways of doing your core tasks	0.930 *
Come up with ideas to improve the way in which your core tasks are done	0.893 *
Made changes to the way your core tasks are done	0.776 *
Task adaptability	
Adapted well to changes in core tasks	0.894 *
Coped with changes to the way you have to do your core tasks	0.895 *
Learned new skills to help you adapt to changes in your core tasks	0.861 *

Note: SATORRA-BENTLER χ^2 : 631.2844 (gl = 461) $p < 0.05$; CFI: 0.938; IFI: 0.938; RMSEA: 0.044; NNFI: 0.933.
 * $p < 0.05$.

Appendix D

Table A4. Discriminant validity.

	1	2	3	4
1. Social media marketing planning	0.583	[0.308–0.602]	[0.392–0.788]	[0.272–0.672]
2. Top management support	0.207	0.706	[0.217–0.621]	[0.280–0.668]
3. Thriving at work	0.348	0.176	0.706	[0.196–0.824]
4. Task performance	0.223	0.225	0.260	0.912

Note: Values on the diagonal represent the AVE. Squared correlations are shown.

Appendix E

Table A5. Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

	1	2	3	4
1. Social media marketing planning				
2. Top management support	0.464			
3. Thriving at work	0.569	0.407		
4. Task performance	0.472	0.495	0.469	

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