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The value of multiparadigm inquiry for understanding phenomena within the scope of marketing – the analysis of farmers' communication on social media for the sake of agricultural industry

Znaczenie wieloparadygmatycznych badań dla rozumienia zjawisk z obszaru marketingu – analiza komunikacji rolników na rzecz przemysłu rolnego w mediach społecznościowych

Abstract

The goal of this article is to investigate how multiparadigm inquiry may broaden the outlook and generate novel research perspectives on the phenomena within the scope of interest of marketing science and related disciplines. A metaparadigm theory building approach and the meta-triangulation procedure were adopted to analyse the extant literature on the phenomenon of farmers' communication on social media for the sake of agricultural industry in the face of the criticism from alternative food movements. The literature was classified into four approaches, each underpinned by common ontological assumptions – computational, applied, critical, and interpretive approach – and learning was proposed as an over encompassing concept that opens up a new research pathway.

Keywords

multiparadigm inquiry, social media, agricultural industry, sustainable marketing, value co-creation

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest ukazanie, w jaki sposób badania oparte na łączeniu paradygmatów mogą poszerzyć rozumienie zjawisk w obszarze zainteresowania marketingu oraz dyscyplin pokrewnych, jak również umożliwić generowanie nowych koncepcji teoretycznych oraz perspektyw badawczych. W tym celu dokonano adaptacji podejścia metaparadygmatycznego oraz procedury metatriangulacji do analizy dostępnej literatury na temat zjawiska komunikacji rolników na rzecz przemysłu rolnego w mediach społecznościowych w odpowiedzi na krytykę ze strony ruchów społecznych. Literatura przedmiotu została podzielona na cztery podejścia różniące się założeniami ontologicznymi – big data, stosowane, krytyczne i rozumiejące. Autorka proponuje uczenie się jako metaparadygmatyczną perspektywę, otwierającą nową ścieżkę badawczą.

Słowa kluczowe

paradygmaty, media społecznościowe, przemysł rolny, zrównoważony marketing, współtworzenie wartości

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Introduction

Although the proliferation of paradigms in marketing science and social sciences in general has resulted in the enrichment of scholarship with the plurality of theoretical perspectives, it has also brought the problem of research incommensurability and the following challenges to a fruitful exchange between different research communities

creative commons

(Sagan, 2012). However, some authors argue that there is value in abstaining from the unequivocal framing of the phenomenon (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2024) and combining different paradigmatic lenses to enable a broader and more dialogical understanding of empirical reality (Lewis & Grimes, 1999). This article adopts Lewis and Grimes' (1999) metaparadigm theory building approach and their operationalization of the metatriangulation procedure to analyse the extant literature on the phenomenon within the scope of marketing science: farmers' communication on social media for the sake of agricultural industry in the face of the public criticism of its externalities. The literature is characterized by the lack of the unified conceptualization of the phenomenon, fragmentary and local focus, as well as the diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches. The performed analysis shows how multiparadigm inquiry may result in a more comprehensive and dialogical outlook on phenomena, as well as the development of promising concepts for future research. The article starts with the discussion of paradigms in marketing and social sciences, the problem of research incommensurability and multiparadigm inquiry, which is followed by the description of the analytical procedure adopted in this study – metatriangulation (Lewis & Grimes, 1999). Next, the article presents the phenomenon and its analysis. The article ends with the discussion of findings and the value of metaparadigm theorizing.

Paradigms and the challenge of incommensurability

According to Sagan (2012), marketing scholarship has been following a traditional Kuhnian understanding of a paradigm as an institutionalized set of ontological and epistemological assumptions about reality and relevant methodologies applied to develop theory in areas of interest to research communities. Throughout the first decades of its development (1930–1970) marketing was a single paradigm discipline; however, since the 1970s marketing has been subjected to similar influences as other social sciences (see also: Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Koźmiński & Latusek-Jurczak, 2011; Tadajewski, 2008) and it has gradually transformed into a multiparadigm, "holistic" science. Sagan (2012) argues that marketing research in general follows three different approaches to knowledge development, i.e. positivist, interpretive and critical, and thoroughly reconstructs their assumptions.

The positivist approach is based on the ontological assumptions of the classical correspondence theory of truth and nomothetic causal explanation, that is, searching for universal and repeatable laws. Epistemologically, it assumes that reality is independent of the knowing subject, and it seeks knowledge development through hypothesizing based on the systematic and objective analysis of the extant knowledge. These assumptions find their expression mostly in methodological monism, i.e. treating social sciences like natural sciences, but also in methodological exclusivism of social sciences and in methodological pluralism.

The interpretive approach is based on the coherence theory of truth and the following idiographic explanation, that is, understanding genetical sources and mechanisms responsible for the occurrence of phenomena. Reality is socially constructed and therefore the role of theory is to account for the way the world is co-constructed by researchers and informants. These ontological assumptions are translated into the epistemology that emphasizes the intersubjective character of knowledge based on the categories agreed by researchers and social actors, as well as the influence of researchers' biases stemming from their positionality. These assumptions imply methodological exclusivism, that is, the separatedness of social and natural sciences.

The critical approach is based on the pragmatic theory of scientific truth and the following teleological explanation. Therefore, critical accounts are interested mostly in defining functional and dysfunctional states of reality and establishing the conditions of their occurrence. Critical approach assumes mutual dependence and corroboration of theory and practice. It takes a macro-perspective to describe the functioning of the institutional marketing system, but also to criticize it and indicate the direction of change. Critical approach implies methodological pluralism (Sagan, 2012).

Marketing scholarship sensitive to paradigms refers also to the work in organization theory (Tadajewski, 2008), where a prominent classification of paradigms was presented by Burrell and Morgan (1979). Their proposition follows the understanding of a paradigm as a set of ontological and epistemological assumptions and distinguishes between four paradigms in sociology which are placed on two dimensions. The first dimension extends between objective and subjective views on the nature of science. The second continuum encompasses different assumptions about the nature of society: the sociology of regulation on one side, emphasizing gravitating towards harmony, and the sociology of radical change on the other side, emphasizing conflict and power imbalance. The four paradigms are functionalism (objectivity/regulation), interpretivism (subjectivity/regulation), radical structuralism (objectivity/radical change), and radical humanism (subjectivity/radical change).

A well-recognized consequence of the proliferation of paradigms in marketing and, more broadly,

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management and organization science is more plurality in the domain of theory, but also the challenge of the incommensurability of studies informed by different paradigms (Burrell & Morgan, 1979), impeding the dialogue between research communities. This incommensurability is due to seemingly incompatible philosophical assumptions and the following differing legitimacy of research problems, as well as the incongruous conceptualizations of phenomena. There have been attempts to address this impasse and overcome it, including attempts at multiparadigm inquiry (e.g. Davies & Fitchett, 2005; Lewis & Grimes, 1999; Midgley et al., 2017; Tadajewski, 2008; 2009).

Lewis and Grimes (1999) proposed that multiparadigm inquiry, which treats paradigms as heuristics to expand comprehension of phenomena, constitutes "tremendous yet unrealized theory-building potential" (Lewis & Grimes, 1999, p. 673), and classified attempts at multiparadigm inquiry into three groups. First, multiparadigm reviews acknowledge that studies on a given phenomenon are embedded in different paradigms. In practice, this group includes reviews of literature bracketing studies according to their ontological affinity and studies employing transition zone theories, which transcend paradigm boundaries. For instance, structuration theory conceptualizes structure as existing objectively and simultaneously mediating subjective meanings. Second, multiparadigm research consists of conducting parallel or sequential empirical studies through different paradigmatic lenses to allow for epistemological diversity in representing phenomena. Third, metaparadigm theory building involves developing an encompassing perspective on the phenomenon. This kind of theory "both accommodates and challenges opposing paradigm insights, and it reflects the ambiguity, complexity, and conflicts experienced by organizational actors" (Lewis & Grimes, 1999, p. 685), and it may "offer a template for extended theory/research" (Lewis & Grimes, 1999, p. 686). Lewis and Grimes (1999) proposed also their version of the metatriangulation procedure – a methodological framework to develop metaparadigm theories of studied phenomena. The proposed theory should meet the criteria of creativity, relevance and comprehensiveness rather than more traditional criteria of validity and coherence. Tadajewski (2009) proposes that it should also avoid the traps of cognitive relativism, theory neutral criteria or subsuming niche and critical paradigms' worldview to that of the dominant one, resembling, to use Kuhn's metaphor, learning each paradigms' languages.

The following study fits the description of a multiparadigm review, as it bases the analysis on the content of available literature. However, I also go beyond paradigm bracketing to draw conclusions that span different paradigm insights, what makes the study similar to metaparadigm theory building. Therefore, this paper adjusts the procedure of metatriangulation (Lewis & Grimes, 1999) to detect patterns in the literature rather than directly in data, and to propose an over encompassing perspective for potential future studies.

Metatriangulation procedure

The operationalization of metatriangulation by Lewis and Grimes (1999) is informed by the classical procedure of induction and consists of three stages: groundwork, data analysis, and theory building, although in practice the process is iterative.

The first stage – groundwork – encompasses defining the phenomenon of interest as "abstract and relational – constructed as theorists use, interpret, and experience it through each paradigm lens" (Lewis & Grimes, 1999, p. 678). The next step is literature review and gaining a multiparadigm understanding of the problem through paradigm bracketing (making paradigmatic assumptions explicit and classifying studies within existing or emerging classifications of paradigms) and locating transition zones (identifying complementarities between paradigms). The final step is collecting a metatheoretical sample of data "interpretable from multiparadigm perspectives" (Lewis & Grimes, 1999, p. 679).

The second stage – data analysis – involves establishing a protocol for paradigm analyses (the order of going from one paradigm to another), conducting multiparadigm coding and writing empirical accounts from the perspective of different paradigms to investigate themes that span them.

The third stage – theory building – is about embracing paradoxes between paradigmatic dualities. It involves developing and examining metaconjectures – "propositions interpretable from different paradigms" (Lewis & Grimes, 1999, p. 683) regarding identified themes. The next step is attaining a metaparadigm perspective through "an inclusive theoretical stance, framework, or concept that may serve as a 'point of contact' across paradigms" (Lewis & Grimes, 1999, p. 684). Finally, researchers articulate critical self-reflection, that is, evaluate results against such criteria as creativity, relevance, and comprehensiveness rather than more traditional criteria of validity and internal consistency.

Empirical phenomenon

A number of social and market trends have revolutionized the interface between businesses and

their consumers and stakeholders. These trends include consumers' growing awareness of the negative social and environmental externalities of economic entities and the following pressure on their transformation (Dyck & Manchanda, 2021), as well as the widespread adoption of social media technologies with their affordances transforming communication and producer–consumer/stakeholder relationships (Sedalo et al., 2022; Zhou & Xu, 2021). The intersection of these trends has led to the emergence of a number of new phenomena, such as influencer marketing of green products and lifestyles (König & Maier, 2024), enhanced transparency of production processes and product traceability (Shank et al., 2025), or highly contested hashtag campaigns to crowdsource brand's accountability (Truong et al., 2022).

One phenomenon at the intersection of sustainability and social media that has been of interest to scholars is the involvement of farmers in communication on social media for the sake of agricultural industry in response to the growing criticism of its social and ecological imprint. This kind of activity bourgeoned in such countries as the U.S. (Brewster, 2015; White et al., 2014), Canada (Braun et al., 2020; Rotz, 2018), Australia (Burgess et al., 2015) and the UK (Riley & Robertson, 2021; Rodak, 2020), albeit with significant differences shaped by local contexts and origins. Although the phenomenon has lost its momentum recently, it manifested in the proliferation of farm influencers across main social networking sites (Shank et al., 2025), hashtags and accounts promoting agriculture (Allen et al., 2010; Riley & Robertson, 2021; Rodak, 2020), as well as non-profit organizations supporting farmers' communication, co-founded by governments and agri-business (Lewis, 2011; Rotz, 2018).

Groundwork

For this analysis a relatively neutral and open working framing of the phenomenon was accepted. The patterns in the scattered literature emerged in the process of its integrative reading, accompanying own empirical research on the phenomenon. As the initial base of articles had been identified, it was updated by tracing past and subsequent citations, as well as through further exploration of agriculture-related journals. The selection criteria for texts included original empirical studies, farmers' public communication being the main topic, and considerable focus on social media as a site of communication, as it occurs also on other sites (see: Holloway, 2004; Smid et al. 2024). After rejecting unpublished studies and works applying theories that would meet Lewis and Grimes' (1999) criteria for transition zone theories (e.g. Rodak, 2020), the final sample (*n*) consisted of 12 publications. The review resulted in saturated paradigm categories, although the adopted non-systematic review method does not guarantee the exhaustiveness of the sample.

The received studies were bracketed based on the affinity of ontological assumptions conceptualized by Burrell and Morgan (1979) – objective or subjective nature of reality and regulation or conflict as the nature of society – as well as other emerging characteristics. Paradigm bracketing resulted in the classification of the studies into four approaches: computational, applied, critical, and interpretive. The distinction on applied and critical approaches was proposed elsewhere (Rodak, 2020), and the four-fold classification is the extension of this work. Although the studies within different approaches may use similar theories and methods, no significant transition zone theories spanning different paradigmatic assumptions were identified. The following paragraphs summarize the assumptions of identified approaches.

In the computational approach, researchers interpret a phenomenon through its technological manifestation, for instance a hashtag. It applies quantitative, digitally native metrics to detect "objective" patterns in big volumes of social media data, often inductively or through the combination of induction and deductive testing. Through mapping different computationally defined communities and their dynamic overlapping, the computational approach acknowledges the conflicted nature of society. At the same time, it emphasizes the transformative effect of technology on social constructs and potential social transformation through mediated social interaction.

The applied approach encompasses the studies which have an explicitly applied character and serve agricultural industry in enhancing the effectiveness of its communication. Although the authors focus on the experiences and perspectives of informants, they use predefined concepts to frame the phenomenon. They also objectivize findings to formulate recommendations for practice and to inform further quantitative research. The studies do not problematize the content of agriculturalists' communication, as well as social processes and relations, what reveals their affinity with regulation paradigms.

The studies within the critical approach combine the perspectives of radical structuralism and radical humanism as they reconstruct objective social relations, as well as ideological narratives that serve to obscure inequalities stemming from the former. The authors strive at reconstructing and problematizing discourses disseminated by farmers and pointing at the role of powerful industry

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leaders and agri-business in organizing and managing the phenomenon for their own benefit. The need for more ecological and just futures is emphasized.

Whilst not undermining the objective nature of reality, the authors following the interpretive approach are concerned predominantly with meaning making processes with technology, and the way they transform representation and social relations. Like the computational approach, the studies within the interpretive approach utilize large amounts of social media data but analysed qualitatively and sometimes accompanied by qualitative interviews. While the studies within the applied approach also utilize some interpretive theories, the studies within the interpretive stream focus on the understanding of reality rather than informing practice.

In their own study of advanced manufacturing technology (AMT), Lewis and Grimes (1999) chose to analyse available case studies. Here, the decision was made to benefit from rich empirical descriptions available in the identified studies and reanalyse them through multiparadigm lenses. Two representative studies were selected per paradigm, except for the computational approach, where only one study was identified. These studies were deemed representative to the paradigms and relatively holistically encompassing the phenomenon. Selected studies were summarized for subsequent data analysis, including information on main concepts, theoretical approaches, methodology, and findings. Table 1 summarizes the results of the groundwork.

Table 1. Identified approaches and studies (representative studies chosen for subsequent analysis are in bold)

Approaches	Studies (n = 12)
Computational approach (n = 1)	**Burgess et al., 2015**
Applied approach (n = 5)	**Meyers et al., 2011** **White et al., 2014** Steede et al., 2016 Dürnberger, 2019 Shank et al., 2025
Critical approach (n = 3)	**Brewster, 2015** **Rotz, 2018** Braun et al., 2022
Interpretive approach (n = 3)	**Riley & Roberston, 2021** **Riley & Roberston, 2022** Robertson & Riley, 2024

Source: own elaboration.

Data analysis

The first step of data analysis, planning paradigm itinerary, resulted in establishing the order of coding from the computational approach, through applied and critical approaches, to the interpretive approach. Each following approach complements or problematizes, even if unknowingly, the assumptions of the previous approach. The computational approach allows to map different groups involved in the phenomenon and highlight its socio-political, transnational context. The applied approach focuses on increasing the effectiveness of communication of one of these groups – farmers and agricultural industry. The critical approach also focuses on this group, but it problematizes the content of their communication and its socio-economic rationale and consequences. Finally, the interpretive approach abandons structural analyses characteristic to the critical approach, focusing on farmers' practices and the transformation of work through technology. Furthermore, it looks closer at the inter-group exchange of ideas and cooperation, identified quantitatively by the computational approach and neglected in other approaches.

Following this itinerary, multiparadigm coding was conducted that resulted in the identification of themes and the selection of the ones which span through two or more approaches. They include conceptualizations of the phenomenon, definitions of involved groups, farmers'[1] motivation and perception, static or dynamic (mis)representation of agriculture, static or dynamic relationship between farmers, and static or dynamic relationship between farmers and other groups. The theme spanning through other themes is gender identity and experience. Four paradigm accounts were written according to identified themes. Table 2 summarizes the results of multiparadigm coding.

Computational approach

Burgess, Galloway and Sauter (2015) conceptualized the phenomenon through its technological manifestation – a Twitter[2] hashtag #AgChatOz, which constitutes a conversation channel about agriculture for Australians and New Zealanders, inspired by its American counterpart, whose content is frequently covered by the national public television ABC. The authors proposed to interpret the hashtag through the political lens, using Michael Callon's model of a hybrid forum, i.e. a site which gathers heterogeneous participants with their various approaches around the issues of common concern.

The micro-study applying a set of quantitative metrics to the seven months sample of tweets

Table 2. Themes identified through multiparadigm coding

Themes identified	Computational approach	Applied approach	Critical approach	Interpretive approach
Conceptualizations of the phenomenon	X	X	X	X
Definitions of involved groups	X	X	X	X
Farmers' motivation and perception		X	X	X
Static or dynamic (mis)representation of agriculture		X	X	X
Static or dynamic relationship between farmers		X	X	X
Static or dynamic relationship between farmers and other groups	X	X	X	X
Gender identity and experience		X	X	

Source: own elaboration.

containing the hashtag revealed the multiplicity of computationally defined "communities" involved in the conversation, including the agricultural community centred around national agricultural organizations with an overlapping international agricultural community. The authors identified also a small group of heavily tweeting agricultural activists, including chat organizers and the account administrators. The analysis revealed also the co-occurrence of almost 6,000 additional hashtags, covering various topics related to agriculture, as well as pointing to organizations, other national and international agricultural communities, commodity groups and mundane issues. One of the themes was "agvocacy", defined by the authors as the mixture of online lobbying for industry and the vernacular online culture of its members.

Other identified groups included: "foodies", national media organizations, as well as "the 'general' Twitter communities structured around progressive politics and digital culture and conservative Australian politics, respectively" (Burgess, Galloway & Sauter, p. 12). The hashtag gathered the stakeholders of animal welfare, shale gas exploitation, and live exports of farm animals. The authors noted that hashtag publics may lead to "counter-intuitive alliances" (Burgess, Galloway & Sauter p. 11), as it had happened for agricultural industry and the Greens around the issue of shale gas exploitation. This may potentially lead to the redefinition of a group and its stance.

Applied approach

The authors within the applied stream focus on the American context and conceptualize the phenomenon as advocacy, activism or agricultural social movement, and notice its intermingling with agricultural marketing, that is, the promotion of commodities. Meyers, Irlbeck, Graybill-Leonard and Doerfert (2011) conducted in-depth interviews with eight administrators of Facebook groups: three employees of advocacy organizations and five agricultural producers, while White, Meyers, Doerfert and Irlbeck (2014) interviewed four dairy farmers who use social media for advocacy and agricultural marketing. Thus, the authors recognize that content creators include not only farmers, but also advocacy organizations. The audience includes other people involved in agriculture who wish to "share their stories" (Meyers et al., 2011, p. 7) and people seeking information on agriculture, including "individuals who are not as passionate about the cause and those who oppose the purpose of the group" (Meyers et al., 2011, p. 11), as well as buyers of agricultural commodities (White et al., 2014).

When it comes to participants' motivation and perception, White et al. (2014) found that interviewees acknowledge the gap between producers and consumers due to urbanization and are motivated mostly by the willingness to respond to criticism and what they believe is the lack of accuracy in the way agriculture is nowadays presented. They believe that agriculture should be defended and more positive information about it should be put online. At the same time, farmers use their social media accounts to target buyers of their commodities. The informants recognize the potential of social media to self-express and reach audiences that were not accessible before, as well as the need to combine multiple online tools to enhance the effectiveness of social media use. They also believe that social media communication is necessary for agriculturalists and that it is generally beneficial to industry. However, White et al. (2014) noted also differences between male and female experiences and communication strategies. Women from the

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studied sample, in contrast to men, are more systematic planners and strategists, and they received negative messages.

According to the applied approach, advocates properly represent the industry which has been misrepresented by its opponents who are misinformed. Groups participating in online exchange are predefined and remain unchanged due to interaction. Social media allows farmers and others in the industry to meet and exchange stories, while outsiders seek information on agriculture or criticize agriculture, and farmers should be prepared for that.

Critical approach

The studies following the critical approach conceptualize the phenomenon in terms of farmers' public relations work that benefit industry. Brewster (2015) applied the perspective of ecocriticism in the discourse analysis of the blogs by three women on agriculture.com, an online portal in the U.S., viewed monthly by more than 250,000 visitors. The blogs are part of the broader phenomenon of agvocacy, which the author framed mostly as an effort of agricultural PR experts to train farmers how to communicate with consumers, or rather "advocate" for the industry, in the face of declining public trust due to activities of "progressive food movements", and the researcher recognizes the impact of "broader trends in agricultural public relations" (Brewster, 2015, p. 74) in their content. One such organization is the AgChat Foundation, established in 2010 to educate farmers on how to represent industry online. The author concludes that the blogs misrepresent women in agriculture and dismiss public concerns about the impact of the dominant agro-food system, normalizing policies beneficial to industry, but harmful to environment. Rotz (2018) combined the methods of survey, focus group, in-depth interview and online data analysis, and concluded that conventional farmers in Ontario, Canada, perpetuate frames influenced and disseminated by industry-founded non-profits, such as Farm and Food Canada and Agriculture More Than Ever. The goal is to mobilize farmers around the shared understanding of conventional identity and reinforce their commitment to industry in the face of internal economic inequalities, as well as alternative farming methods and organizing modes proposed by food movements.

Thus, the authors acknowledge that farmers are the main group involved in the phenomenon, but also that they are a diverse group characterized by uneven relations of power. They also recognize the role of other industry actors in shaping farmers' communication. Other groups involved in the conversation include alternative food movements, consumers, and governments (Brewster, 2015; Rotz, 2018). Farmers are motivated to participate because they believe that criticism towards the industry is misinformed and should be refuted by educating people and governments, whose consumption preferences and demands regarding policy impose a burden on producers (Rotz, 2018).

The main goal of these studies is the denunciation of the (mis)representations of farmers' communication. This concerns three areas. First, it is the misrepresentation of farmers and industry. Brewster (2015) argued that blog posts deny women their farmer status and fail to account for the fact that women constitute a quarter of farm labour (of which 70% are either immigrants or the descendants of Latino and East European immigrants) and primary decision-makers on 14% of American farms. Advocates for industry also fail to account for economic differences between farmers (Rotz, 2018) and structural barriers for women and migrant workforce (Brewster, 2015). Both studies highlight also that industry consists of powerful non-farmers who participate in communication initiatives and benefit from farmers' activity. Furthermore, they are actually responsible for harsh economic conditions of farmers, whilst consumer preferences and governmental policies are being blamed for that (Rotz, 2018). Second, it is the misrepresentation of the ecological impact of the mainstream agricultural agro-food system, which is shown as basically having no negative imprint (Brewster, 2015; Rotz, 2018). Third, it is the misrepresentation of alternative food movements critical to the industry, which are reduced to female and vegetarian urban consumers, as well as organic agriculture, which is framed as non-scientific, backwards and based on emotional evidence. This picture is crafted in opposition to the conventional identity, framed in terms of masculinity, rurality, independence, and science (Rotz, 2018).

When it comes to the way these studies frame relationships between farmers, it is argued that inequalities within the community of farmers, as well as between farmers and others in the industry, are being obscured to unite them against the externally defined enemy (Rotz, 2018). Farmers' communication on social media also does not change significantly relationships and views between farmers and other groups. Brewster (2015) noted that female bloggers dismiss criticism as "fads" (p. 78), rather than answering questions and actually addressing consumers' concerns.

Interpretive approach

The studies within the interpretive approach frame the phenomenon as an attempt at representing farm work using technology, resulting in its

transformation. Riley and Robertson (2021) analysed 5,000 tweets posted by 50 British farmers in order to examine how social media influences the way farmers' lives and work are represented, using Sergi and Bonneau's concept of "working out loud" (WOT), which refers to the online communicative practice of narrating one's work as it happens. In their subsequent work (2022), the authors combined the thematic analysis of 5,000 farming tweets and interviews with 22 British farmers using Twitter to investigate how social media participates in the representation and transformation of the notion of good farming, drawing on the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu and Erving Goffman. Beyond farmers, the researchers identified their peers and various groups of non-farmers, including general public, activists or processors of farm commodities. They indicated such motivations to participate as documenting work, sharing achievements, connecting with peers and non-peers, fighting for justice in the supply chain, and refuting the criticism of the industry.

The authors in this stream also focus on the issue of representation. They concluded that, in comparison with other media, social media enables a more "broadly sourced", "grassroots", unmediated, "more individualized and everyday", "dynamic", "open ended" and "incomplete" depiction of farm life and work. While the tweets in general have a "positivity bias", at the same time social media enables farmers to show "harsher, lived realities" of the countryside (Riley & Robertson, 2021, p. 109). The authors also showed that, in the case of farmers, documenting work is about inscribing achievements in the cyclical nature of farm work and pointing at the social significance of farm work. Farmers also employ many elements of their surroundings, as well as human and non-human farm residents, to represent their work (Riley & Robertson, 2021). In another study, they found that Twitter changes the temporality and spatiality of the performance of good farming by allowing access to isolated rural areas and the farm backstage, as well as constant, almost in real time transmission of farmers' life and work, and the online persistence of their representations. Second, Twitter allows to contextualize good farming by emphasizing particular conditions of farm work and farmers' capacity to work with them rather than focusing on decontextualized symbols of good farming, such as expensive machinery or tidy crops. Finally, Twitter opens a possibility to widen the community authorized to co-produce the notion of good farming by including non-farmers (Riley & Robertson, 2022).

The authors found also that representing their work on social media allows farmers to connect to their peers, what opens space not only for the appreciation of skilled work and knowledge exchange, but also for emotional support (Riley & Robertson, 2021). Furthermore, Twitter allows to redefine industry by expanding and strengthening connections, as well as mobilizing solidarity and emotional support in the face of external groups, such as vegan activists or processors paying low farmgate prices. Representation work leads also to connections with non-farmers. While farmers focus mostly on informing the general public about agriculture and aggregating content favourable to them, they also observe the views of other groups, especially regarding animal welfare and environment, and reflect on and react to their comments, both in marketing of their products and more generally (Riley & Robertson, 2022).

Metaparadigm concept

Metaparadigm theory building is achieved through techniques that allow to reframe a broader question within different paradigms and juxtaposed insights from different paradigms (Lewis & Grimes, 1999). In this study, the character of the material and the differences of local contexts did not allow to propose theory, but certain insights may be juxtaposed regarding the issue of the mostly self-reassuring effect of farmers' communication. Farmers' content seems to different extents influenced by industry (applied and critical approaches) and they aim mostly at communicating their perspective rather than exchange (applied, critical, interpretive). Furthermore, farmers face potentially challenging criticism (applied, interpretive) and their identity and loyalty towards industry are reproduced through social media exchange (critical, interpretive). However, the visibility of critics' content allows farmers to acknowledge the existence of shared concerns and occasionally ally with other groups (computational), as well as reflect on and react to the needs and views of other agriculture stakeholders (interpretive). This analysis justified proposing "learning" as an inclusive concept understood across different research communities. Studies informed by different paradigms reveal various types of farmers' learning: they learn communication skills and adopt frames from industry leaders, but they also practice these skills through online interactions. Nevertheless, this type of learning allows only to maximize the effectiveness of communication rather than to co-create value through ethical and ecological transformation of agricultural production and communication, in accordance with such concepts as sustainable marketing (Dyck & Manchanda, 2021). However, chances for such learning exist, as research provides evidence for farmers' reflections and actions in response to observed criticism. Also farmers express the need to learn two-way communication (Steede et al., 2016).

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Conclusion

The adoption of the metaparadigm theory building approach and the metatriangulation procedure (Lewis & Grimes, 1999) allowed to juxtapose the insights regarding the phenomenon of farmers communication on social media for the sake of industry and propose that farmers may tend to unlock the mode of learning that works towards increasing the effectiveness of their communication rather than enabling value co-creation with consumers and stakeholders. This proposition can be tested in further research, which may focus on identifying conditions enabling the second type of learning. Thus, multiparadigm inquiry may generate broader understanding and new conceptual tools to investigate phenomena within the scope of interest of marketing science and related disciplines.

Notes/Przypisy

[1] "Farmers" may be a shortcut for farmers and other people involved in agriculture. This is explained in each description.
[2] The former name of the microblogging platform currently called X.

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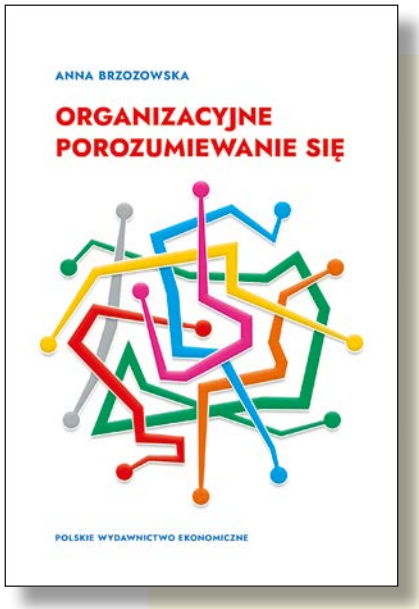
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Adiunkt w Katedrze Zarządzania w Społeczeństwie Sieciowym Akademii Leona Koźmińskiego w Warszawie. Ma tytuł doktora nauk społecznych w dyscyplinie zarządzanie oraz magistra etnologii i antropologii kulturowej. Do jej zainteresowań naukowych należą m.in.: filozofia nauk społecznych, teoria organizacji, wzajemne związki technologii i organizowania oraz społeczne aspekty ochrony zwierząt i ochrony przyrody.



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ZAPOWIEDŹ

Anna Brzozowska

ORGANIZACYJNE POROZUMIEWANIE SIĘ

W świetle współczesnych koncepcji teoretycznych oraz wyników badań empirycznych z zakresu nauk o zarządzaniu i jakości zdolność do porozumiewania się to jedna z kluczowych determinant sukcesu organizacyjnego w warunkach turbulentnego, złożonego i dynamicznie zmieniającego się otoczenia instytucjonalno-biznesowego. Porozumiewanie się postrzegane jest nie jako statyczny mechanizm transmisji informacji, lecz jako proces o charakterze adaptacyjnym i konstruktywnym, którego skuteczność zależy od zdolności do bieżącej reinterpretacji założeń oraz elastycznej reorientacji struktur, form i treści interakcji komunikacyjnych do zmiennych uwarunkowań funkcjonowania organizacji. W niniejszej monografii proces porozumiewania się ujmowany jest jako autonomiczny konstrukt w obrębie komunikacji organizacyjnej i świadomie odchodzi od tradycyjnych, linearnych modeli transmisji informacji. Monografia stanowi interwencję w obszar luki teoretycznej i terminologicznej. Pojęcie porozumiewania się funkcjonuje w monografii jako kategoria analityczna, która w sposób bardziej adekwatny odzwierciedla naturę procesów organizacyjnych, ujmując zarządzanie nie jako zestaw narzędzi i procedur komunikacyjnych, lecz jako relacyjny proces współkonstruowania organizacji. Monografia jest kompleksowym opracowaniem skupionym wokół problematyki porozumiewania się w organizacjach, integrującym zarówno ujęcia teoretyczne, jak również implikacje praktyczne. Podejmuje kluczowe zagadnienia związane z organizacyjnymi procesami porozumiewania się, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem wyzwań wynikających z różnorodności kulturowej oraz dynamicznego rozwoju technologii informacyjno-komunikacyjnych. Analizuje wpływ współczesnych uwarunkowań społeczno-gospodarczych na procesy komunikacyjne oraz praktyki zarządzania organizacyjnego, formułując przy tym teoretyczny model skutecznego porozumiewania się o charakterze adaptacyjnym i synergicznym, który sprzyja budowaniu współpracy oraz wspieraniu innowacyjności w organizacjach. Rozważania teoretyczno-badawcze inicjowane są zdefiniowaniem problemu badawczego, osadzonego na płaszczyźnie wielowymiarowych i dynamicznych transformacji otoczenia organizacyjnego oraz ich implikacji dla wewnątrzorganizacyjnych procesów porozumiewania się. W monografii podkreślono znaczenie zintegrowanej, zrównoważonej perspektywy analitycznej, umożliwiającej spójne powiązanie ram teoretycznych z praktyką zarządzania.