

Exploring SAVE Farm's online presence: a qualitative content and sentiment analysis

by

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Abstract

As veterans return to civilian life, and more are seeking career paths in agriculture, the demand for training programs continues to grow. The Servicemember Agricultural Vocation Education Farm (SAVE Farm), located in Manhattan, KS, is an organization that offers programs designed to help veterans and servicemembers gain certification in agricultural skills, preparing them for careers on farms and ranches. Research on the marketing efforts of veteran-focused agricultural training programs remains limited, particularly in the case of the SAVE Farm program.

Social media is a widely used tool for businesses and organizations to promote their services or products. Exploring how veteran-focused agricultural training programs are marketing their organization on social media to veterans can provide insight into how to better efforts to be more effective. The purpose of this study was to explore SAVE Farm's online presence through a content analysis of their Facebook page. Additionally, a sentiment analysis for SAVE Farm was conducted through Mentionlytics.

The conceptual framework guiding this study consists of the Uses and Gratifications Theory and Framing Theory. Uses and Gratifications Theory explores the reasons individuals engage with social media, focusing on the needs they seek to satisfy and gratifications they derive from their involvement. Framing Theory addresses how messages and visuals are selected and framed to shape the audience's perception of an event, influencing how they interpret and respond to the information.

The study followed a qualitative content analysis design, along with a sentiment analysis conducted through Mentionlytics. Posts from SAVE Farm's Facebook page were collected in November 2024. These posts spanned from January 1, 2024, to October 22, 2024. These posts

were examined for their visuals and captions. Codes were derived from both the imagery and captions, allowing for the identification of recurring themes.

The results of the study revealed that SAVE Farm's current social media marketing efforts primarily target a male demographic, while also striving to communicate the organization's values through its captions. While SAVE Farm includes calls-to-actions in captions when promoting events, there is an opportunity to increase engagement by tagging collaborators and partners in the captions. These collaborations can increase awareness of both the events and SAVE Farm itself. The results also indicated that most of the sentiment surrounding online content about and posted by SAVE Farm was either positive or neutral.

Future research should explore additional social media platforms where SAVE Farm is active, such as X (Twitter), Instagram and YouTube. Expanding beyond SAVE Farm, research should also examine similar programs across the United States that focus on training veterans in agricultural practices. To support the growth of agricultural programs aimed at helping veterans, it is crucial to encourage the effective use of social media in marketing these organizations.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my Papa Willie, whose love and passion for agriculture and life have been a constant inspiration throughout my years. Your wisdom and work ethic have shaped my journey, and your influence and guidance remain ever-present from Heaven.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The agricultural industry plays a vital role in the United States supporting food production, contributing close to \$1.537 trillion to the country's gross domestic product in 2023 (USDA Economic Research Service, 2023b). Approximately 1.2 billion of the 2.6 billion acres of land in the U.S. are used for agriculture (USDA Economic Research Service, 2024c). Today agricultural operations are focused on fewer, larger farms, often located in rural areas where much of the U.S. population does not reside (USDA Economic Research Service, 2024d).

In 2023, there were 1.89 million farms in operation in the U.S. (USDA Economic Research Service, 2024d). However, agriculture looks much different than it did even 30 years ago (Bailey, 2013). Farm labor shortages are increasingly challenging for farmers, forcing them to adapt their labor management and production practices (Win et al., 2023). The current employment provided by agriculture, food and related industries in the United States accounts for 10.4% of total employment (USDA Economic Research Service, 2023b).

The agricultural workforce primarily consists of self-employed farmers, their family members, and hired farm labor (USDA Economic Research Service, 2023a). However, the demographic of farmers and ranchers is undergoing significant change (Bailey, 2013). Many producers are aging, with some beginning to retire (USDA, 2023a). It is crucial that the next generation of producers' steps in to sustain the industry (USDA, 2023a).

During recent years the number of qualified younger individuals entering the agricultural industry has been low (Bailey, 2013). Less than 1% of United States workers are made up of hired farmworkers working in different segments of the industry including field crops, nurseries, livestock, agricultural inspectors, and more (USDA Economic Research Service, 2023a).

According to the USDA (2023a), the average age of farmers, ranchers, and producers was 57.5 years old in 2017.

As the current producers continue to age and retire, the industry needs qualified individuals who can take over or help with these operations (Schreiner et al., 2018). While men are acknowledged to be a farmer and rancher (Quisumbing & Doss, 2021), the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (2017) determined that beginning producers coming into the industry are more likely to be female. Many individuals interested in farming and ranching practices also come from nonfarming backgrounds with hardly much if any experience in agricultural practices (Ekers et al., 2016). In 2017, 17% of all farms in the United States had a producer who was either currently serving or had previously served in the United States Armed Forces (USDA, 2023c).

Many veterans are expressing an interest in pursuing farming after their military service (Fanatico et al., 2025). In 2023, there were over 18 million veterans living in the United States (Schaeffer, 2023). By early 2025, the veteran unemployment rate had risen to 3.8%, marking an increase from the previous year (Veteran unemployment rate, 2025). Among these unemployed veterans, 4.9% are female and 4.1% are male (Veteran unemployment rate, 2025). The majority of veterans returning to the work force are older males (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2020).

The rise in unemployment can be attributed to the challenges veterans face when transitioning back to civilian life (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2020). Many veterans struggle to adjust after their service (Prudential, 2012), with decisions related to education and employment playing a crucial role in their successful reintegration (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2020).

Additionally, veterans dealing with injuries or health issues often face even greater employment

challenges, and many do not receive the necessary support or training to help navigate this transition (Prudential, 2012).

However, many veterans plan to return to their communities at the end of their service (Donoghue et al., 2014). The skills and discipline they have developed can be valuable assets to farms and rural communities (Donoghue et al., 2014). To facilitate this transition, it is important for organizations to provide opportunities for veteran employees to gain the experience and skills needed to advance in their careers, offering training and guidance through supportive supervisors (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2020). Given the need to integrate veterans into the workforce (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2020), and the growing interest among veterans in pursuing careers in farming (Fanatico et al., 2025), there is an increasing demand for training programs to support this transition to support the training of veterans in agriculture.

In response to veterans' needs, programs designed to train individuals in agricultural practices have steadily grown over the years (Fleming, 2015). Agricultural training and educational programs are essential for new farmers and ranchers in general (Schreiner et al., 2018), playing a key role in improving industry practices and boosting productivity (Raji et al., 2024). In addition to academic institutions, private and nonprofit programs offer courses and training programs as alternative pathways for individuals entering the field (Schreiner et al., 2018). These programs assist in increasing knowledge, effective practices, and skills (Raji et al., 2024).

Furthermore, agricultural training programs can play a crucial role in helping veterans transition into new careers by providing them with the experience and skills needed for agricultural work. These programs can also support veterans' mental health needs, addressing their emotional, physical, and social well-being (Fleming, 2015). Engaging with nature through

agricultural work has been shown to positively impact mental health, offering benefits for their recovery (Beguín-Fernald, 2022).

To provide the best training, organizations and institutions offer resources that give student veterans hands-on opportunities to practice and learn (USDA, 2025d). Many of these organizations in the United States offer agricultural certificates that can be earned quickly, equipping veterans with a strong foundation to start and grow their operations (USDA, 2025d). Additionally, the USDA offers funding specifically for veterans to pursue careers in agriculture through these training programs (USDA, 2025d).

The Servicemember Agricultural Vocation Education Farm (SAVE Farm) (SAVE Farm, 2024) is a higher educational program in Manhattan, Kansas, allowing servicemembers, veterans, and family members to become certified in agricultural topics to learn the skills to work on and assist on a farm or ranch operation. SAVE Farm offers various educational opportunities to meet different learners' needs. For those focusing on specific topics, one-week and two-week courses are available (SAVE Farm, 2024). Additionally, individuals seeking hands-on training and farm experience can participate in a five-month apprenticeship program, which includes 414 hours of agricultural courses to obtain a certificate after completion, as well as aid with finding a job following (SAVE Farm, 2024). SAVE Farm also hosts a variety of events and workshops, ranging from one to three days, that are open to the public.

Courses at SAVE Farm are offered in both the spring and fall. The specific courses include the following: Agribusiness management, fundamentals of conventional crop science, farm equipment operations and maintenance, cover crops, fundamentals of animal science and industry, introduction to animal behaviorism, understanding horticulture, watering, water quality, range management, basic farm construction, high tunnel construction and operations, specialty

crops, farm/ranch fencing, agricultural marketing, introduction to regenerative agriculture, and farmstead design (SAVE Farm, 2024).

SAVE Farm is dedicated to supporting veterans. Opportunities for healing, mentorships, community integration and guidance and support are integrated into the program's efforts (SAVE Farm, 2024). This support is implemented with Post Traumatic Growth in mind to assist with the transition for veterans back into the community after suffering stress, injuries, and any other issues following service (SAVE Farm, 2024).

The organization is present on several social media platforms to educate and inform about what SAVE Farm offers. They are present on Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram and YouTube, with Facebook being the platform they are most active on. Social media has become a key component of an organization's or business's marketing strategy (Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003), particularly when it comes to event promotion. A crucial factor in maximizing the success of promotional events is the timing of the announcement and how it is shared on social media (Adamopoulos & Todri, 2015), as well as consistent posting to help increase visibility and reach a broader audience (Adobe Express, 2023). As organizations such as SAVE Farm continue to develop their programs, it is crucial to effectively present this information about their courses and events to their target audience.

Statement of the Problem

SAVE Farm has a crucial role in providing veterans with the training needed to enter the agricultural workforce in Manhattan, Kansas and surrounding areas. To reach a specific target audience, social media is an essential tool that can be used for any organization's strategy (Porter, 2001), allowing a way to easily reach this audience and receive high return with hardly any cost or time needed (Tajudeen et al., 2018). Establishing goals and being present on the right

social media platforms is important for this tool to be successful (Treadaway & Smith, 2010). Effective event promotion through social media marketing is needed (Adamopoulos & Todri, 2015) for agricultural training programs for veterans, such as SAVE Farm, to reach their audience.

Research on the framing of marketing messages on social media aimed at student veterans primarily focuses on strategies used by higher educational institutions (Sullivan et al., 2022). With limited data surrounding the social media presence of agricultural veteran training programs, it is important to review SAVE Farm's social media efforts with the aim of more effectively reaching veterans interested in the program. Further research is needed to establish the overall presence on Facebook to provide insights SAVE Farm can incorporate into their Facebook marketing strategy (Kim & Johnson, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the online presence of SAVE Farm, specifically examining their social media efforts, including the images they post and the marketing messages in their captions. The social media platform evaluated in this study is Facebook. Additionally, the study will assess the coverage of SAVE Farm across various online sources to determine the overall sentiment toward the organization. This includes web-based publications, magazines and social media posts that mention "SAVE Farm" in the body copy or tag an official SAVE Farm social media account.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What type of content did SAVE Farm post on their Facebook page in 2024?

2. What strategies and tactics does SAVE Farm use to promote their events on Facebook?
3. What is the sentiment value of SAVE Farms' content?

Definition of Key Terms

Call-To-Action – A prompt used in marketing that can be used as a statement, link or button encouraging an instant response from individuals to take a specific action (Sprout Social, 2022).

Engagement – Referring to individuals engaging with posts on social media through actions such as commenting, liking, sharing, and other forms of participation (Lim & Kumar, 2019).

Facebook – A social media platform allowing users to connect and communicate with one another by sharing photos, videos, messages, and more (Treadaway & Smith, 2010).

SAVE Farm – Servicemember Agricultural Vocation Education Farm: a vocational education program in Manhattan, Kansas committed to serving servicemembers, veterans and their families interested in agriculture (SAVE Farm, 2024).

Sentiment Value – Evaluating social media platforms and internet presence of a particular keyword to analyze data and reveal trends (Rizki, 2023).

Servicemember – An individual who is currently serving in the United States Armed Forces.

Social Media – Platforms that allow users to engage through posting photos, videos, text and other digital media via the internet.

Social Media Marketing – Promoting and marketing a product or service on a social media platform.

Target Audience – The group of individuals targeted for a specific product or service (Zote, 2023).

Veteran – An individual who has served in the United States Armed Forces.

Limitations of the Study

The design of this study includes several limitations. The study is limited by the short time frame, collecting data from only January 1, 2024, to October 22, 2024. Ideally data from a full year would provide more information, but due to time constraints we only collected data from January to October. A wider timeframe would have potentially provided a broader understanding of the overall quality and quantity of content shared by SAVE Farm on Facebook. This study also focuses specifically on Facebook, which limits the capture of SAVE Farm’s full online presence across other social media platforms and does not account for the consistency of their messaging and engagement across those platforms. The study is limited to the public engagement on Facebook and does not capture direct messages that could provide insights on how SAVE Farm promotes themselves. Another limitation arises from a shift in the study’s focus and parameters after more than a year of research, leading to the development of a new study still centered on SAVE Farm but tailored to different research questions. Additionally, due to the niche focus of this study and the small sample size limited to SAVE Farm’s social media efforts, the findings may not be generalizable to larger populations or organizations outside this specific context.

Basic Assumptions

The following assumptions were made about this study:

1. SAVE Farm is targeting veterans, servicemembers, and their families when posting content on their Facebook page.
2. The content posted by SAVE Farm is intended to promote the program.

3. The content analyzed for this study included all Facebook posts made by SAVE Farm from January 1, 2024, to October 22, 2024.
4. SAVE Farm content on social media can reflect the efforts on social media platforms, however this does not reflect the effectiveness of the program overall.
5. SAVE Farm content represents the organization's marketing strategies.

Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

Overview

This chapter is intended to introduce the conceptual framework and literature review that guided this study. The chapter begins by reviewing social media marketing, marketing on Facebook, agricultural social media use, and then discussing veterans in education and veterans in agricultural programs. After reviewing the literature, this chapter will provide a summary of each theory that guided this study, including the Uses and Gratifications Theory and Framing Theory.

Social Media Marketing

The use of the internet has increased significantly over the past couple decades which has allowed individuals with easy access to a wide range of resources (Albors et al., 2008). With the rise of these new emerging technologies there has been a noticeable shift in use of the internet amongst businesses and organizations (Porter, 2001; Albors et al., 2008). For businesses and organizations this is a key tool that can be incorporated into any plan or strategy, within any industry (Porter, 2001). This in turn has created a shift in consumer consumption through new ways to discover, assess and purchase products and services through the Internet (Albors et al., 2008).

Social media, specifically, has allowed individuals the ability to engage and interact with one another through communication within mediated channels at anytime and anywhere (Albors et al., 2008). This form of media has become the platform for consumers looking for information, entertainment and more. While businesses and organizations have seen impacts on performance regarding information becoming more accessible to consumers while also strengthening consumer relations (Tajudeen et al., 2018).

Overtime social media has increasingly been acknowledged by organizations and businesses as a key factor in influencing how services and products are used (Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003). Social media allows a simple way to reach a larger audience with little cost and time involved, while providing a high return (Tajudeen et al., 2018). However, while social media is a powerful tool to be successful, organizations and businesses must first establish their goals and target audience to make sure they are using the right platforms effectively (Treadaway & Smith, 2010).

To ensure efforts remain effective it is crucial to also develop multiple strategies for social media marketing (Alves et al., 2016). Specific strategies include collaborating with other organizations to boost visibility and increase engagement (Harris & Rae, 2009). This is important because individuals interpret and react differently to content, and developing multiple approaches will encourage engagement by appealing to different individuals (Alves et al., 2016).

To gain this better understanding of trends and consumer preferences for a brand or organization to develop different strategies for marketing on Facebook, conducting a sentiment analysis can provide insights into the impact on brand perception (Rizki, 2023). Rizki's (2023) study found that a social media sentiment analysis for organizations on Facebook can help identify trends and audience preferences, and to improve communication strategies to help build and strengthen relationships and a positive brand image.

Overall, social media is increasingly important for businesses and organizations to reach their consumers (Pongpaew et al., 2017; Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003). As the importance increases many businesses and organizations are diving into the marketing trend, but often with no strategy in regard to how they will promote their service or product to reach their audience (Pongpaew et al., 2017). These brands must establish goals and their target audience (Treadaway

& Smith, 2010), develop multiple specific strategies (Alves et al., 2016; Harris & Rae, 2009), and utilize a content and sentiment analysis to assist their efforts (Rizki, 2023).

Marketing on Facebook

Facebook is a social media platform that allows users to connect and communicate with one another through sharing photos, videos, and more (Treadaway & Smith, 2010). There are multiple advantages of using Facebook as a marketing platform. Facebook is a free tool for businesses and organizations to support their advertising efforts (Piranda et al., 2022). It allows users to view posts related to products and services through pictures and videos, and the platform now offers a wider range of advertising services (Piranda et al., 2022).

While the platform can be used for marketing by businesses and organizations trying to reach their target audience, Treadaway and Smith (2010) recommend using Facebook to create marketing campaigns, but emphasize that, for success, organizations and businesses must first identify their target audience and determine the most effective way to reach them with their content. Once a target audience is identified and you can reach them (Treadaway & Smith, 2010), listening to what consumers are saying about your brand and how it compares to brand competitors is important (Kim & Johnson, 2016).

Kim and Johnson (2016) stress the importance for organizations and businesses to listen to what consumers are saying on Facebook, as it can reveal potential opportunities, highlight areas for improvement, and help build stronger relationships between customers and the brand. Reiterating the importance a sentiment analysis can have on a brand (Rizki, 2023), since consumers have the power to influence the opinions and behaviors of others (Kim & Johnson, 2016). Although businesses and organizations cannot control or change what is being said about

their brand, this feedback provides valuable insights that can be incorporated into their overall Facebook marketing strategy (Kim & Johnson, 2016).

Drossos et al. (2023) explored brand posts on Facebook and determined that social media engagement is crucial for expanding the reach of posts and generating more impressions among target audiences. When a brand shares high-quality content, engages with users in real time, and receives positive feedback from consumers, it can build trust and boost confidence in the brand among consumers (Pongpaew et al., 2017). The higher the levels of engagement, the more likely they are to foster greater brand trust, ultimately leading to stronger brand loyalty (Pongpaew et al., 2017).

Agricultural Social Media Use

As technology advances and social media becomes more prominent, agricultural businesses and individuals in the industry are discovering the need to be on social media (White et al., 2014). Haller et al. (2019) discovered in their study that agricultural organizations in Ohio primarily use Facebook as their preferred social media platform, as it effectively meets their desired gratifications. (Haller et al., 2019). Aligning with the findings of Weingarten et al. (2023), who also found that agricultural businesses widely use Facebook due to its ability to drive higher engagement and attract a larger following.

Weingarten et al. (2023) found that agricultural businesses believe social media marketing has played a key role in their businesses' success. However, although they can use social media to market their business or organization at no cost, many desire to be more knowledgeable about how to effectively use these platforms for marketing (Weingarten et al., 2023). Many agricultural Facebook pages remain inactive or are not updated frequently, which

may be due to the stress of managing a business, organization or operation while also trying to engage on social media (Weingarten et al., 2023).

Veterans in Education

The transition from military service to student life presents numerous challenges (Semer, 2015). Veterans require physical and emotional restoration when coming back into civilian life (Coll et al., 2011). Veterans returning and receiving higher education need faculty members who can distinguish and understand the challenges that are specific to engaging veteran students (Coll et al., 2011). Developing a collaborative relationship that incorporates engagement can develop satisfaction and motivation in veteran students, while creating an environment tailored to fit the needs and experiences of veterans coming back and enrolling in higher education courses will help promote success (Coll et al., 2011).

Providing resources and tools to assist student veterans in their transition to the classroom can ease these challenges and improve their experience (Semer, 2015). As new technologies continue to advance, organizations and universities are diversifying their educational formats (Grandillo & Magee, 2016). This is changing the educational landscape for higher education. These advancements allow service members access to degrees and certificates without being in-person or needing to be discharged (Grandillo & Magee, 2016).

Veterans in Agricultural Programs

Agriculture provides veterans with opportunities to use their skills, passion, discipline and service to influence rural and farming communities (Donoghue et al., 2014). Since the introduction of the first Post 9/11 veteran to farmer program in 2007, these programs have continued to grow to allow veterans with these opportunities (Fleming, 2015). As veterans return from service, transitioning back into the community can be difficult. Veteran to farmer programs

and organizations have been found to help this by addressing PTSD symptoms and assisting with their post-service work search (Beguin-Fernald, 2022; Fleming, 2015). These programs focused on helping veterans post-service, not only help with mental health but also provide the skills specifically needed to assist them in being a vital resource to rural and farming communities they plan to return to (Beguin-Fernald, 2022).

Fetsch and Grenwelge (2023) explored the effects of a training program specifically developed for veterans becoming farmers. It is noted that the sample for this study had a total of 85% males (Fetsch & Grenwelge, 2023). Regarding a connection to agriculture, after two to five months of completing this program 87.5% of participants were self-employed in agriculture (Fetsch & Grenwelge, 2023).

Literature Recap

With the introduction of the internet and social media (Albors et al., 2008), marketing has increasingly shifted to an online presence. The social media platform Facebook, on which SAVE Farm is active, serves as an effective tool for informing and educating audiences through marketing (Piranda et al., 2022). It is widely used by agricultural businesses and has proven to be successful (Weingarten et al., 2023). Reviewing efforts through content and sentiment analyses is important on this platform to strengthen a brand (Rizki, 2023) such as SAVE Farm.

This review explored several key topics, including social media marketing, marketing on Facebook, agricultural social media use, veterans in education and veterans in agricultural programs. It also reviewed the guiding conceptual framework. Analyzing Facebook marketing efforts is essential for SAVE Farm to effectively engage veterans interested in agricultural education as they transition back into civilian life. With more veterans being drawn to the idea of

returning to their communities to farm and ranch (Fanatico et al., 2025), it is important to implement strategies to connect them with the opportunities available at SAVE Farm.

Conceptual Framework

This study was guided by the Uses and Gratifications Theory and Framing Theory. The Uses and Gratification Theory describes why individuals rely on media to meet their needs. The Framing Theory explains that the form in which information is displayed to individuals determines how they will interpret and process the information.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973), developed Uses and Gratifications (U&G) to explain why individuals look to mass media to meet and satisfy specific needs. Through research U&G dives specifically into determining which specific types of media are used for different gratifications, developing the idea that all media can be shaped for any need (Katz et al., 1973). There are four categories exemplifying these different needs including:

1. Diversion – Escaping reality or everyday duties through entertainment (Katz et al., 1973; McQuail, 1979; Ruggiero, 2000).
2. Personal Relationships – Connecting with family and/or friends (Katz et al., 1973; McQuail, 1979; Ruggiero, 2000).
3. Personal Identity – Shaping one’s self-concept through content focused on one’s beliefs and values (Katz et al., 1973; McQuail, 1979; Ruggiero, 2000).
4. Surveillance – Seeking to acquire information about social or political topics (Katz et al., 1973; McQuail, 1979; Ruggiero, 2000).

As technology advances, new media options continuously emerge, making it essential to understand audience motivations and satisfactions for media use (Ruggiero, 2000). With the

audience in mind, it is also important to recognize if individuals are actually active and fully engaging with content while using media (Ruggiero, 2000). Looking specifically at social media, some users may still obtain information but not interact with the content, while others heavily engage and interact through sharing, liking and commenting (Ruggiero, 2000).

A study by Lim and Kumar (2019), evaluated the uses and gratifications of businesses networking on social media to form an online group for the brand's customers. Findings showed that searching for information and incentives were possibly the initial motivating factor for the audience to engage on Facebook brand's pages' (Lim & Kumar, 2019). In another study conducted for a thesis, the uses and gratifications theory assisted the researcher in finding that businesses and organizations choose Facebook for their primary social media choice due to the desired gratifications it fulfilled (Morrison, 2015).

Framing Theory

Framing occurs when the message or presentation of information has been altered about an event that develops a change in opinion (Chong & Druckman, 2007). The three types of framing including:

1. Semantic Frames – A set of related concepts which create a foundation for comprehending a certain event to assist in explaining relationships within the context of the event (Sullivan, 2023).
2. Cognitive Frames – The structure that is focused on the organization of information and how the information about a situation or event will be interpreted and perceived by an individual (Sullivan, 2023). Cognitive framing is based on the prior knowledge an individual has about a situation or event needed to make sense of the things happening (Sullivan, 2023).

3. Communicative Frames – The way information is strategically presented to an individual which can include focus on the language, context, stress placed on the topic to influence perceptions of a situation or event (Sullivan, 2023).

The use of frames within communication is significant considering they have the ability to influence beliefs and behaviors by altering the way information is presented (Chong & Druckman, 2007). The effects resulting from framing will depend on different factors such as how strong the frame is and how often it is repeated, the motivations and attitudes of the individual, as well as the competitive environment (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

Summary

This study is centered around the Uses and Gratifications Theory and Framing Theory to guide the analysis of Facebook content through both content and sentiment analyses. The Uses and Gratifications Theory will help explore the motivations behind audience engagement with SAVE Farm's Facebook page and identify the gratifications derived from the content (Lim & Kumar, 2019). Meanwhile, the Framing Theory focuses on SAVE Farm's marketing efforts, specifically how they craft and frame their messages through text and photos to effectively target their audience.

Chapter 3 - Methods

Overview

This chapter will provide an overview of the methods used for this study including the research design, research context, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

The purposes of this study were to evaluate SAVE Farm's online presence on Facebook and review a content sentiment analysis of content online about SAVE Farm. Evaluation of marketing efforts and developing strategies can allow SAVE Farm to continue effectively to reach their target audience. Determining how SAVE Farm promotes their events and how others feel about the organization will allow for improvements in their marketing efforts in the future.

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What type of content did SAVE Farm post on their Facebook page in 2024?
2. What strategies and tactics does SAVE Farm use to promote their events on Facebook?
3. What is the sentiment value of SAVE Farms' content?

This research focused on the official SAVE Farm Facebook page to gain insights into their marketing efforts. Additionally, this research analyzed online content about SAVE Farm across various sources including web-based publications and social media to determine audience perceptions of the organization. The research questions were addressed through both a qualitative content analysis and a sentiment analysis using Mentionlytics. The growing diversity of content formats, including video, graphics, audio, text and images, has made qualitative content analysis increasingly effective (Roller, 2019). A qualitative study design allows for the identification of themes and patterns in the content collected from SAVE Farm's social media presence, providing a deeper understanding of their social media efforts (Creswell, 2007). Data

for this study was gathered from SAVE Farm's Facebook page, which is a platform widely used by agricultural organizations to meet audience gratifications (Haller et al., 2019). Given that Facebook is SAVE Farm's most active social media platform, this study primarily focused on their efforts on this platform.

Research Design

This study follows a qualitative approach to address the research purpose and questions. Specifically, a qualitative content analysis was used to best explore the content SAVE Farm shares online, as well as an analysis of the sentiment of posts. A qualitative approach was followed to allow data to be collected in a natural element that themes or patterns can be established from (Creswell, 2007). Following a qualitative approach allows for an exploratory study in which the researcher attempts to comprehend a topic that is not in-depth or as heavily been studied and allows the researcher to go beyond the meaning of activities or behaviors to better understand the actual meaning (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Schreier, 2012).

Most qualitative research designs rely on images and text as foundational elements for analysis (Creswell & Cresswell, 2017). This approach is particularly useful in examining SAVE Farm's Facebook posts, which incorporate text, images and graphics (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Specifically, engaging in any interpretation of these materials to develop a meaning for the data, lends well to a qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012). This qualitative research method used mostly in communications and social science studies, focuses on specific details of the material being analyzed which is what distinguishes the method from other qualitative methods (Schreier, 2012).

For this study a systematic approach was developed as the original concept. A qualitative content analysis has three key distinctions creating a systematic nature: 1) The researcher

examines all the material and decides where each piece will fit within the coding frame, 2) The sequence of steps will always remain the same for this method regardless of the research question or material, and 3) The researcher must remain very attentive during the documentation and coding process to make logical decisions (Schreier, 2012).

While systematic in its approach, this method remains flexible and reduces the amount of data. Data is reduced compared to other qualitative methods because the researcher limits the analysis process to only the key aspects that are relevant to the research question and objectives, and through categorizing codes within the coding frame to be at a higher level than the fundamental information within the research material (Schreier, 2012). While existing coding frames and theories developed by other researchers can serve as a starting point, they must be adjusted to fit the unique context of the study (Schreier, 2012).

However, through the data analysis process there is enough flexibility where codes can be derived from the data to fit the specific material. During data analysis if other important codes appear the coding frame can be adjusted (Schreier, 2012). This flexibility allowed for codes to be derived from the raw data.

To ensure reliability in qualitative content analysis, the coding scheme must be flexible and tailored to the specific material under investigation (Schreier, 2012). Rather than relying entirely on predetermined codes, the coding frame in this type of qualitative research should be partly data-driven, evolving based on the materials being analyzed (Schreier, 2012).

Research Context

The unit of analysis for this study was social media posts from SAVE Farm's Facebook. SAVE Farm is a higher educational program in Manhattan, Kansas, allowing servicemembers, veterans, and family members to become certified in agricultural topics to learn the skills to work

on and assist at a farm or ranch. SAVE Farm's online efforts are aimed towards informing and educating what SAVE Farm has to offer, to the individuals mentioned above who have returned from service and want to learn about agricultural practices to begin careers working on farms and ranches. SAVE Farm is active on Facebook posting a couple times a month, except for the month of May.

The content selected for this study was gathered from SAVE Farm's Facebook page during the Fall of 2024. Data was collected from January 1, 2024, to October 22, 2024, with all posts within this time frame included in the sample. A total of 28 posts were analyzed, which included both original posts by SAVE Farm and shared posts. The posts varied in format, including those with images, image graphics, and only text.

Instrumentation

While this study followed a systematic content analysis approach originally, with the flexibility of this approach (Schreier, 2012), codes were developed during the data analysis process based on the evaluation of photos and captions from each Facebook post. With this approach I was able to better understand the content SAVE Farm posts and how they promote their events by deriving codes that best align with the guiding questions for this study.

As the posts were assessed, a codebook was created in Microsoft Excel to categorize both the visual data and captions (Appendix A). The codebooks documented each code and tracked the frequency of its occurrence, helping to identify patterns and support the development of themes for the study. The codes were initially established deductively based on the literature and the guiding framework of this study. Throughout the coding process, additional codes emerged inductively from the data.

For the first phase of this study a social media monitoring tool, Mentionlytics was used to collect data to complete a sentiment analysis of SAVE Farm's online presence. After evaluation of multiple web and social media monitoring tools, Mentionlytics provided the most information from multiple different sources, providing the most complete set of data for a sentiment analysis.

Mentionlytics is an online tool that is a resource for any brand to monitor their online presence through web monitoring and social media monitoring (Mentionlytics, 2024). This tool can measure audience interaction, curate a sentiment analysis and evaluate a brand's efforts compared to competitors (Mentionlytics, 2024).

Reliability & Trustworthiness

Developing codebooks to analyze data in a qualitative content analysis can assist the researcher in directing the data analyzation process and develop coding standards for the research based on the significant attributes of the data (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). A Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was used to organize the codes in a codebook.

To establish a baseline for coder reliability, a thesis committee member and I collaboratively coded two captions and two images to ensure consistency in the qualitative content analysis (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Following this, I independently coded the remaining images and captions. After finalizing the coding process, I organized the final codes for both visuals and captions into codebooks, which were then reviewed by the same member of the thesis committee. This review provided an additional layer of reliability, ensuring that the codes accurately reflected the data being analyzed. Once there was consensus on the derived codes, I examined the data from both codebooks to identify common and relevant themes. These themes

were then reviewed by the same thesis committee member to confirm their relevance and consistency and ensure they align with the research purpose and questions.

Data Collection

The first phase of data collection for this study involved analyzing the sentiment of online content related to SAVE Farm, including news articles, social media posts, and other sources. To do this, I utilized the social media monitoring tool, Mentionlytics, to determine the sentiment value of content mentioning SAVE Farm. After creating an account, I set the keyword “SAVE Farm” to initiate the search for all online content that included this term. I set the period for data collection based on the earliest date available in Mentionlytics, which was 2001, to give us more historical perspective. Although, SAVE Farm did not begin until 2015, collecting data starting from 2001 ensured that all available online content would be captured including any references to the establishment of the organization. Mentionlytics then generated a database of relevant content, which I reviewed and filtered to remove any unrelated material. For example, content referring to a video game with the tagline “Save farm animals...” was excluded.

After this filtration process, I focused on content directly related to SAVE Farm. According to Mentionlytics, from January 1, 2001, to the present, there were a total of 53 mentions of SAVE Farm, excluding data from Instagram and X (Twitter). Instagram and X (Twitter) data were not collected because I did not have login information to integrate those platforms into Mentionlytics.

Once I evaluated the social platforms SAVE Farm is present on through the data Mentionlytics pulled, I began looking specifically at Facebook. This introduced the second phase of data collection for this study, conducted through the review of Facebook posts on SAVE Farm’s page.

First, I collected all posts, including images, captions, and the number/types of interactions. Facebook content from January 1, 2024, to October 22, 2024, was gathered to ensure it covered all content from the beginning of the year up to the start of this study. This specific time frame was selected based on the availability of data following a shift in this study's focus to evaluate the online presence of SAVE Farm.

The visual data was captured through screenshots of the posts and stored in a OneDrive folder. The text and numerical data were organized in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet within the same OneDrive folder, where I recorded the date of each post, the text of the caption, the number of likes and comments, as well as the content of the comments themselves.

Data Analysis

The first phase of data analysis was conducted using the data collected from Mentionlytics. Of these 53 mentions, 35 were suitable for sentiment analysis, determined by Mentionlytics. Mentionlytics categorizes sentiment into five emotions: joy, neutral, anger, sadness, and fear. These categories were used to assess the emotional tone of the mentions.

Based on the data collected, Mentionlytics evaluated each mention and classified it according to its sentiment including only three of the five emotions: negative, positive, or neutral. The tool determines sentiment using methods such as dictionaries, taxonomies, and scales, analyzing the words in each mention to identify whether they are negative positive, or neutral. All sentiment data was collected directly through the Mentionlytics platform based on its automated analysis.

The second phase of data analysis began with the first phase of coding. An initial set of deductive codes were established for both the captions and visual data based on the studies

framework. Following the initial set of codes, child codes emerged. For the visual data, duplicate posts sending reminders were only coded once using the first original post.

Parent codes for the post captions included items such as: surveillance/offerings, positive tone, engagement, and values/identity based on the codebook developed for this study. During the second phase of coding, additional inductive codes emerged including the following: workshops, partners/collaborations, links, tailored audiences, call to action, numbers/metrics, safety/security, and state connection. Once the parent and child codes were discovered I developed a spreadsheet in the OneDrive folder that tallied the total times each post fit within a code.

Parent codes for the visual component included items such as: holiday, nature, people, celebration, Kansas, events, animals, equipment, food, logos and sports. During the second phase of coding for the visual component, I discovered further codes including: field, soil, plants, crops, sun/sunset, small group, large group, men, women, youth, confetti, fireworks, beekeeping, expo, preservation, workshop, goats, bees, sheep, tractor, and honey extractor. After discovering the codes, a separate spreadsheet in the OneDrive folder was created to tally the total times each post fit within a code.

The second phase of coding for both the captions and images involved developing parent codes, with child codes grouped under each category. In the final phase of coding, I reviewed the spreadsheet containing all the data to identify the most relevant codes for the study and to determine themes. The selected themes were based on the codes derived and were chosen to best address the research purpose and questions.

Immediately following data collection, I went back through and determined the total posts that were originally posted by SAVE Farm and the total number of posts that were shared,

as well as the total number of posts that contained a photo and the total number of posts that contained a graphic image.

Summary

This chapter provided the purpose of the research and objectives guiding this study, the research design, research context, instrumentation including the reliability and trustworthiness of the study, and data collection procedures for both parts of the study. Additionally, the methods for data analysis were discussed. The next chapter will present the findings for the research objectives guiding this study.

Chapter 4 - Findings

Overview

The primary objective of this study was to assess the online presence of SAVE Farm on Facebook. Additionally, the study aimed to explore the sentiment of content about SAVE Farm across all digital media except for X (Twitter) and Instagram. This research aims to understand SAVE Farm's strategies for promoting, educating and informing their audience on Facebook, while also evaluating the sentiment surrounding the program as expressed by both the audience and overall media except for X (Twitter) and Instagram. The research questions guiding the study are: What type of content did SAVE Farm post on their Facebook page in 2024? (2) What strategies and tactics does SAVE Farm use to promote their events on Facebook? (3) What is the sentiment value of SAVE Farms' content? The answers to these questions will allow for a comprehensive understanding of SAVE Farm's efforts and identify strategies to more effectively engage their audience on Facebook.

This chapter will present the findings of the qualitative content analysis of the captions and photos posted on SAVE Farm's Facebook page, highlighting the common themes that were identified within the body text and photos of these posts. The captions and photos were looked at separately from each other and were individually coded. Additionally, the data from the sentiment analysis conducted using Mentionlytics will be discussed. Themes were considered relevant for the study if a significant number of captions or photos consistently referenced or aligned with a specific category during the coding process. For this study, a significant number was defined as nine or more references for captions and ten or more references for images. This threshold was determined based on the highest frequency of occurrence and aligned with the

research purpose and questions, serving as the primary focus of the study. A total of six themes emerged from the analysis including both captions and photos.

RQ1: What type of content did SAVE Farm post on their Facebook page in 2024?

The analysis of SAVE Farm's content posted in 2024 identified four primary themes: imagery featuring people and agriculture/nature, the use of positive tones, and the representation of the organization's values through captions.

Photo Theme 1: Emphasis on the inclusion of people, particularly men.

Imagery featuring people was frequently used in the images shared by SAVE Farm. The child codes present under the parent code of 'People' were used to categorize the types of human representations within each image. These categories included: small groups, large groups, men, women and youth. The frequency of each child code is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Inclusion of People in SAVE Farm's Posts (N=28)

Child Code	Frequency	Percent
Small Group	2	7.1%
Large Group	4	14.3%
Men	17	60.7%
Women	10	35.7%
Youth	3	10.7%

Note. Multiple codes could be identified within each post.

The posts analyzed featured representations of various groups of people and genders. Several images included both small and large groups of people including a mix of men, women, and youth. Several pictures used for posts were taken at SAVE Farm and include small groups with both men and women (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1. Example image of large group including men and women at SAVE Farm.



However, men were more frequently portrayed in images compared to women or youth, suggesting that SAVE Farm could be targeting a male audience (See Figure 4.2). Using photos with men appears to be a strategy used to appeal to this specific demographic and connect with the audience.

Figure 4.2. Example image of large group including men and youth in front of a tractor.



Incorporating people into the photos is a way to engage the target audience, especially by focusing on including the target demographic in photos as well. This inclusion also promotes the events and services that SAVE Farm offers to student veterans enrolled in the program.

Photo Theme 2: Nature and Agricultural Scenes/Imagery

SAVE Farm frequently posted images featuring nature and agricultural scenes, either as the primary focus or as the background of the image. The child codes under the parent code of ‘Nature’ were used to categorize the different aspects of nature that were captured in these images (See Table 4.2). These categories included: outdoors, fields, soil, plants, crops, and sun/sunset.

Table 4.2. Inclusion of Nature and Agricultural Scenes/Imagery in SAVE Farm’s Posts (N=28)

Child Code	Frequency	Percent
Outdoors	11	39.3%
Fields	1	3.6%
Soil	1	3.6%
Plants	6	21.4%
Crops	1	3.6%
Sun/Sunset	2	7.1%

Note. Multiple codes could be identified within each post.

The inclusion of nature and agricultural scenes posted by SAVE Farm is relevant as it highlights the organization’s focus and provides a glimpse at what veterans enrolled in the program are doing (See Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3. Example image of men outside working at SAVE Farm.



Even in their use of graphics, SAVE Farm consistently incorporates nature and agricultural images (See Figure 4.4). Figure 4.4 was posted for National Kansas Day to encompass the mission of SAVE Farm by incorporating an image of sunflowers, the state's flower.

Figure 4.4. Example of a sunset and plants incorporated into a graphic post.



SAVE Farm frequently incorporates agricultural scenes and nature in the images they post. Even in their graphics, elements are included that reflect the organization's focus. For example, in Figure 4.5, the graphic posted on their Facebook page does not feature a traditional image but includes graphics of the sun, plants and soil. These are elements that signify agriculture and nature. This consistent inclusion of relevant visuals helps maintain a cohesive theme across their social media efforts.

Figure 4.5. Example of a sun, plants and soil incorporated into a graphic post.



Above are examples of what was included in the 'nature and agricultural scenes/imagery' code during the analysis of SAVE Farm's posts. Whether captured through photos or created using graphic design elements, all forms of imagery were considered.

Caption Theme 1: SAVE Farm Consistently uses a Positive Tone

A positive tone was used in 32.1% (n=9) of the captions that SAVE Farm posted. This tone is encouraging and aims to engage individuals interested in or viewing the posts. This suggests that they are dedicated to maintaining a positive image for their brand which would likely reflect their values. Words identified as positive in this study included 'happy,' 'excited,' 'great,' 'outstanding,' 'love,' 'success,' 'enjoy,' and 'incredible.' One of the captions written by

SAVE Farm highlighted this theme, “Completing what was an **outstanding day**. We had a **great** time and learned alot. Really looking forward to future collaborations!”

These uplifting and motivational tones were a common theme as the positive words mentioned above were continuously used in captions throughout the year such as, “**Big thanks** to the team from John Deere. The Precision Agriculture workshop was a **great success**. We are looking forward to future opportunities like this.”

Other positive words identified in this study were used consistently throughout various captions. These include captions like the examples above, as well as captions announcing upcoming events or opportunities at the farm and extending holiday greetings to their audience.

Caption Theme 2: Values of the Organization

In addition to a positive tone, SAVE Farm actively acknowledges the values of their organization through their personal identity, highlighting safety and ensuring security for their audience and displays this through social media. These values were incorporated in 32.1% (n=9) of the body copy of the posts to reinforce the organization’s commitment to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for students enrolled in the program, as well as for those attending workshops and other events at SAVE Farm. The child codes present under the parent code of ‘Values and Identity’ included personal identity, numbers/metrics, safety/security, and state connection (See in Table 4.3).

Table 4.3. Inclusion of Values and Identity in SAVE Farm’s Posts (N=28)

Child Code	Frequency	Percent
Personal Identity	4	14.3%
Numbers/Metrics	2	7.1%
Safety/Security	1	3.6%
State Connection	2	7.1%

Note. Multiple codes could be identified within each post.

Personal Identity emerged the most throughout the captions analyzed for this study. This suggests that SAVE Farm makes an effort to ensure their target audience is aware of what the organization stands for. Several captions emphasize personal identity such as, "Does anyone have any **goals** or **resolutions** for 2024? Share them with us here! We are excited to **continue with improvements** to the Farm in the new year and our classes."

Another caption displays their desire for the audience to understand their values through a donation option to allow improvements to facilities on the farm:

The 12th Annual Grow Green Match Day on Monday, April 22, 2024, is an incredible **opportunity** for SAVE. On that day, The Greater Manhattan Community Foundation will match donations to our organization. SAVE could receive up to a **\$7,500 match**. This year, SAVE is looking to raise funds to complete the **installation of ramps and railing for the differently abled** to our two new classroom buildings on the farm. These ramps will ensure the **safety and security** of our students. SAVE has already **invested** \$10,000 in this project but it will take another \$10,000 to complete it.

RQ2: What strategies and tactics does SAVE Farm use to promote their events on Facebook?

The analysis of promotional efforts of SAVE Farm's events on Facebook identified two primary themes: Event graphics were focused on branding through logos and captions referenced calls to action and collaborations. Of the 28 posts, 67.9% (n=19) were promoting events.

Photo Theme 3: Branding Focused for Event Graphics

Most event graphics are focused on branding, prominently featuring SAVE Farm's logo. Of the content posted by SAVE Farm, 75% were graphics and 35.7% of those included the SAVE Farm logo. This shows a clear intention to reinforce brand recognition through

promotional materials for their program. The use of logos in these graphics allows the audience to immediately associate the content with SAVE Farm without needing to read the caption (See Figure 4.6 and 4.7).

Figure 4.6 Example of a graphic incorporating the SAVE Farm logo to promote a beekeeping event.



Placing the logo at the bottom of the graphic was a strategy for establishing visual hierarchy (See Figure 4.6). This allows the audience to read and obtain the most important information first, while also associating SAVE Farm as the host of the event when they glance at the bottom.

Figure 4.7 Example of a graphic incorporating the SAVE Farm logo and other logos to promote a seminar offered at the farm.

1 Day Drought Resilient Seminar



Don't miss this incredible opportunity to join a one day, Drought Resilient Seminar hosted by SAVE with several workshop sponsors. This Complimentary Drought Resilient Seminar. This event is **OFFERED TO YOU at NO COST and includes lunch.**

One Day Seminar: Saturday – November 2, 2024
The SAVE Farm – 9680 N. 52nd Street, Riley, KS 66531
 Sign-in - 8:30 a.m. Workshop - 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

We are offering this workshop for current producers, beginning farmers and ranchers, veterans, and transitioning service members interested in, or currently engaged in, land management and grazing activities.

This Workshop is part of a multi-year Conservation Coalition Grant from NRCS Kansas-USDA

Join us for this seminar taught by Dale Strickler, Chief Agronomist for Regenerative Wisdom Consulting Firm. Advance registration is appreciated. Please RSVP with name(s), email address and phone number to mary@kglc.org or call Mary at 785-562-8726. For more information please call or text Mary. **Lunch is included.** Please note your type of agricultural operation and level of experience. Everyone is Welcome including educators and agency personnel. This Complimentary Grazing Management Workshop is sponsored by The SAVE Farm and a generous grant from USDA NRCS, KACD and KGLC.



Join us for this Drought Resilient Seminar for Kansas Ranchers and Farmers.

Dale Strickler, chief agronomist for the consulting firm Regenerative Wisdom, author of the book The Drought Resilient Farm and a Kansas rancher, teaches a course on how individuals can make their own agricultural operations much more efficient at capturing, storing and using rainfall, and how many common agricultural practices are making our farms and ranches more susceptible to drought. Dale Strickler is a Kansas Farmer and rancher with a master's degree in agronomy from Kansas State University. He taught college for 15 years and is a professional agronomist, specializing in cover cropping and grazing strategies to build soil health.

Module 1. Make your own agricultural operation more efficient at capturing, storing and using rainfall.
Module 2. Keeping livestock fed and watered during a drought and how to not go broke doing it
Module 3. Creating a more moisture efficient (and more profitable) form of agriculture on the Plains
Module 4. Make it rain! How our current land management reduces rainfall, and how we can reverse the trend and increase regional rainfall

Educational workshop sponsors: Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition, Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD), Kansas NRCS, Kansas Farmers Union, John Deere Foundation, Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops, SAVE Farm, Farmer Veteran Coalition Kansas Chapter.




Kansas | Natural Resources Conservation Service - USDA

This grant is part of a multi-year Conservation Coalition Grant from NRCS Kansas-USDA.







Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops





SAVE Farm incorporated a variety of logos within this graphic to ensure all the sponsors were recognized (See Figure 4.7). However, placing the SAVE Farm logo at the top, separate from the others, was a tactic used to distinguish the organization hosting the seminar from the

event sponsors. Other graphics promoting SAVE Farm’s events on Facebook were similar in style to Figure 4.6 and Figure 4.7.

Caption Theme 3: Calls to Action and Collaborations

SAVE Farm posts focus on increasing engagement by incorporating calls to action and collaborations. The event-promoting child codes present under the parent code of ‘Engagement’ included links, partners/collaborations, tailored audience, and call to action (See Table 4.4).

These child codes fall under the parent code of ‘Engagement’ because they all aim to foster some form of interaction. Calls-to-action are prompts encouraging individuals to take action, while collaborations involve specific brands contributing to events at SAVE Farm.

Table 4.4. Inclusion of Calls to Action and Collaborations in SAVE Farm’s Posts (N=28)

Child Code	Frequency	Percent
Links	3	10.7%
Partners/Collabs	3	10.7%
Tailored Audience	1	3.6%
Call to Action	8	28.6%

Note. Multiple codes could be identified within each post.

Words and statements identified within the parent code of ‘Engagement’ in this study included ‘share them with us here,’ ‘future collaborations,’ ‘John Deere,’ ‘see you there,’ ‘join our program,’ ‘interested in learning about being a part of our state’s beautiful agriculture,’ ‘reach out,’ ‘make a donation,’ ‘register for this one,’ ‘register now,’ and ‘reserve your seat.’ Links were included in two captions to take the audience back to the SAVE Farm website and the other link was included in a post encouraging donations that would take the audience to the Grow Green Manhattan webpage. An example of engagement was the caption, “If you missed our last workshop, here’s your chance to **register for this one**. Great workshop, outstanding experience! Looking forward to **seeing you there**.”

The use of encouraging words such as ‘register for this one’ and ‘looking forward to seeing you there,’ exemplifies a call to action in one sentence.

Another example that includes a solid call-to-action while linking to their website is, “Happy National Kansas Day! Get out there and enjoy our beautiful state. **Interested in learning about being a part of our state’s beautiful agriculture? Reach out** to us! **<https://www.thesavefarm.org>**.”

Social media, specifically Facebook, is an effective social media platform for informing and educating an audience. However, the main objective of social media is to make your audience aware of your service or product and be directed to the website (Mailchimp, 2025). The combination of a call-to-action and linking to the website is a strong strategy for promoting their program by initiating the buyer’s journey. Another caption illustrates an example of collaboration between SAVE Farm and their partner, “Big thanks to the team from **John Deere**. The Precision Agriculture workshop was a great success. We are looking forward to future opportunities like this.”

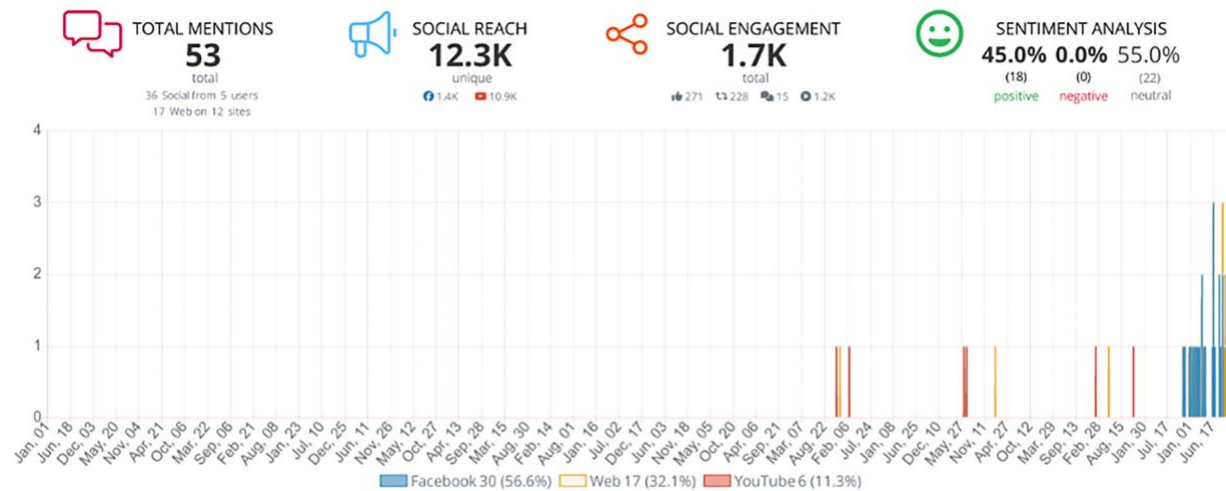
While John Deere’s account was not tagged, they were still mentioned in the post as a way emphasize the collaboration with SAVE Farm.

RQ3: What is the sentiment value of SAVE Farm’s content?

Using Mentionlytics, a sentiment analysis was performed on content related to SAVE Farm from January 01, 2001, to October 30, 2024. A total of 53 mentions emerged according to the Mentionlytics report. Of the 53 total mentions, 23 were from outside sources that used the keyword ‘SAVE Farm,’ and 30 of the mentions were from their own media.

While 36 of the mentions were collected from social media (6 from YouTube and 30 from Facebook) and the other 17 were collected from websites (See Figure 4.8). These mentions included anytime ‘SAVE Farm’ was mentioned.

Figure 4.8 Total Mentions of ‘SAVE Farm’ online.



Of the 53 total mentions, Mentionlytics determined a total of 40 mentions with a sentiment analysis. Not all 53 mentions were analyzed for sentiment because Mentionlytics may not be able to be classified to any of the three categories making sentiment unknown. An example of this would be a post without captions. This sentiment analysis was determined based on methods including dictionaries, taxonomies and scales and through these, grouped mentions based on whether they were negative, positive or neutral. Of the 40 mentions with a sentiment analysis, 18 (45%) were positive, 0 (0%) were negative, and 22 (55%) were neutral (See Figure 4.9).

Content identified as a neutral sentiment revealed to be more focused on educating and informing the audience. An example was, “Learn Sustainable Agriculture at SAVE Farm with Hands on Farming Techniques and Practices.” Another example was a headline from the Kansas Living Magazine that was titled, “Veterans and Farmers Come Together on SAVE Farm.”

Online sources with a positive sentiment were pulled from SAVE Farm’s Facebook posts that contain the positive tones mentioned previously in this findings section. An example is, “We are getting close! This is a great opportunity to enhance your grazing experience and knowledge. Register now if you are a beginning farmer/rancher, experienced farmer/rancher, veteran, or anyone interested.”

Summary

This chapter dove into the emergent themes determined from the codes that emerged when evaluating SAVE Farm’s content on Facebook. Additionally looking at the sentiment value of content posted about SAVE Farm. The photo themes that emerged were as follows: an emphasis on the inclusion of people, particularly men, nature and agricultural scenes/imagery, and branding focused for event graphics. The caption themes that emerged were as follows: SAVE Farm consistently uses a positive tone, SAVE Farm places importance on the values of the organization, and often uses call-to-action and collaborations. These findings are further explored in the conclusions.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions

Overview

The final chapter examines the findings in the context of existing literature, highlights the contributions of the conceptual framework, and offers recommendations for future research. This study evaluated the online presence of SAVE Farm on Facebook. The three questions used to guide this study were:

1. What type of content did SAVE Farm post on their Facebook page in 2024?
2. What strategies and tactics does SAVE Farm use to promote their events on Facebook?
3. What is the sentiment value of SAVE Farm's content?

Discussion

RQ1: What type of content did SAVE Farm post on their Facebook page in 2024?

The SAVE Farm Facebook posts explored in this study indicate people appeared frequently in SAVE Farm Facebook posts. However, looking at the gender representation, men were portrayed more than women or youth, indicating SAVE Farm may be targeting a predominantly male audience. This was expected because according to the United States Census Bureau in 2022 in the most recent survey, of the 16.2 million total military veterans only 1.7 million of those were female (US Census Bureau, 2023). When we look at agricultural roles specifically, we also know it is more likely to be acknowledged as a male in that position as men farmers and ranchers are more visible (Quisumbing & Doss, 2021).

The Framing Theory exemplifies the efforts on Facebook of SAVE Farm to post imagery that primarily includes men to frame and tailor their messaging specifically to their target audience of male veterans interested in agriculture (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Previous studies

also emphasized the predominance of male figures in agricultural-focused veteran programs and activities through both the scope of the study as well as evaluation of their sample demographics (Fetsch & Grenwelge, 2023).

SAVE Farm also notably makes efforts to display their values of the organization and the care they ensure for those on the farm when writing captions for Facebook posts. This emerged through commitments to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for enrolled students and individuals on the farm, as well as emphasizing personal goals and identity to better the program. While the Framing Theory provides an overall framework for answering the first research question of this study, the Uses and Gratifications Theory outlines how SAVE Farm seeks to connect with their identity through their social media efforts. Acknowledging the values and mission of SAVE Farm is integral to an audience investing time into a program. SAVE Farm indicates they are framing certain messages included in Facebook posts to focus solely on the incorporation of these values to encourage the audience if they enroll in the program, they will receive support in a safe learning environment (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

While there is limited research directly aligning value identities on social media, one study supported this finding through framing in communication of marketing messages toward student veterans. While Sullivan et al. (2022) explored higher educational institutions' marketing messages, the study still determined the most prevalent messages to be tailored to the core values and experiences of the student veterans.

RQ2: What strategies and tactics does SAVE Farm use to promote their events on Facebook?

The findings suggest that to promote events through Facebook, SAVE Farm focuses on using calls-to-action in the post captions. The Uses and Gratifications Theory provides a

framework that helps understand the strategies and tactics used to promote events on Facebook. Incorporating a call-to-action is an effective strategy for organizations and businesses to encourage the audience to engage further with a brand by prompting them to take specific actions (Mejtoft et al., 2021). These calls to action encourage engagement by prompting their audience to take the next step through offering opportunities to register for events and view their website for more information. SAVE Farm often uses this approach by inviting the audience to register if they missed the previous event, while also reinforcing them that their presence would be welcomed and appreciated at the next one.

Social media is an effective tool for event promotion due to its ability to expand reach, engage audiences, target specific demographics, and facilitate real-time interaction (Sprinklr, 2025). Strategies include creating unique event hashtags, leveraging Facebook events with clear calls-to-action, producing engaging and original content, utilizing paid social ads when possible, collaborating with others, and maintaining post-event engagement through testimonials and sneak peeks of upcoming events (Sprinklr, 2025).

SAVE Farm also highlights collaborations with partners for workshops, courses and other events which is a great tactic for event promotion (Sprinklr, 2025). Featuring these partnerships strengthens the program's credibility and broadens the reach on Facebook for their target audience. However, while SAVE Farm acknowledges their partners and collaborators in their posts, their partners' social media pages were not tagged.

Consistent with this finding, Harris and Rae (2009) determined that online marketing should focus on building brand relationships. Strategies involving collaboration can attract more attention with well identified and credible brands while driving engagement to go up (Harris & Rae, 2009). This supports SAVE Farm's efforts to include collaborations in their marketing

efforts on Facebook to promote events. However, with their current efforts, SAVE Farm does not include direct links to it is unclear how the audience can sign up for events.

RQ3: What is the sentiment value of SAVE Farm's content?

The findings indicated that the sentiment online surrounding content about and posted by SAVE Farm was positive or neutral. The content posted by outside sources suggests that the external perspective and audience hold the program in high regard. This is evident through reviews of the program, the promotion of events and workshops, and other forms of engagement. The lack of negative sentiment not only reflects the program's reputation but also highlights the impact of SAVE Farm's community engagement and outreach efforts.

Additionally, this sentimental value shows that SAVE Farm potentially fostered these external perceptions through their strategic use of social media and focusing on collaborations and partnerships (Heller & Parasnis, 2011). Sentiment analyses give consumer sentiment in real-time, which can help SAVE Farm identify trends and audience preferences and determine opinions and attitudes their audience has towards their events and programs (Rizki, 2023). In addition, this positive or neutral sentiment can strengthen SAVE Farm's credibility, attract new students to enroll in the program and participate in workshops and events, and improve communication strategies (Rizki, 2023).

Recommendations

While SAVE Farm implemented effective strategies into their Facebook marketing efforts, there remains potential for further improvement. It is recommended that SAVE Farm incorporate the practice of tagging relevant accounts in Facebook posts when they highlight collaborations and partnerships. By tagging others on their posts, they will promote further engagement and attract attention to their brand (Harris & Rae, 2009). Cross-promotion on

Facebook by tagging other accounts works by extending reach to that account's audience, attracting a broader demographic. This can be established during the sponsorship or collaboration setup. SAVE Farm should discuss this with the partners, request their official accounts, and ensure they use the correct accounts. Additionally, it's important to emphasize that sponsors or collaborators tag the official SAVE Farm account and share content related to the specific events.

A deeper exploration of the engagement fostered by SAVE Farm through their Facebook posts suggests that their marketing efforts could be further developed by providing clear and accessible ways for the audience to sign up for workshops and events. To easily execute this, it is recommended that SAVE Farm include a direct link to sign up or provide clearer instructions for how individuals can register rather than just telling the audience to sign up and not providing further information. Offering contact information or indicating they can message for details on the specific social media platform are also ways to execute a great call-to-action. While SAVE Farm does currently incorporate calls-to-action in their posts, a more strategic approach would increase attendance and involvement overall at events (Sprout Social, 2022).

The sentiment analysis conducted from Mentionlytics determined all content associated with SAVE Farm was either neutral or positive. A total of only 53 mentions were recorded between 2001 and 2024. To strengthen their online presence and visibility, it is recommended that SAVE Farm increase mentions and encourage more timely content related to the organization (Kim & Johnson, 2016). While SAVE Farm cannot directly control external content, there are strategies they can use to promote this.

Strategies include encouraging participants or past enrolled students at SAVE Farm programs and events to leave reviews on platforms such as Facebook or Google Reviews.

Individuals coordinating the events at SAVE Farm could verbally ask the participants to leave a review or collecting emails to create an email campaign list would allow SAVE Farm to send out emails following events as a reminder to leave a review (Timofeeva, 2023). SAVE Farm could also offer incentives for sharing photos and experiences while tagging SAVE Farm. An example for an incentive could be complimentary enrollment into a one-day workshop at the farm. Requesting partners and collaborators consistently tag the official SAVE Farm page in relevant posts will also strengthen their visibility. These strategies geared towards SAVE Farm related user-generated content would aid in brand recognition and encourage community engagement (Kim & Johnson, 2016).

An evaluation of SAVE Farm's Facebook page revealed inconsistent posting frequency. During the reviewed period, some months featured three or more posts, while others had only one or none. Consistent posting is crucial for social media algorithms, as it helps increase visibility and reach a larger audience (Adobe Express, 2023). To address this, SAVE Farm could create a posting schedule for Facebook content. While Adobe Express (2023) suggests posting at least once a day, the frequency in this case should align with the available content. A good starting point would be to post two to three times per week. If engagement improves, SAVE Farm can consider increasing the posting frequency.

To help with posting more frequently, it is recommended that the social media manager for SAVE Farm's Facebook page create a content calendar to track important dates, such as holidays, events and other significant activities at the farm that could be shared. This calendar could be organized in a Microsoft Word or Excel document, which can be regularly updated when scheduling posts. For example, national holidays like New Year's, Easter, Christmas, National Agriculture Day, and others related to the values of SAVE Farm should be included.

Additionally, upcoming events should be included to be posted in advance to give the audience enough time to sign up. It's important to maintain a good balance between static images and graphics to keep the content diverse and engaging.

Lastly, it is recommended to effectively engage a broader audience that SAVE Farm should consider not only featuring men in photos but also expand their reach to include other demographics such as women and first-generation farmers who may be interested in their events and program. This could involve including more photos of women in their posts, as well as crafting captions that speak directly to the unique experiences and needs of first-generation farmers. Given that women made up 3.4 million producers in the U.S. as of 2017 (USDA, 2023b), and that first-generation farmers accounted for 908, 274 producers that same year (USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2017), targeting these groups could help expand SAVE Farm's reach.

Implications

The results of this study can be used by SAVE Farm to assess their current marketing strategies and gain a better understanding of how the findings and recommendations can enhance their efforts on Facebook. This includes applying recommendations to their strategy, such as encouraging users to tag accounts when posting about collaborations and partnerships, as well as creating more opportunities for audience engagement through well-executed calls-to-action. Additionally, it involves consistently reviewing external content posted about SAVE Farm. The results also demonstrate the need for SAVE Farm to continue to explore the core values and experiences of veterans to assist in tailoring messages for social media (Sullivan et al., 2022).

Overall, it is important to encourage SAVE Farm to implement these strategies while continuously adapting them based on future feedback and data to ensure ongoing success.

Developing multiple strategies is a necessity for marketing an organization or business on social media (Alves et al., 2016). Properly implementing strategies such as tagging their partners' accounts, including direct links with calls-to-action, encouraging participants to share photos, developing a content calendar, and featuring women more frequently in photos can enhance engagement and ultimately drive greater participation in the courses and other events at the farm.

Agricultural education programs tailored to any audience, not just veterans, utilizing social media to promote their program should consider these findings to adjust and develop their social media efforts. While the research is limited to SAVE Farm, the foundation of the findings still applies. Understanding the crucial role of adapting multiple strategies to reach the target audience (Alves et al., 2016), the practice of tagging accounts and encouraging partners and collaborators to practice the same for cross-promotion, and the need to reflect on efforts to determine if they are working will be helpful to other programs.

Future Research

This study focused solely on SAVE Farm's Facebook presence and the sentiment analysis of their brand. Future research should explore a broader range of factors, including different social media platforms and engagement metrics, as the limited timeframe of this study prevented such exploration.

Future research can also specifically examine SAVE Farm's content and should explore additional social platforms where SAVE Farm is active, such as X (Twitter), Instagram and YouTube, using a qualitative content analysis approach. This will provide a comprehensive understanding of their overall social media efforts. The research should examine why SAVE Farm may not be posting as frequently on these platforms compared to Facebook.

Reviewing SAVE Farm's received engagement on posts would also be beneficial. Looking at the number of likes, shares and comments would help evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts on their social media platforms. Addressing analytics is important with social media efforts to evaluate what is working, areas of opportunity and what needs improvement.

Future research should also be expanded to examine similar programs across the United States that focus on educating veterans about agriculture. This research would provide a deeper understanding of how these programs are engaging this population through social media efforts. Ultimately, such research would allow initiatives like SAVE Farm to learn from each other's social media strategies and tactics, enhancing their ability to effectively promote events to their target audience.

Lastly, while a qualitative content analysis design was used for this study to establish themes and patterns in photos and captions to understand SAVE Farm's Facebook presence and efforts on this platform (Creswell, 2007), a quantitative method might further complement this research. By analyzing the engagement metrics from each post and correlating this data with the themes presented, SAVE Farm can gain valuable insights into how to optimize their social media strategy. This approach will help them better promote events, boost engagement, and improve overall brand sentiment.

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Appendix A - Codebooks

Appendix Figure A.1. Codebook for captions

Posts	Codes										
	Hashtag	Surveillance		Engagement				Values and Identity			Positive Tone
		Workshops	Offerings	Links	Partners/Collabs	Tailored Audience	Call to Action	Personal Identity	Numbers/Metrics	Safety/Security	State Connection
1/1/2024							X	X			
1/15/2024	X										
1/29/2024				X			X				X
2/12/2024											X
2/14/2024				X			X				X
2/26/2024							X				X
3/2/2024											
3/5/2024					X						X
3/6/2024											
3/11/2024											
3/27/2024					X				X		
3/27/2024											
4/12/2024		X			X			X			X
4/21/2024				X			X	X	X	X	X
6/13/2024											
6/20/2024											
6/20/2024											
6/20/2024		X					X				X
6/20/2024						X	X	X			
7/2/2024											
8/2/2024											
8/2/2024											
8/2/2024											
8/12/2024											
8/27/2024			X								
8/27/2024							X				
10/22/2024											
10/22/2024											

Appendix Figure A.2. Codebook for Images.

Posts	Codes																										
	Holiday	Nature						People				Celebration		Kansas	Event				Animals			Equipment		Food		Logos	Sports
	Outdoors	Field	Soil	Plants	Crops	Sun/Sunset	Small Group	Large Group	Men	Women	Youth	Confetti	Fireworks		Beekeeping	Expo	Preservation	Workshop	Goats	Bees	Sheep	Tractor	Honey	Canned Fruit	Honey extractor		
1/1/2024	X											X	X														
1/15/2024	X								X																		
1/29/2024	X				X		X								X												
2/12/2024								X	X	X		X															X
2/14/2024																											
2/26/2024									X	X								X									X
3/2/2024															X					X							X
3/5/2024		X						X	X	X																	
3/6/2024		X																X									X
3/11/2024		X																X									X
3/27/2024								X	X	X	X							X									
3/27/2024								X	X	X	X							X									
4/12/2024		X	X					X	X		X												X				
4/21/2024		X		X	X	x	X																				
6/13/2024		X															X			X		X					
6/20/2024		X			X				X	X							X										
6/20/2024																		X									X
6/20/2024		X			X				X	X							X										
7/2/2024										X	X								X								X
8/2/2024		X			X				X	X							X										
8/2/2024																		X							X		
8/2/2024																									X		
8/12/2024									X									X									X
8/27/2024									X														X		X		
8/27/2024									X									X									X
10/22/2024		X						X		X												X					X
10/22/2024									X									X									X