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Scholarly Output on Media Management in Poland: An Evaluation

ABSTRACT

Media management combines general management theory with the specific features of the industry. It is a complex process that relies on economic, cultural, and social values. Researchers face challenges in understanding the field and in proposing theories useful to practitioners. This article evaluates the Polish scholarly output on media management by mapping topics, research methods, and keywords using secondary data analysis and qualitative content analysis. A total of 186 citable articles from nine scientific journals published between 2018 and 2025 were collected according to the following criteria: language and digital accessibility. These publications constituted 12% of all articles published in these journals during the specified period. Among the most common topics in media management are strategic management, media product management, the media landscape, the media industry, and audience management. The least common topics are media, the labour market, and leadership. The analysis also identified topics that were entirely absent, such as M&A, diversity, inclusivity, gender theories, organisational culture, and international media management. The scholarly output was assessed as diverse and rich, although several important topics for future research were identified. Across all analysed articles, qualitative research dominates, including content analysis, case studies, discourse analysis, and desk research. It was also established that the selection of keywords is somewhat random, too general, too specific, or overly journalistic in character. The authors of this article strongly recommend creating a keyword catalogue.

KEYWORDS: media management, scholarly output, topics, keywords, evaluation

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STRESZCZENIE

Ewaluacja dorobku naukowego w obszarze zarządzania mediami w Polsce

Kluczowym zadaniem zarządzania mediami jest łączenie ogólnej teorii zarządzania ze specyfiką branży medialnej. Zarządzanie nią jest złożonym procesem, gdyż opiera się na wartościach ekonomicznych, kulturowych i społecznych. Oprócz wyzwań praktycznych, zarządzanie mediami stanowi również poważne wyzwanie dla badaczy, którzy próbują zrozumieć tę rzeczywistość i zaproponować teorie przydatne dla praktyków. Proponowany artykuł ocenia polski dorobek naukowy w zakresie zarządzania mediami poprzez mapowanie tematów, metod badawczych i słów kluczowych (przy użyciu następujących metod: analiza danych zastanych i jakościowa analiza treści). W latach 2018–2025 zebrano łącznie 186 cytowanych artykułów naukowych z dziewięciu czasopism naukowych, według kryteriów: językowego i dostępności cyfrowej. Ustalono, że publikacje te stanowiły 12% wszystkich artykułów opublikowanych w badanych czasopismach we wskazanym okresie. Do najczęstszych tematów w ramach zarządzania mediami należą zarządzanie strategiczne i strategia, zarządzanie produktem medialnym, krajo-braz medialny, branża medialna i zarządzanie publicznością. Najmniej popularne tematy to rynek pracy w mediach i przywództwo. Zupełnie nieobecne tematy to: fuze i przejścia, teorie różnorodności, inkluzywności, teorie płci, kultura organizacyjna lub międzynarodowe zarządzanie mediami. Dorobek naukowy oceniono jako różnorodny i bogaty tematycznie, choć wskazano tematy ważne do podjęcia. We wszystkich analizowanych artykułach dominują badania jakościowe, w tym analiza treści, studia przypadków, analiza dyskursu i badania źródłowe. Stwierdzono również, że dobór słów kluczy jest nieco przypadkowy, zbyt ogólny, zbyt szczegółowy lub zbyt publicystyczny. Autorki niniejszego artykułu postulują stworzenie katalogu słów kluczy.

SŁOWA KLUCZE: zarządzanie mediami, dorobek naukowy, tematy, słowa klucze, ewaluacja

Introduction

The media market is distinctive due to the unique characteristics of its products (Picard, 2005; Jupowicz-Ginalska, 2010), audiences (Napoli, 2003; 2011), and distribution mechanisms (Anderson, 2006). Its simultaneous reliance on economic, cultural, and social values makes its management particularly complex. A key task of media management is to combine general management theory with the specific characteristics of the media industry. However, media management as a subdiscipline remains loosely defined and conceptually fragmented. It still lacks an established set of theories or methods and instead draws on media studies, media economics, and communication research, which together help capture the specificity of content, distribution, and consumption (Küng,

2007, p. 25; Rohn & Evans, 2020; Brown, 2016). The ambiguity of media management is evident even in how the industry is defined: in the American tradition, the term “media industry” includes sectors such as video games or theme parks (e.g. Disney World), whereas the European definition is narrower. The scope of the media industry is further complicated by the inclusion of advertising, PR, marketing, and the performing arts (Küng, 2007, pp. 33–34). Similar difficulties arise when defining a media enterprise, which may operate under various ownership models and at different market levels. In addition, “management” itself covers multiple managerial tiers and dimensions of performance (Albarran, 2013; Albarran & Moellinger, 2017). At the same time, the media perform cultural, social, and political functions, thereby broadening the scope and implications of managerial decision-making (Mierzejewska, 2011, pp. 10–11). Media management is distinctive because of several characteristics of the media sector. Media companies rely on intangible assets such as reputation, creativity, and intellectual property rights. Media products combine informational, entertainment, and cultural functions, while audience reactions are highly uncertain (Mierzejewska, 2011). For digital products, near-zero marginal and distribution costs enable rapid scaling, reinforce network effects, and foster the dominance of the largest players. Moreover, the industry operates on a global scale, reaching audiences, advertisers, and content creators across multiple markets, thereby increasing development opportunities and competitive risks (Rohn & Evans, 2020). Media management must address not only economic aspects but also social, cultural, and public-value considerations, which further distinguish the sector from many others (Mierzejewska, 2011). Employment structures are highly diverse, with numerous creative and production roles. This diversity fosters tensions between profitability and content quality and increases the complexity of leadership (Rohn & Evans, 2020).

While media management research has historically drawn on theories and methods borrowed from related disciplines, particularly media studies, this reliance reflects the field’s interdisciplinary origins rather than its current stage of development. Although such a multi-directional approach is valuable in the early phases of a field, the continued absence of a more focused and coherent set of theories and methodological frameworks may limit cumulative knowledge building. Given the maturity of media management as a field of study, there is a growing need to consolidate its theoretical and methodological foundations to ensure greater consistency across studies and strengthen its analytical and practical relevance.

Media management differs from media economics in its scope of interest: the former focuses on internal processes and firm-level decisions, while the latter analyses market and industry structures. However, the two fields are closely interconnected, and their interdependence supports the development of both (Rohn & Evans, 2020). Today, the media sector faces pressure from rapid technological progress and competition from GAFAM giants (Google/

Alphabet, Amazon, Facebook/Meta, Apple, Microsoft), which capture audience attention and redefine distribution channels. Legacy media must adapt to technological convergence and hypercompetition, while researchers search for new paradigms for strategy analysis (Murschetz et al., 2020). With the emergence of new product categories and rising competition for audience attention, research on business models, innovation, and organisational adaptation is gaining importance (Küng, 2007). In the future, media management will need to provide knowledge that supports sectoral transformation and develop tools that integrate management theory with communication studies to create new interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives (Rohn & Evans, 2020; Brown, 2016).

Beyond its practical complexities, media management is a unique, diverse, and inherently complex field that poses significant analytical challenges for researchers, making it difficult to formulate a clear, concise definition and requiring the development of theoretical frameworks that meaningfully reflect this complexity and remain useful to practitioners.

A Scoping Literature Review of Scientific Output in Media Management and Media Economics

A scoping literature review makes it possible to “map a body of literature with relevance to time, location (e.g. country or context), source (e.g. peer-reviewed or grey literature), and origin (e.g. healthcare discipline or academic field)” (Peters et al., 2015, p. 142). This type of review is particularly useful for demonstrating an existing research tradition. The review for this article was conducted in scientific databases with the support of Elicit. Abstracts were collected to map previous work on scientific output. The most common methods were identified, but individual studies were not assessed. Data were collected digitally, in accordance with established accessibility criteria.

One of the first comprehensive syntheses of media management research was conducted by Bożena Mierzejewska and Ann C. Hollifield (2006). They examined more than ten years of selected academic publications and identified six core theoretical approaches: strategic management, structural theories, transnational media management, organisational culture theories, technology/innovation/creativity, and leadership research. The development of transnational media management research from 1974 to 2009 was examined by Mania Strube (2010), who analysed 62 publications using a propositional inventory. The study identified seven core topics: firm-level management, market entry strategies, corporate strategies, internationalisation processes, leadership/organisation, functional management, and cross-border cooperation. This longitudinal analysis documented a shift from operational to strategic and cultural considerations. A meta-analytic approach was pioneered by George Sylvie and Amy Schmitz Weiss

(2012), who systematically reviewed innovations in media management studies (1983–2008). They examined the use of sociotechnical systems theory in newsroom research and found that it was referenced only indirectly, suggesting limited integration into media management scholarship. In 2013, expert interviews with 50 researchers were conducted to evaluate publications, identify research gaps, and reveal fragmented research, and call for greater integration (Wirtz et al., 2013). Major changes in media management research were analysed by Bożena Mierzejewska and Dan Shaver (2014), who emphasised how technology and changing consumer habits have affected traditional research methods and documented an evolution from economic descriptions to complex digital frameworks. A comprehensive evaluation of media management and economics research was carried out by Alan B. Albarran (2014), who examined its historical development and future directions. This analysis showed an evolution from basic economic analysis to more sophisticated management frameworks addressing digital transformation. The methodological characteristics of media management and economics articles published in leading journals from 2004 to 2016 were analysed by Michel Dupagne (2018). His study showed that most research in this field is quantitative, relies on secondary data, uses non-probabilistic sampling, and employs regression models. The analysis also revealed temporal shifts from survey-based research (2010–2015) to secondary data analysis (2014–2019), indicating increasing methodological sophistication. This assessment was updated by Mierzejewska (2018), who identified major advances since 2006 and established research priorities that emphasise digital transformation and stakeholder-oriented approaches. Open innovation in media research was systematically reviewed by Nina Klač (2020), who analysed 54 relevant articles and identified six key practices: cooperation, mergers and acquisitions, crowdsourcing, co-creation, collaboration, and spin-outs. The most salient media-specific condition was cultural uniqueness. Innovation in journalism research was systematically reviewed by José-Alberto García-Avilés (2021), whose study covered 302 peer-reviewed publications from 2000 to 2020. The review found a predominant focus on diffusion theory, management, organisational culture, professional profiles, and business models and showed exponential growth in innovation-related publications after 2010, accompanied by increasing methodological diversity.

The review presented here is not exhaustive; however, it provides a foundation for further analyses of scholarly output on media management in Poland and highlights a long-standing research tradition in this area. The body of literature examined not only reflects developments and trends within the media industry but also offers insights into the evolving research interests and priorities of scholars in this field. At the same time, the review demonstrates that questions about the definition of media management remain part of an ongoing international scholarly debate. By situating Polish research within this broader context, the study contributes to the continuing effort to conceptualise

media management and to identify the specific role and contribution of Polish scholarship within this global discussion.

Research Design and Research Process

Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of this article is twofold: (1) to contribute to the ongoing discussion about the potential and necessity of establishing media management as a distinct subdiscipline within the broader discipline of social communication and media studies in Poland, and (2) to assess the current state of scholarly output on media management in Poland.

The objective of the study is to identify the most common topics (thematic mapping), determine the most frequently used research methods, and examine the keywords employed in selected scientific journals in Poland within the study period.

Accordingly, the research question is: What are the topics, methods, and keywords in the Polish scholarly output on media management?

Methods

To achieve the research objective, two methods were selected: secondary data analysis and qualitative content (text) analysis with an open coding frame, focused on thematic syntheses and keyword assessment.

Secondary data analysis is a research approach that can be used across different fields. It uses existing data and various methods to answer new research questions (Polit & Beck, 2021). Barney G. Glaser (1963) was among the first to highlight the benefits of reanalysing data. As Kelly et al. emphasize, “Secondary data analysis is an accessible, feasible, and cost-effective means of conducting high-level research that is accessible to experienced and novice researchers” (2024).

The application of content analysis as a quantitative tool depends on the importance of frequency or the statistical nature of the research question. Conversely, qualitative content analysis is also relevant, as Margrit Schreier notes, when one “systematically describes the meaning of qualitative material (...) by assigning successive parts of the material to the categories of a coding frame” (2012, p. 1). Qualitative analysis focuses on meaning and context. It explores themes, patterns, and categories in the material, rather than statistical frequency (Schreier, 2012, pp. 7–8). Eventually, in accordance with the principles of grounded theory, the collection of research material has the potential to contribute to the formulation of hypotheses (Charmaz, 2006).

Research Material

A review of nine scholarly journals specializing in social communication and media studies was conducted. These journals are included on the Polish Ministerial List of Ranked Journals¹ and have been published since at least 2018.² Among the nine journals selected for the collection of research material (see Table 1), none has a higher point value than the others on the Polish Ministerial List of Ranked Journals. Table 1 presents detailed information about the selected journals.

Table 1. List of journals included in the research with specifications

Title of Journal (Full and Shortened)	Year of Establishment	Publication Frequency	(e-)ISSN
<i>Zeszyty Prasoznawcze</i> // Media Research Issues	1960	Quarterly	0555-0025
<i>Studia Medioznawcze</i> // Media Studies	2000	Quarterly	1641-0920
<i>Media – Kultura – Komunikowanie Społeczne</i> // Media – Culture – Social Communication	2005	Annual (quarterly since 2021)	1734-3801
<i>Kultura Media Teologia</i> // Culture–Media–Theology	2010	Quarterly	2081-8971
<i>Media i Społeczeństwo. Medioznawstwo – komunikologia – semiologia – socjologia mediów – media a pedagogika [Media i Społeczeństwo]</i> // Media and Society	2011	Semi-annual (annual until 2018)	2083-5701
<i>Oblicza Komunikacji</i> // Faces of Communication	since 2011	Annual	2083-5345
<i>Zarządzanie Mediami</i> // Media Management	2013	Quarterly	2354-0214
<i>Media – Biznes – Kultura. Dziennikarstwo i komunikacja społeczna [Media Biznes Kultura]</i> // Media Business Culture	2016	Semi-annual	2451-1986
<i>Com.press</i>	2018	Semi-annual	2545-2320

Source: Author's own elaboration.³

The journals and published scholarly articles were deliberately selected based on the criterion of linguistic accessibility for Polish readers, researchers, and

1 Selected journals were included on the List of Scored Journals of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MNiSW/MEiN). Beginning in 2019, scholarly journals have been awarded points according to a scale of 20/40/70/100/140/200. The nine selected journals are generally in similar point ranges (20/40), but *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze*, *Kultura Media Teologia*, *Media Biznes Kultura*, and *Media i Społeczeństwo* received 70 points only in 2023.

2 The youngest journal, *Com.press*, meets the accepted criteria and was founded in 2018.

3 Polish-language journal titles have been retained in this article.

media professionals (i.e., publication in Polish). This means that Mediatization Studies (ISSN 2451-1188), Social Communication (ISSN 2450-7563), and the Central European Journal of Communication (ISSN 1899-5101), although well known in the field, were not included in the study.

Research Process

During the research process, a total of 1,531 citable scholarly articles in Polish were collected from nine journals for the study period 2018–2025. Of these, 186 (12%) were articles on media management. The distribution of articles by journal is shown in Table 2.

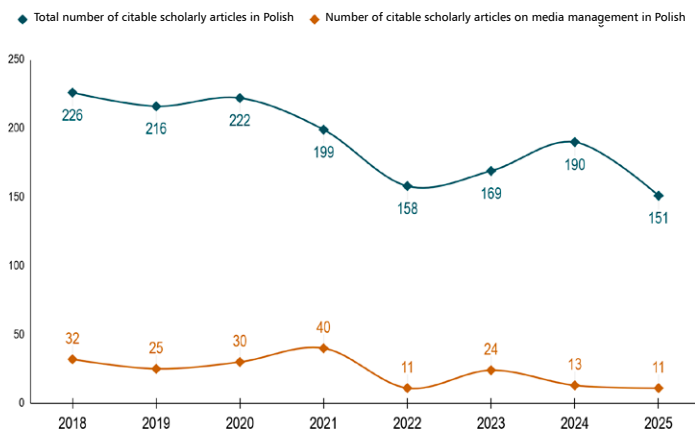
Table 2. Numerical summary of all citable scholarly articles and citable scholarly articles on media management in Polish in the period 2018–2025

Journal	Total number of citable scholarly articles in Polish (2018–2025)	Number of citable scholarly articles on media management in Polish (2018–2025)
<i>Zeszyty Prasoznawcze</i>	198	33
<i>Studia Medioznawcze</i>	174	21
<i>Media Kultura Komunikowanie Społeczne</i>	128	9
<i>Kultura Media Teologia</i>	244	21
<i>Media i Społeczeństwo</i>	314	17
<i>Oblicza Komunikacji</i>	55	0
<i>Zarządzanie Mediami</i>	134	58
<i>Media Biznes Kultura</i>	193	17
<i>Com.press</i>	91	10

Source: Author’s own elaboration.

The distribution of articles by year is shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1. Numerical summary of all citable scholarly articles and citable scholarly articles on media management in Polish in the period 2018–2025



Source: Author's own elaboration.

The research material thus consists of 186 articles. These articles were assigned to one of two categories: soft-related to or hard-related to media management. Articles that explicitly addressed media management were classified as hard-related, for example:

The role of emotions in the management of a media organisation: the example of RMF FM radio (Stach, 2018),

FAST channels as a component of the Polish media market (Nowak, 2025).

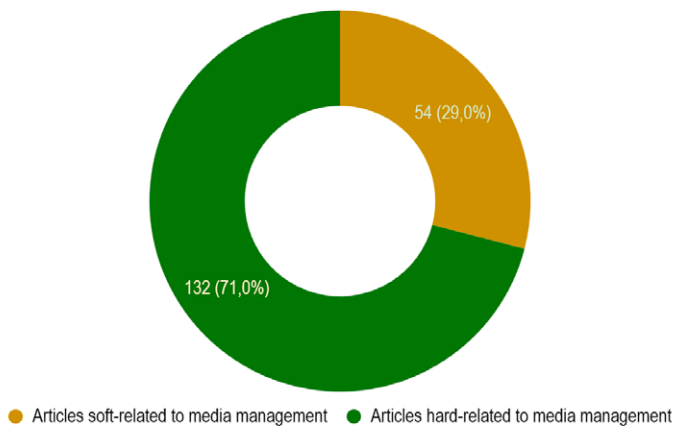
Articles classified as soft-related were those in which another subdiscipline played a parallel or leading role within the same article, for example:

The Podcast, i.e., from the Audial Transmission towards its Audiovisual Renditions. A Media Linguistic Perspective (Kalisz, 2024),

Personalisation of Religious Messaging and User Profiling in the Digital World. A Perspective of Applied Theology (Siepert, 2025).

The percentages of soft- and hard-related articles in the research material are illustrated in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1. Percentage and numerical distribution of soft-related and hard-related articles in the research material



Source: Author’s own elaboration.

However, this classification did not affect the subsequent research process. As part of the qualitative content analysis, publications were coded according to previously adopted codes based on the title, abstract, and keywords; in ambiguous cases, the full text of the publication was consulted. Concurrently, new codes were created based on data that did not fit into the pre-existing codes. The catalogue of codes and subcodes is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Catalogue of codes with subcodes within the research material

Predefined codes (<i>a priori</i>)	Emergent codes (<i>a posteriori</i>)	Example subcodes (<i>a posteriori</i>)
audience management		viewership; consumption patterns; user profiling
economic aspects in media management		business models; ad revenue; paid content
labour market and employment in the media		media volunteering
leadership and work organisation		
media ethics		corporate responsibility; ethical standards; media management axiology
media marketing		content promotion; media performance

media organisation management		digital media organisation; media organisation identity; organisational decentralisation
media personnel, human resources management		job specifics, well-being, quality of work in the media
media product/good management		
media strategy or strategic management		competitive advantage
management of international/global media organisations		
mergers and acquisitions		
new technologies, innovation, creativity		innovation; digital transformation; technological convergence
organisational culture		
structural approach (ownership structure and the structure of the organisation itself)		newsroom management; editorial policy; media conglomerate owners
	crisis management	crisis communication
	history of media management	history of press management; history of weekly newspaper management; history of management in the press
	media content and programming management	radio programme management; thematic channels; content management
	media distribution management	streaming platforms; modes of television broadcasting; modes of distribution; distribution
	media industry	games market; creative industry; broadcasting industry
	media landscape	public media; commercial media; regulators
	media law	audiovisual media services; press law
	media management	electronic media management; social media management; radio management
	media production management	media format; media production; film production
	media regulation	self-regulation of the information market, Adam Smith's invisible hand

	self-management (e.g. specific areas)	relationship management; risk management; information management
	quality management	quality; quality audit

Source: Author’s own elaboration.

Discussion and Recommendation

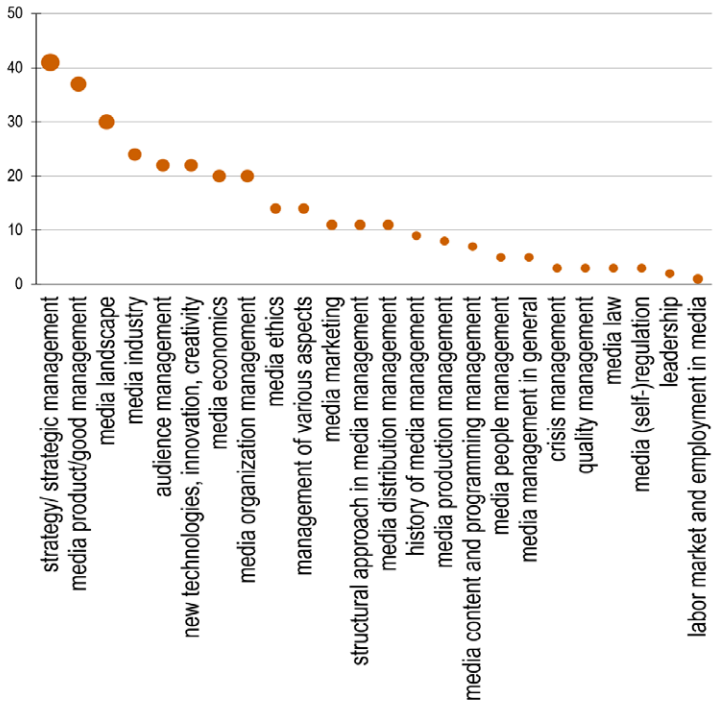
An analysis of Polish articles published between 2018 and 2025 in nine selected journals shows that media management issues are addressed in a multidimensional way, although they rarely refer directly to classical categories of management science. Instead, the studies are situated at the intersection of media studies, communication studies, political science, and cultural studies, which shapes both the scope of the problems analysed and the dominant research strategies. This is understandable, given that the specificity of media management is largely determined by the uniqueness of the media industry (Lavine & Wackman, 1988; Ferguson, 1997, 2005; Faustino, 2015).

Polish scholarly output on media management exhibits thematic diversity and multiple topics within a single publication; only occasionally is an article devoted to a single topic. Chart 2 shows the thematic distribution, highlighting the most and least frequently addressed topics.

A key topic is media strategy, understood primarily as narrative, communication, and programming strategy. Authors focus on how messages are constructed, topics selected, events framed, storytelling employed, and issues made visible in the public sphere (Kułaga, 2021). Strategy is often shaped by political, market, or crisis-related pressures, which is particularly evident in the case of public media (Woźniak, 2020; Zaborowska, 2024) and opinion-forming news programs (Wełna & Woźniak, 2021). Another frequently recurring topic is the media product, present in many texts in *Media i Społeczeństwo* (Dziukiewicz, 2018; Bałdys & Piątek, 2019; Woźniak, 2020), *Com.press* (Kantorski, 2018; Dopierała & Ossowski, 2018; Wigienka, 2021; Trojanowska, 2023), and *Media Biznes Kultura* (Kępa-Mętrak, 2021; Durmaj, 2022). Media products are not treated solely as the result of editorial work, but as instruments for implementing organisational, market, or political strategies, carriers of ideology, and tools for building relationships with audiences. Analyses in this area often address visual and narrative aspects, audience segmentation, and content multiplatforming (Jupowicz-Ginalska, 2018; Dąbrowska-Cendrowska, 2019; 2020; Kowalik, 2024). The media landscape is another frequent topic. It is examined in relation to public media (Jędrzejewski, 2019; Szot, 2022; Nierenberg & Bujak, 2025), commercial and community media (Klimkiewicz & Wilk, 2018), broadcasters, the third sector, regulators, advertisers, and

agencies such as press and news agencies (Piasecka-Strzelec, 2020), as well as legacy media (Goban-Klas, 2025), digital and online media, and broader notions such as the media system (Głuszek-Szafraniec, 2019; Durmaj, 2022; Sajna-Kunowsky, 2022) and media ecosystem (Wolska-Zogata, 2018). The media industry appears as another important area, discussed in relation to the sector as a whole (Nowak, 2025), the press market (Mikosz, 2018; Nowosad et al., 2020), the television market (Szostak, 2021; Kuchta & Mętel, 2023), the games market (Bajew, 2023), the film and audiovisual industries (Błaszczok, 2024), and the broadcasting, publishing, and printing sectors (Cetera, 2021). Audience management is also a recurring topic, usually linked to strategy and the media product. Audiences are primarily treated as objects of educational, persuasive, or manipulative influence rather than as partners in a market relationship. Examples can be found in analyses of educational and social media (Dziukiewicz, 2018) and in studies on the reinforcement of stereotypes in entertainment television (Kułaga, 2021). Economic issues feature prominently and include financial questions and business models (e.g., subscription, advertising revenue) (Dzierżyńska-Mielczarek, 2020), paywalls and paid content (Szynol, 2019; Walkowiak, 2019; Leśniczak, 2025), as well as the stock market (Bąk, 2021), media economisation (Chyliński, 2020), and press financing (Dzierżyńska-Mielczarek, 2023). New technologies, innovation, and creativity, including the use of artificial intelligence, form a distinct and growing research strand (Kowalik, 2024; Chlebowski, 2024). These studies show that technology influences not only media content but also decision-making structures and newsroom work models. Innovations are linked with strategy, media products, work organisation, and established theories (Teler, 2021), although normative and ethical perspectives tend to dominate over economic and managerial ones. Creativity is examined in the context of myths (Golonka, 2019) or as a key component of the (over)production of talent in media formats such as talent shows (Kasprowski, 2020). Media organisations and their management have been examined in studies of digital media organisations (Cyrek, 2020; Maguś, 2021), media organisation identity (Milczarczyk, 2019), and organisational decentralisation (Hendzel, 2018). Ethics is another frequently discussed topic, especially in relation to public media, the pandemic, armed conflicts, and digital technologies (Maliszewski, 2019; Woźniak, 2020; Barańska & Szot, 2021; Soczyński, 2021; Miller, 2022; Chlebowski, 2022; Teler, 2023; Chomik, 2025). In these publications, ethics serves as an interpretative framework for assessing editorial decisions and communication strategies, often constraining the influence of market and political pressures. Historical perspectives and analyses of the evolution of the press and media (Jabłonowski, 2018; Gałęzowski, 2018; Czopek, 2019; Plášková, 2020; Walkowiak, 2019) show that media have long operated under political, economic, and ideological pressures. This approach highlights continuity in problems related to media autonomy, ownership structures, and relations with the environment.

Chart 2. Numerical representation of topics present in the research material



Source: Author's own elaboration.

Despite the breadth of analyses, issues related to work organisation, leadership, and human resource management are rarely addressed and appear only in fragmentary form (Kononiuk, 2023; Koźdoń-Dębecka, 2025; Nierenberg & Bogdanov, 2023). Quantitative methods and market data analyses are used only sporadically, limiting the potential for developing generalizable managerial conclusions.

The research material also contains contextual elements that are difficult to classify as independent themes, as they primarily form the background to the issues discussed. Political conditions in different countries shape media systems and, for example, the functioning of public media. A significant portion of the articles reflects on the impact of the political context on media management (Zaborowska, 2024; Wełna & Woźniak, 2021; Durmaj, 2022). Media are portrayed as actors in political disputes, controlling information flows and shaping narratives and public opinion. Editorial strategies, topic selection, and the presentation of political actors often have a normative and symbolic rather than a managerial character. Moreover, during the period under study, the world faced the global COVID-19 pandemic, which formed part of

the contextual background for the analyses. The pandemic was an important catalyst for research into media management. Publications from 2020–2022 focus on newsroom reorganisation, adaptation of content and communication processes, and crisis management (Miller, 2022; Wróblewska-Jachna, 2022). Media organisations demonstrated considerable operational flexibility; however, responses were primarily ad hoc, and long-term managerial strategies were rarely developed. The analysis also shows that some subjects are underrepresented or largely absent. These gaps are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Representation of topics in the research material by scale

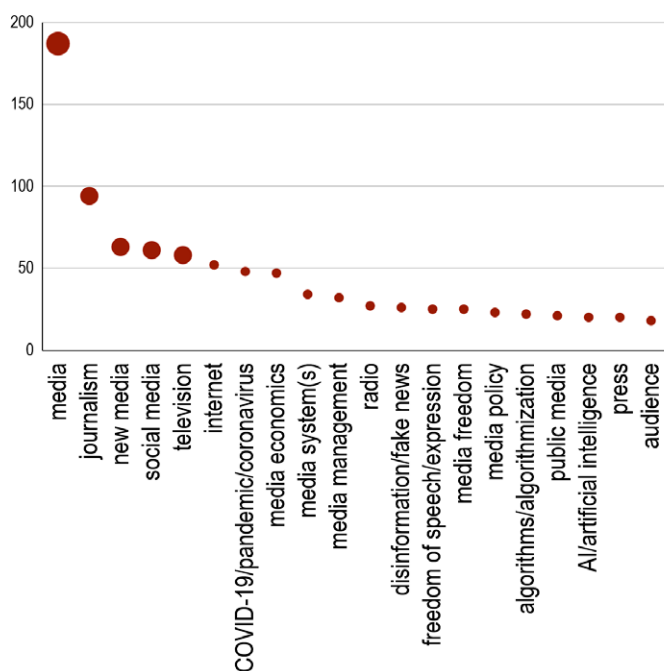
No presence	Minimal presence	Modest presence
Mergers and acquisitions	Employment and media labour force	History of media management
Diversity, inclusivity, and gender theories	Leadership and entrepreneurship theories	Media production management
Organisational culture	Media personnel management	Media content and programming management
Contingency and efficiency theories	Media management in general	
Transnational media management	Crisis management	
Knowledge management and information and decision-making processes	Quality management	
Analysis of the competitive environment	Media law	
Value chain management	Media (self-)regulation	
Talent management		
Analysis of the effectiveness of specific solutions		
Controlling		
Analysis of managerial competence (no research on managers) and employee competence		
Assessment of the actual state of management in a given organisation/sector		
Stakeholder analysis		

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Across all analysed journals, qualitative research dominates, including content analysis, case studies, discourse analysis, and desk research. Systemic comparisons and empirical studies conducted under crisis conditions (the pandemic) are also employed, although interpretative approaches still prevail. Quantitative methods, big data analyses, and financial research occur only marginally, reinforcing the cultural and interpretative character of reflections on media management.

The vast majority of scholarly articles include keywords (often in both Polish and English). Chart 3 shows the most common ones.

Chart 3. Numerical representation of the top 20 keywords in the research material



Source: Author's own elaboration.

Constructing a set of keywords is not necessarily easy. The goal of preparing keywords is to improve searchability in databases: the better the keywords, the easier it is to find the article. Authors of scholarly articles do not always indicate precisely what an article is about. Sometimes, the keywords are too general (e.g., “media”) or too specific. Most often, there is no indication in the keywords that the article concerns media management. Keywords are sometimes

overly journalistic and thus lose their usefulness. At this point, the authors of this article propose creating a catalogue of keywords aligned with the codes and subcodes developed in the research process. The development of such a catalogue would necessitate a gradual process, followed by its dissemination for widespread use. This need is substantiated by the research undertaken and is further supported by a comparable catalogue, namely the JEL Classification Codes (by the Journal of Economic Literature).⁴ The code classification was first published in 1963 (with subsequent updates) and has since become well known among economists.

Research Limitations

The research material was collected over a limited period of time. The selection of journals was purposive, related to the discipline of social communication sciences and media, and focused on publications in the Polish language. The digital accessibility criterion was applied, but publication gaps were found in *Oblicza Komunikacji*, *Com.press*, and *Kultura Media Teologia*. Polish researchers are keen to publish in English and actively seek high-scoring journals, although these are not always closely related to media studies—for example, journals such as *Prace Językoznawcze*, *Perspektywy Kultury*, *Przegląd Wschodniocuropejski*, and *Res Rhetorica*, which were not included in this study. Moreover, monographs and doctoral or master's theses were not included in the research.

The study relied on numerical measurements and the formulation of qualitative conclusions to assess the scale and specificity of publication activity and to observe thematic evolution. Applying this method for analysing articles published in other languages would be advantageous in two respects. First, it would facilitate a comparative analysis of linguistic influences. Second, it would make it easier to recognise transnational differences. It is hoped that this research will be further developed in the future, with its use expanded to include more detailed contextual analyses.

Main Findings

A thorough evaluation of the scholarly output published in Polish journals in social communication and media studies, according to the adopted criteria, indicates that:

⁴ See also, JEL Classification System / EconLit Subject Descriptors, at <https://www.aeaweb.org/econlit/jelCodes.php>.

1. It is evident that the scholarly output under discussion is both substantial and diverse.
2. The authors apply a media management framework while simultaneously drawing on other areas of research or alternative theoretical frameworks for media management research.
3. In addition to preferred topics, some areas remain underrepresented (at this stage, it is impossible to determine the reasons for this phenomenon).
4. The scholarly output on media management can be divided into two categories—soft-related and hard-related to (according to the previously accepted distinction)—which may indicate the semi-universal character of media management.
5. Several common research methods are used. The analysis also shows a lack of field research and studies based on large datasets, while qualitative methods are used extensively.
6. It is evident that the process of creating keyword sets is not yet fully structured, highlighting the necessity for a relevant catalogue.

The recommendations formulated in this study have broad applicability. At the individual level, these principles can be applied to the author's decision-making process. For example, they can be used to address identified research gaps, apply underused research methodologies, or employ suitable keywords. At the editorial level, these recommendations can help editors organise issues into thematic sections. For journals focused on media management, media economics, or the media business (such as *Zarządzanie Mediami* or *Media Biznes Kultura*), separate sections for hard-related and soft-related articles (e.g., *varia*) could be introduced. For journals with a broader thematic scope, it is possible to propose introducing a section devoted strictly to media management (hard-related articles).

Consequently, the adopted research objective has been fulfilled. It is hoped that the research, conclusions, and postulates presented in this article will contribute to the ongoing scientific discussion and stimulate further consideration of the potential and necessity of establishing media management as a distinct subdiscipline within the broader domain of social communication and media studies.

Summary

The analyses reveal a coherent picture of media management in Polish scholarly output from 2018 to 2025. Media management is treated primarily as strategic management, audience management, management of media products and content, and ethics, rather than as a classical organisational and managerial process. The main areas of reflection are the media product and strategy, often

considered within political, social, or crisis-related contexts. Political, crisis, and technological conditions significantly influence editorial decisions and media strategies, underscoring the role of media as actors in ideological disputes and as instruments of narrative control. By contrast, areas such as leadership and work organisation remain under-researched, indicating a substantial gap in the literature. The growing importance of technological innovation, particularly artificial intelligence, also underscores the need for research into the impact of technology on newsroom management and communication models.

Taking into account the diversity of subject areas in social communication and media studies (e.g., political communication, marketing communication, media history, media education), media management, according to the adopted criteria of language and digital accessibility, accounts for 12% of all scholarly articles in the period studied. The varied nature and complexity of media management pose a challenge to defining the field as a distinct subdiscipline within the broader domain of communication and media studies.

In conclusion, Polish scholarly output on media management in 2018–2025 presents media management primarily as a symbolic, social, and normative process, focused on strategy, meanings, audience relations, and responses to political or crisis-related pressure. Overall, the findings indicate a need for stronger integration of media studies with management sciences, including the development of economic and organisational research, in order to better understand the functioning of contemporary media as institutions operating under market and technological conditions. The findings also suggest the need to establish a publicly available classification system (i.e., a catalogue) for media management keywords.

There is a continuing need for research into media management and for the further development and expansion of the topics addressed. The authors hope that this article will contribute to further research in this challenging area.

AI tools and scope of use

Data collection and sorting: Formula Bot, ChatGPT, Gemini

Support in literature review: Elicit

Support in translation: DeepL, ChatGPT, Gemini

Proofreading (with author's final decisions): Formula Bot

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