

Enhancing Organizational Communication in the Service Industry through Digital Technologies: A Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRACT. *In the rapidly evolving digital business environment, organisational communication (OC) plays a central role in the service industry, where customer interactions and information exchange define operational success. Advances in digital technologies—such as cloud collaboration platforms, artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the Internet of Things—have transformed communication processes, offering opportunities for greater efficiency, responsiveness, and adaptability. Despite growing academic interest, research on OC and digital technologies remains fragmented, lacking a comprehensive analytical synthesis. This study addresses this gap through a bibliometric analysis of scholarly publications on OC from 2020 to 2024. Using the Dimensions database, a dataset of 11,260 peer-reviewed journal articles was analysed with CiteSpace and VOSviewer to map intellectual, social, and conceptual structures in the field. The research examined the most cited journals, the most co-cited authors, and the most frequent keywords, applying performance indicators such as h-index, SJR, and quartile rankings. Results reveal a concentrated network of influence dominated by journals such as Sustainability, and leading scholars including Philip M. Podsakoff, Arnold B. Bakker, and Linjuan Rita Men. Thematic clusters highlight enduring topics in organisational behaviour, strategic communication, and management theory, as well as emerging themes such as digital transformation, blockchain integration, and skill development. The prominence of terms like “organisation,” “performance,” and “pandemic” reflects the field’s responsiveness to global crises and technological change. The study contributes to the literature by providing a structured mapping of OC research in the service industry, revealing interdisciplinary linkages and priority areas for future investigation. These findings offer practical insights for academics, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to leverage digital technologies for enhanced communication, innovation, and adaptability in service-sector organisations.*

Keywords: organisational communication, digital technologies, bibliometric analysis, service industry, digital transformation, co-citation network, research trends

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Introduction

In today’s dynamic and increasingly digital business environment, organisational communication (OC) has become a crucial determinant of success. This is particularly true in the service sector, where operational processes rely heavily on human interaction and intangible outputs [1,2]. The emergence of digital technologies has transformed not only the delivery of services but also the internal and external communication practices that underpin organisational effectiveness [3–5].

Digital tools such as cloud-based collaboration platforms, instant messaging applications, customer relationship management systems, and AI-driven chatbots have reshaped the communicative landscape. These tools enhance efficiency, responsiveness, and adaptability, contributing to more agile organisational structures [6–8]. The service industry, with its strong dependence on information exchange and customer relations, is especially well-positioned to benefit from such digital transformation [9,10].

Despite these advances, existing research on digital organisational communication remains fragmented. Numerous studies examine isolated topics, such as technology adoption, communication efficiency, or employee engagement, without providing an integrated analytical perspective [11,12]. This lack of cohesion highlights the need for a comprehensive synthesis of the literature, capable of identifying dominant trends, influential works, and emerging directions in the field [13,14].

Previous studies have tended to focus on the technological implications of communication or on specific managerial contexts. However, few have systematically mapped the intellectual, social, and conceptual structures of organisational communication research. This study addresses this gap through a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of scholarly publications on OC during the period 2020–

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2024. Between 2020 and 2024, the study of organisational communication has received increasing academic attention, stimulated by technological innovation, new workplace configurations, and changing socio-economic contexts. Understanding these developments is essential for scholars and practitioners seeking to improve organisational effectiveness, adaptability, and resilience in a digital era.

The primary aim of this study is to synthesise the scientific literature on organisational communication published between 2020 and 2024 and to evaluate the structure and performance of the field using bibliometric methods.

Literature review

Structuring communication in the digital era

Organizational communication has evolved into a central component of strategic management, particularly within service-based industries. The literature reveals an increasing convergence between classical communication theories and the transformative role of digital technologies in enhancing message transmission, collaboration, and innovation across organizations. Foundational communication models, such as Shannon and Weaver's linear transmission model, provide a theoretical lens for understanding technical efficiency and clarity in message exchange. However, these early frameworks are often critiqued for neglecting the dynamic, bidirectional nature of communication processes within modern organizations.

A substantial body of research emphasizes the structural-functional approach to communication, where effectiveness is linked to clarity, accuracy, and minimal distortion [15]. The integration of engineering principles into communication theory has enabled a better understanding of how advanced systems such as wireless networks and cloud infrastructures support organizational performance [16]. The shift toward digital communication tools has been thoroughly documented, from the advent of email and instant messaging to the widespread adoption of AI chatbots and collaborative platforms [1,18]. These tools facilitate remote work, increase message personalization, and support real-time decision-making. Nevertheless, literature also points to challenges such as digital overload, miscommunication, and data privacy concerns [19]. Emerging themes in the literature also focus on the dual role of digital technologies: while they enhance productivity and sustainability, they introduce ethical, strategic, and operational complexities that organizations must manage. The gap identified lies in the lack of comprehensive bibliometric mappings that synthesize how digital technologies are studied in relation to organizational communication within the service sector. This study addresses this gap by offering a bibliometric analysis to trace research patterns, key contributions, and thematic concentrations, providing a foundation for more integrated and forward-looking communication strategies.

Characteristics and concepts used by service provider organisations

The service industry has become a vital pillar of the global economy, delivering value primarily through experiences and expertise rather than tangible goods. In particular, this industry is characterised by high levels of interaction between providers and clients, where organisational communication plays a key role in ensuring customer satisfaction and loyalty [2,7].

From a definitional perspective, services are understood as economic activities that provide intangible benefits without transferring ownership [19]. Kotler and Armstrong (2022) emphasise that this intangible nature requires effective communication to convey value. Moreover, services are inseparable from consumption, subject to variability, and perishable [3]. Importantly, organisational communication influences both the perceived quality of services and the development of the client-provider relationship. It is essential for building long-term relationships [15]. On an internal level, communication supports collaboration and operational efficiency, while in the digital era it assumes an increasingly strategic role [1]. The service industry can be seen as a complex system grounded in personalised solutions and relationships [7]. In this context, transparent, responsive, and adaptive communication is essential [20], while the integration of digital technologies plays a key role in shaping the customer experience and enhancing organisational performance.

Digital technologies used in organisational communication

Modern organisations in the service industry employ a wide range of digital technologies to optimise communication and internal processes. Among the most significant of these are blockchain, artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), social media networks, and the intranet.

To begin with, blockchain described as a distributed, immutable, and secure database, is applied in financial transactions, smart contracts, and digital identity management [20]. This technology offers notable advantages such as enhanced security, transparency, and efficiency; however, challenges persist regarding scalability and regulatory frameworks. In addition, artificial intelligence, with applications ranging from chatbots to sentiment analysis, plays a crucial role in improving both the efficiency and personalisation of communication. Generative models, such as GPT, further extend these capabilities by supporting content creation and assisting creative processes [13]. Closely related to this is the Internet of Things, which connects smart devices to collect and transmit data, thereby enabling operational optimisation and personalised services [18]. Within industrial contexts, IoT supports real-time monitoring and fosters collaboration across teams. Equally important are social media networks, which remain essential in marketing, public relations, and client engagement. These platforms provide highly effective channels for promotion and rapid feedback exchange. Finally, the intranet serves as a secure and centralised environment for internal communication, document sharing, and employee collaboration, thereby enhancing organisational efficiency and safeguarding sensitive data [11]. In conclusion, the integration of these digital technologies constitutes a central pillar of modern organisational strategies, facilitating effective communication, fostering innovation, and enhancing adaptability in an increasingly competitive environment.

Methodology

To achieve the stated objectives, this study adopts bibliometric analysis, a rigorous methodological framework enabling both a systematic review of the literature and a detailed evaluation of the performance of authors, publications, countries, and institutions. Bibliometric analysis identifies patterns of scientific productivity and impact, quantifying outputs such as publication volume and citations while also assessing qualitative influence. A significant advantage of this approach lies in its reliance on objective bibliometric indicators, which minimise researcher subjectivity when identifying prolific and influential contributors.

The scientific mapping of the organisational communication (OC) domain offers a detailed view of the research structure and dynamics, highlighting key authors, prevailing concepts, and dominant themes that have shaped academic discourse between 2020 and 2024. This mapping elucidates the relationships among research outputs, authors, and core ideas, producing a coherent overview of the field's intellectual and conceptual development. Data collection began with a systematic literature review on the Dimensions platform (<https://app.dimensions.ai/>), selected for its extensive coverage of scholarly articles, patents, grants, and its integration of diverse bibliometric indicators. An initial search for the keyword “organisational communication” retrieved 2,711,483 records. The search was then refined to include the term in the title and abstract, yielding 58,854 records. Restricting the period to 2020–2024 reduced the set to 20,840. Focusing exclusively on peer-reviewed journal articles brought the count to 16,379. Further exclusion of unrelated disciplines resulted in 11,345 articles, and limiting the language to English produced the final dataset of 11,260 items for analysis. The dataset was exported in CSV format and processed using CiteSpace for data decoding and VOSviewer for network visualisation. VOSviewer was selected for its capacity to handle large datasets and generate detailed bibliometric maps based on clustering algorithms that group items, such as co-cited authors or frequently co-occurring keywords according to the strength of their connections. Short distances on the map indicate strong relationships, while longer distances denote weaker links. In addition to bibliometric mapping, descriptive statistics were applied, and performance indicators such as the h-index, SJR 2023, and best quartile rankings were used to assess the relevance and impact of authors and journals.

To ensure methodological robustness, validation checks were conducted by cross-verifying the dataset with Scopus and Web of Science records, reducing potential duplication or bias. Consistency of network clusters was verified through multiple iterations in VOSviewer, ensuring the stability and reliability of the visualised structures.

Results and further discussions

Research question: What are the relationships (networks) among the most cited journals? In order to determine the most cited publications during 2020–2024 in which articles on organisational communication were published, the VOSviewer option analysing the number of citations by source was selected. The analysis focused on sources that had published at least four articles and had a minimum of 40 citations per source.

From the 1,202 sources initially identified using the Dimensions platform, the VOSviewer software was expected to analyse 120 sources; however, it identified 103 items that were not connected to the rest of the network. These were therefore excluded, leaving a network composed of 62 interconnected items. The final output was $n = 62$, 12 clusters, and a total of 275 strong links, as shown in *Figure 1*. Sustainability emerged as the most prominent journal, occupying a central role in the network, with multiple connections to other major journals such as the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health and the International Journal of Business. The map is organised into colour-coded groups, which reflect subfields or clusters of journals frequently cited together. For example, journals such as the Journal of Communication Management, International Journal of Strategic Communication, and PLOS One are well integrated into the network and appear in distinct colour groups, suggesting that the research published in these journals is relevant to multiple domains. Other important journals, such as the Journal of Knowledge Management and the International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, are present but exert a more limited influence, being located at the periphery of the network with fewer direct connections (*Figure 1*).

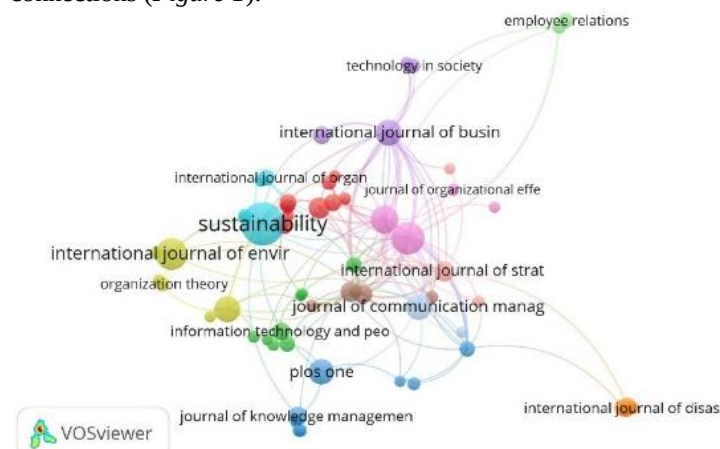


Figure 1: Analysis of the relationships (networks) and densities among the most cited journals

Source: Data processed by the author in VOSviewer.

Legend: Each node represents a journal; node size reflects citation volume, and line thickness indicates co-citation strength. Colours denote thematic clusters: **green** (employee relations and organisational performance), **pink** (management and business communication), **blue** (technology and information systems), **yellow** (organisational theory), and **orange** (crisis communication). *Sustainability* occupies the central position, linking environmental, managerial, and communication research streams.

Compared with previous bibliometric and methodological studies on communication and digitalisation [1,4,9,13], this analysis reveals both continuity and divergence. While prior research often emphasised narrower communication perspectives, the present findings highlight a stronger interdisciplinary integration, where *Sustainability* acts as a hub linking management, digital transformation, and communication research streams. This evolution suggests that organisational communication is increasingly embedded within broader cross-sectoral frameworks that align with sustainability and technological innovation priorities [15,18,19].

The centrality of *Sustainability* can be interpreted through the theoretical lens of digital communication systems [10], reflecting how internal and external communication channels contribute to adaptive organisational learning and transformation. Such a view reinforces the conceptual position of communication as both an operational process and a strategic mechanism supporting sustainable digital development. This theoretical alignment strengthens the explanatory depth of the bibliometric patterns observed, moving beyond descriptive mapping.

From a managerial perspective, the prominence of interdisciplinary journals offers actionable insight. Managers can utilise findings published in these key outlets to inform digital communication strategies that align with both efficiency and sustainability objectives. For example, studies such as Chandrasari et al. (2024) [1] and Gao (2023) [2] provide frameworks for improving communication effectiveness through technology-driven initiatives. Managers can thus apply insights from central journals like *Sustainability* and *Information & Management* to design integrated communication systems that promote transparency, stakeholder engagement, and responsible digitalisation.

Furthermore, qualitative exploration of citation and keyword patterns, similar to the methodological reflections proposed by Gutiérrez-Salcedo et al. (2018) [13], could uncover emerging interdisciplinary bridges between organisational communication, governance, and artificial intelligence research. This deeper interpretative layer would highlight not only where influence is concentrated, but also how conceptual and thematic relationships evolve across disciplines.

As an analytical method for the 62 resulting sources, the VOSviewer option “association strength” was selected between the variables “documents” and “average citations”. This produced an Overlay Visualisation map, which allows the display of layers showing the connections between the 12 clusters, each represented by a distinct colour, as illustrated in *Figure 2*.

Figure 2 shows that *Sustainability* appears as the central node and the most influential journal, being well connected to other major journals such as the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health and the International Journal of Business. The links between these journals suggest frequent co-citation and research collaboration. The Journal of Communication Management, PLOS One, and Information Technology & People are also influential journals, connected to the central network. Other notable journals include the International Journal of Strategic Communication and the Journal of Knowledge Management, which appear in the network but with a more limited influence. Overall, the network highlights the extensive collaborations and broad research impact within these publications.

Compared with similar mapping efforts in recent bibliometric analyses of digital communication [6,10,11,13], this overlay map demonstrates stronger cross-cluster connectivity, indicating a more cohesive and collaborative research structure. The prominence of *Sustainability* as the central node reflects the journal’s ability to bridge research domains that link organisational communication, technological transformation, and sustainability-driven management practices [15]. This pattern suggests that scholarly communication increasingly aligns with the global shift toward digital sustainability and ethical innovation. From a theoretical perspective, the observed network configuration reinforces the systemic view of organisational communication, where digital channels act as socio-technical mediators that integrate organisational learning, employee engagement, and strategic adaptation [4,10,12]. The interconnection between management and technology journals supports the notion that communication functions not merely as an exchange of information but as a driver of organisational resilience and transformation [3,4,5].

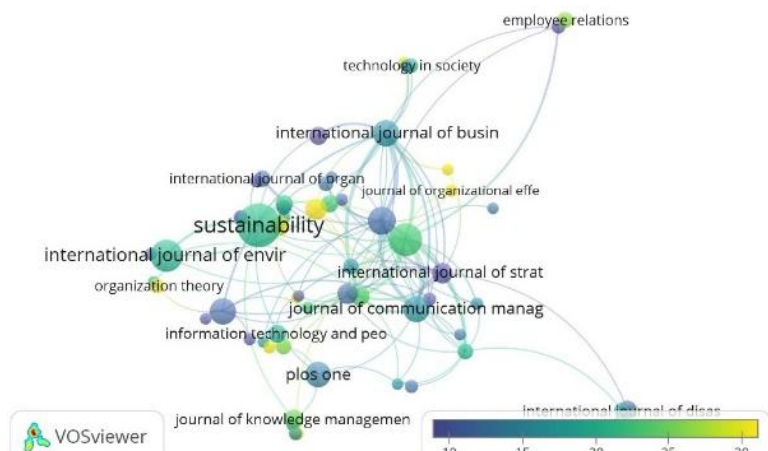


Figure 2: Overlay of cluster layers based on the association between the variables ‘documents’ and ‘average citations of the most cited journals

Source: Data processed by the author in VOSviewer.

Legend: Each circle represents a journal; larger circles show more citations. The colours (blue to yellow) indicate average citation impact, yellow journals have higher influence. Lines illustrate co-citation links; thicker lines mean stronger relationships. *Sustainability* is the central and most connected journal, bridging research in management, communication, and technology.

From a practical standpoint, the findings highlight the key publication outlets where managers and practitioners can access evidence-based guidance on implementing digital communication systems. For instance, research disseminated through *Information & Management* and *Journal of Communication Management* offers empirical frameworks for enhancing digital collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovation within service-oriented sectors [1,7]. Managers aiming to integrate AI-powered communication tools or sustainability reporting systems can thus rely on the interdisciplinary insights clustered within these influential journals.

Finally, further comparative investigation of overlay networks across time, following the methodological procedures suggested by Gutiérrez-Salcedo et al. (2018) [13] could help trace how centrality and influence evolve as organisational communication research continues to expand into AI, sustainability, and digital governance fields [12,19].

In *Figure 3*, the intensity of the items forming the clusters can be observed according to the number of citations received. Sustainability emerges as the most prominent journal, with a high citation density. Other important journals include the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health and the International Journal of Business, both of which have high visibility in *Figure 3*. Journals such as the Journal of Communication Management, PLOS One, and Information Technology & People are also well represented, reflecting their significant research impact. In addition, the presence of journals such as the International Journal of Strategic Communication and the Journal of Knowledge Management can be noted; although less prominent than others, they play an important role in this field.

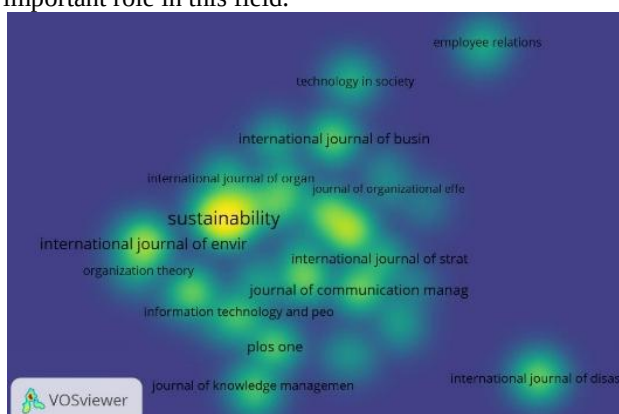


Figure 3: Cluster item density

Source: Data processed by the author in VOSviewer.

Legend: Colour intensity indicates citation density, yellow areas represent journals with the highest citation concentration, while blue areas show lower density. Larger and brighter zones, such as *Sustainability* and the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, mark the most influential sources within the research network.

When compared to earlier bibliometric analyses [1,2,4,13], the current results reveal a more balanced citation distribution, indicating a shift from discipline-specific to integrative research patterns. This diversification reflects a growing engagement with interdisciplinary issues such as digital transformation, sustainability, and organisational adaptability [5,15]. The concentration of

citation density around *Sustainability* illustrates how communication research increasingly incorporates cross-domain perspectives that link managerial decision-making, environmental awareness, and stakeholder communication.

Theoretically, this pattern reinforces the view of organisational communication as a socio-technical ecosystem [10], where digital infrastructures mediate not only the efficiency of information flow but also the creation of organisational knowledge. The overlap between management-oriented and communication-focused journals demonstrates how the field has matured into a knowledge domain integrating behaviour, technology, and strategy, a trend consistent with the systemic communication models revisited by Getchell et al. (2023) [3].

From a practical standpoint, the prominence of interdisciplinary journals suggests that practitioners should consult research published across multiple domains, particularly those combining communication, technology, and sustainability. Managers can utilise insights from *Journal of Knowledge Management* and *Information & Management* to guide digital communication initiatives that enhance transparency, collaboration, and innovation [4,5,7,9]. The high citation density of these sources highlights their influence on applied approaches, from AI-powered communication tools to digital capability development strategies.

Furthermore, analysing citation density trends over time could offer insight into emerging research priorities, such as the integration of blockchain-based communication systems or data-driven knowledge platforms [8,14,19]. This would contribute to identifying evolving scholarly interests and the diffusion of technological themes within the communication and management literature.

Research question: What are the relationships (networks) among the most co-cited authors? in order to identify the networks formed by the most co-cited authors in the field of organisational communication (OC) during 2020–2024, the VOSviewer option analysing the number of cited authors based on co-citations was selected. The analysis focused on authors with a minimum of 40 co-citations.

In *Figure 4*, the map colours vary according to occurrence scores, ranging from 2 to 8. Terms highlighted in yellow-green are the most frequently used, while those in blue-violet have a lower frequency. Organisation is the most prominent term, centrally positioned, with a high number of links and major influence in the network, as indicated by its green colouring. Terms such as service, performance, and data are also highly frequent, indicating key themes in contemporary organisational studies. These are associated with concepts related to digital transformation, organisational performance, and service management.

As a result, from the 168,642 authors initially identified using the Dimensions platform, the VOSviewer software was expected to analyse 333 authors. This yielded $n = 333$, 5 clusters, and a total of 316,583 strong links, as shown in *Figure 4*.

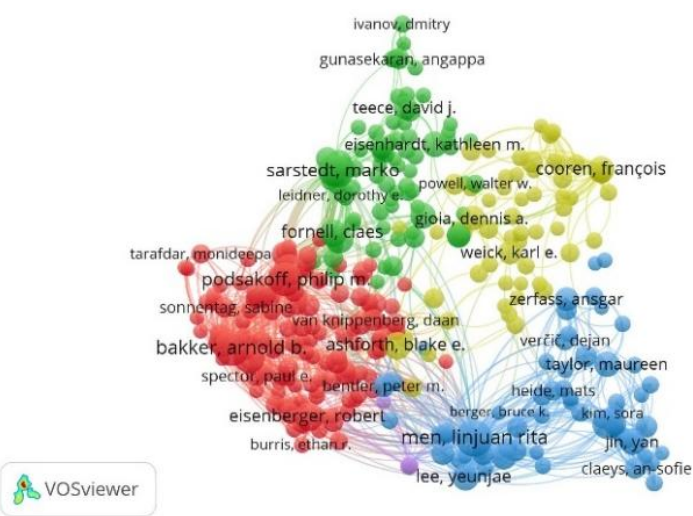


Figure 4: Networks of the most co-cited authors
Source: Data processed by the author in VOSviewer.

Legend: Each node represents an author; larger nodes indicate higher co-citation frequency. Colours show clusters of authors working on related themes. *Red cluster:* organisational behaviour and work psychology (e.g., Podsakoff, Bakker, Ashforth). *Green cluster:* management and research methodology (e.g., Sarstedt, Fornell, Teece, Eisenhardt). *Yellow cluster:* organisational communication and theory (e.g., Cooren, Gioia, Weick). *Blue cluster:* strategic communication and public relations (e.g., Men, Lee, Zerfass, Verčič). Lines represent co-citation links; thicker lines indicate stronger scholarly connections.

In *Figure 4*, Philip M. Podsakoff, Arnold B. Bakker, and Blake E. Ashforth are central nodes in the red cluster, indicating a high number of collaborations and citations in their works. This cluster is closely linked to research in organisational behaviour and work psychology, and also includes authors such as Robert Eisenberger and Sabine Sonnentag. Marko Sarstedt and Claes Fornell dominate the green cluster, suggesting a focus on management and research methodology, with major contributions to the evaluation of research quality and statistical analysis methods. David J. Teece and Kathleen M. Eisenhardt are also present, exerting significant influence in the field of strategic management theory. The yellow cluster, with authors such as François Cooren, Dennis A. Gioia, and Karl E. Weick, points to research oriented towards organisational communication and organisational theory. This cluster often explores organisational dynamics and structures in the context of change and innovation. In the blue cluster, Linjuan Rita Men and Yeunjae Lee are the main authors, focusing on strategic communication and public relations, with notable collaborations with researchers such as Ansgar Zerfass and Dejan Verčič, who contribute to studies on organisational communication. This cluster highlights international collaborations in communication studies. Overall, this visualisation underscores the complex structure of co-authorship networks, identifying centres of influence and interdisciplinary connections among authors from various research domains.

Compared with previous co-citation analyses of communication and management scholarship [2,4,13,16], this structure displays greater cross-disciplinary convergence, where behavioural science, management theory, and communication research intersect more visibly. The co-location of authors such as *Shalihati et al. (2025)* indicates the merging of empirical performance-oriented studies with interpretative perspectives on organisational meaning-making and discourse [20]. This alignment suggests that the field of organisational communication has evolved toward a pluralistic paradigm integrating quantitative rigour with qualitative insight.

From a theoretical standpoint, the configuration supports the systems-communication model advanced by Wuersch et al. (2024) [10], in which digital communication functions as a socio-technical interface linking human behaviour and technological adaptation. The simultaneous presence of strategy scholars such as *Teece* and *Eisenhardt* alongside communication theorists such as *Weick* and *Cooren* reinforces this integrative trend, indicating that modern organisational research increasingly views communication as both an operational and strategic resource [15].

In practical terms, the co-citation clusters reveal which intellectual traditions managers can draw upon when developing digital communication policies. For example, the red cluster highlights psychological approaches relevant to motivation and engagement [11,12], while the blue and yellow clusters emphasise strategic communication and knowledge management perspectives applicable to digital transformation [1,5,6]. These insights can help practitioners identify leading scholars and theoretical frameworks that inform evidence-based organisational communication strategies.

Future analyses could extend these findings by examining qualitative linkages between clusters, such as how emerging technologies [15,19] or AI-mediated collaboration tools [6,7,9] influence co-citation dynamics across disciplines. Such exploration would deepen understanding of how new technological paradigms reshape the intellectual architecture of organisational communication research.

In *Figure 5* the terms *covid* and *pandemic* appear in yellow, signalling a recent and significant research interest in the impact of the pandemic on organisations and the workforce. These are linked to terms such as *team* and *worker*, reflecting concerns related to

team management during global crises. Digital transformation, digitalisation, and digital economy appear frequently, underscoring the emphasis on technological change and the adaptation of organisations to new economic models. On the right-hand side of the map, terms such as *platform*, *blockchain*, and *network* suggest an interest in research on emerging digital technologies and their impact on organisational structure. Terms such as *skill*, *training*, and *support* are located within the blue-green cluster, reflecting research focused on skill development and organisational support for employees.

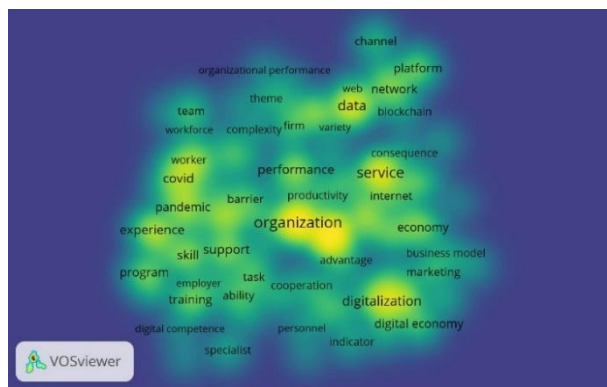


Figure 5: Visualisation of the densities of keyword occurrences within the cluster structure

Source: Data processed by the author in VOSviewer

Legend: Colour intensity indicates keyword frequency, bright yellow areas show the most recurring terms, while green and blue areas indicate lower occurrence. Central terms such as *organization*, *service*, *performance*, and *data* highlight core research themes. Peripheral keywords like *blockchain*, *platform*, and *digital economy* represent emerging topics linked to technological innovation and digital transformation.

These terms highlight the importance of training and competency development in the modern organisational context. This visualisation illustrates how organisational research addresses a broad range of interconnected topics from the pandemic's impact to digital transformation and skills development highlighting current themes and trends in the scholarly literature.

When compared with earlier bibliometric and thematic analyses of communication research [2,3,4,13], this keyword mapping reveals a clear shift toward post-pandemic adaptation and digital resilience. The clustering of *covid*-related terms alongside *digital transformation* and *team* reflects how organisational communication scholarship has expanded to include crisis response, hybrid work, and technology-enabled collaboration [1,2,9,12]. This convergence underscores the growing interdependence between digitalisation and human resource development in sustaining organisational continuity under volatile conditions.

Theoretically, these findings align with the socio-technical communication frameworks proposed by Wuersch et al. (2024) [10] and Capurro et al. (2023) [15], suggesting that digital infrastructures and human capital function as co-evolving subsystems. The

presence of terms such as *training* and *support* indicates that effective organisational communication increasingly relies on continuous learning and employee empowerment, dimensions also emphasised in Alshemmari (2023) [11] and Reddy (2022) [9]. Hence, communication is not only an information channel but a mechanism that fosters adaptability, digital competence, and psychological security in technologically driven workplaces.

From a managerial perspective, the prominence of keywords such as *digital transformation*, *platform*, and *blockchain* offers actionable implications for decision-makers. Managers can draw on studies like Manzoor et al. (2025) [19] and Bi & Lian (2024) [14] to integrate blockchain-based communication platforms or AI-driven decision systems that enhance transparency and collaboration. Likewise, insights from Wang et al. (2025) [5] and Itani et al. (2022) [7] demonstrate how knowledge-sharing and CRM technologies can be leveraged to strengthen internal communication and customer engagement.

Moreover, the emphasis on *skill* and *training* suggests that future organisational communication strategies should prioritise continuous competence development, aligning with the Industry 4.0 capabilities outlined by Reddy (2022) [9] and Subrahmanyam et al. (2024) [18]. Integrating digital literacy and strategic communication training into corporate learning agendas would thus ensure that organisations remain agile amid technological disruption.

The analysis of the bibliometric networks reveals distinct patterns of influence and connectivity among journals, authors and thematic keywords within the organisational communication field. The co-citation structure of journals shows a concentration of intellectual influence in a relatively small number of publication outlets, with Sustainability emerging as a central hub strongly linked to both interdisciplinary and domain-specific sources. This central positioning indicates its pivotal role in bridging environmental, management and communication research streams. Other journals, such as the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health and the International Journal of Business, display strong connections that suggest thematic overlap and frequent co-citation patterns. The overlay visualisation confirms that the most prolific and impactful journals maintain cross-cluster linkages, pointing to a diversified citation base that extends beyond their immediate disciplinary boundaries. These structural connections indicate that research in organisational communication is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing from management, public health, technology and social sciences. Journals positioned at the network periphery, such as the Journal of Knowledge Management and the International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, contribute specialised perspectives, although with fewer reciprocal links, signalling niche but valuable contributions. The density visualisation further emphasises the dominance of a few key journals, where high citation density corresponds with sustained visibility and influence across the analysed period. The patterns suggest that impact is not solely a function of publication volume but also of the breadth and recurrence of citations in diverse scholarly contexts.

The co-citation analysis of authors reveals a similarly centralised network, with prominent figures such as Philip M. Podsakoff, Arnold B. Bakker and Blake E. Ashforth anchoring research in organisational behaviour and work psychology. These authors' positions within the red cluster reflect both thematic alignment and collaborative networks that enhance their visibility. The green cluster, led by Marko Sarstedt and Claes Fornell, underscores the methodological dimension of the field, focusing on research quality assessment and advanced statistical analysis. The presence of David J. Teece and Kathleen M. Eisenhardt further illustrates the integration of strategic management theory into the broader organisational communication discourse. The yellow cluster, including François Cooren, Dennis A. Gioia and Karl E. Weick, reflects the theoretical and qualitative research strand, exploring organisational meaning-making, structure and change. The blue cluster, represented by Linjuan Rita Men and Yeunjae Lee, highlights research in strategic communication and public relations, often linked to influential European scholars such as Ansgar Zerfass and Dejan Verčič, reinforcing the international character of the field. The keyword occurrence and density maps provide thematic insight into the intellectual structure of the field. High-frequency terms such as organisation, service, performance and data underscore the operational and outcome-oriented focus of current research. The prominence of covid and pandemic signals the significant effect of global crises on organisational studies, with linked terms such as team and worker indicating a concern for human factors in crisis contexts. Digital transformation, digitalisation and digital economy occur frequently, highlighting the strong interest in technology-driven change. Peripheral but notable clusters of keywords, including platform, blockchain and network, suggest emerging research on the implications of digital technologies for organisational structures.

Collectively, these patterns indicate that organisational communication research between 2020 and 2024 is characterised by strong core-periphery structures in both journal and author networks, interdisciplinary cross-linkages and a thematic focus shaped by both enduring managerial concerns and emergent global and technological challenges.

Practically, managers can derive several concrete lessons from these findings:

1. Develop integrated communication ecosystems: Organisations should adopt hybrid communication infrastructures that combine internal digital platforms (e.g. CRM, AI chatbots) with collaborative tools supporting transparency and employee engagement [1,7,15].
2. Invest in continuous capability development: As the analysis highlights the prominence of *skill* and *training*, communication departments must work alongside HR and IT to foster digital literacy and strategic communication competence across teams [9,11].
3. Align communication with sustainability and ethics: Journals such as *Sustainability* dominate the network, reflecting the need for ethical and socially responsible communication strategies. Managers should therefore integrate ESG communication principles and transparent stakeholder reporting into their digital frameworks to reinforce trust and corporate reputation [7,11,15].
4. Leverage AI and data analytics for evidence-based decision-making: The emerging prominence of *data*, *platform*, and *blockchain* suggests that communication professionals must embrace data-informed approaches. Predictive analytics, sentiment analysis, and AI-assisted content personalisation can strengthen strategic alignment between communication output and organisational objectives [14,17,19].

Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis of organisational communication research between 2020 and 2024 offers a comprehensive mapping of its intellectual, geographical, and thematic landscape. By examining the most cited journals, the most co-cited authors, and the most frequent keywords, the study reveals a network structure characterised by a small number of highly influential publication outlets, central scholarly figures, and thematic clusters that reflect both established and emerging research priorities.

The findings underscore the interdisciplinary nature of organisational communication, with strong linkages to management, strategic communication, public health, and digital transformation research. The prominence of terms such as *organisation*, *performance*, *digital transformation*, and *pandemic* demonstrates the responsiveness of the field to contemporary organisational challenges, from technological adaptation to crisis management. Despite these contributions, the research has certain limitations. First, the analysis relied exclusively on data from the *Dimensions* database, which may exclude relevant publications indexed elsewhere. Second, the selection thresholds for inclusion (minimum publications and citations) inevitably excluded some potentially significant but less prolific sources. Third, while bibliometric mapping identifies patterns of influence and thematic clustering, it does not capture the qualitative depth or contextual nuances of the underlying studies. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating multiple databases, lowering inclusion thresholds to capture niche contributions, and integrating qualitative content analysis to deepen thematic interpretation. In addition, future studies could benefit from employing mixed-method research designs that combine bibliometric mapping with qualitative inquiry, such as expert interviews or discourse analysis, to uncover the mechanisms driving collaboration and knowledge exchange within the field. This would allow a deeper exploration of how theoretical perspectives and methodological innovations co-evolve in organisational communication scholarship. Longitudinal analyses extending beyond the 2020–2024 timeframe could also help distinguish between short-term research trends, such as those triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, and enduring shifts toward digitalisation and sustainability. By combining quantitative precision with qualitative interpretation, future research can bridge the gap between academic discourse and managerial application, enhancing both the theoretical depth and practical relevance of the field. Overall, this study contributes to a better understanding of the structural and thematic dynamics of organisational communication scholarship in the post-2020 context, highlighting the field's global reach, interdisciplinary integration, and evolving research priorities.

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