

Organizational communication: Analysis of research trends through production indicators in Scopus

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ABSTRACT

Objective. This study investigates institutional communication research, focusing on its representation in the Scopus database. It outlines and analyzes the scientific activities recorded in this database, identifying key trends and patterns that characterize its contribution to the field.

Design/Methodology/Approach. The methodological procedure, grounded in a quantitative approach, entails the retrieval of relevant literature stored in the Scopus database. While a specific time frame is not established, we proceed with the extraction of all scientific information related to the concept of institutional communication. A bibliometric methodology and various techniques are employed for the processing and calculation of indicators that reflect the main characteristics of research in this field.

Results/Discussion. The evolution of scientific production has experienced a notable and progressive increase over time. Despite the contributions of numerous authors, the author with the highest output during the entire period has not exceeded 26 articles. This study addresses organizational communication issues from various perspectives, including the Communicative Constitution of Organizations, Ventriloquism and Distributed Agency, Communication and Power in Organizations, Organizational Culture and Narratives, Technology and Digital Communication, and Communication and Change. It also covers topics such as organizational communication in global and cross-cultural contexts, ethics in organizational communication, communication and emotions in the workplace, communication in specific sectors, and communication and sustainability.

Conclusions. The study in question provides a comprehensive perspective on how organizational communication adapts to technological, social, and economic changes. This adaptation is examined from a bibliometric viewpoint and through a thorough analysis of the literature indexed in Scopus. For example, it is important to note that topics such as cybersecurity, sentiment analysis, teleworking, and the use of social networks are becoming increasingly significant in scientific literature, reflecting the current needs of organizations.

Keywords: organizational communication; bibliometric study; research trends; authorship patterns; thematic analysis.

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1. INTRODUCTION

INSTITUTIONAL communication is a strategic area that manages an organization's image, identity, and relationships with its internal and external audiences. According to Capriotti (2013), institutional communication is defined as the process through which an organization conveys information, ideas, and values to its various audiences, aiming to build, consolidate, or enhance its image and reputation. This type of communication seeks not only to inform but also to foster trust and legitimacy in the eyes of society.

According to Zerfass *et al.* (2020), institutional communication is a holistic process that articulates corporate identity management, strategic communication planning, and the connection with stakeholders, aimed at achieving organizational goals. This approach emphasizes the importance of aligning communication with the organization's values and mission, particularly in a digital and globalized environment. In today's context, where organizations function in highly competitive and media-saturated environments, institutional communication has become an essential tool for strategic management. As noted by Costa (2012), communication has transformed from a secondary aspect into a vital resource that ensures the survival and success of organizations. Therefore, there is an urgent need for institutions to plan and implement communication strategies that not only reinforce their corporate identity but also cultivate positive and constructive relationships with their stakeholders.

In the contemporary context defined by the dominance of the digital era, institutional communication has undergone a remarkable evolution, adapting to the changing dynamics of social interaction. According to Valentini (2021), the proliferation of social networks and digital platforms has significantly transformed how organizations engage with their audiences, establishing new imperatives regarding transparency, speed, and authenticity in communication. Consequently, institutions face an urgent need to adopt multichannel strategies and utilize digital tools to manage their reputation and foster strong relationships with their audiences. One of the fundamental pillars of institutional communication is the development of

a coherent and consistent corporate identity. Van Riel (1995) defines corporate identity as the collection of distinctive features that confer uniqueness to an organization and differentiate it from others. This identity is expressed through various channels, including visual, verbal, and behavioral communication, and must align with the organization's values and mission.

One fundamental aspect of institutional communication is the management of corporate reputation. According to Einwiller *et al.* (2022), reputation is an intangible resource built through the congruence between the messages communicated by an organization and its actions. In this sense, institutional communication is not limited to the transmission of information; it also aims to generate trust and credibility among relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, it underscores the crucial role of institutional communication in crisis management.

Fearn-Banks (2017) states that a crisis is a situation that, if not properly managed, can negatively impact an organization's reputation. In such circumstances, effective and transparent communication becomes an essential component for mitigating adverse effects and restoring public confidence. Conversely, Coombs (2021) argues that, in crisis situations, effective and timely communication is critical to lessening the negative impact on reputation and rebuilding public trust. This necessitates the implementation of well-structured contingency plans and a rapid, transparent response capability.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN CHALLENGING CONTEXTS

In recent years, organizational communication has become particularly relevant in several challenging contexts, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and digital transformation. Likewise, there has been an increased demand for inclusion and diversity in workplace environments. The articles reviewed in this study provide a comprehensive view of how organizations have adapted their communication strategies to meet these challenges, highlighting the importance of transparency, adaptability, and knowledge management.

During the pandemic, Ahillan *et al.* (2023) examined how Covid-19 affected the homeless population, identifying a higher prevalence of the virus within that group and significant hesitancy toward vaccination. This study underscores the need for targeted public policy and communication strategies to address the needs of vulnerable populations. Meanwhile, Battams and Martini (2024) analyzed the impact of Covid-19 on nursing home staff, focusing specifically on workers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The results revealed challenges such as work overload and lack of resources, highlighting the importance of implementing culturally sensitive communication strategies and providing adequate support to these workers.

In the field of organizational communication and technology, Browning *et al.* (2022) developed a grounded theory regarding how organizations adapted their communication and technology strategies during the pandemic. Through ethnographies, the authors discovered that flexibility and innovation in communication were vital for maintaining operational capacity and staff morale. Similarly, Cidade and Oliveira (2024) investigated the relationship between organizational communication and knowledge management, concluding that effective communication enhances the transfer and creation of knowledge, which is crucial for organizational resilience.

In recent scientific literature, organizational culture and work behavior have emerged as fundamental axes of analysis. Several studies, including those by Bujang *et al.* (2024), have determined that factors such as leadership and ethics significantly influence work behavior. Meanwhile, the work of Freedman *et al.* (2024) emphasizes the negative effects of incivility in hospital settings, impacting both safety culture and the quality of patient care. In summary, both studies highlight the importance of fostering positive and communicative work environments.

Concerning inclusion and diversity, Wilhoit Larson *et al.* (2022) developed a proposed research agenda aimed at exploring how organizational communication can promote inclusion. Conversely, Lambertz-Berndt (2024) advocated for a more equitable approach to realistic job forecasts, suggesting that the language used should be inclusive and culturally sensitive.

These works highlight the importance of adapting communicative practices to enhance diversity and equity.

In the field of public health, several authors have explored the importance of communication in integrating health systems and utilizing social networks to enhance service quality (Neill *et al.*, 2023; Walsh *et al.*, 2022). These studies highlight the crucial role of effective communication and the involvement of relevant stakeholders in achieving significant advancements in public health.

In summary, recent literature demonstrates that organizational communication is a crucial foundation for addressing contemporary challenges, including health crises, digital transformation, and inclusion. Organizations that prioritize transparent, inclusive, and adaptive communication are well-positioned to foster resilience and achieve long-term success. Given the importance of effective institutional communication for organizational management, a bibliometric analysis of this topic has been conducted using the Scopus database.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study examines published research on institutional communication in the Scopus database. The relationship between the population and the sample is highlighted, as all documents listed in the database have been collected. Research on organizational communication began in 1966. By 2024, a total of 3,290 papers had been retrieved, spread across 1,466 publications, including journal articles, review articles, book chapters, conference papers, and presentations at events.

When using Scopus as a source of information, the search code tailored to retrieve a subject- specifically, organizational communication- is employed. The records were retrieved using the equation: *TITLE-ABS-KEY ("organizational communication") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("organizational communication") AND PUBYEAR > 1965 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "cp") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ch") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "re") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "cr"))*. CSV and RIS files were obtained to work with open technological tools such as Bibliometrix and Vosviewer.

In the present research, key indicators were examined to characterize the published literature and create map and network representations, which facilitated the assessment of collaboration levels among institutions and countries in the field of organizational communication research and its main thematic trends.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research on organizational communication in Scopus, a well-known indexer of scientific literature, has been tracked since 1966. The overall data of the published literature was gathered through the Bibliometrix tool, which indicates

that the annual growth of scientific production is 8.65%. Furthermore, the average citation rate is notably high, with 20.5 citations per document. Another point of interest for the scientific community is the longevity of the literature, as documents age approximately 13 years after publication. The published results demonstrate a steady increase over the years, signifying the growth of the literature (Figure 1). This phenomenon predominantly occurs from 2004 onwards. It can be asserted that, as a trend, growth on this subject sustained a systematic and gradual increase until the early 2000s, when a more significant expansion began to appear, accompanied by deeper exploration of the subject in the scientific literature.

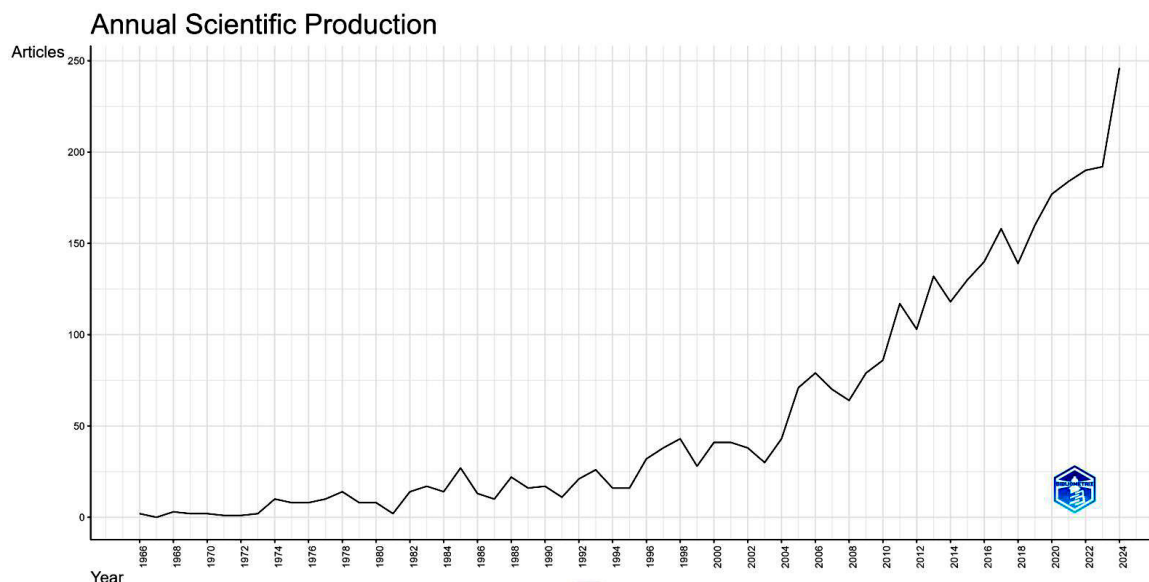


Figure 1. Scientific productivity on organizational communication in Scopus (1996-2024).

Regarding authorship, various characteristics can be observed. Although 6,196 authors were registered throughout the entire period, no major contributors were identified in the field of organizational communication. Instead, authors showing higher productivity published a total of 26 papers (Table 1). While the articles by Buzzanell and his collaborators cover a broad range of topics related to organizational communication, they include gender, meaningful work, and identity in diverse cultural and work contexts. From analyzing meaningful work and vocations among Brazilian employees (Barreto *et al.*, 2023) to examining the stresses and promises of careers (Berkelaar &

Buzzanell, 2015), these studies explore how individuals construct meanings in their jobs and how organizational dynamics influence their identities.

In the field of organizational communication, issues related to gender and feminism have been explored (Buzzanell, 1994, 2021). The intersection of work, family, and parenthood has also been investigated (Duckworth & Buzzanell, 2009). Additionally, the narratives of Chinese children regarding dirty work (Berkelaar *et al.*, 2012) and the experiences of the Post-80s generation of Chinese workers (Long *et al.*, 2016, 2021) are examined. Further research addresses topics such as environmental sustainability

in Brazilian NGOs (Marchiori & Buzzanell, 2017), diversity in educational settings (Martinez *et al.*, 2018), and adaptation to remote work during the pandemic (Vomacka & Buzzanell,

2024). Together, these studies reflect a commitment to social justice, gender equity, and meaning-making in diverse and evolving work and organizational contexts.

Authors	# of documents	% of 3290	Affiliation
BUZZANELL PM	26	0.79	Michigan State University, USA
COOREN F	26	0.79	University of Montreal, Canada
TRACY SJ	17	0.52	Arizona State University, USA
BISEL RS	15	0.46	University of Oklahoma, USA
SCHOENEBOORN D	12	0.36	Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
SCOTT CR	12	0.36	The University of Texas, USA
STEPHENS KK	12	0.36	The University of Texas, USA
STOHL C	12	0.36	University of California, USA
TREEM JW	12	0.36	The University of Texas, USA
BRUMMANS BHJM	11	0.33	University of Montreal, Canada
Total documents	3290	100.00	

François Cooren and his colleagues research organizational communication from a perspective emphasizing the communicative constitution of organizations (CCO). They explore how interactions, discourses, and communicative practices shape and sustain organizations. Their methodology focuses on concepts such as ventriloquism (the way human and non-human actors “speak” through others), materiality (the role of objects and artifacts in communication), and co-productivity (how multiple voices and agents contribute to the creation of meaning). In their research, Cooren and his colleagues examine how organizations are constructed and transformed through communication, analyzing specific cases such as humanitarian groups (Doctors Without Borders), political parties, and organizational strategies. They also investigate issues like organizational culture (understood as a process of communicative cultivation), organizational identification, and the integration of individuals in borderline situations. Their interdisciplinary approach links organizational communication with theories from sociology, philosophy, and media studies, emphasizing the importance of tensions, discourses, and practices in shaping organizational dynamics. In summary, Cooren and his team focus on understanding how communication not only reflects but also constitutes organizations, addressing theoretical and methodological challenges that question traditional views of management and communication.

In the field of organizational communication research at the University of Texas, there is thematic diversity ranging from fundamental theories, such as the Communicative Constitution of Organizations (CCO) and ventriloquism, to practical applications in areas like technology, gender, sustainability, and globalization. This broad array of research interests reflects the richness and impact of contributions to the field. Scholars at the University of Texas investigate various topics within organizational communication, making significant contributions to the Communicative Constitution of Organizations (CCO), which examines how organizations are shaped and transformed through communicative practices. They also explore ventriloquism and distributed agency, analyzing how human and non-human actors (including technologies and documents) influence organizational dynamics. Additionally, they address fundamental issues such as power and resistance in organizations, organizational culture and narratives, the effects of technology and digital communication, and processes of organizational change. Topics like gender, diversity and inclusion, ethics, emotions at work, and communication in global and cross-cultural contexts are also examined. The research focuses on specific sectors such as health, education, and NGOs, alongside sustainability and social responsibility communication. Collectively, these subjects reflect an interdisciplinary

and applied approach that merges theory and practice to understand and enhance communication in organizations.

The present study examines Lotka’s distribution (Table 2) as an analytical approach to illustrate the phenomenon of author productivity. It is observed that low specialization or, conversely, high transience among authors is reflected in the substantial percentage of authors who publish only one paper (5,436), representing 88 %.

In contrast to the previous analysis, the institutions with the highest productivity exhibit a different dynamic (Figure 2). While the universities of California and Arizona occupy the top positions, Purdue University in Indiana, along with other institutions in Finland, the Netherlands, Iran, and Australia, also stands out in the academic arena.

Number of documents	Number of authors
1	5436
2	491
3	126
4	49
5	38
6	21
7	12
8	5
9	2
10	4
11	3
12	5
15	1
17	1
26	2

Table 2. Productivity of authors according to Lotka’s distribution.

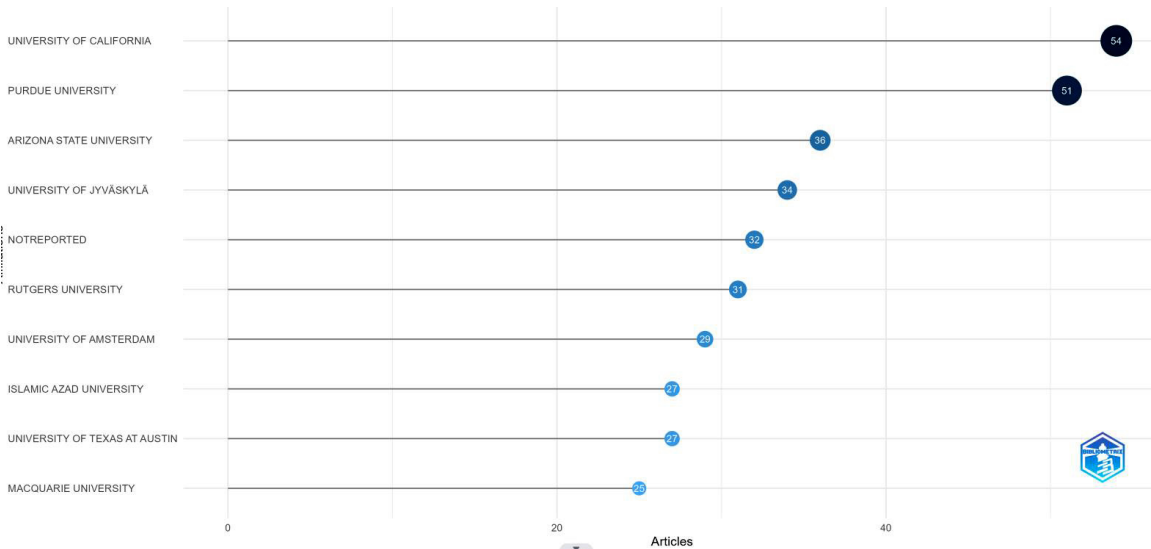


Figure 2. Most representative institutions (1996-2004).

As illustrated in Figure 3, the latest research trends focus on issues related to educational health. Recent articles address essential topics, such as the impact of the pandemic on health and education. In this context, the significance of organizational communication in various health and educational settings is highlighted, demonstrating its effects on labor welfare, quality of care, and efficiency in crisis management.

Recent published work addresses various aspects of organizational communication in health care, highlighting its impact on efficiency, well-being, and the quality of services

(Andargie *et al.*, 2024). Similarly, Andargie *et al.* (2024) explore leadership practices in primary care in Ethiopia, identifying key factors that influence the effective management of health services. Darcho *et al.* (2024) analyze organizational communication skills among health care providers in Ethiopia, emphasizing the importance of clear and effective communication for improving care quality. Furthermore, Fullaondo *et al.* (2024) examine how the Covid-19 pandemic drove transformations in health systems in the Basque Country, stressing the need to adapt communication and organization to

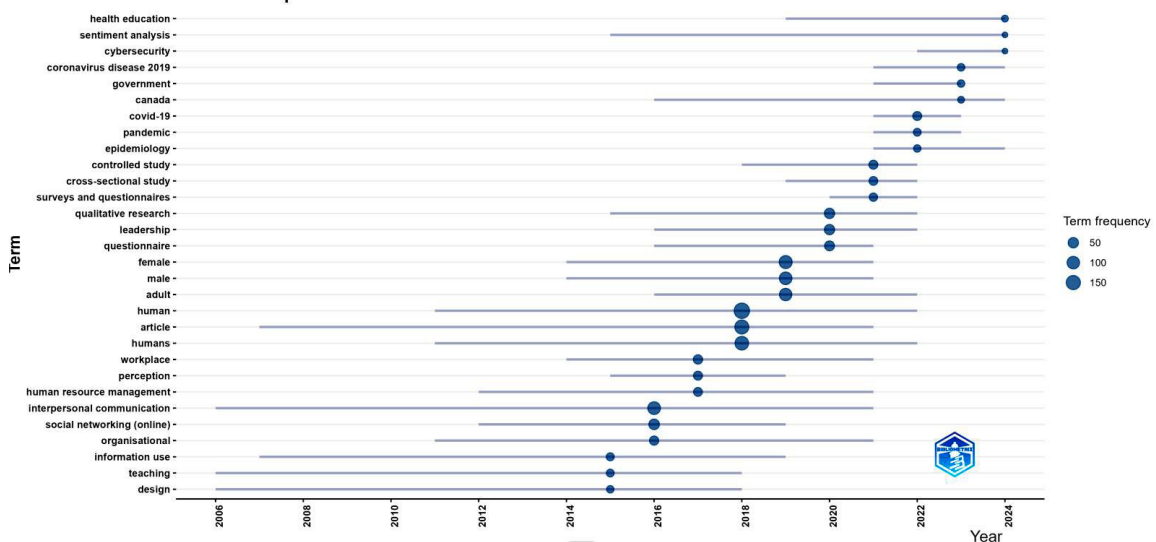


Figure 3. Trending topics in the last 10 years on organizational communication in Scopus.

manage health crises (Fullaondo *et al.*, 2024). These studies underscore the significance of internal and external communication in optimizing health services (Darcho *et al.*, 2024).

In the area of communication and well-being, several articles address specific challenges within this field. Hernandez-Torres *et al.* (2024) investigate the difficulties in communication between faculty and students during medical residencies, while Ihm *et al.* (2024) explore how teleworking affects employee well-being, revealing digital divides that influence job satisfaction. Sokol-Hessner *et al.* (2024) examine the prolonged emotional impact on patients affected by medical errors, relating it to the quality of organizational communication. Finally, studies by Lucas *et al.* (2024) and Ye *et al.* (2024) analyze the use of social networks and integrated health communication, respectively, highlighting their potential to improve access and efficiency in medical care. Taken together, these papers emphasize the urgent need for effective and adaptive communication strategies in the healthcare sector to promote better organizational performance and enhance the well-being of both professionals and patients.

Sentiment analysis is an emerging topic in the field of organizational communication (Figure 3). The collected articles approach this phenomenon from various perspectives, emphasizing its significance for understanding social, cultural, and workplace dynamics. Fantinelli and Sivilli (2015) employ open-source

intelligence methodologies to analyze organizational communication, demonstrating how sentiment analysis can reveal emotional patterns and improve decision-making. Meanwhile, McGuire and Kampf (2015) examine the application of sentiment analysis in social networks as a vital skill for technical communicators, facilitating a deeper understanding of audience perceptions and emotions. Obembe *et al.* (2021) study the impact of social network communication during the Covid-19 pandemic in the tourism sector, illustrating how sentiment analysis can identify emotional trends and inform effective communication strategies. These studies highlight the value of sentiment analysis in enhancing the understanding of interactions and emotions in organizational contexts.

Other research has focused on the theoretical and technical aspects of sentiment analysis, demonstrated in the study by Dinh *et al.* (2022). They propose improvements to structural equilibrium theory for social network analysis, allowing for a more accurate interpretation of emotional dynamics within groups. Conversely, Hofstede (1998) examines how cultural attitudes and values influence organizational communication, providing a framework for understanding emotional differences in multicultural contexts. Similarly, Shukla *et al.* (2024) employ deep learning techniques to analyze and enhance workplace communication, highlighting the potential of artificial intelligence to identify and manage emotions in work environments.

Lastly, Xue *et al.* (2024) present a typology of social network use by nonprofit organizations, emphasizing how sentiment analysis can optimize communication and engagement with audiences. Collectively, these articles illustrate the significance of sentiment analysis as a crucial tool for understanding and improving organizational communication across various contexts.

In the scientific literature on communication, cybersecurity has emerged as a recent topic of interest. This field focuses on the importance of safeguarding information and preserving the trust of stakeholders and beneficiaries, emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies to mitigate cyber risks. In this context, Cram *et al.* (2024) examine corporate communication management in crisis situations, specifically in the case of ransomware attacks, analyzing whether organizations choose to hide or disclose information to stakeholders. This study highlights the tension between transparency and reputation protection during crises. Conversely, Gaidarski and Chehlarova (2024) explore management approaches and application areas of information security within organizations, reinforcing the need for thorough strategies to mitigate cyber risks. Hytönen *et al.* (2022) conduct a systematic literature review on the societal impacts of cybersecurity, emphasizing how cyber challenges affect not only organizations but also society as a whole. These papers underscore the importance of effective communication and proactive strategies to address cyber threats. Collectively, these studies illustrate the necessity of combining technical, communication, and organizational approaches to enhance cybersecurity and protect digital assets in an increasingly interconnected world.

5. CONCLUSIONS

A bibliometric analysis of organizational communication is essential for understanding the evolution, trends, and opportunities in this interdisciplinary field. This analysis enables the identification of the most influential authors, institutions, and publications, as well as the emerging topics that are shaping the future of organizational communication. Additionally, by quantifying and analyzing scientific output, it is possible to detect research gaps and prioritize areas needing more attention, such as

communication in digital environments, crisis management, and the influence of organizational culture on communication effectiveness. In a world where communication is crucial to organizational success, a bibliometric study provides a solid foundation to guide future research and professional practices.

Secondly, this type of study offers a global perspective on how organizational communication adapts to technological, social, and economic changes. For example, topics like cybersecurity, sentiment analysis, teleworking, and social network usage are becoming increasingly relevant in scientific literature, reflecting organizations' current needs. A bibliometric analysis, therefore, not only synthesizes existing knowledge but also fosters innovation by linking disparate ideas and promoting collaboration across disciplines. In conclusion, a bibliometric study on organizational communication serves as a valuable academic tool and a strategic resource to enhance the effectiveness and resilience of organizations in an increasingly complex and dynamic environment.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Contribution statement

Conceptualization, writing-original draft, writing-review & editing: Luis Alberto Baldeos Ardán, Jorge Luis Junco Romero

Formal analysis, data curation, validation: Pablo César Cadenas Calderón, Carmen Luz Berrios Vega.

Methodology, software: Hemerson Rostay Paredes Jiménez.

Statement of data consent

The data generated during the development of this study has been included in the manuscript. ●

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