Communication Research: Then, Now, and Future

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Abstract
This article discusses the state of research in the field of communication science in Indonesia, focusing on the research development themes. Data were gathered via a survey distributed to communication science study programs in Indonesia that are members of the Association for Higher Education Communication Sciences (ASPIKOM). This paper is strengthened by a review of research findings published in various international journals. The data indicates that communication science research in Indonesia has been trending toward technological advancements, primarily focusing on new media and socio-cultural communication. Most research findings are presented at national/international seminars, with the proceedings serving as the final product. Additionally, based on the data, it can be concluded that while communication science continues to develop in Indonesia, it is still not being used as a vehicle for collaborative learning to advance communication science.

Keywords: Communication Studies; Trend; Research

Abstrak

Kata Kunci: Ilmu Komunikasi; Trend; Penelitian

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Introduction

Research is the backbone of the development of science. With research, science will grow. Research will also provide an idea of whether a theory is still relevant to the development of societal problems or even create a new theory. The development of science requires the development of methodologies, the latest measuring tools, and how to analyze new forms of data (McIntosh, 2019).

Examining the Communication Research Journal as one of the oldest communication research journals in the field of Communication Science, the themes have developed since 1974. In the last issue of vol 49 of 2022, there are three major themes: new media and political expression, media framing and misinformation, and Communication Networks. Here are some of the communication research titles, including Community Storytelling Network, Expressive Digital Media Use, and Civic Engagement (Nah et al., 2022), Beyond Incivility: Understanding Patterns of Uncivil and Intolerant Discourse in Online Political Talk (Rossini, 2022), Political Homophily in a Large-Scale Online Communication Network (Bond & Switzer, 2022), Spiral on Silence in the Social Media Era: A Simulation Approach to the Interplay Between Social Networks and Mass Media (Sohn, 2022), Credibility Perceptions and Detection Accuracy of Fake News Headlines on Social Media: Effects of Truth-Bias and Endorsement Cues (Luo et al., 2022), and Creating News Literacy Messages to Enhance Expert Corrections od Misinformation on Twitter (Vraga et al., 2022). This is much more developed than the themes raised in the same journal in 1974, including the themes of political communication in television news, films, the application of communication theories in the mass media, to experimental studies. Some of the titles in this publication are Television News and Political Advertising: The Impact of Exposure on Voter Beliefs (McClure & Patterson, 1974), Film Preferences Following a Murder (Boyanowsky et al., 1974), An Information Theory Measure for Television Programming (Watt & Krull, 1974), A Cognitive Developmental Study of Children's Attention to Television Commercials (Wartella & Ettema, 1974), and An Experimental Study on Communicating Specialize Science Information to a Lay Audience(Funkhouser & Maccoby, 1974). From the themes and titles above, it is known that there has been a change in the study of communication research, both the research object and the research method. The most fundamental change is due to following the development of technology and theory to measuring tools in data collection.

A similar thing can be found in the Aspikom Journal. Aspikom Journal is one of the leading journals in the field of communication that gets the highest accreditation rating at the national level. Looking at the first issue in 2010, the themes of his published writings include advertising, cultural communication, development communication, journalism, and new media to media studies. Some of the titles include Post Media Literacy: Witnessing the Power of Media with Michel Foucault (Syahputra, nd), Terrorism and Media Relations (Junaedi, 2010), Visual Communication for Cigarette Print Advertising in Indonesia during 1950-2000 (Kertamukti, 2017) and Questioning Contemporary Journalism Ethics: Learning from OhmyNews (Widodo, 2017). Compared to the publication of the Aspikom Journal 12 years later, the object of research is more closely following the development of digital technology, both news on digital media and applications/platforms on social media. Some examples of titles published in vol 7 no 1 (2022) include How Print Media Industry Survive in Digital Era (Firmansyah et al., 2022), Fact-Checking and Check-Worthiness Determination on Tempo.co During Covid-19 Pandemic (Hanifah & Monggilo, 2022), MSMEs' Strategy...
for Delivering Messages through TikTok Content (Adyatma, 2022), and Pros and Cons of Vaccine Refusal in Social Media (Karolina & Zarkasi, 2022).

From the two journals, it is known that the object of communication research has not changed much, but the approach or method in studying the object of research has developed a lot. So this paper aims to provide notes and an overview of the research themes often studied by the Communication Studies program in Indonesia. With the portrait of the theme of communication science research in Indonesia, the development of science, especially communication science in Indonesia, can be seen. With this portrait, it can also be seen what fields of study have not received enough attention from communication science so far. The next benefit is to provide a network map to communication science academics in Indonesia where it will be known in which study program to study in what field of science. Therefore, it is expected to be the entry point for inter-institutional research collaborations and scientific deepening. This is because the collaboration of various parties is needed to deepen and develop communication science in Indonesia and at the global level.

At the international level, Donsbach (2006) emphasizes that communication science is a field that has developed very rapidly in various countries and academia for more than 30 years compared to other fields of science. This can be seen from the significant increase in communication journals. In early 2000 there were more than 50 communication journals at the international level. This is also in line with the development of communication science study programs in Indonesia and the world (Donsbach, 2006). Donsbach also stated the importance of research on communication because scientific growth is still far from the end and will always develop.

For this reason, this paper provides the latest guidance on research issues regarding communication science carried out by higher education from the academics’ point of view by looking at communication problems in Indonesia. This differs from the various problems and communication issues developed by practitioners and professional associations. The study on the latest communication issues was published by PR Indonesia, which raised 12 recent communication issues (Wikan et al., 2021). This book raises the themes of communication issues from the perspective of practitioners and professionals such as Corporate PR/Communications, SEO Masters, special staff to the Minister for communications, heads of public communications bureaus, and others. Other research related to communication research is the Study of Ulmu Philosophy Based on Epistemological Elements, Communication Phenomena, and Communication Sciences. This paper highlights how various errors occur in studying communication phenomena, methods, and approaches in research. (Imran, 2014). Imran emphasizes the approach, while this paper emphasizes the research trends of the last five years. This shows that the research trends presented in this paper have novelty value.

**Method**

This research is quantitative, with a positivist paradigm with the method of collecting data using a questionnaire. The analysis in this study uses descriptive analysis, which tries to describe the phenomenon of communication research in Indonesia. For this reason, the unit of analysis in this study is the Communication Studies Program under ASPIKOM or the Association for Higher Education in Communication Studies. The population in this study was 230 study programs, and the research sample was 70 study programs spread not only in Java but throughout Indonesia. From 70 study programs found hundreds of research titles during the last five years, which became the unit of
analysis of this research. Data collection itself is carried out from November to January 2022.

**Results and Discussion**

Based on the survey results, the Communication Studies Study Program in Indonesia is more developed in Java Island than in other regions in Indonesia. The data shows that more communication science study programs exist and are located on Java island than those outside Java. 70% of communication science study programs are located on the island of Java, while the rest are located all over Indonesia. Communication Studies in Indonesia are very thick with social and political sides. This is shown by 44.3% of communication science study programs in Indonesia are under the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, although it is recorded that 22.9% of communication science study programs are under the Faculty of Communication Sciences or other faculties. Of course, this will affect the themes of communication science research. The largest Communication Studies Program is at the Bachelor (S1) level, with the greatest interest in journalism studies and public relations or public relations. For the focal point of scientific deepening or the specificity of the study program, 37.1% stated that they focused on pure communication science, 17.1% said they focused on new media studies, and 11.4% focused on public relations studies. This data is quite interesting because the focus or specificity of the study program has shifted to the new development of communication science, namely the study of new media or new media. The focus of other studies is noted to be quite diverse and have their own uniqueness or specialties, such as Environmental Communication and Local Wisdom in Wetlands, which are the mainstay of the Communication Studies Study Program at Lambung Mangkurat University. From the data, it can also be seen how each study program tries to find the specificity and uniqueness displayed through the specific course. For example, Gunadharma University Communication Studies Study Program has excellent courses: Growth Hacking, Digital Communication Strategy, and Data Analytic. Communication Science Study Program of Dr. Soetomo University has Tourism Communication and MICE Management courses. The Communication Studies Study Program of University of Muhammadiyah Malang has Islamic Communication and Da'wah Strategies courses. Communication Studies Program at Nusa Cendana University has Multicultural and Archipelagic Intercultural Communication courses. This specificity is then expected to align with the themes of communication research which will be discussed below.

**Communication Science Research Theme**

In the study over the last five years, at least 12 issues have become themes in communication science research in Indonesia. There are some general issues as well as quite specific issues. These include the development of new media such as digital literacy, social media to the internet; marketing communications/communication strategy; public relations; political communication and development; media studies; social and cultural communication; applied communication such as creative communication, film, photography, graphic design and audiovisual; contextual communication such as disaster communication, Health communication; Content Discourse Analysis; Interpersonal Communication and Communication Psychology; Advertising; and Journalism. However, from the issues mentioned above, the issue of New Media for the last three years has become a major issue in communication science
research. Of around 190 research titles/themes collected, 21% research themes revolve around new media. The issues in this theme are quite diverse and intersect with other communication studies such as Cyber Public Relations, Digital Communication, digital marketing to innovation in the use of new media. The digital or online world is currently the largest research market. The number of research on the digital world has reached more than 6 billion dollars. This research with new media studies controls more than 10% of current research worldwide (Wilson, 2011). This is because communication via the internet provides the highest level of networking between individuals and groups (Szabo et al., 2019).

In the next position is the theme of intercultural and social communication, which is 13%. The issues in this theme are quite diverse, including social campaigns, cultural communication, and cross-cultural communication regarding gender issues. This is because most of the communication science study programs are under the faculties of social and political science or the humanities faculty, which causes cultural and social themes to become themes that cannot be separated from research in the communication sciences in Indonesia.

The next position is equal to 11% on the theme of political communication. It is interesting how the issues of politics and communication up to now have proven to be issues/themes that are always interesting to study. It also shows that communication is the most important part of politics. The issues raised on political communication are public opinion, government and development communication, and political communication itself. Apart from political communication, another 13% of the themes are contextual communication themes. Communication issues seem to be evolving, and communication science has become very specific and fits into various contexts. This shows that the broader and more profound the science of communication is developing, including health communication, disaster communication, tourism communication, education communication, and forensic communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Media</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Communication</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing/Communication Strategy</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public relations</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Communication and Development</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Studies</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and Social Communication</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Communication: Photography, Graphic Design</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual Communication</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Communication and Psychology of Communication</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
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From the data, it is also seen that the themes that previously often became the main themes, such as public relations, advertising, journalism, and even marketing communications, are no longer widely studied themes. The data found that the theme of Marketing Communication was only 9%, PR 6%, Media 8%, Journalism 3.6%, and even advertising only 2%. From the results of the study, it can be seen that research is
developing towards technological developments. Research is also now moving more in a specific and contextual direction. The irony is the disappearance of major issues in research such as advertising, journalism, marketing communications to public relations. There are even issues such as television which is missing from the themes with the object of research in magazines/newspapers/tabloids, television shows, and radio broadcasts. This seems to illustrate how the "dead" of conventional mass media leads to research studies in similar fields.

**Research Theme Based on Geographical Location.**

The data shows that more communication science study programs exist and are located on Java island than those outside Java. 70% of communication science study programs are located on the island of Java, while 30% are spread throughout Indonesia, from Aceh to Papua. If you look at the location of the study program and the research theme, there are differences in the research themes. Based on Figure 1. Comparison of Research Themes, there is no difference in the most popular research themes studied by communication science study programs both in Java and outside Java. The research theme that became the most popular theme was New Media, or New Media related to technological developments and digitization. The New Media theme for media on the island of Java reached 58% compared to other themes appointed as research themes for lecturers in the communication science study program. While outside Java, the figure is even slightly higher, reaching 60%, for new media themes compared to other themes raised for research. This shows that geographic location does not have enough influence on research themes that have become trends over the last five years. Technological advances and new media issues are a concern not only for study programs located on the island of Java but also outside Java. Technology plays a role in the process and practice of communication in society towards an information society. Technology will also change the practical and theoretical communication map (Kurmia, 2005). Another reason this theme has received attention over the last five years is the development of new media users such as social media and internet users in Indonesia. Weare social noted that the increase in internet and social media users in Indonesia continued to soar to 77% of the total population in Indonesia. Research also shows how technological developments offer interesting problems to study because the impact of technological developments, especially new media, on society, is positive and negative. The affected people also come from all ages and backgrounds (Willmot et al., 2006). However, apart from the theme of new media research, there are some differences in the focus of research themes carried out by communication science study programs both in Java and outside Java.

The next theme with the same research focus from the communication science study program in Java and outside Java is Intercultural and Social Communication. Both scored 36% for Java Island and 35% for research themes outside Java. This shows that this communication science has a close relationship with society and its culture, cultural diversity, and kinship relations of the multicultural Indonesian people. It encourages endless research themes on intercultural and social communication. The details are presented in Figure 1. Comparison of Research Themes.
In Figure 1, it is known that the distribution of research themes for study programs of communication science for study programs outside Java is more diverse than the research themes for study programs in Java. The trend in Figure 1 shows that there are other differences in themes between study programs in Java and outside Java. The study program is located on the island of Java, and popular themes for research are Media themes. This is interesting because there are significant differences in media themes/media studies. Where for the communication science study program on the island of Java, the media study theme is one of the central points of the research theme, reaching 30%, while in the communication science study program outside Java, the figure is only 10% of the research themes carried out by the study program. Communication science there. This can be due to several things, including the still centralized mass media, online and offline, on the island of Java and their ownership (Zulfa Aulia, 2021), (Karman, 2014). this unconsciously affects the low number of research with media themes for research in communication science study programs outside Java. Different popular research themes were carried out by communication science study programs outside Java. The two biggest themes that are often worked on as research themes are Political Communication and Contextual Communication, both of which occupy the highest positions with a percentage of 40% each. This shows that Political Communication remains a trend for research themes for communication studies programs outside Java, this figure is much higher than the research themes for study programs on the island of Java. This theme remains a trend because of the Indonesian political system with direct local elections and political themes that often become central issues in daily conversations and in any mass media. Political issues will still be one of the issues in communication studies that always get special attention (Bahruddin, 2019).

From Figure 1, there are other exciting things. For communication science study programs outside Java, the research theme using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method has not become a research trend for the last five years. This differs from the study program in Java, which makes the research theme with a critical discourse analysis approach. This data, of course, needs to be deepened with research related to research methods that are generally used by the researcher from the communication

Figure 1. Comparison of Research Themes
science study program. However, when viewed from the incoming data, such as existing titles, the approach used in the research trend of the last five years is to use a positivist, post-positivist, and constructivist. The methodological approach used is dominated by a qualitative approach. This is somewhat different from the development of methodologies that are developing at the global level. Communication research methods at the global level use more quantitative-empirical approaches (Donsbach, 2006).

In general, there are two research approaches, namely quantitative and qualitative. There is an evolution to both approaches. Quantitative approaches dominated social research from the late 19th century to the mid-2000s. After that, the interest in using a qualitative approach increased quite high. Then, there is also an increase in the mix-methods approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The theme that is quite interesting is the high theme of the environment in the studies conducted by the communication science study program outside Java compared to the research conducted by the communication science study program in Java. However, in general it is known that there are themes that are the center of attention for research in communication science study programs both on the island of Java and outside Java.

**Funding and Dissemination of Communication Science Research**

Research, of course, requires funding. This research shows that most of the research conducted by the study program uses internal funds from each college or campus, which is 46%. Although study programs often receive funds from grant programs organized by the Ministry, either through the Directorate General of Higher Education at the Ministry of Education and Culture or other ministries, or grants from foreign parties, which is 34%. However, there is not much research funded from the results of institutional collaboration, which is 20%. This institutional collaboration can be in the form of inter-campus collaboration or collaboration with private institutions. The details are in Figure 2, Source of Research Funding below:

![Figure 2. Research Funding](image-url)

From the data above, there are three funding schemes, namely internal funding, funding from institutional collaboration, and competition grants from ministries or foreign parties. From the data, it is known that 39% of study programs admit to getting research funds from the three schemes above, 35% of study programs run research with research funds from the two schemes above, and 26% of study programs receive research funds from only one scheme. This proves that the source of funding in
communication research in Indonesia is mostly funded by second and third parties. However, universities also provide internal research funds for Communication Studies Study Programs. Unfortunately, research funding from the results of institutional collaboration is still quite low. With the network owned by ASPIKOM and the network between lecturers of communication science in Indonesia, the opportunity for research collaboration between institutions is possible. The details are in Figure 3. Research Funding Scheme.

**Figure 3. Research Funding Scheme**

The results of research or research outputs, of course, require recognition or recognition through the publication of research results. Several forms of output are commonly used by researchers of communication science study programs in Indonesia, namely the outputs in the form of articles/writings in international journals, national journals, seminars or conferences, research posters, and research reports. Research in communication science study programs in Indonesia is mostly contained in the output of national journals, which is 30%, 20% in international journals, and 23% in the form of proceedings. Unfortunately, the research output, which is still in the form of unpublished research reports, is 26% larger than the output published in international journals and proceedings—more in Figure 4 below.

**Figure 4. Research Output/Publication**
The data in Figure 4 above illustrates that communication science research in Indonesia has not yet been widely disseminated. Even 27% stated that the output was still in the form of research reports that were only stored in the library or part of the reporting administration of research funding. Even though the opportunity to disseminate research results is wide open in international journals. This can be caused by several things, such as limited external funds, the lack of confidence of researchers in Indonesia to disseminate their research in international journals, to the limited time for reporting the results. Another interesting thing is that 23% of research results are published in proceedings as an outcome of seminars or conferences. This is in line with the increasing number of conferences in the field of communication science in Indonesia which are held by various parties, not only universities to associations. Although according to the high number of conferences, this is not in line with the conference's basic objectives, such as knowledge exchange, it becomes a political arena and economic gain (Masduki, 2022). Therefore, this phenomenon can lead to the quality of the proceedings published by conferences with political and economic objectives. Nevertheless, the positive thing is that most (30%) have been published in national journals. This shows a positive trend in developing communication science research in Indonesia.

Based on the location of the study program, both in Java and outside Java, the research outputs are mostly articles in national journals. However, there is a difference in the trend between the dissemination of research outputs of the communication science study program in Indonesia based on the location of the study program. Research results or study program outputs in Java are dominated by outputs like articles in national journals. However, many research outputs have been disseminated or published in articles in international journals. This is different from the research output of the communication science study program outside Java. Figures show that a larger percentage of research outputs are published through proceedings articles and only in unpublished research reports compared to scientific articles in international journals. The details are shown in Figure 5, Comparison of Research Outcomes below.

![Figure 5. Comparison of Research Output](image_url)
Figure 5 shows that the number of scientific articles published in international journals is still minimal. Whereas by publishing it in international journals, the communication science study program in Indonesia will increasingly play a role in the development of communication science at the global level. The data also shows how the potential research outcomes of the communication science study program are quite large. Generally, the publication of articles in international journals is constrained by language and supporting funds (Pardjono et al., 2017). Therefore, joint support is needed from the study program concerned, faculties, universities to associations to help with the problems and constraints. Another solution is the need for communication between study programs that are accustomed to publishing scientific articles in international journals and study programs that are still having problems publishing their research articles in international journals. The system, like foster brothers, is expected to be able to control scientific articles that are still a report to enter journals and upgrade the target of articles that are accustomed to publishing in national journals into articles in international journals.

**The Future of Communication Science Research: Predictions and Expectations**

Research is a major part of the development of science. Research is a form of testing knowledge. The results are expected to enrich science and broaden the meaning of science for society. So research or research is expected to have a road map with great hopes for the benefits of the science that is part of the research. Research conducted by the study program is expected to align with the study program's specificity or deepening knowledge. In Indonesia, each study program must have a specificity that distinguishes the scientific development of one study program from another. This specificity is also related to the suitability of students' interests in a field of science. Even when opening a study program, the program must include the distinction with similar fields of science that already exist in Indonesia. These differentiating forms and fields of knowledge are expected to be generated from direct and indirect studies. So, the development of the specific field of science must be in line with the courses that characterize the study program and in line with the research and research themes of the study program. The research results then become outputs and add strength and material to the teaching materials of the courses that are the specialty of the study program. So this process is a continuous circular process until it becomes a strong study program with its specialty, specialization courses, and knowledge development.

However, from the data that the researcher re-tabulated, it was recorded that only 31.4% of study programs had a correlation between the specifics of the study program and the research themes carried out by the study program. In comparison, the remaining 68.6% did not have a correlation or relationship between the specificity of the study program and the research themes for the last five years. Several scientific focuses that are in line with the research theme for the last five years are Cultural Communication (2 study programs), Political Communication (2 study programs), Public Relations (3 study programs), Marketing Communication (4 study programs), and New New media or media (10 study programs). However, it should be noted that 37% of communication science study programs stated that their specialty was communication science or did not have a more specific specialty. This can cause the study program not to have a differentiator that can be an added value for the study program. This fact also deserves more attention from associations so that in the future, communication science can develop together with their respective specialties. The fact that also needs to be
considered is that 31.6% of study programs do not have consistency between the study program's specifics and the study program's research theme for the last five years. For example, when a specialty of the study program is journalism, the research themes for the last five years have been dominated by the themes of public relations. If this situation continues, it can be predicted that communication science in Indonesia will not have a strong road map, where each study program will compete instead of being complementary.

Conclusion
The portrait of communication science research in Indonesia in the last five years has narrowed down to a few major themes, namely new media, intercultural and social communication, political communication and development, and contextual communication. New Media has become a new theme that has emerged since the early 2000s and now dominates the theme of communication science research in Indonesia, which is in line with research developments at the global level. Intercultural and social communication proves that Indonesia as a multicultural country makes the theme of intercultural communication remains a concern among communication scientists. Political communication and development seem to illustrate how communication and politics have become inseparable since these two sciences developed worldwide. Meanwhile, contextual communication encourages the understanding that communication science is currently developing into a more specific and widespread science in several other fields of science. This illustrates how communication science has played an important role in developing other sciences. Several research themes, including contextual communication, include disaster communication, health communication, and forensic communication. Nevertheless, what needs to be noted is the reduced quantity of research with the themes of journalistic research, advertising, and media studies with mass media objects such as television, radio, magazines, newspapers, and tabloids. This deserves special attention because Indonesia's number of television viewers is still quite high.

The following finding, research funding is still dominated by internal campus funding, and output is still dominated by output in the form of articles in national journals and proceedings. This illustrates several things, namely the lack of cooperation between institutions in developing joint research: and the lack of extensive publication of research results of communication scientists in Indonesia at the international level, especially from communication science study programs outside Java. This lack of publication will impact the lack of citation and use of research results in scientific development and learning itself, both in Indonesia and at the international level.

Research development relates to the specificity or focus of the study program developed in each study program. Therefore, this research suggests that the research theme raised by the study program must be related to the specificity of the study program's science and mainstay so that the special theme of the study program will be stronger and become a differentiator compared to other study programs in Indonesia. After each study program has the specificity and depth of the theme, communication science in Indonesia will certainly be stronger and complementary. Another suggestion is the need for communication science higher education associations to have a communication science research roadmap that explains and becomes a guide for communication science in the future, which has high ideals and hopes for how communication science plays a role for the country, society, and the world.
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