Global and Regional Evolution of Economic Communication Research (1960–2024): Systematic Review and Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract
This study provides the first longitudinal and global mapping of the evolution of Economic Communication from 1960 to 2024 by combining a systematic literature review (PRISMA) with bibliometric analysis (VOSviewer) of 117 Scopus-indexed articles. The findings reveal that the field has transformed from fragmented, discipline-specific studies into an interdisciplinary domain shaped by digital transformation, globalization, and shifting policy agendas. Five interconnected thematic clusters were identified—macroeconomic growth, sustainability communication, ICT–FDI linkages, digital inequality, and crisis-related messaging—highlighting communication's function as a governance tool, an enabler of inclusive participation, and a driver of resilience. By embedding these clusters within frameworks such as Risk Communication Theory, the Digital Divide Framework, and Global Value Chain Theory, the study advances conceptual clarity and situates communication at the center of development and policy discourse. Its contribution lies in offering a theory-anchored synthesis that bridges structural mapping with interpretive insight, while foregrounding emerging contributions from the Global South. Limitations include reliance on Scopus and English-language publications, which risks selection and language bias. Future research should expand to multi-database and multilingual corpora,

integrate mixed-method approaches, and examine AI-mediated communication to address inequalities and institutional trust in diverse contexts.

1. Introduction

Economic communication has emerged as a crucial interdisciplinary field that links economics, communication studies, political economy, and development research. It examines how the framing, transmission, and interpretation of economic information shape decision-making, institutional trust, and policy compliance. Unlike financial communication, which focuses on firm-level reporting, or development communication, which emphasizes social transformation, economic communication addresses a broader set of issues—ranging from monetary and fiscal policy communication to digital narratives that sustain market confidence and public legitimacy (Easterbrook, 1960; Holub & Hlushchenko, 2017; Marcus & Wernick, 2017). Its integrative scope underlines its growing importance in an era of globalization, digital transformation, and frequent economic crises.

The literature demonstrates that economic communication plays both functional and structural roles in contemporary economies. Studies on central bank messaging show how communication strategies can stabilize exchange rate expectations and influence investor behavior (Holub & Hlushchenko, 2017). ICT-related communication has been proven to drive productivity and sustainable growth, with evidence from China and Sub-Saharan Africa confirming its role in economic diversification and resilience (Liu, 2021; Owolabi et al., 2023). Similarly, coordinated narratives during the COVID-19 pandemic highlight how effective economic messaging is critical for crisis response and public trust (Baker et al., 2021). Other contributions explore communication in conflict economies (Koldaş, 2017), ICT integration in health and education sectors (Alimbaev et al., 2021), and sustainability-oriented discourse (Goff et al., 2021). Collectively, these works underscore the strategic significance of communication as both a governance tool and a development driver.

Yet, this diversity also exposes the field's fragmentation. Prior studies often remain thematically narrow—focusing on specific issues such as fiscal policy announcements, regulatory frameworks, or sectoral ICT adoption—without embedding them in a coherent historical and conceptual narrative (Brennan, 1992; Marcus & Wernick, 2017). Moreover, most research is concentrated in high-income economies, with

limited representation from the Global South despite increasing scholarly contributions from Indonesia, Nigeria, and Pakistan (Gandasari et al., 2021; Qureshi, 2021; Sarah & Olujobi, 2021). These underrepresented perspectives are crucial, as they reflect distinct institutional settings, digital divides, and socio-political dynamics. The imbalance perpetuates epistemic asymmetries and restricts the cumulative development of theory (Connell, 2007).

This study addresses three major gaps. First, there is no comprehensive longitudinal mapping of the evolution of economic communication from its earliest academic reference in 1960 to the digital age. Second, the lack of theoretical integration and reliance on fragmented case studies has limited cumulative knowledge-building. Third, practical challenges such as digital inequality, weak institutional trust, and fragmented communication strategies remain insufficiently theorized or empirically assessed (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Van Dijk, 2020). Addressing these shortcomings requires a systematic synthesis of existing scholarship alongside a quantitative mapping of intellectual structures and thematic clusters.

Accordingly, this study adopts a hybrid approach, combining a systematic literature review (SLR) with bibliometric analysis. The SLR ensures conceptual depth and replicability, while bibliometric mapping identifies intellectual networks, thematic clusters, and geographic patterns. This integration strengthens methodological rigor and provides a multi-layered perspective on the field's development.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- *RQ1: How has the concept, scope, and focus of economic communication evolved globally and regionally from 1960 to 2024?*
- *RQ2: What are the major research clusters, disciplinary intersections, and geographical patterns within the field?*
- *RQ3: How can the theoretical and practical insights from existing studies be synthesized into a coherent research agenda for future scholarly and policy applications?*

By addressing these questions, the study provides the first comprehensive mapping of the intellectual evolution of economic communication, situating diverse scholarly contributions within a unified framework. In doing so, it offers both theoretical integration and practical pathways for designing communication strategies that promote resilience, inclusivity, and sustainable economic development.

2. Method

This study was conducted within a constructivist–interpretivist paradigm, emphasizing the socially constructed and context-dependent

nature of knowledge (Lincoln, 1985). The research design combined a systematic literature review (SLR) and bibliometric analysis, an approach that allowed both qualitative interpretation and structured mapping of intellectual patterns in the field. The SLR provided depth through critical synthesis of conceptual definitions, theoretical frameworks, and methodological orientations (Gunnell et al., 2022; Tranfield et al., 2003), while bibliometric techniques offered breadth by visualizing co-authorship, citation networks, and keyword clusters (Kastrin & Hristovski, 2021; McAllister et al., 2022). This hybrid design was particularly suited to the research questions, which required a longitudinal and global perspective on the evolution of economic communication.

The setting of this research was the global scholarly discourse on economic communication between 1960 and 2024. This period was deliberately chosen because it encompasses the earliest identifiable work in the field (Easterbrook, 1960) and captures subsequent developments shaped by digital transformation, globalization, and repeated policy crises. The context was not geographically bound to a single location but spanned across regions, thereby highlighting the epistemic imbalance between Global North–dominant research and the emerging contributions of the Global South (Connell, 2007; Gandasari et al., 2021; Qureshi, 2021). This comparative global scope was crucial to understanding how institutional, socio-cultural, and technological environments have shaped economic communication.

The "participants" of this study were not individuals but published articles retrieved from the Scopus database, which was selected for its wide disciplinary coverage and compatibility with bibliometric tools (Klarin, 2024). A purposive sampling strategy was applied to ensure the inclusion of studies that explicitly engaged with the concept of economic communication or related terms such as financial communication, economic discourse, and development communication. The inclusion criteria required relevance to the field, conceptual or empirical contribution, and publication in English-language journals, while exclusion criteria removed non-article documents such as conference abstracts. Following PRISMA 2020 protocols (Page et al., 2021), an initial dataset of 78,940 records was systematically filtered through title, abstract, and full-text screening, resulting in a final corpus of 117 studies.
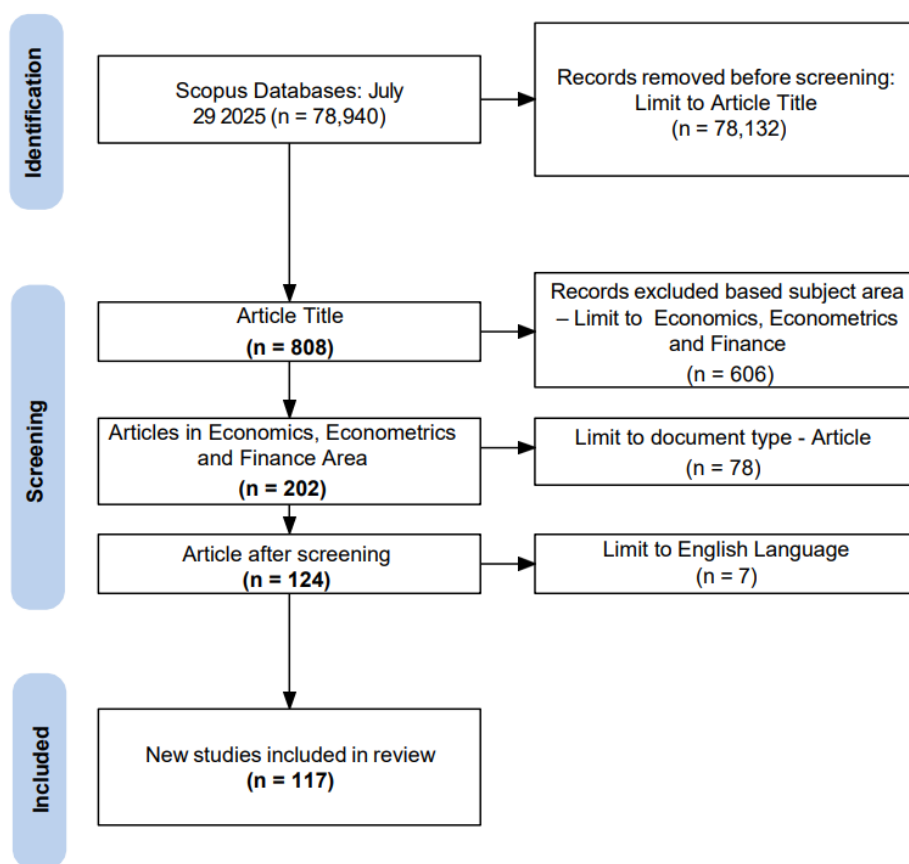
Figure 1. Systematic literature review process based on the PRISMA protocol

The data collection process unfolded in three stages. First, pilot searches were conducted using a range of terminological variations to ensure adequate recall and precision. Second, records were screened through multiple rounds, applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Third, all selected studies were documented in a PRISMA flow diagram, which served as both a methodological record and a tool for transparency. Alongside the review process, bibliometric metadata—covering authorship, institutional affiliation, citations, and keywords—were extracted for quantitative mapping. The instruments included a PRISMA-based screening protocol, standardized data extraction sheets, and VOSviewer software for bibliometric visualization (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). To ensure reliability, two independent coders were involved in the screening and coding processes, achieving a substantial inter-rater

agreement (Cohen's Kappa = 0.87), which indicates robust consistency (Gunnell et al., 2022).

Analysis proceeded through an integration of thematic synthesis and bibliometric mapping. Thematic synthesis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, which included familiarization with the data, coding, identification of themes, and iterative refinement. The bibliometric component mapped conceptual clusters, intellectual linkages, and geographical patterns using co-occurrence and co-citation analyses (Narong & Hallinger, 2023; Yuan et al., 2022). These two strands of analysis were not applied sequentially but iteratively, as bibliometric insights informed thematic interpretation, and qualitative findings contextualized the patterns emerging from the network visualizations.

To ensure the trustworthiness of findings, several qualitative validation strategies were employed. Credibility was established through triangulation of sources (SLR and bibliometric networks) and member-checking with domain experts. Transferability was strengthened by providing thick descriptions of the research setting, timeframe, and thematic scope. Dependability was supported through a detailed audit trail that documented the search strategies, screening decisions, and coding procedures. Confirmability was addressed by maintaining reflexivity and transparency in all methodological decisions, ensuring that findings were grounded in the data rather than researcher bias (Lincoln, 1985).

Although the study did not involve human participants, ethical considerations were carefully observed. Only publicly available and peer-reviewed articles were included, and all sources were properly acknowledged to respect intellectual property. Data management adhered to Scopus licensing conditions, and no confidential or sensitive information was disclosed (Xiao & Li, 2021). This ethical stance, combined with methodological rigor, positions the study as both transparent and replicable, while contributing a reliable foundation for future scholarship on economic communication.

3. Results

This section integrates bibliometric mapping and systematic literature review findings from 117 Scopus-indexed articles on economic communication, answering the three research questions in turn. The analysis follows the PRISMA protocol and applies VOSviewer for network mapping, with a minimum keyword occurrence threshold of three and co-authorship/co-citation thresholds calibrated to the dataset's frequency distribution to ensure interpretive clarity and replicability. Statistical significance of temporal trends was explored through year-on-year

percentage change analysis, and all visualizations are directly tied to specific RQs.

RQ1: How has the concept, scope, and focus of economic communication evolved globally and regionally from 1960 to 2024?

Understanding the historical trajectory of economic communication is essential for positioning the field within broader scholarly and policy debates. Although recent scholarship frequently frames economic communication as a strategic driver of governance, market stability, and digital transformation, its conceptual foundations have emerged gradually rather than from a unified starting point. Tracing its evolution from the mid-20th century to the present reveals not only shifts in research volume and thematic scope but also the influence of socio-economic events, technological advances, and regional policy priorities on scholarly interest. By combining temporal trend analysis with theoretical interpretation, this section examines the pivotal milestones, structural changes, and external catalysts that have shaped economic communication into an increasingly interdisciplinary and globally relevant domain.
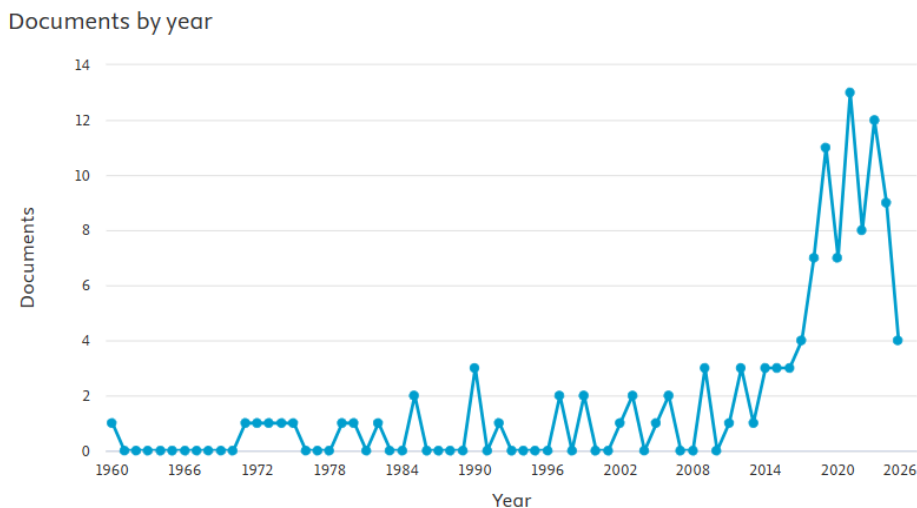
Figure 2. Research trends in economic communication

As shown in Figure 2, between the 1960s and early 2000s, research activity in this area remained minimal—fewer than two articles annually— reflecting the absence of a coherent conceptual base and limited cross-disciplinary engagement. The earliest identified work Easterbrook (1960) explored historical intersections between economics and communication but failed to trigger sustained scholarly momentum. Early contributions

often appeared as peripheral discussions embedded within economics, political science, or media studies, lacking distinct methodological and theoretical frameworks of their own (McCloskey, 1990).

A decisive acceleration occurred from 2017 onwards, coinciding with the rapid global digital transformation and increasing policy recognition of communication as a tool for governance, transparency, and economic resilience. Seminal works during this phase included research on central bank communication (Holub & Hlushchenko, 2017), the role of ICT in economic growth (Saidi et al., 2017), and regulatory harmonization in electronic communications (Marcus & Wernick, 2017). These studies began integrating economic theory with strategic communication models, creating a platform for interdisciplinary analysis that addressed both macroeconomic governance and micro-level market behaviors.

The spike in 2021—visible in Figure 2—aligns with the COVID-19 crisis, which disrupted economic systems and intensified research into ICT-enabled productivity (Liu, 2021), digital health economies (Baker et al., 2021), and sustainability communication (Goff et al., 2021). This thematic expansion marked a theoretical shift from perceiving communication as a supplementary function to recognizing it as a central driver of institutional trust, economic behavior, and inclusive policy-making.

Documents by country or territory
Compare the document counts for up to 15 countries/territories.
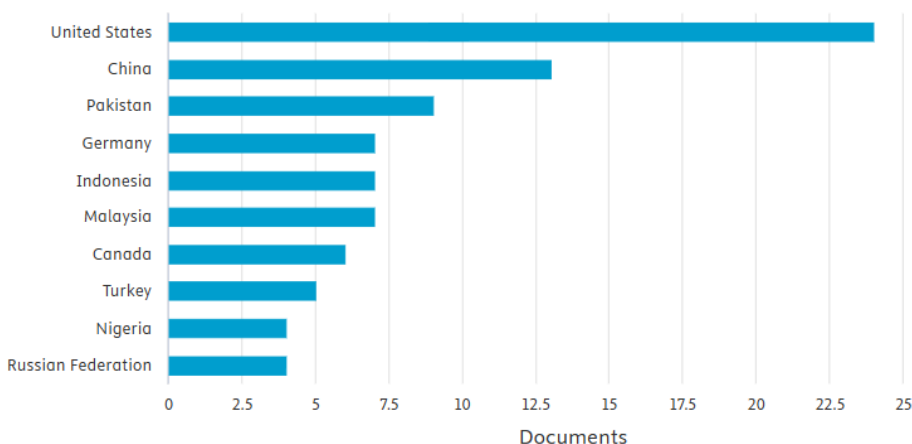
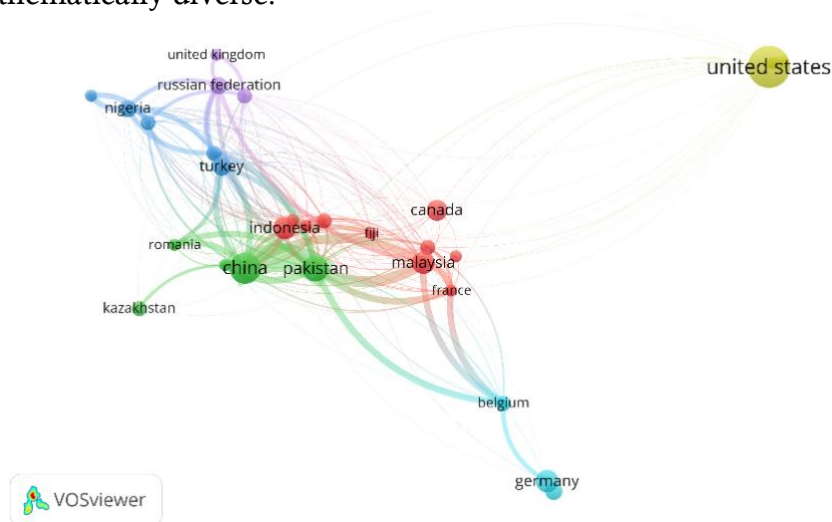**Figure 3.** Distribution of economic communication publications by country

Regionally, Figure 3 shows that the United States (24 publications) and China (13) dominate output, with notable contributions from Pakistan

(9), Indonesia (7), Malaysia (7), and Nigeria (4). Developed economies primarily focus on regulatory frameworks, macroeconomic stability, and financial communication, while Global South research emphasizes digital inclusion, economic empowerment, and trust-building in governance. Such divergence reflects context-specific priorities shaped by varying levels of economic development, institutional maturity, and digital infrastructure. However, the patterns must be interpreted cautiously due to publication and language biases inherent in focusing solely on English-language Scopus-indexed literature, which may underrepresent non-English and locally published scholarship.

RQ2: What are the major research clusters, disciplinary intersections, and geographical patterns within the field?

While RQ1 established the chronological evolution and regional diversification of economic communication research, understanding the field's intellectual architecture requires moving beyond temporal mapping toward an analysis of thematic structures, collaborative networks, and disciplinary intersections. This shift allows for a deeper exploration of how knowledge is produced, disseminated, and integrated across global research communities. As such, RQ2 draws on bibliometric network analyses to examine patterns of co-authorship, institutional distribution, and publication venues, as well as keyword-based thematic clustering. Together, these dimensions reveal the multi-layered nature of economic communication as a research domain that is both globally interconnected and thematically diverse.

Figure 4. Country collaboration network in economic communication research

Documents by affiliation

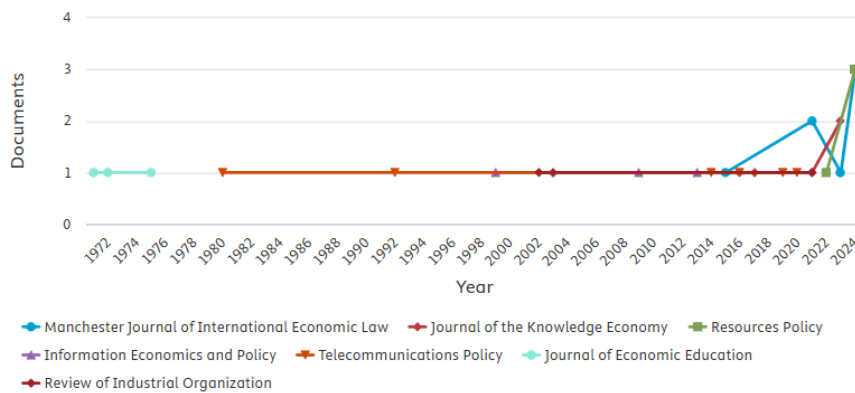Compare the document counts for up to 15 affiliations.
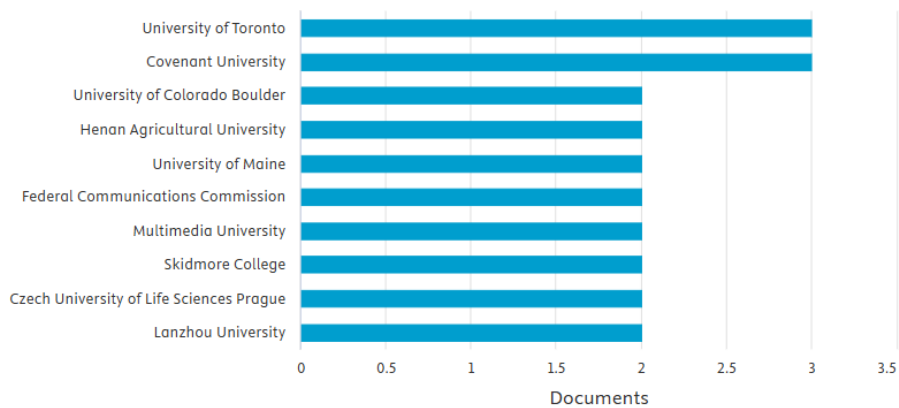
Figure 5. Distribution of economic communication publications by affiliation

Documents per year by source
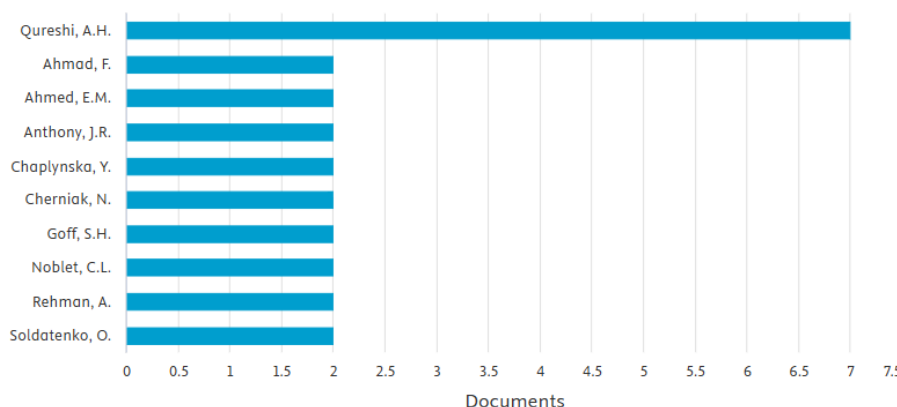
Compare the document counts for up to 10 sources.   Compare sources and view CiteScore, SJR, and SNIP data

Figure 6. Distribution of economic communication publications by source

Documents by author

Compare the document counts for up to 15 authors.

Figure 7. Distribution of economic communication publications by author

The country collaboration network in Figure 4 demonstrates that Global North nations dominate dense co-authorship clusters, while emerging economies—particularly Indonesia, Malaysia, and Pakistan—are increasingly active in South–South collaborations. This trend suggests a gradual decentralization of knowledge production; however, structural dependencies on partnerships with high-output institutions in the Global North remain significant. Figure 5 further shows that institutional contributions are both multidisciplinary and geographically diverse: the University of Toronto (Canada) and Covenant University (Nigeria) each produced three publications, while the University of Colorado Boulder (USA), Henan Agricultural University (China), and Multimedia University (Malaysia) each contributed two. The involvement of economics, communication, and technology faculties reinforces the argument that economic communication thrives at the intersection of multiple disciplines, enabling cross-pollination of theories and methodologies.

The breadth of publication outlets, illustrated in Figure 6, underscores the field's cross-domain appeal, with contributions appearing in law-oriented journals (e.g., *Manchester Journal of International Economic Law*), resource economics platforms (*Resources Policy*), and digital policy-focused outlets (*Telecommunications Policy*). Such diversity demonstrates the adaptability of economic communication research to different epistemic communities. However, Figure 7 reveals a concentration of authorship,

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with Qureshi, A.H. producing seven publications. While such leadership accelerates conceptual consolidation, it also risks narrowing the field's thematic scope through the disproportionate influence of a few dominant voices, highlighting the importance of fostering diverse scholarly participation—particularly from underrepresented regions.
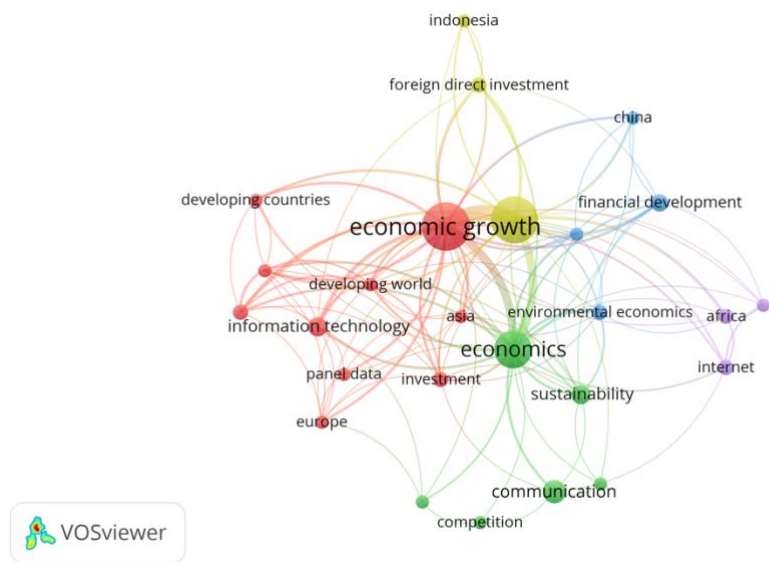
Figure 8. Keyword co-occurrence network in economic communication research

Table 1. Keywords by authors

Rank	Keyword	Total Link Strength
1	Economic Growth	91
2	Information and Communication Technology	87
3	Economics	71
4	Developing World	21
5	Information Technology	19
6	Investment	18
7	Labor Productivity	18
8	Productivity	18
9	Financial Development	15
10	Natural Resource	15
11	Sustainability	15

Rank	Keyword	Total Link Strength
12	Environmental Economics	14
13	Asia	13
14	Foreign Direct Investment	13
15	Europe	12
16	Developing Countries	11
17	Internet	11
18	Africa	10
19	China	9
20	Communication	8
21	Panel Data	7
22	Sub-Saharan Africa	7
23	Indonesia	6
24	Telecommunications	6
25	Covid-19	4
26	Competition	3

**Table 2.** Cluster analysis of keyword

Cluster	Item Themes
Cluster 1	Asia; Developing Countries; Developing World; Economic Growth; Europe; Information Technology; Investment; Labor Productivity; Panel Data; Productivity
Cluster 2	Communication; Competition; COVID-19; Economics; Sustainability; Telecommunications
Cluster 3	China; Environmental Economics; Financial Development; Natural Resource
Cluster 4	Foreign Direct Investment; Indonesia; Information and Communication
Cluster 5	Africa; Internet; Sub-Saharan Africa

The thematic composition of the field is mapped in Figure 8 and Table 1, with a cluster analysis in Table 2 identifying five interconnected but distinct thematic groups: (1) macroeconomic growth and productivity, (2) communication, sustainability, and competition—including COVID-19-related discourse, (3) environmental–financial linkages centered on China, (4) foreign direct investment and ICT—strongly linked to Indonesia, and (5) digital inequality in Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. Rather than functioning as isolated silos, these clusters form a dynamic web of concepts

in which economic communication acts both as a bridge between disciplines and as a catalyst for shaping economic policy, market behavior, and public perception.

RQ3: How can the theoretical and practical insights from existing studies be synthesized into a coherent research agenda for future scholarly and policy applications?

The patterns revealed in RQ2—ranging from collaborative networks to thematic clustering—provide a critical foundation for the interpretive synthesis undertaken in RQ3. Here, the analysis moves beyond structural mapping to interrogate how these patterns translate into actionable theoretical and practical pathways. By embedding the identified clusters within established conceptual frameworks such as *Risk Communication Theory* (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005), the *Digital Divide Framework* (Van Dijk, 2020), *Global Value Chain Theory* (Gereffi, 2019), and *Development Communication Theory* (Wilkins & Mody, 2001), this stage clarifies the multi-level role of economic communication—as a unifying force integrating global economic discourses and as a diversifying force addressing region-specific challenges.
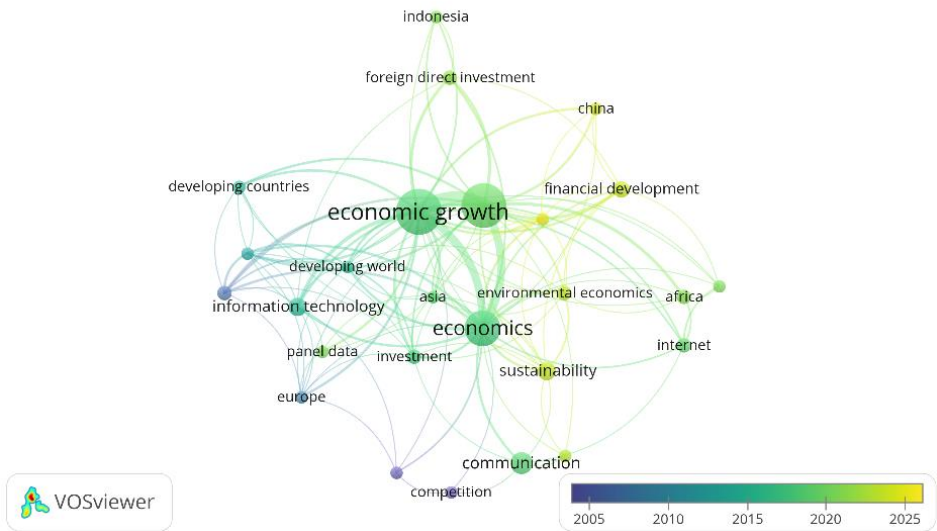
Figure 9. Emerging research trends in economic communication based on keyword co-occurrence mapping

As visualized in Figure 9, the thematic evolution from macroeconomic fundamentals toward more contextualized, interdisciplinary topics signals the field's conceptual maturation. At the macro level, economic communication emerges as a governance instrument for crisis management, enhancing institutional trust and behavioral compliance during systemic shocks. At the meso level, it functions as a driver of digital inclusion, addressing structural inequities in information access and participation. At the micro level, it serves as a participatory platform enabling communities and stakeholders to co-create economic strategies that reflect local realities. These interconnected roles underscore the necessity of contextually adaptive strategies that are theoretically grounded yet flexible enough to address distinct socio-economic environments.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that economic communication has undergone a profound epistemological consolidation, particularly after 2017, when publication output expanded sharply and thematic scope broadened to encompass sustainability, digital inequality, and foreign direct investment. This transition represents more than a quantitative increase; it reflects the emergence of a coherent field of inquiry that integrates diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives. Earlier scholarship was often confined to narrow domains such as central bank announcements or ICT-driven productivity (Holub & Hlushchenko, 2017; Saidi et al., 2017), whereas the longitudinal and cross-regional mapping employed here uncovers structural patterns that extend beyond case-specific findings. The divergence arises largely from methodological scope: bibliometric mapping combined with systematic review enables the identification of long-term trajectories across six decades, capturing dynamics that single-country or thematic analyses could not.

The identification of five thematic clusters reinforces existing theoretical frameworks while simultaneously extending their analytical reach. As shown in Figure 10 and Table 3, crisis-related communication is consistent with Risk Communication Theory (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005), echoing pandemic-related studies where credible and timely communication was indispensable for sustaining institutional trust (Baker et al., 2021). Similarly, the Africa–digital inequality cluster confirms the relevance of the Digital Divide Framework (Van Dijk, 2020), aligning with evidence that infrastructural disparities systematically reproduce exclusion from financial and digital economies (Owolabi et al., 2023). The ICT–FDI cluster corresponds with insights from Global Value Chain Theory (Gereffi, 2019) and resonates with studies on China's digital economy (Liu,

2021) and Kazakhstan's institutional reforms (Alimbaev et al., 2021), but our mapping demonstrates that such linkages represent a broader transnational trend rather than isolated national cases. Meanwhile, the macroeconomic growth and sustainability clusters align with Development Communication Theory (Wilkins & Mody, 2001), advancing the view that communication operates not merely as information transmission but as a participatory process shaping collective economic trajectories. In this way, the findings situate economic communication as a multidimensional mechanism: an enabler of growth, a governance tool, and a participatory platform for inclusive development.
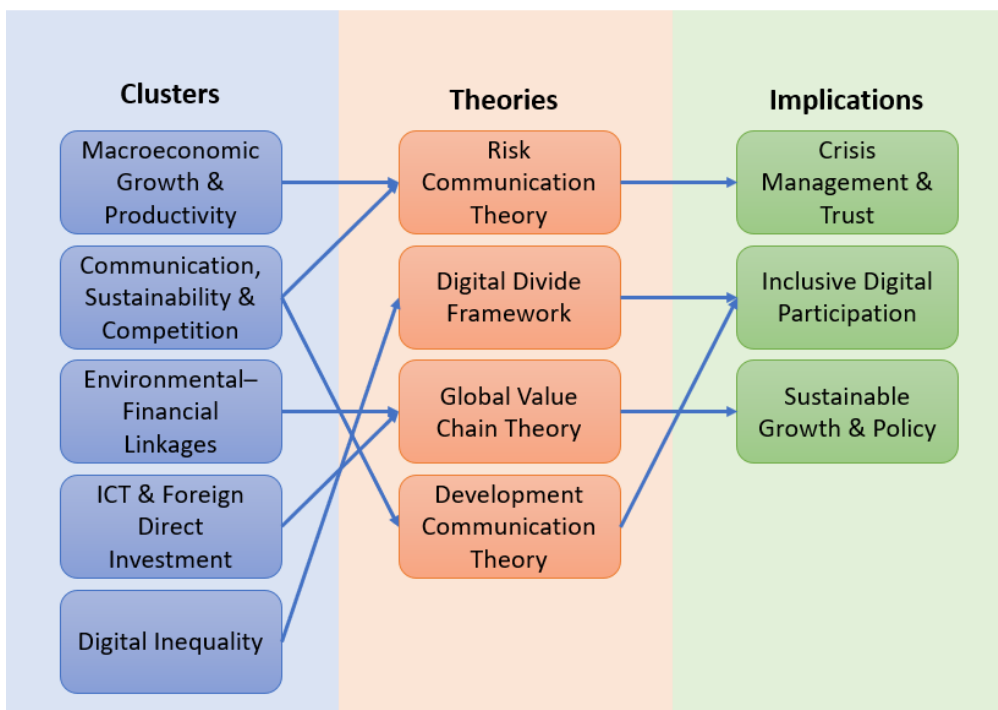
Figure 10. Conceptual map linking research clusters, theoretical frameworks, and practical implications in economic communication

Table 3. Linking research clusters, theoretical frameworks, and practical implications in economic communication

Research Cluster	Theoretical Framework	Practical Implication
Crisis Communication Cluster	Risk Communication Theory (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005)	Crisis Management & Trust

Research Cluster	Theoretical Framework	Practical Implication
Digital Inequality Cluster	Digital Divide Framework (Van Dijk, 2020)	Crisis Management & Trust; Inclusive Digital Participation
ICT–FDI Cluster	Global Value Chain Theory (Gereffi, 2019)	Sustainable Growth & Policy
Macroeconomic Growth & Productivity Cluster	Development Communication Theory (Wilkins & Mody, 2001)	Sustainable Growth & Policy
Sustainability Communication Cluster	Development Communication Theory (Wilkins & Mody, 2001)	Inclusive Digital Participation

The results also highlight persistent asymmetries in knowledge production. In line with Connell's (2007) critique of epistemic dominance, Global North institutions remain central in collaborative networks and continue to shape the prevailing theoretical and methodological paradigms. Nevertheless, the analysis reveals a discernible rise of Global South contributions, particularly from Indonesia, Nigeria, and Pakistan, where scholars foreground issues of digital inclusion, empowerment, and institutional trust (Gandasari et al., 2021; Sarah & Olujobi, 2021). These contributions have often been underrepresented in earlier reviews, partly due to reliance on case-based or English-only corpora, but the network-based bibliometric method employed here makes such emerging perspectives more visible. This methodological difference explains why the present results diverge from earlier studies, as they capture decentralizing tendencies and highlight South–South collaborations that were previously overlooked.

The implications of these findings are both theoretical and practical. From a policy standpoint, insights from central bank communication research can inform the design of transparent and credible messaging strategies that reinforce institutional legitimacy (Holub & Hlushchenko, 2017). The association between ICT, FDI, and productivity underscores the importance of communication infrastructure as a determinant of competitiveness within global value chains (Gereffi, 2019), consistent with recent arguments that digital platforms are increasingly central to economic sovereignty and regional integration (Acs, 2023; Bellanova et al., 2022). Likewise, the persistence of digital inequality highlights the urgency of embedding inclusivity within regulatory frameworks, ensuring that marginalized groups are not excluded from emerging digital economies (Owolabi et al., 2023; Van Dijk, 2020). The thematic expansion into

sustainability communication further demonstrates the normative weight of economic narratives, which now shape expectations regarding environmental accountability and inclusive development (Goff et al., 2021; Meppem & Bourke, 1999; Sénit, 2020). Viewed collectively, these findings suggest that economic communication is no longer peripheral but instead constitutes a central pillar of economic governance, market legitimacy, and societal resilience.

Despite these contributions, important limitations must be acknowledged. The reliance on Scopus-indexed and English-language publications introduces selection bias, potentially excluding regionally significant or non-English research (Xiao & Li, 2021). Moreover, bibliometric mapping is inherently descriptive and cannot establish causal relationships, in contrast to qualitative methodologies such as case studies or ethnographic inquiry that capture micro-level contextual dynamics (Creswell et al., 2007). The strength of this study lies in its breadth and longitudinal scope, but this breadth necessarily trades off with depth. Future research should, therefore, combine bibliometric mapping with qualitative approaches, expand to a multi-database and multilingual corpora, and employ mixed-method designs that are capable of establishing causal linkages between communication strategies and economic outcomes.

Overall, the discussion underscores that this study not only confirms existing insights but also advances the field by offering the first global and longitudinal mapping of economic communication. By systematically linking thematic clusters with theoretical frameworks and practical implications, it demonstrates that communication functions as connective tissue across diverse domains—governance, growth, sustainability, and inclusion. Simultaneously, it highlights persistent asymmetries in knowledge production while identifying emerging contributions from underrepresented regions. Through these insights, economic communication can be repositioned from a fragmented and descriptive domain into a coherent and action-oriented discipline with tangible societal relevance.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to examine the global and regional evolution of economic communication from 1960 to 2024, combining systematic literature review with bibliometric mapping to capture both structural dynamics and theoretical underpinnings. The analysis revealed that what began as a fragmented set of contributions embedded within economics, political science, and media studies has progressively developed into a

coherent interdisciplinary domain shaped by digital transformation, globalization, and shifting policy imperatives. Five interconnected thematic clusters were identified—macroeconomic growth, sustainability communication, digital inequality, ICT–FDI linkages, and crisis-related communication—demonstrating that economic communication now operates simultaneously as a governance instrument, a driver of equity, and a mechanism for participatory development.

The results highlight how these clusters align with and extend established frameworks such as Risk Communication Theory, the Digital Divide Framework, Global Value Chain Theory, and Development Communication Theory. By linking thematic evolution to theory, the study contributes to advancing economic communication beyond descriptive bibliometric accounts toward a theory-anchored synthesis. This positioning demonstrates the originality of the work: not only identifying when and where research has emerged but also clarifying how intellectual structures have evolved and how communication functions across governance, market, and societal dimensions.

The contribution of this paper lies in three areas. First, it provides the first longitudinal, global mapping of economic communication that integrates bibliometric evidence with theoretical interpretation. Second, it offers a replicable hybrid methodology for other interdisciplinary domains seeking to bridge quantitative mapping with qualitative synthesis. Third, it foregrounds the growing contributions from the Global South, highlighting both epistemic asymmetries and the potential for decentralizing global knowledge production.

The study carries several implications. Theoretically, it demonstrates that economic communication constitutes a maturing interdisciplinary field with a coherent conceptual architecture. Practically, it offers policymakers evidence-based insights for embedding communication strategies into economic governance, from crisis management and institutional trust-building to inclusive digital participation and global value chain competitiveness. For practitioners, the findings underscore the need to integrate digital inclusion into regulatory frameworks, align crisis messaging with resilience strategies, and use communication capacity as a strategic lever for sustainable development.

Like all research, this study has limitations. Its reliance on Scopus-indexed, English-language publications introduces both selection and language bias, while the use of author-assigned keywords entails a degree of arbitrariness in thematic delineation. Nevertheless, the breadth and longitudinal scope of the dataset provide a strong foundation for

identifying structural patterns and theoretical linkages that single-country or case-based studies cannot capture.

Future research should build on this foundation by expanding to multi-database and multilingual corpora, adopting standardized keyword taxonomies, and integrating mixed-method approaches that test causal relationships between communication strategies and economic outcomes. Promising directions include empirical evaluation of communication interventions addressing digital and financial inequalities in the Global South, examination of AI-mediated and algorithmic economic messaging on institutional trust, and cross-regional comparative studies exploring how cultural and institutional contexts mediate communication effectiveness.

Through these contributions, this paper positions economic communication as a maturing interdisciplinary domain that not only enriches scholarly debate but also informs the design of inclusive, resilient, and future-oriented economic policies.

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