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A Long Look Back: An Analysis of 50 Years of Organizational Communication Research (1964-2013)

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Abstract

As a means of understanding the identity and heritage of organizational communication scholarship, we conducted a content analysis of 1,399 articles published in communication journals since 1964. Our findings demonstrate key turning points in organizational communication scholarship, trends in the development of knowledge, and areas in which this discipline can continue to grow in future endeavors. While research has problematized power and has emphasized the constitutive nature of communication, more research is needed to explore alternative forms of organizing and to expand diversity scholarship beyond gender and nationality. While research has grown more theoretically complex, work can still be done developing meso-level theories that highlight the role of communication in various organizing processes. While qualitative methods have erased the dominance of quantitative methods, greater parity and an appreciation for how methods may inform each other would advance scholarly contributions. While the number of studies conducted in organizations has grown, the percentage of studies using field work methods has declined, increasing the risk that research may miss important contextual cues. We discuss the implications of these findings as a road map for new scholars wanting to understand what organizational communication has been and all scholars wanting to know what organizational communication can be.

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Highlights

- The authors reviewed 1,399 journal articles that addressed organizational communication.
- The most common topics in organizational communication have been supervisor-subordinate communication, diversity, and technology, corporate communication, socialization, and organizational change.
- The most common theory used in organizational communication research over the last 50 years has been media richness theory.
- About half of the empirical studies in organizational communication since 1964 have used quantitative research.
- Quantitative and qualitative research have been used with increasingly equal frequencies in recent organizational research.
- While field work is the most common means of collecting data, the percentage of studies using field work is declining.

Content

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HISTORIES 32
Research Questions 33
METHODS 34
Unitizing the Data 34
Coding the Data 35
RESULTS 37
Topical Domains 37
Figure 1. Percentage of Studies from Five Domains. 37
Theories 38
Data Collection and Analysis Methods 38
Sampling 39
Figure 2. Percentage of Data Collection Methods over Time. 39
DISCUSSION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH 40
Topical Domains 40
Figure 3. Percentage of Sampling Methods over Time. 40
Theories 42
Data Collection and Analysis 43
Sampling 44
LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION 45
REFERENCES 46
Table 1. *Comparison of Articles Included in the Sample by Year and by Journal.* *50*
Table 2. *Comparison of the Top Topical Domains Used by Year.* *52*
Table 3. *Comparison of the Top Theories Used by Year.* *56*
Table 4. *Comparison of Data Collection Methods by Year.* *58*
Table 5. *Comparison of Analysis Methods by Year.* *60*
Table 6. *Comparison of Sampling Methods by Year.* *62*
COPYRIGHTS AND REPOSITORIES 64

Most scholars spend their time focused on the day-to-day tasks of teaching and research and rarely reflect on how their contributions are situated within the history of their field (Miller, 2005). However, as the academic descendants of past scholars, present researchers can learn much about what they do and who they are intellectually by thinking about how history has shaped the present. Such a backward glance can reveal a field's history and thereby suggest trends for the future, allow scholars to see how their research overlaps with and extends others' work, and provide a sense of identity, even among scholars with diverse research aims and metatheoretical orientations (Wert-Gray, Center, Brashers, & Meyers, 1991). Within organizational communication, some of the topics that can be seen frequently in *Management Communication Quarterly* and other journals were not even imagined decades ago. Likewise, the topics that were of great interest to scholars in the 1960's and 1970's may seem answered, superficial, or unduly biased toward managerialism in light of research and theorizing today. The present study examined organizational communication research in order to better understand the scope of that stream of scholarship. We searched communication journals for organizational communication articles published since 1964. We then conducted a qualitative content analysis of the topical domains, theories, data collection and analysis methods, and sampling sources in these publications. These results provide a map of areas in which organizational communication research has developed as well as places where growth is still needed and can serve to help present scholars situate how their work builds upon, extends, and challenges past trends.

A Brief History of Histories

This is certainly not the only review of organizational communication history. Redding (1985), while noting that the term *organizational communication* would not appear in general use until the 1960's, reviewed studies in management, psychology, and industrial communication through the 1940's and 1950's that created a foundation for organizational communication research. He found that the prominent topics included management pragmatics (i.e., how to manage people), techniques for improving basic communication skills, and human relations. Tompkins (1967) conducted the earliest review of organizational communication research, per se, finding 100 studies that focused on organizational communication. Redding (1972) also provided an early and extensive review of organizational communication research. Redding and Tompkins (1988) updated that review fifteen years later. Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren (1999) summarized organizational communication by tracing the development of the field from a transmission metaphor to a constitutive perspective. In a similar approach, Taylor, Flanagin, Cheney, and Seibold (2001) contrasted earlier systems approaches with the rise of social construction, describing the interpretive and discursive turns in organizational communication research. Tompkins and Wanca-Thibault (2001) reviewed the field as a preface to the 2001 *New Handbook of Organizational Communication*. Putnam (Putnam & Boys, 2006; Putnam, Phillips, & Chapman, 1996) summarized current research in organizational communication in a series of metaphors. In addition to these chapters, the *Journal of Business Communication* published a history of organizational communication in 1974, and *Management Communication Quarterly* published a similar history in 2005.

These histories describe a rich legacy of scholarship, and each highlights important trends and ideas. Many of these histories use what Kuhn (2005) called institutionalized turning points to describe the field. They tell the story of organizational communication in terms of the authors' view of key events. Kuhn noted the danger in the institutionalization of any moment in history as that moment may prevent scholars from thinking beyond the boundaries of the once-new ideas of that turning point. Other than the authors' view of critical events, these histories offered little in the way of explanation for authors included and excluded. Most reviews also attempt to contextualize history as a way of explaining the present and, as such, do not claim to present the breadth of research done during any particular time period.

In the early 1990's two groups of researchers sought a more systematic examination of organizational communication research. Wert-Gray et al. (1991) examined journals in the Matlon *Index to Journals in Speech Communication* from 1979 through 1989, focusing on the research topics and methodological orientations in 289 articles during this period. Their results indicated that the most common research topics were climate/culture,

supervisor-subordinate communication, power/conflict/politics, information flow, and public organizational communication. Allen, Gotcher, and Seibert (1993) expanded the range of journals in a content analysis of the same period by including a number of management and organization science journals in their sample. They found 889 organizational communication articles published between 1980 and 1991. Allen et al. identified supervisor-subordinate communication as the most frequent topic of research. Other prevalent topics included communication skills, organizational culture, information flow, and power/influence. Salem (1999) summarized the topics, theories, methods, and applications of research for two decades (from 1975-1994), noting how the field had grown from a variable analytic, managerial focus to a theoretically rich, critical perspective.

The Wert-Gray et al. (1991) and Allen et al. (1993) reviews provide a more systematic approach with much analytic rigor as opposed to the critical events approaches of other reviews. However, they focused on only a single decade of research. Salem (1999) reviewed a longer time period but provided only broad strokes regarding the nature of research during that period rather than the more detailed analytical rigor of Wert-Gray et al. and Allen et al. In addition, all three of these reviews focused on research from more than 20 years ago. As will be demonstrated, the field of organizational communication has changed dramatically over the last 25 years.

The first organizational communication textbook was published in 1964 (Falcione, 1976; Redding, 1985). Given that it has been roughly 50 years since the field of organizational communication was codified into a textbook, we wanted to conduct a review of the research in that field using the rigor and systematic approach of Wert-Gray et al. and Allen et al. but broadening the scope to include research published since the offering of that first textbook. Rather than identifying turning points and critical events from our perspective, we wanted to examine organizational scholarship and allow those developments to emerge more organically. To that end, we conducted a content analysis of organizational communication scholarship published in communication studies journals from 1964 to 2013. In doing so, we dramatically increased the breadth of previous analyses (from 10-20 years to 50 years) while allowing historical trends to appear independent of what we think may or may not have been important events. In the discussion that follows, we then map some of those seminal turning points back on to the data to interpret the developments that we identified.

Research Questions

Our first point of inquiry was the topics of organizational communication studies. While the tables of contents of handbooks offer one look at the domains of study within organizational communication scholarship, those chapters are bound by space limitations and are often an attempt to describe the field as it is rather than as it has been. Thus, we sought to identify the topical domains present in organizational communication research.

RQ$_{1a}$: What are the dominant topical domains in organizational communication research?

RQ$_{1b}$: To what extent have the dominant topical domains in organizational communication research changed over time?

We were also interested in the theories that guided organizational communication research. Richetto (1977) and Salem (1999) noted that much of the early research in organizational communication was variable analytic and focused on using the latest methodological tools to study a phenomenon rather than developing and using theory to undergird research. Although using a theory in research question or hypothesis production privileges deductive research, developing and expanding theory represents one way to codify knowledge and understanding. Thus, our analysis examined the theories that were prevalent in organizational communication research with the understanding that such an approach might bias our findings in this area in favor of social science research. The most recent SAGE Handbook of Organizational Communication (Putnam & Mumby, 2014) listed eight theoretical frames (systems theory, structuration, critical and postmodern theories, feminist theories, postcolonial theories, communication constitutes organizations, and institutional theory). Naturally, a handbook cannot list every theory used in a field, and so we asked more broadly about the theories used in organizational communication research.

RQ$_{2a}$: What theories have been used in organizational communication research?

RQ$_{2b}$: To what extent have the theories used in orga-

nizational communication research changed over time?

Since the 1980's scholars have increasingly challenged the hegemony of positivist research, asserting the advantages of inductive and qualitative paradigms. The first Alta conference in 1981 certainly served as a milestone, making a case for the value of interpretive and critical research (Kuhn, 2005; Tracy & Geist-Martin, 2014; see Putnam & Pacanowsky, 1983). Miller, Poole, Seibold, and associates (2011) suggested that the pendulum had swung too far away from quantitative studies, such that quantitative scholars may feel excluded in some ways. Miller et al. argued for balance, saying that both positivist and interpretive research were important. We wanted to compare the prevalence of quantitative and qualitative research and also examine the degree to which that prevalence has changed since the Alta conference. We recognized that the difference between positivist and interpretive frames of reference does not always equate to the differences between research methods, but we felt that research methods would be easier to ascertain in reading a single article than the author's metatheoretical frame. Therefore, we asked the following research questions:

RQ$_{3a}$: What are the prominent methodologies in organizational communication research?

RQ$_{3b}$: To what extent has the prominence of various methodologies changed over time?

Scholars as early as the 1970's have noted that students are typically an inappropriate sample due to their limited experience in organizations (Richetto, 1977). Nevertheless, students are a handy resource for collecting data. A number of recent studies have used students, not as participants themselves, but to recruit participants who have full-time work experience (Miller et al., 2011). On the other hand, Doerfel and Gibbs (2014) called for more attention to deeply engaged field work in organizations as important for understanding the ways in which communication constitutes the context and histories of organizations. Given the contrast between convenience and validity, we wondered about the prevalence of various types of convenience samples and the extent to which sampling techniques have changed over time, which led to the following research questions:

RQ$_{4a}$: What is the nature of typical samples in organizational communication research?

RQ$_{4b}$: To what extent has the nature of typical samples changed over time?

Methods

We conducted a qualitative content analysis of the organizational communication literature in a number of journals from January 1964 through August 2013 to answer these questions. While it may be almost impossible to date the beginning of organizational communication studies, that date was chosen for several reasons. Richetto's (1977) review began with the Hawthorne studies in the 1920's, and Tompkins and Wanca-Thibault's (2001) review started at approximately the same time. Other scholars suggest that research in organizational communication began in the 1940's even if it was not called organizational communication (Redding, 1985; Taylor et al., 2001). Conrad (1985) identified 1955-1975 as the foundational years of organizational communication, which might indicate a date at least as early as 1955 for the beginning of the field. Similarly, Goodall (1984) began his review in 1955. However, Falcione (1976) noted that most of the graduate and undergraduate courses in organizational communication had been offered for less than five years. As previously mentioned, Falcione also stated that the first organizational communication textbook was published in 1964 (Redding & Sanborn, 1964 as cited in Falcione, 1976), codifying the field for teachers and students. Redding (1985) suggested that a series of conferences legitimized the term "organizational communication" beginning in 1967 and that Ph.D. programs began to proliferate in the the mid to late 1960's. Perhaps as important, Redding also noted that, other than dissertations, there was very little published research in organizational communication until the 1960's. Indeed, as we began to work backward through articles identifying organizational communication content, we noticed a steep decline in the number of organizational communication articles in these journals during the 1970's. This confirmed that, although 1964 cannot be considered the "start" of organizational communication research, it is sufficiently early to include most research relevant to the present study.

Unitizing the Data

We divided the time between 1964 and 2013 between the authors. Each person reviewed the tables of contents

in thirteen journals for the years of his or her time period, identifying articles that examined communication constituting organizations (even if the articles approached communication from a transmission perspective rather than a constitutive perspective). The first author reviewed the entire time range as a check on other authors' coding. The journals selected were: *Management Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Business Communication*, *Communication Monographs*, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *Human Communication Research*, *Communication Research*, *Communication Quarterly*, *Communication Studies*, *Southern Communication Journal*, *Western Journal of Communication*, *Communication Research Reports*, *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, and *Communication Reports*. This was a departure from Wert-Gray et al.'s (1991) use of the Matlon Index, because many of the journals in that index seemed unlikely to publish organizational communication research (e.g., *Argumentation and Advocacy* and *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*) while journals not included in that source might be more receptive (e.g., *Journal of Applied Communication Research*).

In using these journals, we made scope choices that are important to acknowledge. First, some organizational scholars publish in other journals (e.g., *Administrative Science Quarterly* or *Human Relations*) and indeed, Allen et al. (1993) found a number of organizational communication studies in management, sociology, and psychology journals. Nevertheless, we believed that communication journals were likely to be representative of core ideas in organizational communication scholarship. We also excluded edited book chapters, which are a significant outlet for organizational communication scholars (DeWine & Daniels, 1993). That might be especially true for early interpretive and critical research in the 1980's as those approaches were still gaining legitimacy. This was done for a practical reason as it seemed impossible to objectively determine which edited books to include and which to exclude. Additionally, we believed that journal articles were likely to be indicative of the areas of importance within the field even if such articles were not exhaustive. Other content analyses have similarly excluded edited book chapters (see Doerfel & Gibbs, 2014, and Tracy & Geist-Martin, 2014). We also excluded handbook chapters, state-of-the-art reviews, and textbooks.

In identifying organizational communication articles, we included both empirical as well as conceptual articles. We did not include articles that described research methods for studying organizations unless those articles included an actual study of an organization. We also did not include articles that focused specifically on skills needed in organizations (e.g., studies of effective business writing or interviewing) or on educating students in communication courses/programs. We included research on group communication if it focused exclusively on workgroups and identified the significance of the organizational context, but we excluded research that was solely focused on the functions of a group. Similarly, we included research on leadership only if the article examined leadership in the context of organizing. Finally, we excluded forums, commentaries, and book reviews. Discussions between the first author and each coauthor served to refine which articles were included and which were exclude. The final data set included 1,399 articles. Table 1 displays the number of articles per journal per year of publication.

Coding the Data

Previous histories have listed topics that are commonly studied in organizational communication. Those lists could have been consulted to form a codebook that could be used to quantitatively analyze our data. However, most of those lists are somewhat bound to particular time periods (i.e., 1979-1989, Wert-Gray et al., 1991; 1980-1991, Allen et al., 1993; 2001-2013, Putnam & Mumby, 2014). Because of the extensive time included in our sample, we chose to inductively explore the topics discussed in each article. We first examined the title, abstract, and author-supplied keywords (when provided). Each researcher compared articles in his or her time period to develop categories (e.g., supervisor compliance-gaining, managerial style, and upward communication became supervisor-subordinate communication). We then met and compared topical domains by taking turns writing the topics from each time period on approximately 15 square meters of whiteboard. As each researcher saw that someone had already written a topic that he or she had also found, that researcher would put a tick mark next to it. This allowed us to visualize the range of ideas and generate a tentative list of topics. We then returned to the data and sorted topics into more general domains.

For example, organizational change, downsizing, and mergers/acquisitions were grouped together under the heading of change. These became the themes that are reported in the results section to answer the first research questions. Although we tried to categorize each article with only one topic when possible, if two or more topical domains were equally dominant in an article, all of the main topics of the article were included in the analysis.

We also coded any theories used in the article. At some points, it was quite difficult to define what was a theory and what was not a theory. Theories approach organizational phenomenon at different levels with some theories being very broad, macro-level theories or even metatheories (e.g., structuration theory and systems theory) while other theories are much more fine-grained, microlevel theory, dealing with very specific kinds of interactions (e.g., communication accommodation theory). Other theories are micro-level applications of macro theories (e.g., structurational theory of identification). While we could have imposed a system of classification, instead, we used the word *theory* broadly and tried to rely on the original theorist(s) to set boundaries on what was and was not a theory.

For those articles that were available as electronic documents and were able to be scanned, we searched for the root *theor* to identify the theories used. For articles that were not available electronically, we skimmed each article looking for the word *theory*. We also skimmed the abstract for any theories that did not include the word *theory* (e.g., communication constitutes organizations). We excluded any reference to *organizational theory* or *communication theory* that did not reference a specific theory. Similarly, we excluded references to *postmodern theory* because the tenets of postmodernism prohibit such a singular theory. We also chose not to include *theoretical work* that did not result in or originate from a named theory. For example, a great deal of theoretical work has examined socialization in organizations, but there is not a "theory" of socialization in the same way that the theory of unobtrusive control and structuration theory exist as named theories (see Kramer & Miller, 2014). The choice to exclude theoretical work that did not result in or originate from a named theory, which admittedly favored traditional social science theories over interpretive work, was made in part because of scope considerations, but practically, it provided a more definitive criteria from which to proceed with coding.

For empirical studies (n = 1,237), we recorded the method of data collection (e.g., surveys, interviews, observation), the method of data analysis (e.g., constant comparative analysis, regression), and the nature of the sample (e.g., field studies, students, student-recruited employee samples). In doing so, we tried to be faithful to the methods description in the article while capturing similarities between methods. For data collection, many interpretive studies used a combination of qualitative methods, and in these instances, we coded those data collections as *combination qualitative*. These were often a combination of interviews and participant observations. Some studies used qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data, and we coded these as *qualitative + quantitative*. The exception to that was if the purpose of the qualitative data was to generate items for a quantitative survey rather than to stand side-by-side with the quantitative data; for those instances where survey item generation was the centerpiece of the study, we coded that as *survey*.

For quantitative studies, if only one method of analysis was used to answer research questions or hypotheses (e.g., analysis of variance), we recorded that method. If more than one statistical test was used to address the research questions or hypotheses, we coded that as *mixed statistics*. If data were content analyzed where the researcher(s) attempted to fit the data into a priori categories, particularly if intercoder reliability was reported, we coded that as *content analysis*. For qualitative studies, various studies used the terms grounded analysis and constant comparative analysis almost interchangeably. Nevertheless, we wanted to preserve, as much as possible, any distinctions in the usage of these methods. Therefore, we developed the following rules. If a study stated that results were analyzed using a constant comparative analysis, we recorded that as the analysis method. If qualitative studies stated that a grounded approach was used to analyze the data and if the study did not mention constant comparative analysis, we coded the analysis method as *grounded analysis*. If the study did not use the terms constant comparative analysis or grounded analysis but did describe a process by which themes or central ideas emerged from the data, we coded that as *thematic analysis*. If the qualitative study did not directly specify the methods of analysis but seemed to use data to describe how

ideas connected to a specific example, we coded that as *case study analysis*.

Regarding sampling, if data were collected in an organizational context (i.e., if participants were employees in a single organization or if the researcher collected data from the employees of several organizations), that was coded as *organization*. If the researcher used his or her contacts to connect to sources, we coded that as *snowball sample*. If students were used to recruit participants, we coded that as *student-recruited sample*. While this last example is also a snowball technique, we wanted to differentiate between researcher contacts and students as recruiters. If we could not be sure, we coded that as snowball sampling.

Our analysis of theories and methods largely proceeded along the same lines as for topics. Each author coded the data within his or her date range. We met and discussed the theories and methods that we found using whiteboards to map our ideas. Discussions among all authors served to refine the final codes used. The entire dataset was developed by consensus and is available at http://www.drgarnerresearch.com/literatureanalysis.html (doi: 10.12840/issn.2255-4165.2016.04.01.009data).

Results

Topical Domains

The first research questions addressed the topics that were prevalent in organizational communication studies over the last 50 years. As we analyzed the data, 72 domain codes emerged. Table 2 compares the top 31 topical domains (those found in 10 or more articles) as compared to year of publication. The most common topical domains were supervisor-subordinate communication, diversity (which included gender and race studies and intercultural/international communication in organizations), technology, corporate communication (i.e., corporate discourse, public relations), socialization, organizational change, and crisis/risk communication. We analyzed those domains over time by drawing line graphs of publication activity and projecting trendlines out five years beyond our sample. Several ideas emerged in this way. The work on supervisor-subordinate communication seemed to have peaked in 1990 and has rapidly declined

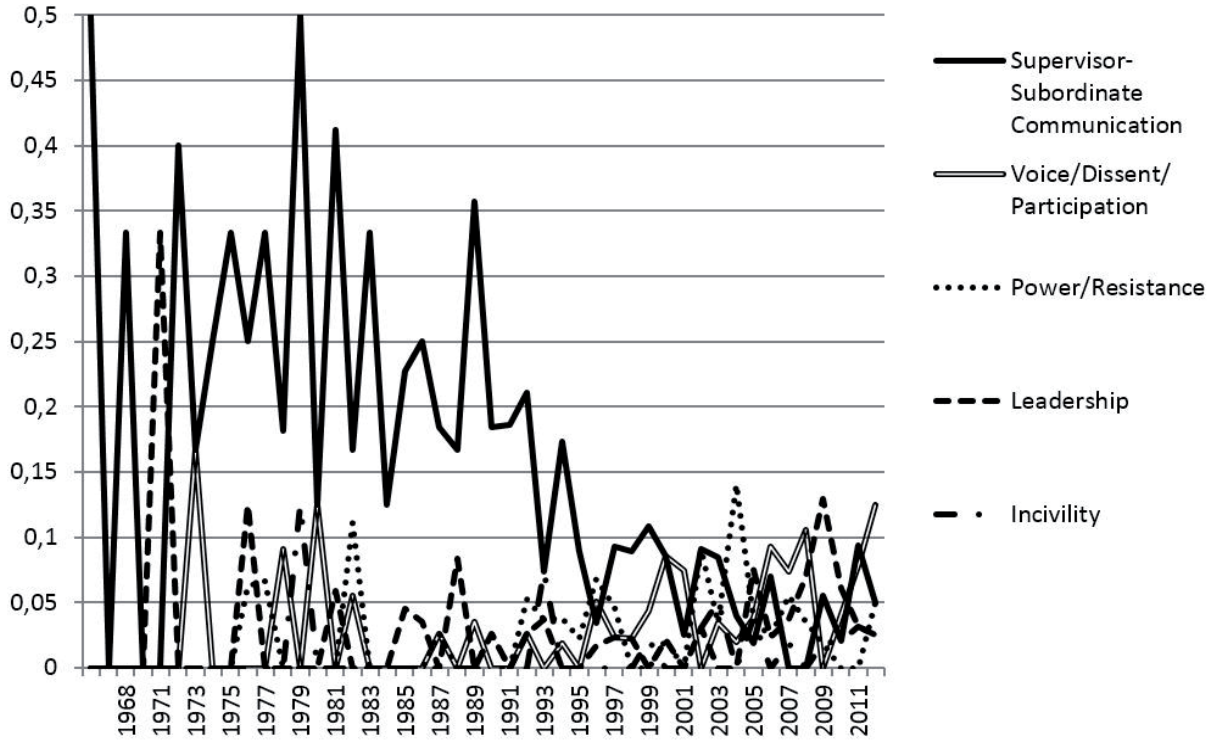

Figure 1. Percentage of Studies from Five Domains.

since then. Figure 1 displays the percentage of studies that were classified as supervisor-subordinate communication contrasted with studies of employee voice/dissent participation, power/resistance, leadership, and incivility, all of which might be alternative frames with which to view the supervisor-subordinate dyad. The percentage of studies that focused on information/knowledge management showed a similar decrease as organizational communication studies expanded from examining how information was transmitted in organizations to other topics, and research shifted to more of a constitutive view. Finally, some topics had increased in frequency for a while but had declined recently. Climate/culture and sexual harassment are two examples of such curvilinear patterns.

Theories

The second research questions addressed the theories used in organizational communication research. More than 50% of studies were not guided by a named theory. Of those that were, the most common theories used were media richness theory, leader-member exchange theory, structuration theory, and uncertainty reduction theory. There were 251 theories mentioned a total of 745 times (some articles cited more than one theory). Because a table with 251 columns is unwieldy, Table 3 displays the 18 most common theories by year of publication. These 18 theories accounted for 318 (42.7%) of the theories mentioned and included every theory mentioned ten or more times in our sample. As we examined Table 3, the use of several theories was declining as the use of others increased. Although systems theory, genre theory, and information theory were among the most commonly mentioned theories, recent studies have moved away from these perspectives. At the same time, research using leader-member exchange theory, structuration theory, dialectics theory and social identity theory was increasing. The percentage of studies that do not use at least one named theory as a rationale for their study has declined. Finally, it is worth noting that most of the theories guiding organizational communication research first appeared in communication journals in the last 25 to 30 years. The number of theories used increased most dramatically between 1987 and 1992.

Because of the large number of theories used over the last 50 years, we decided to conduct a post hoc analysis of the most common theories since 2000. The most common theories between 2000 and 2013 were structuration theory (20 articles), leader-member exchange (19), dialectics (16), media richness theory (16), social identity theory (12), and institutional theory (10). The increased prominence of theories such as structuration and dialectics may reflect a greater balance between positivistic and interpretive perspectives.

Data Collection and Analysis Methods

The third research questions examined the methods used to study organizational communication in the 1237 articles that presented empirical research. These questions were addressed in terms of the data collection methods and in terms of the data analysis methods. Table 4 displays the frequencies of data collection methods used as compared to year of publication, and Table 5 displays the frequencies of the 16 most common data analysis methods as compared to year. Overall, 49% of empirical studies in organizational communication research used quantitative methods to collect data while 44 % of studies used qualitative methods. Figure 2 compares the percentage of studies using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method data collection along with studies analyzing existing texts such as websites, press releases, and employee manuals. As can be seen in the figure, studies were predominantly quantitative through 1990, studies oscillated between quantitative-dominance and parity through the 1990's, studies were predominantly qualitative through the 2000's, and studies have been close to parity for the last two years. By contrast, research combining qualitative and quantitative data collection peaked in the mid-1990's and has represented a smaller percentage of studies since then. That trend is present in both data collection and analysis.

The most common methods of quantitative analyses were studies using a combination of statistical tests followed by those that answered hypotheses or research questions using regression or structural equation modeling (SEM). Studies relying solely on bivariate correlations declined in frequency as more quantitative studies used regression and SEM. The most common methods of qualitative analyses included case study analysis, the-

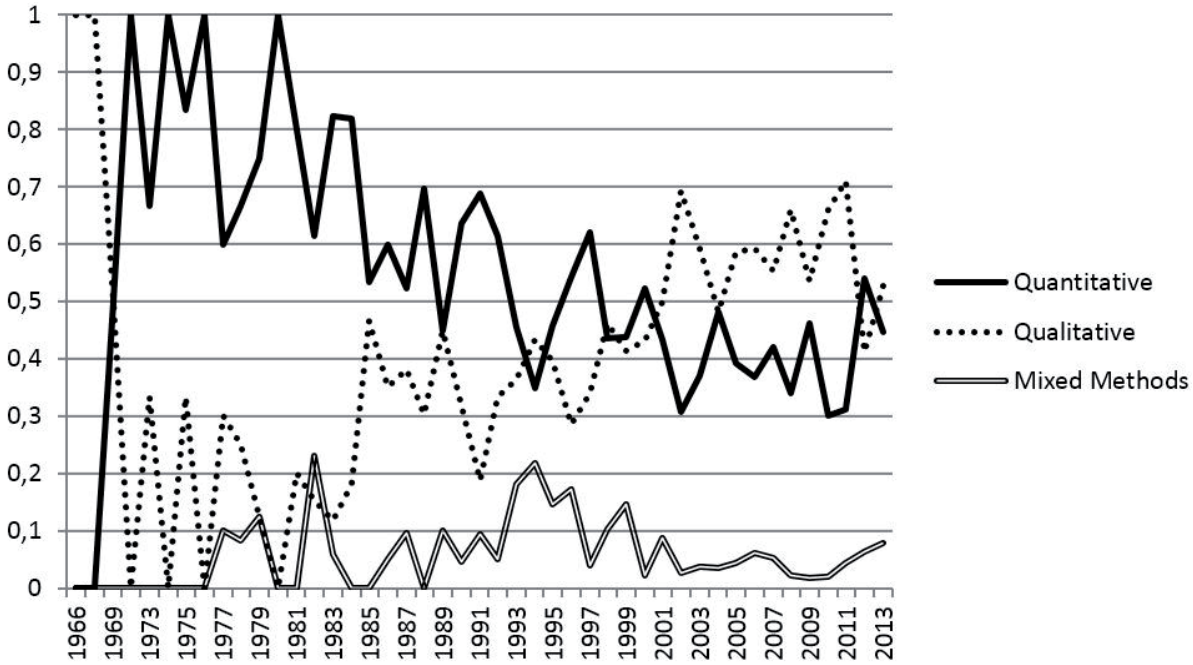

Figure 2. Percentage of Data Collection Methods over Time.

matic analysis (with no mention of grounded theory or constant comparison analysis), and constant comparative analysis. While grounded theory and constant comparative analysis were developed in the 1960's (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 is generally the earliest citation associated with these methods), they were not prominently used in organizational communication articles until the late 1990's and early 2000's.

One particular type of study that we noticed prominently in the 1990's and 2000's were crisis communication research articles that analyzed existing texts of a company's response to a crisis using a case study analysis. This combination of topical domain, data collection method, and data analysis accounted for 50% of all research on crisis and risk communication. Similarly, several other domains relied on one primary methodology. For example, research on conflict management, humor, and workplace relationships predominantly used survey research and quantitative analyses.

Sampling

The fourth research questions focused on the nature of samples in organizational communication research. Table 6 displays the frequencies of various sampling methods over time. More than 50% of empirical studies used samples from one or more organizations rather than snowball sampling or student/student-recruited sampling. As seen in the table, organizational field studies, snowball sampling, student-recruited sampling, and the use of students as samples all increased. However, those numbers are deceptive because the overall number of empirical studies increased as well. Figure 3 graphically illustrates the relative percentages of these sampling methods over time. The percentage of studies that used an organization or several organizations as the sample rather than using some type of convenience sample has decreased over time. Thus, while more half of all of the empirical studies in organizational communication over the last 50 years have used organizations as samples, the percentage of studies doing so has declined since about 1989. The trendline predicts that such field studies will represent less than half of empirical research in the near future. Over that same period of time, the percentage of studies using snowball samples from authors' contacts and using student-recruited samples has increased. The percentage of studies examining texts in organizations (web sites, training manuals, annual reports, etc.) has also increased, possibly due to the increased accessibility of these texts via the Internet. Approximately 20% of empirical studies over the last decade have used existing texts as the sample, and trendlines suggest that number will rise.

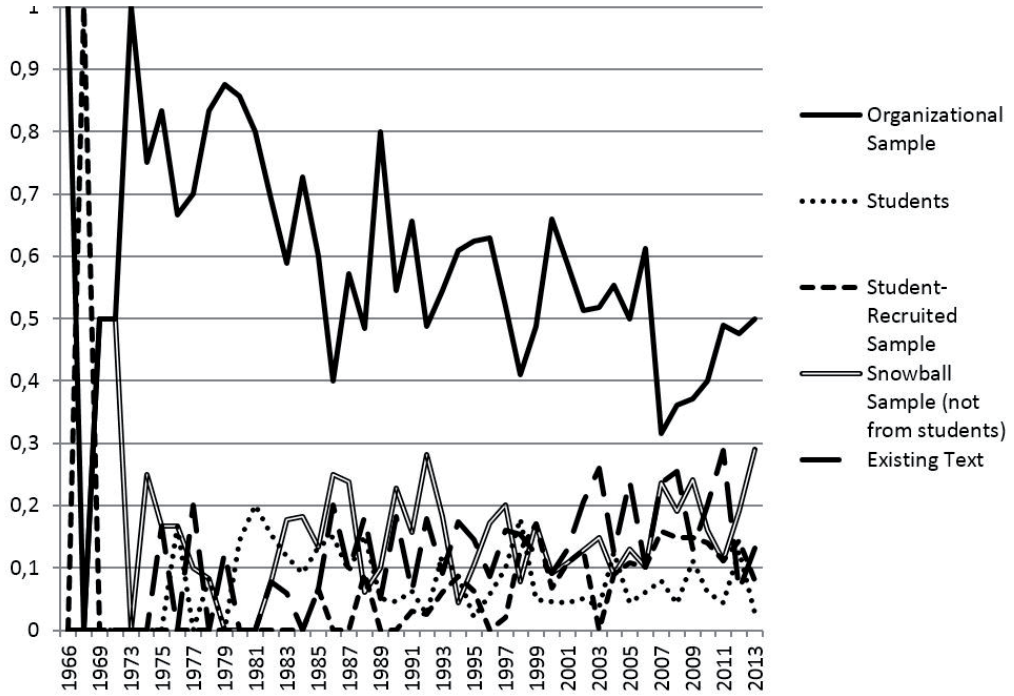

Figure 3. Percentage of Sampling Methods over Time.

Discussion and Opportunities for Growth

As we unpacked these results, we looked for patterns that spoke to the identity of organizational communication scholarship. We also examined anything that might indicate a gap in knowledge, a weakness in current research, or an area needing further attention. The following paragraphs describe our interpretation of these data as well as such opportunities for growth in the coming years.

Topical Domains

Consistent with Allen et al. (1993) and Tompkins (1967), we found that the most frequently studied topic in organizational communication was supervisor-subordinate communication. However, as we unpacked that prevalence, we discovered that, while this was the most common topical domain, the number of supervisor-subordinate communication studies was declining. During the 1980's, studies in this topic tended to focus on downward influence (i.e., Infante & Gorden, 1985) and/or managerial style (i.e., Richmond, McCroskey, & Davis, 1982). Downward influence was still popular in the 1990's although it had extended to include upward influence to a greater degree than did earlier research (i.e., Krone, 1992). Research in the 1990's also began to focus on relational communication between supervisors and subordinates (i.e., Lee & Jablin, 1995; Sias & Jablin, 1995) even as other areas began to emerge that offered additional nuances in framing the supervisor-subordinate dyad. These developments meant that there were relatively few studies examining supervisor-subordinate communication in any way that resembled studies from the 1970's and 1980's. More recently, studies of downward communication seem to have been replaced by research on power and resistance that challenges linear, top-down understandings of influence (i.e., Ashcraft, 2005; Gossett, 2006; Mumby, 2005). While early research focused on managerial style, contemporary scholarship has questioned managerialism by studying organizational participation (i.e., Harter, 2004; Stohl & Cheney, 2001) and employee dissent (i.e., Garner, 2009; Kassing, 1997). The studies that do examine leaders' roles in organizations, rather than examining managerial style or downward influence, tend to focus on the social construction and discursive nature of leadership (i.e., Fairhurst & Grant, 2010).

Taken together, this shift seems to emphasize some of Mumby and Stohl's (1996) central problematics in orga-

nizational communication. Mumby and Stohl suggested that the field of organizational communication is held together by four problematics—voice, rationality, organization, and organization-society relationship. The problematic of voice questions whose voice counts in organizations. The problematic of rationality questions what determines success in organizations. The problematic of organization redefines what is meant by the word "organization." The problematic of organization-society relationship reflects the permeable boundaries that exist in and around organizations. The move from managerial studies of supervisor-subordinate communication to studies of power, resistance, participation, dissent, and discourse in our data emphasizes the emergence of the problematics of voice and rationality. As organizational communication research developed through the 1990's and particularly 2000's, scholars began questioning traditional answers to whose voice counts and how success is defined in organizations.

At the same time, growth is still needed in the problematic of organization. While scholars have recently begun to heed Lewis' (2005) call to consider diverse types of organization, most research in organizational communication focuses on for-profit businesses. A handful of scholars in the 1980's and 1990's examined government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Since Lewis' seminal work, research on nonprofit organizations has become more prevalent as volunteers and voluntary organizations have become suitable arenas of study (i.e., Iverson & McPhee, 2008; Kramer, 2011). Scholars have also recognized that churches are significant organizations in society (i.e., McNamee, 2011). Nevertheless, these studies represent a small fraction of research in the field. Scholars studying less traditional forms of organizing talk of the struggles they face in convincing reviewers that they are, in fact, studying organizations, despite the reality that many organizations in contemporary society do not fit the mold of "traditional" organization. Scott's (2013) recent book on hidden organizations and the recent special issue of Management Communication Quarterly on the same subject are promising developments. Growth is still needed in exploring alternative forms of organizing, and scholars need to continue pushing the boundaries of what defines an organization.

Research on diversity, which was lacking in earlier decades (Allen et al., 1993), expanded through the 1990's. The number of studies examining issues of gender, intercultural communication, and international communication increased dramatically over the last two decades, with 14 articles published in 1996 and 2010 alone. Even the nature of diversity research has changed. Early studies compared the management styles of men and women (i.e., Baird & Bradley, 1979; Lamude & Daniels, 1984), where gender was seen as a variable influencing managers' communication. Other studies examined national/cultural differences as predictors of communication style or preferences (i.e., Rossi & Todd-Mancillas, 1985; Sullivan & Kameda, 1982). In the 1990's, researchers still studied diversity as a set of variables that influenced communication, but other scholars began to explore this topic in deeper ways. For example, Ashcraft and Pacanowsky (1996) examined women's narratives as they constituted a sense of community and self while Allen (1996) provided an autobiographical account of race and gender in socialization processes. Rather than a variable that influences the main topic of study (i.e., communication style), gender, race, nationality, and other areas of differentness became main topics of study themselves. Many of the articles published in the 1990's were essays laying out conceptual arguments regarding diversity (i.e., Mumby, 1996). In the 2000's, there were fewer essays and more empirical studies, perhaps as scholars sought data with which to explore the ideas begun a decade earlier. While Allen et al. (1993) lamented that research on diversity was sparse in the 1980's, that research has grown in quantity and depth since then. Some of that growth is likely due to the increased importance of globalization (i.e., the Journal of Business Communication devoted two issues to international and intercultural organizational communication in 2010), but we suspect that much of it stems from increasing awareness of a culturally diverse and gendered workplace. Scholars have begun to focus attention on the ways in which organization marginalize minority members. At the same time, such focus is generally narrowed to gender diversity and international/intercultural diversity. There is very little research examining racial diversity in organizations (beyond considering race as a variable in quantitative studies). We found only two studies examining diversity related to persons with disabilities (Cohen & Acanzino, 2010; Harter, Scott, Novak, Leeman, & Morris, 2006). Little research has explored ways in which people in

other minority groups can be marginalized in organizations. These represent important areas of growth for communication scholars.

Increases in the frequency of some topical domains can be seen based on seminal works. For example, Mumby and Putnam (1992) conceptualized bounded emotionality and called for more research on emotion in organizations. The research on emotions in organizational communication prior to 1992 was predominantly concerned with stress and burnout (i.e., Miller, Stiff, & Ellis, 1988). That research continued through the 1990's and 2000's, but communication scholars began studying emotional labor (i.e., Tracy & Tracy, 1998), emotional narratives, (i.e., Miller, 2002; Miller, Considine, & Garner, 2007), and emotions in power relationships (i.e., Scarduzio, 2011). Despite these studies and their challenge to the ability of people to compartmentalize their emotions, there is still an expectation of rationality in organizations (Dougherty & Drumheller, 2006). Dougherty and Drumheller's work on sensemaking and emotions may provide an interesting stepping off point as scholars seek to demonstrate the prevalence of nonrational responses in organizations and to explore the ways in which emotions are important in organizational members' social constructions of organizational life. In addition to research in these areas, organizational communication scholars could do better as voices in popular circles against the chimeric emphasis on rationality and efficiency by communicating our research in nonacademic outlets in addition to scholarly publications.

As organizational communication scholars have embraced the constitutive perspective and as technological capabilities have increased, research on technology and communication channels has changed. Studies in the 1970's and 1980's examined how organizations processed information, and much of the research on communication channels related to transmitting information to the right person (i.e., Arntson & Smith, 1978). More recent scholarship has focused on contemporary technologies, of course, but has also reflected the dynamics of power and discourse that are inherent in technology. For example, Gossett and Kilker (2006) studied dissent and resistance in a counterinstitutional web site, finding that the site provided participants the ability to express disagreement and find community in that disagreement when such communication was taboo through official channels. Similarly, Larson and Pepper (2011) found that the ways in which members' identification with their organization and those members' use of technology were mutually entailed. Their study illustrated that technology is not an objective entity in organizations by which information is transmitted but instead plays a role in the coconstruction of organizational membership. These are just two studies that exemplify the constitutive power of technology in organizations, an area of increasing interest. What may be most important for this area is to take research into nonacademic outlets, helping practitioners understand communication and technology in their organizations. Organizational communication scholars are particularly well suited to challenging the myth of more or better technology equating to better communication. Scholars can instead emphasize the important ways in which our choices regarding communication technologies shape the organizational environment.

Theories

Organizational communication research shifted to a more theoretical focus in the late 1980's and early 1990's. There are several possible explanations for this increase in theory usage. The first handbooks of organizational communication were published in 1987, and these handbooks could have codified the field in such a way as to extend scholarship in theoretical directions. Since that time, the percentage of studies that have been guided by one or more theories has increased steadily, despite the stringent coding that we used. The increase in the number of theories used may indicate an arrival for a field that has sometimes perceived itself to be in the shadow of business schools (Mumby & Stohl, 1996).

It was notable that few of the theories listed in Table 3 have originated in organizational communication. Media richness theory and institutional theory originated from the field of management. Leader-member and social exchange theories, social identity theory, and social influence theory began in psychology. Structuration theory and standpoint theory were developed in sociology. Uncertainty reduction theory and social information processing theory are credited to interpersonal communication scholars. In fact, the only theory listed in Table 3 that originated within organizational communication is

Tompkins and Cheney's (1985) theory of unobtrusive control. Communication Constitutes Organization is a dominant theory (or even metatheory) that has developed within organizational communication, but its recency means that it was not as frequently used as the theories listed in Table 3. There is nothing inherently wrong with borrowing theories from other fields. At the same time, we wondered if organizational communication studies might be ripe for more efforts to develop communicative theories of organizations, perhaps along the lines of Kuhn and Ashcraft's (2003) theory of the firm. Kuhn and Ashcraft examined the phenomenon of corporate scandals and found existing management theories inadequately explained the social processes and meaning development that occurs as companies face scandals. Their theory uses a constitutive perspective of organizational communication to address that shortcoming. Organizational communication researchers could do more over the next 50 years to examine the deficiencies in existing theory and advance meaningful theories for how core ideas from organizational communication could advance scholarship.

A counter to that suggestion is that organizational communication is rife with areas in which, while there is no named "theory" per se, there is a substantial body of literature centered around theoretical work. One such example is organizational socialization. While the concept of organizational socialization seems to have originated in sociology and management literature (i.e., Van Maanen, 1975), most scholars in organizational communication trace their research back to Jablin's (1984) foundational research. A number of scholars studying socialization describe Jablin's ideas as a theory. Waldeck and Myers (2008) authored a chapter that reviewed "organizational assimilation theory and research," which is indicative of this trend. Nevertheless, Kramer and Miller (2014) noted that Jablin's model is more of a descriptive framework rather than a theory. Consequently, we did not code scholarship in this area as a named theory, even though it seems to have many of the elements of an organizational communication theory.

At the same time, we present these theories with an important caveat. We only coded theories that were named, which may have privileged traditional social science theories over interpretive theories. Indeed, we saw several studies that worked to develop grounded theory. These ideas generally did not rise to the level of abstraction associated with named theories, which meant that they were excluded from our analysis. The most recent Handbook of Organizational Communication referenced several theories and approaches, and we followed its conventions with few exceptions. For instance, the handbook refers to systems theory, structuration theory, and institutional theory, but postmodernism and postcolonial approaches. While some articles used the term "postmodern theory," a single theory of postmodernism could not exist (because postmodernism would reject such a singular narrative). Instead, those authors were using "postmodern theory" to situate their study within the metatheoretical lens of postmodernism and the theoretical work associated with that lens. We did make three exceptions to the handbook conventions. First, we treated communication constitutes organizations as a theory because that is how recent work seems to be moving. It was not a particularly prominent theory because it has only recently become popular more contemporary and because some research using this theory does not refer to it explicitly. Second, we did not include critical theory among our theories because most work using that perspective does not use critical theory as a unified lens. Similarly, although the handbook refers to feminist theory, there are many varieties of feminist thought. As we read these articles, only those articles using standpoint feminism seemed to refer to what they were doing as *theory*.

While theoretical work is important, there may be a sense of external validation in a named theory. Given the dramatic growth of organizational communication, perhaps it is time for additional work along that line. While a macro-level "theory of everything" is inappropriate in organizational communication (see Corman & Poole, 2000), we could not help but wonder if organizational communication research was ripe for more meso-level theories, theories that conceptualize how communication constitutes particular aspects of organizing. Kuhn and Ashcraft's (2003) theory is one example of how such theorizing might work.

Data Collection and Analysis

The graphical representation of the growth of qualitative research was particularly illuminating. While there are a number of factors responsible for that growth, the

largest increase in the percentage of studies using qualitative methods of data collection occurred between 1983 and 1985, immediately after the publication of essays from the first Alta conference (Putnam & Pacanowsky, 1983). That has consistently been identified as a turning point in organizational communication research (Tracy & Geist-Martin, 2014), and these data graphically demonstrate its importance. It is also worth noting the increased interest in grounded theory and constant comparative analysis that corresponded to the prevalence of qualitative studies in the late 1990's and early 2000's. While both techniques existed prior to that time, scholars increasingly began using those terms to describe their analyses beginning in 1999 and 2000. Those are now the dominant qualitative analyses methods, having replaced the more general thematic analysis. Kuhn (2005) suggested that some generalizations overplay the importance of the first Alta conference and that its significance was perhaps a product of the intellectual climate that had already been created by its participants. While that certainly may be true, our results demonstrate the increase in research using qualitative research immediately following the publication of proceedings from the conference. Either the conference itself or the comradery experienced by participants and their protégés seems to have energized scholars using qualitative methods.

Miller et al. (2011) commented that, after decades of dominance, it seemed that perhaps quantitative studies were now being marginalized by qualitative research. Our data did indicate that, for the first decade of the 21st century, qualitative studies outpaced quantitative ones. Miller et al. advocated for methodological balance. While data from 2012 and 2013 indicate greater parity than previous decades, it is too early to know if researchers have found such balance. Part of their argument was based on the availability of newer, more sophisticated methods of quantitative analyses such as network analyses and multilevel modeling. Although the specific methods that they described have not been available long enough to be prominent in our results, such growth has been evident in the past. In studies using only one statistical method, bivariate correlation was the dominant method chosen until the mid-1980's, when regression and SEM became more popular than reporting correlations alone. Scholars in other fields have argued that the research question should drive the methods used rather than letting one's methodological preferences dictate the questions to be asked (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). As such an approach becomes more prevalent in organizational communication, one might expect balance among various methods of data collection and analysis since some methods will be better suited for some questions than others.

Perhaps more importantly, different methods should inform each other. Myers (2014) called for increased scholarship using mixed methods. She noted an increase in the use of mixed methods in a variety of fields and even the development of an interdisciplinary Journal of Mixed Methods Research. However, within organizational communication, the number of articles using mixed methods rose through the early 1990's as qualitative research became more popular but has since declined slightly. Myers noted a variety of reasons why scholars might be hesitant to use mixed methods designs such as the uncertainty of leaving one's comfort zone, the pressure to complete projects quickly, and the pressure to have higher numbers of articles (and so publishing the results of a mixed methods project separately). Organizational communication is particularly suited for mixed methods research, given the focus of scholarship on addressing practical concerns (Barge & Shockley-Zalabak, 2008). A single method may not adequately answer those concerns. This is certainly an area in which organizational communication scholarship needs to grow.

Sampling

Doerfel and Gibbs (2014) analyzed recent organizational communication scholarship that sampled from organizations using field work. They proposed a continuum of field work that moved from only slightly embedded in the context of the organization to fully embedded in that context. We included the entire continuum in our code that focused on data collected from organizations (as opposed to convenience samples or students). Doerfel and Gibbs found that the number of studies using field work was increasing. Our results cannot be precisely compared to that study since there was not complete overlap between the journals that we used and the ones that they used. Nevertheless, our data confirmed that the number of studies using field work is increasing.

However, that finding could be misleading. While more studies are collecting data from organizations than

in past decades, the percentage of studies doing so is declining as an increasing amount of organizational communication scholarship relies on snowball samples and student-recruited samples. One possible explanation for this trend could be the increasing need to conduct studies and publish results quickly due to funding or tenure and promotion pressures. Convenience samples, almost by definition, are more expedient to recruit. In some cases, these convenience samples might represent a cross-section of organizations or industries, which could be an advantage when compared to research conducted in a single organization. At the same time, Miller et al. (2011) explained the problems associated with convenience sampling, including the lack of organizational context in interpreting results. Studies using samples across organizations tend to underemphasize elements of context and history that are more likely to be found in studies using samples collected within one or more organizations. Reversing this trend is an important area of growth. While convenience samples may be important for exploratory work or for topics that might prove difficult to capture in organizational samples, movement away from field work could indicate a detachment from core ideas regarding how communication constitutes the organization.

As we examined our results, we found it particularly troubling that some topics seemed to rely more heavily on convenience samples with little regard for field studies in organizations. For example, the majority of studies examining organizational dissent were conducted with student-recruited samples. When those studying a particular topic or theory rely exclusively on a single sampling technique, they likely miss important nuances that could be revealed by varying the sample. Scholars should consider the sampling methods that others have used to examine a particular topic and extend research on that topic by using other types of samples in the same way that one might use mixed methods to triangulate data.

Limitations and Conclusion

As was true with every study included in these data, the present analysis is not without caveats and limitations. The purpose of the study was to examine the prevalence of topics, theories, and methods present in organizational communication literature, but doing so sacrificed the depth of exploring what we know about those ideas. That is particularly true in terms of the theory and methods sections. While we sought greater breadth in these areas, we sacrificed the depth that could have come with a more precise taxonomy of theory and of research methods. In terms of theory, some of the theories that we found were broad, macrotheories (or even metatheories) while others were much narrower. We grouped those theories together to examine the breadth of conceptualizations in organizational communication research, but future researchers might want to explore theories within various levels of analysis. The articles included in this corpus came from thirteen particular journals. Certainly organizational communication scholars publish in outlets beyond what we examined for this study, including management journals and health communication sources. We also excluded book chapters which are popular outlets for some organizational communication scholars. As previously mentioned, another limitation was our coding of theory, which privileged certain kinds of theory (specifically social science theories) while neglecting other kinds of theory (such as interpretive theories). Since theories are often abstractions beyond singular, subjective experiences, much of the research in organizational communication may not be captured by that type of generalization. Finally, even our interpretation of the topics examined in each article is also a limitation. While we based our coding on author-supplied keywords and topics identified in article titles and abstracts, others might have coded topics differently. DeWine and Daniels (1993) criticized Allen et al. (1993) and Wert-Gray et al. (1991) for their choices of topic categories, and our choices are certainly open to criticism as well. However, we have an advantage that previous reviews did not have available. Regarding differences in coding as well as the possibility that we missed articles that should have been included, we invite the scholarly community to participate in the refinement of our data. The data are available at http://www.drgarnerresearch.com/literatureanalysis.html in spreadsheet form for two reasons. First, we invite other scholars to examine, critique, and revise the data. We plan to maintain the spreadsheet as a living document in that way. Second, this spreadsheet is a record of the majority of organizational communication research from the last 50 years. We offer it as a resource to scholars wanting to examine a particular area or to better under-

stand how their research fits with other studies, and we look forward to how that research shapes the next 50 years.

In conclusion, organizational communication research has changed dramatically since 1964. Topics of interest in recent years could not have been imagined 50 years ago while some of the research questions from earlier generations of study seem superficial by today's standards. Our findings have demonstrated a number of turning points and seminal work as well as trends in the development of scholarship. These analyses also illustrated areas where organizational communication research can continue to grow, such as an increased exploration of alternative forms of organizing, expanded work on diversity scholarship and additional theorizing. In empirical studies, future research can advance through an appreciation of methodological balance and increased fieldwork in organizations. Given the evolution of the field since 1964, we look forward to seeing how scholarship progresses over the next 50 years and beyond.

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Table 1. *Comparison of Articles Included in the Sample by Year and by Journal.* Back to text

	CM	CQ	CRp	CRs	CRR	CS	HCR	JAC	JBC	MCQ	QR	SJ	WJ	Total
1966									2					2
1968									2					2
1969									3					3
1971						1							1	2
1972									3					3
1973						1		2	2					5
1974								1	5					6
1975				1			1	1	4				1	8
1976							1	2	2				1	6
1977	2	1				2	2	1	7			1		16
1978	3	1					1		10					15
1979	1	3						4	3					11
1980		1		1			1	1	4					8
1981		1		1				3	1			1	1	8
1982		3				1	3	1	5				4	17
1983	3	1					2	6	3				3	18
1984	1	2			2		2	2	9					18
1985		1		1	4		3	1	2			1	3	16
1986	1	4				4	2	3	5			2	1	22
1987	2			4	3	4		2	5	8				28
1988	1	1	1	7	5	2		1	8	8		1	3	38
1989	3	2			1	3			5	5		3	2	24
1990		1		3	1	1		7	5	7		1	2	28
1991	3	2	1	2	1	1		3	8	14		1	2	38
1992		2	1	1	1	1	2	10	10	12			3	43
1993	6	1	1			2	2	6	6	12		2		38
1994	4	1			3	1	2	1	3	10		1	1	27
1995	4	1	2	3	1	4	5	3	12	13			4	52
1996	3	2			1	2	1	6	17	10		2	1	45
1997	3	2		6	4	5	1	5	14	16		1	2	59
1998	2	1	1	2	4		1	1	13	14		1	3	43
1999	1	3	2		7			6	8	13		3	2	45
2000	2	1		1	7	2	2	9	7	11		1	3	46
2001		1			9	2	1	7	11	12	1	3	1	48
2002	4	2		1	1	4	1	3	10	14	2			42
2003	1	1			2	5	2	2	7	13				33
2004	5	2	1	1	5	6	2	8	6	12		5	6	59

Table 1. *continued*

	CM	CQ	CRp	CRs	CRR	CS	HCR	JAC	JBC	MCQ	QR	SJ	WC	Total
2005	4	3		3	3	3	2	4	13	13	2		2	52
2006	5	2	1	2	3	7	2	8	10	13	1		2	55
2007	2	3		2	4	2		4	11	14	1		1	44
2008	3	3		1	5	2		8	16	16	1			55
2009					2	5		6	17	18	1	2	7	58
2010	5	1	1	1		5	1	7	16	16		1		54
2011		3		2	3			4	16	14	3	2	5	52
2012	4	3	1	3	2	8	2	5	13	14	1	6	3	65
2013	4	1			3		1	3	11	15	2	2		42
Total	82	63	13	49	87	86	48	156	350	337	15	43	70	1399

Note. 1964, 1965, 1967, and 1970 are not included in this table or any subsequent table because no organizational communication articles were found in those years. Journals included in this table are *Communication Monographs* (CM), *Communication Quarterly* (CQ), *Communication Reports* (CRp), *Communication Research* (CRs), *Communication Research Reports* (CRR), *Communication Studies* (CS), *Human Communication Research* (HCR), *Journal of Applied Communication Research* (JAC), *Journal of Business Communication* (JBC), *Management Communication Quarterly* (MCQ), *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication* (QR), *Southern Communication Journal* (SJ), and *Western Journal of Communication* (WJ).

Table 2. *Comparison of the Top Topical Domains Used by Year.* Back to text

Year	Sup-Sub	Div	Tech	Corp Com	Soc	Chng	Crss	Iden	Info Mgt	V/D/P	Emo	Net	Pwr/ Rst	Lead	Cul
1966	1											1			
1968									2						
1969	1								1			2			
1971									1						
1972									2					1	
1973	2					1									
1974	1									1					1
1975	2	1							1						
1976	2								2		1	1			
1977	4	2							3		1		1	2	1
1978	5					2	1		2			1	1		3
1979	2	1				1			2	1					2
1980	4								2						
1981	1		1						1	1					
1982	7	3									1			1	1
1983	3	1				1		1	1	1	1		2		1
1984	6	2	1						4						
1985	2	3	2		1	2	1								1
1986	5	4		2	1				2		1	1		1	
1987	7	1	5	2				1	2		1			1	1
1988	7	5	5	3		4	2		2	1	1	1	1		1
1989	4	1	1	1	2	1		2	2		1	1		2	
1990	10	3	4			2	1			1	1				
1991	7	10	3	1	1	1		2	1		2	2	1	1	2
1992	8	6	6	4		2	2					1			3
1993	8	5	1	2	3	1		1	1	1	1	1	2	1	

Table 2. *Continued*

Year	Sup-Sub	Div	Tech	Corp Com	Soc	Chng	Crss	Iden	Info Mgt	V/D/P	Emo	Net	Pwr/ Rst	Lead	Cul
1994	2	2		4	4	1	1	1	1				1	1	1
1995	9	3	4	2	7	3	6			1	1	2	2		4
1996	4	14	3	1	3	3			2				1		
1997	2	8	5	6	3	4	4	1	1	3	1		4	1	1
1998	4	4	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	
1999	4	4	3	2	3	2	3	3		1		2		1	1
2000	5	6	1	5	2	4		1		2	4	2			3
2001	4	6	2	3	1	2	5		1	4	1	2	1	1	1
2002	1	5	3	5	4	4	4	3	2	3	3				1
2003	3	3	2		3	3	6	3	1			2	3	1	
2004	5	5	2	6	3	3	1	3	2	2		2	2		2
2005	2	6	5	2	5		4	1	4	1	4	1	7		
2006	1	6	6	2	2	4		6	2	2	2	1	2	4	4
2007	3	6	5	3	2	2	2	2	2	4	4		1	1	
2008		2	5	10		4	2	5	1	4	1	3	3	2	
2009		3	4	5	5	1	6	3	1	6	1	1	2	4	1
2010	3	14	6	5	2	1	2	2			1	3	1	7	1
2011	1	4	8	9	4	2	2	3		2	2	2		3	1
2012	6	6	8	1	5	2	3	7		5	3	4		2	
2013	2	3	6	3		3	2	5	1	5	1	1	2	1	1
Total	160	157	109	92	68	68	61	57	56	53	44	42	42	40	39

Note: The following abbreviations were used: Supervisor-Subordinate Communication (Sup-Sub), Diversity (Div), Technology (Tech), Corporate Communication (Corp Com), Socialization (Soc), Change (Chng), Crisis/Risk Communication (Crss), Identity/Identification (Iden), Information Management (Info Mgmt), Employee Voice/Dissent/Participation (V/D/P), Emotion (Emo), Networks (Net), Power/Resistance (Pwr/Rst), Leadership (Lead), Culture/Climate/Values (Cul).

Table 2. *Continued*

Year	Rls	Atrb	Sx Hrs	Cnft	Sts	NP/ Chrch/ Gov	Grp	Cstm	Incvl	Prfrm	Trn	Ethcs	Wrk-Lf	Hm	Lng	Sns
1966																
1968																
1969																
1971																
1972																
1973																
1974	1				1											
1975	1	1						1								
1976																
1977					2											1
1978					1											
1979		1					1				1					
1980									1	1						
1981										3						
1982										1						
1983	1	1		1							1				1	
1984	1	2			1											
1985	1	3								1						
1986		1			2											
1987	1	1		1							2					
1988	2	2		2	1	2	1									
1989			1							1	1					3
1990	1				1					1		1				
1991	1	1	1	1			1	1		1						
1992	2	4	3	2							2	1				
1993			2	1						1	1				1	

Table 2. *Continued*

Year	Rls	Atrb	Sx Hrs	Cnft	Sts	NP/ Chrch/ Gov	Grp	Cstm	Incvl	Prfrm	Trn	Ethcs	Wrk-Lf	Hm	Lng	Sns
1994		3	1				1	1	2							
1995	2	1		1			1	1				1				
1996	2		2		1	1	1			1		2			1	
1997	4	1	2	2	1	1						2		1		
1998	1	2		1			1	1							1	1
1999	2	2	2	1			2					1		2		
2000			2	1	1	1		2	1		1	1			1	
2001	1		3	1			1	2						1		2
2002	1					1							1			1
2003	1			2		2		1	1							
2004	2		1	2	2		1	1	3		1			2		
2005	2					2					1		1			
2006			1		1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1		2		1
2007	1		1				1						1			
2008	1		1		2	2			1	1			2		1	
2009	1		2		1		5			1			2	2	2	
2010		1	1	1		1			1		1		2		1	
2011		1			2	1		1	1			1				
2012	3	3				1		3	2	1			1	1		1
2013		2		1		3	1		1			1	2		1	
Total	36	33	26	21	20	20	19	17	16	15	13	12	12	11	10	10

Note: The following abbreviations were used: Peer Relationships (Rls), Personal Attributes (Atrb), Sexual Harassment (Sx Hrs), Conflict (Cnft), Nonprofits/Churches/Government (NP/Chrch/Gov), Workgroups (Grp), Customer Service (Cstm), Incivility (Incvl), Organizational Performance (Prfrm), Training and Development (Trn), Ethics (Ethcs),Work-Life Balance (Wrk-Lf), Humor (Hm), Language Use (Lng), and Sensemaking (Sns).

Table 3. *Comparison of the Top Theories Used by Year.* Back to text

Year	--	Md Rch	LMX	Strctr	UR	Sys	Dlct	Inst	Std-pnt	SIP	Soc Xch	Soc Id	Soc Inf	Plt	Soc Prs	CAT	Gnre	Inf	Unob Cont
1966	2																		
1968	2																		
1969	3																		
1971	1					1													
1972	2					1													
1973	3					1													
1974	4					1													
1975	7					1													
1976	5																		
1977	12																	2	
1978	13																		
1979	8																	1	
1980	7																		
1981	6										1								
1982	15					1													
1983	12					1					1							1	1
1984	11					1					1							4	
1985	12									2									
1986	18					1				1									
1987	19	2				1				2								1	
1988	26			1		1													
1989	14	1	1		1	1					1								1
1990	17	2		1	1					1									
1991	20	3	1			1					1		1	2	1	1			3
1992	29	3					1		1	2					1	1			
1993	26		2	1				2	1		1			1					

Table 3. *Continued*

Year	--	Md Rch	LMX	Strctr	UR	Sys	Dlct	Inst	Std-pnt	SIP	Soc Xch	Soc Id	Soc Inf	Plt	Soc Prs	CAT	Gnre	Inf	Unob Cont
1994	15		1		3			1	1	1									
1995	24	2	3	3	2	1			2	1	3		1		1		1		
1996	24	2	1		1				2		1	1		1	1	1			
1997	35	1	1	2	1	4		2	1			1	1				1		1
1998	25	1	1	2	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1						1
1999	28	1	1	1	2		1	1	1		2		1	1		1			1
2000	30		1	1				1	1	2				2		2	1		
2001	32	1	2		2			1	2	1							1		
2002	22	1	1	3	2				1				1				1		1
2003	20	2	1				1						2	1					
2004	33	2	1		2	1	3					1		2	1				
2005	29	2	3				2				1		1		2		1		
2006	34		1	3			1						1			1	1		
2007	22	1	1	2	1			2				1	1		1	2	2		1
2008	31	2		1			1	1									1	1	
2009	30		1	1			3	1	1				1				1		
2010	29		2	4			1	1		1	1	2		2		2			
2011	23	2		3			2		1			3	1		2	1			
2012	26	1	4	1			2	1	1			3	1	1	2				
2013	24	2	1	1	1			2		1		2			1			1	
Total	829	34	31	31	20	20	18	17	17	16	15	15	14	13	13	12	11	11	10

Note: The following abbreviations were used: Media Richness Theory (Md Rch), Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), Structuration Theory (Strctr), Uncertainty Reduction Theory (UR), Systems Theory (Sys), Dialectics (Dlct), Institutional Theory (Inst), Standpoint Theory (Std-pnt), Social Information Processing Theory (SIP), Social Exchange Theory (Soc Xch), Social Identity Theory (Soc Id), Social Influence Theory (Soc Inf), Politeness Theory (Plt), Social Presence Theory (Soc Prs), Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), Genre Theory (Gnre), Information Theory (Inf), and Unobtrusive Control (Unob Cont).

Table 4. *Comparison of Data Collection Methods by Year.* Back to text

	Combo Qual	Diary	Exist Text	Experi-ment	Focus Groups	Interview	Observe	Qual + Quant	Survey
1966					1				
1968						1			
1969		1		1					
1972									2
1973	1								2
1974									4
1975			1			1			5
1976				1					5
1977			2	2		1		1	4
1978	2			1		1		1	7
1979			1					1	6
1980				3					4
1981				1			1		3
1982		1	1	2				3	6
1983			1	1		1		1	13
1984				1		2			8
1985			1	1		4	2		7
1986			4	2		2	1	1	10
1987	2		2	1		3	1	2	10
1988	2		6	5		2			18
1989	3		1			4	1	2	9
1990			4	1		3		1	13
1991			2	2		1	3	3	20
1992	3		7	6		1	2	2	18
1993	4		3	3	1	3	1	6	12
1994	4		4	1		2		5	7
1995	7		7			4	1	7	22
1996	2		3	1		4	1	6	18
1997	7		8	4		2		2	27
1998	6		6	3		4	2	4	14
1999	6		5	2		5	1	6	16
2000	13		3			2	1	1	23
2001	13		6	2		3	1	4	18
2002	9		8	2		8	2	1	10
2003	4		7	1		4	1	1	9

Table 4. *Continued*

	Combo Qual	Diary	Exist Text	Experi-ment	Focus Groups	Interview	Observe	Qual + Quant	Survey
2004	12		7	4		6	2	2	23
2005	10		11			4	2	2	18
2006	14		5			8	4	3	18
2007	5		9	2		6	1	2	14
2008	10		12	1		7	2	1	15
2009	8		7	4	1	4	9	1	21
2010	10		10	5	1	9	3	1	10
2011	9		13	1	3	6	1	2	13
2012	7		4	2	1	9	5	4	32
2013	7		5	4		6	2	3	13
Total	179	2	176	73	8	133	53	82	527

Note: The following abbreviations were used: Combination of Qualitative Methods (Combo Qual), Existing Texts (e.g. websites; Exist Text), Observations (Observe), Qualitative and Quantitative Methods (Qual + Quant).

Table 5. *Comparison of Analysis Methods by Year.* Back to text

	Mix Stats	Case Stdy	Theme-Analys	Mixed Meth	Contnt Analys	CCA	Regrs	SEM	Grnd Analys	ANV	MANV	Cor	Rhetoric Analysis	Freq	Convrs Analys	Netwrk Analys
1966		1														
1968														1		
1969	1				1											
1972														1		
1973		1										1		1		
1974	1											3				
1975					1					1				3		
1976	1						1			1		1		1		1
1977	2	3								1		2	1			
1978	2	2		1					1	1		1		1		1
1979	2	1		1								2		1		
1980	3									2				1		
1981	2						1				1				1	
1982	3			3	1					2		1	1	1		
1983	3	1		1			1	1		2	1			3		
1984	3						1				1	3		2		
1985	3	1	1		2			2		1				1		1
1986	5	2	1	1	4					2	2	1		1		1
1987	6	2	1	1	1		1		1	1	2		1	2	1	
1988	10	3	2	1	3		1	2	1	3		1	1	3		
1989	5	2		2			2		2			1	1		2	
1990	4	3		1	6		2	2					1	1		
1991	8	1	1	3	3			2		1	2	2		3		1
1992	3	3	5	6	3		5	4		2	3	2				
1993	7	5	2	5	2	3		1			1	1				
1994	4	6		5	2			1			2	1	2			

Table 5. *Continued*

	Mix Stats	Case Stdy	Theme-Analys	Mixed Meth	Contnt Analys	CCA	Regrs	SEM	Grnd Analys	ANV	MANV	Cor	Rhetoric Analysis	Freq	Convrs Analys	Netwrk Analys
1995	8	8	4	6	4	1	2	4		2			2			2
1996	11	6	3	4	1		4	1		1			1	1		
1997	13	9	7	3	2		2	1		3	2	1	1			1
1998	7	8	4	4	5	1	1			1	2		1			2
1999	8	6	4	6	1	3	2	1			5					1
2000	12	3	6	1	3	2	1	1	4	1	2					2
2001	8	6	8	3		3	3	2	2	2	2	2				2
2002	4	7	5	3		5	1	5	2		2		1			
2003	3	5	4	3	1	2		2	2		1					1
2004	11	5	7	4	3	4	2	2		3	3	1	1		2	2
2005	8	5	6	3	3	6	3	3	4	1			1		1	1
2006	6	4	6	1	1	13	5	2	1	1	1	2	1		3	
2007	5	2	5	2	7	1	2	5	1	1	2					
2008	6	11	3	3	7	3	4	1		3		3	4		1	
2009	13	2	6	2	2	9	4	2	3		1		1		7	1
2010	6	3	10	2	4	6	1	2	3	3					1	1
2011	4		3	3	5	8	4	5	3				8	1	1	1
2012	11	2	5	7	2	6	9	7	5		1	2		2	2	1
2013	7	2	3	3	1	6	3	4	2	2			2		1	
Total	229	131	112	94	81	81	68	51	51	44	39	34	32	31	23	23

Note: The following abbreviations were used: Mixed Statistics (Mix Stats), Case Study Analysis (Case Stdy), Thematic Analysis (Theme Analys), Mixed Methods (Mixed Meth), Content Analysis (Contnt Analys), Constant Comparative Analysis (CCA), Regression (Regrs), Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Grounded Analysis (Grnd Analys), ANOVA (ANV), MANOVA (MANV), Bivariate Correlations (Cor), Frequencies (Freq), Conversational Analysis (Convrs Analys), and Network Analysis (Netwrk Analys).

Table 6. *Comparison of Sampling Methods by Year.* Back to text

	Org	Snow ball	Exist Text	Student Recruit	Student	Cust	Profess Sample	Rand	Alum	Autobio Data
1966	1									
1968				1						
1969	1	1								
1972	1	1								
1973	3									
1974	3	1								
1975	5	1	1							
1976	4	1			1					
1977	7	1	2							
1978	10	1			1					
1979	7		1							
1980	6				1					
1981	4				1					
1982	9	1	1		2					
1983	10	3	1		2	1				
1984	8	2			1					
1985	9	2	1	1	2					
1986	8	5	4		3					
1987	12	5	2		2					
1988	16	2	6	3	5			1		
1989	16	2	1		1					
1990	12	5	4		1					
1991	21	5	2	1	2					
1992	19	11	7	1	1					
1993	18	6	3	2	4					
1994	14	1	4	2	2					
1995	30	5	7	3	1	1			1	
1996	22	6	3		2				1	1
1997	26	10	8	1	5					
1998	16	3	6	5	7	2				
1999	20	7	5	7	2					
2000	29	4	4	3	2	1				
2001	27	5	6	5	2	2				
2002	20	5	8	5	2					
2003	14	4	7		1	1				

Table 6. *Continued*

	Org	Snow ball	Ex-ist Text	Student Recruit	Stu-dent	Cust	Profess Sample	Rand	Alum	Autobio Data
2004	31	5	7	5	7	1				
2005	23	6	11	5	2					
2006	32	5	5	5	3	1	1			
2007	12	9	9	6	3					
2008	17	9	12	7	2			1		
2009	20	13	7	8	6	1				
2010	20	8	10	7	3		1			
2011	22	5	13	5	2		1			
2012	30	12	4	9	8		1			
2013	19	11	5	3	1			1		
Total	644	186	174	100	93	11	4	3	2	1

Note: The following abbreviations were used: Organizational Sample/Field Study (Org), Snowball Sample of Researcher's Contacts (Snowball), Existing Text (Exist Text), Student-Recruited Sample (Student Recruit), Customers (Cust), Professional Sampling Service (Profess Sample), Random Sample of a Particular Geographical Area (Rand), Alumni of Researcher's University (Alum), and Autobiographical Data (Autobio Data).

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