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## RESEARCH TRENDS ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION: A SCOPUS-BASED BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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### Abstract:

Family communication has long been recognised as a fundamental element in shaping relational dynamics, psychological well-being, and social development across generations. However, a comprehensive mapping of its scholarly evolution remains limited. Nevertheless, despite increasing academic interest, the breadth of research trends, influential works, conceptual focuses, and international collaborations within this field has not been systematically assessed through bibliometric techniques. To address this gap, this study conducts a bibliometric analysis of global research on family communication to identify publication trajectories, key contributing countries, dominant research themes, and collaborative networks. Data were retrieved from the Scopus database using an advanced search strategy and filtered to include only relevant peer-reviewed documents, resulting in a final dataset of 597 publications spanning multiple disciplines. The dataset was first analysed using Scopus Analyser to generate descriptive statistics and graphical outputs on annual publication trends, citation patterns, and geographical distribution. OpenRefine was employed to clean and harmonise metadata, particularly author and keyword variations, ensuring consistency for further processing. Subsequently, VOSviewer software was used to visualise keyword co-occurrence patterns and co-authorship networks through clustering and mapping techniques. The results reveal a steady growth of scholarly output over time, with notable peaks reflecting heightened interest in family communication during periods of social and technological change. The United States (US) emerged as the most productive and influential

contributor; while recurring keywords such as family communication, conversation orientation, conformity orientation, parent-child relationships, and resilience imply both theoretical foundations and contemporary thematic expansions. Co-authorship visualisations further indicate uneven international collaboration, suggesting potential for greater cross-cultural engagement. Overall, this study provides a holistic overview of the intellectual and collaborative structure of family communication research, offering insights for future studies and strengthening the understanding of how communication shapes and sustains family life.

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Bibliometric Analysis; Family Communication; International Collaboration; Keyword Co-occurrence; Research Trends



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## Introduction

Family communication stands as a cornerstone of human development, shaping the emotional, cognitive, and social trajectories of individuals across the lifespan. Over decades, scholarly inquiry has illuminated the intricate ways in which family members co-construct shared realities, negotiate roles, and manage conflict through communication. Foundational theories such as family systems theory, social constructionism, and relational dialectics have provided robust frameworks for understanding these processes, emphasising the dynamic interplay between structure and agency within family units. Notably, the evolution of family communication research has moved beyond traditional models of authority and control, introducing concepts such as warm conformity that highlight the importance of emotional support and relational closeness alongside behavioural regulation. These theoretical advancements have deepened the understanding of family functioning and have informed practical interventions aimed at fostering healthy family relationships and psychosocial well-being across diverse cultural and structural contexts (Braithwaite et al., 2017; Hesse et al., 2017; Schrodts et al., 2009; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Suter & Norwood, 2017; Schrodts et al., 2008).

Furthermore, in recent years, the field has witnessed a surge in interdisciplinary approaches and methodological innovation, reflecting the growing complexity of family life in contemporary society. Empirical studies now routinely explore how communication patterns differ across nuclear, single-parent, blended, and multigenerational families, revealing both universalities and context-specific nuances. The integration of biosocial perspectives—incorporating biological markers and psychophysiological measures—has further enriched understanding of how stress, emotion, and regulatory behaviours are intertwined with verbal and non-verbal exchanges. Simultaneously, the proliferation of digital technologies has transformed the landscape of family communication, introducing new opportunities and

challenges as families navigate both face-to-face and technologically mediated interactions. Thus, these developments underscore the need for comprehensive, culturally sensitive models that capture the fluid, negotiated nature of family communication, setting the stage for future research and targeted interventions that address the realities of modern family life (Schrodt et al., 2009; Koerner & Schrodt, 2014; Santos-Morocho et al., 2020; Räisä, 2022; Phillips & Soliz, 2020).

Over the past few decades, research on family communication has grown substantially, reflecting increasing scholarly interest in understanding how communication processes shape family relationships and individual development. Despite this expansion, efforts to synthesise the broader trajectory of scholarship in this area remain relatively limited. Existing reviews have largely relied on narrative or systematic approaches that summarise key theoretical perspectives and empirical findings within the field (Phillips & Soliz, 2020). These studies have been important in clarifying central concepts and highlighting the significance of communication dynamics within family systems. In addition, several meta-analytical studies have examined more specific aspects of family communication, particularly the relationship between family communication patterns and psychosocial outcomes. Such work has contributed valuable empirical evidence and theoretical integration, demonstrating how family communication environments influence relational quality, psychological well-being, and individual adjustment across different life stages (Schrodt et al., 2008). While these contributions have enriched the field in meaningful ways, they tend to focus on particular constructs or thematic areas rather than providing a broader picture of the intellectual development of family communication research. Consequently, larger patterns of scholarly activity—such as the growth of publications over time, the identification of influential studies, and the extent of collaboration among researchers across countries—remain less clearly documented. Without this wider perspective, it is difficult to fully appreciate how the field has evolved and where new directions of inquiry may be emerging. In this regard, bibliometric analysis offers a useful methodological approach for examining the development of research fields. By analysing large sets of bibliographic data, bibliometric techniques allow scholars to map intellectual structures, identify dominant themes, and explore patterns of scientific collaboration (Donthu et al., 2021; Fahimnia et al., 2015). Responding to the need for a broader overview, the present study conducts a Scopus-based bibliometric analysis of family communication research published between 2005 and 2025, using tools such as VOSviewer to examine citation networks, keyword co-occurrence, and international collaboration patterns.

## Literature Review

The study of family communication is anchored in a rich tapestry of theoretical frameworks that have evolved to capture the complexity of familial interactions. Family systems theory posits that families function as interconnected systems, in which each member's behaviour influences and is influenced by the whole, emphasising feedback loops, homeostasis, and the importance of relational patterns over individual traits. Social constructionist theory, in contrast, foregrounds the role of language, dialogue, and shared meaning-making in the co-construction of family realities, highlighting the subjective and evolving nature of family life. Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT) has been particularly influential, delineating conversation and conformity orientations as central dimensions that shape how families create shared social realities. Additionally, recent expansions of FCPT have introduced the concept of warm conformity, which reframes conformity as authoritarian control and as a vehicle for emotional closeness and support. Relational dialectics theory further enriches this landscape

by examining the tensions and negotiations inherent in family discourse, such as autonomy versus connection and openness versus privacy, offering a critical lens on power and transformation within family communication (Braithwaite et al., 2017; Hesse et al., 2017; Schrodt et al., 2009; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Suter & Norwood, 2017; Kim et al., 2016). Communication patterns within families are far from monolithic, varying significantly across family structures and cultural backgrounds. Empirical research consistently identifies conversation orientation—characterised by open, supportive dialogue—as a predictor of positive psychosocial outcomes, including emotional well-being, autonomy, and family satisfaction. Conversely, conformity orientation, which emphasises uniformity and parental authority, presents a more nuanced picture. However, while it can foster respect and cohesion, it may also suppress individual autonomy and open expression, particularly in high-conformity families. Studies reveal that these orientations manifest differently in nuclear, single parent, blended, and multigenerational families, with blended families often exhibiting more rigid communication boundaries but sharing similarities in the number and function of intrafamily secrets. Intergenerational transmission of communication patterns is also well-documented, with grandparent orientations predicting those of parents and grandchildren, and cultural context shaping the expression and impact of these patterns. Notably, conversation and conformity orientations are inversely related. Their balance is critical for supporting adolescent development, emotion regulation, and conflict resolution across diverse family forms (Schrodt et al., 2008; Santos-Morocho et al., 2020; Rauscher et al., 2020; Caughlin et al., 2000; Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994).

Moreover, recent empirical trends in family communication research reflect a growing emphasis on biosocial approaches and the pervasive influence of digital technologies. In particular, integrating biological markers, such as stress hormones and psychophysiological responses, has provided new insights into how family communication processes are linked to health and well-being, revealing bidirectional influences between biological and social levels. Digital mediation, through platforms like WhatsApp and social media, has transformed family interactions, enabled emotional closeness and intergenerational support while also introducing challenges such as technofence and digital conflict. Nevertheless, studies indicate that while digital communication can enhance family connectedness, it may also complicate conflict resolution and emotional intimacy, with outcomes varying by platform, family role, and cultural context. The development and validation of standardised measurement tools, such as the Family Communication Scale and Family Communication Patterns Questionnaire, have facilitated cross-cultural research and the identification of knowledge gaps. This includes the underrepresentation of nontraditional parental figures and the need for more inclusive, global perspectives (Räisä, 2022; Mills-Koonce & Towe-Goodman, 2022; Laurente & Gonzales, 2020; Abel et al., 2021; Dubrov, 2020).

Additionally, a range of factors influence family communication dynamics, including culture, family roles, relational climate, and methodological approaches. Family culture shapes the development and maintenance of conversation and conformity orientations, with recent research advocating for a reconceptualisation of conformity to include both controlling and warmth-promoting behaviours. Methodological diversity is essential for capturing the complexity of family communication, with mixed-methods, ethnographic, and participatory approaches offering rich, context-sensitive insights, particularly in multicultural and digitally mediated settings. On the other hand, critical theoretical perspectives, such as relational dialectics theory 2.0, encourage the examination of power, ideology, and transformation within family discourse, while applied research underscores the importance of communication-

focused interventions for health, education, and family business contexts. Nonetheless, despite significant advances, gaps remain in understanding the roles of nontraditional family members, the impact of digital technologies across cultures, and the need for decolonised, interdisciplinary frameworks. Consequently, future research is called to address these gaps, expand conceptualisations of conformity and family roles, and develop culturally sensitive models that reflect the realities of contemporary family life (Hesse et al., 2017; Phillips & Soliz, 2020; Keeley, 2016; Matsunaga & Imahori, 2009; Mustaffa et al., 2021).

Recent scholarship increasingly highlights the significant role of digital technologies in shaping how families communicate and maintain their relationships. The widespread use of social media, instant messaging applications, and other digital platforms has gradually transformed everyday family interactions. Through these technologies, family members are able to stay connected, share emotional support, and coordinate daily matters more easily than before. For families who live apart—particularly those separated by work, migration, or study—digital communication has become an important way to sustain relational closeness and maintain a sense of everyday presence despite physical distance (Abel et al., 2021; Taipale, 2019). At the same time, researchers note that the increasing presence of digital devices within family life also brings new relational challenges. One commonly discussed issue is technoference, where digital devices interrupt or compete with face-to-face interaction among family members. Beyond simple distraction, digital environments may also influence how authority, personal boundaries, and emotional expression are negotiated within the family context (Storch & Ortiz Juarez-Paz, 2019; Bărbuță et al., 2023). Recent studies further suggest that digital media have become deeply embedded in everyday family routines. These platforms shape parental mediation practices, influence interactions between generations, and contribute to the formation of communication norms within households (Abendroth et al., 2024; Luo et al., 2025). Consequently, scholars increasingly view digital communication not merely as an additional channel of interaction, but as an integral element of contemporary family systems.

Cross-cultural perspectives have become increasingly important for understanding variations in family communication across societies. Family interactions are closely shaped by cultural norms, parenting values, and shared expectations about relationships, which influence how family members negotiate authority, openness, and emotional expression. Comparative research suggests that the well-known dimensions of conversation and conformity orientations may appear differently across cultures, particularly in societies where values such as collectivism, hierarchy, and relational harmony play a central role (Matsunaga & Imahori, 2009; Phillips & Soliz, 2020). In addition, growing global mobility has highlighted the experiences of multicultural and transnational families, where communication practices are influenced by multiple cultural environments. Studies show that migration and intercultural interaction often require family members to navigate different cultural expectations simultaneously, shaping how language, identity, and relational norms are negotiated within the household (Barrie et al., 2019; Casimiro & Neves, 2021). These developments underscore the importance of incorporating cross-cultural perspectives into family communication research. Theoretical frameworks developed within a single cultural context may not fully capture the diversity and complexity of communication practices found in families across different societies.

### ***Research Question***

RQ1: How has scholarly production on family communication evolved over time based on annual publication trends?

RQ2: Which publications represent the most influential contributions to the field, as reflected by citation impact?

RQ3: Which countries demonstrate the highest research productivity and visibility in family communication studies?

RQ4: What are the most frequently occurring keywords, and how do they reflect the conceptual landscape of family communication research?

RQ5: How are countries connected through co-authorship networks, and what patterns of international collaboration can be identified in family communication research?

### ***Methodology***

Bibliometric analysis entails the systematic collection, organisation, and evaluation of bibliographic data derived from scholarly publications (Verbeek et al., 2002; Assyakur & Rosa, 2022; Alves et al., 2021). In addition to basic descriptive indicators such as source journals, publication trends, and prolific contributors (Wu & Wu, 2017), it also incorporates advanced analytical methods, including document co-citation analysis. A rigorous and iterative approach to selecting keywords, conducting literature searches, and performing detailed examinations is essential for producing a comprehensive reference base and credible findings (Fahimnia et al., 2015). Accordingly, this study concentrated on high-impact publications, as they offer deeper insights into underlying theoretical frameworks within the research domain. To ensure data reliability, Scopus was utilised as the primary database for data retrieval (di Stefano et al., 2010; Khiste & Paithankar, 2017; Al-Khoury et al., 2022). Furthermore, the data set was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles to preserve scholarly quality, excluding books and conference proceedings (Gu et al., 2019). The retrieval process in Elsevier's Scopus database encompassed publications from 2005 to December 2025 for subsequent analysis.

### ***Data Search Strategy***

The bibliometric data for this study were retrieved from the Scopus database, which provides comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed literature in the Social Sciences (SOC) and humanities. An advanced search string (as depicted in Table 1) was applied to ensure precision and relevance by targeting publications whose titles explicitly contained the terms “family communication,” “family interaction,” or “family dialogue.” Notably, these keywords were selected to capture research directly addressing communicative processes within family contexts while avoiding broader or tangential discussions. The search was further refined by limiting the subject areas to SOC and Arts and Humanities (ARTS), ensuring that the retrieved works aligned with disciplinary perspectives most relevant to communication, relational studies, and family research. To maintain linguistic consistency and comparability, only publications written in English were included (see Table 2).

Moreover, to map the evolution and trajectory of scholarly interest in the field, the publication period was restricted to works published between 2005 and 2025, covering twenty-one years of academic output. This time span enabled the identification of long-term trends, emerging themes, and shifts in research focus in family communication across modern and contemporary contexts. Specifically, applying these search filters yielded 597 documents, forming a robust

dataset for bibliometric analysis. This corpus reflects the sustained scholarly attention given to how families communicate, interact, and negotiate relationships across changing societal, cultural, and technological landscapes.

**Table 1: The Search String**

Scopus	TITLE ( ( "FAMILY COMMUNICATION" OR "FAMILY INTERACTION" OR "FAMILY DIALOGUE" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "SOCI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "ARTS" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "English" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2005 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2006 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2007 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2008 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2009 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2010 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2011 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2012 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2013 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2014 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2015 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2016 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2017 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2018 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2019 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2020 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2021 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2022 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2023 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2024 ) OR LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2025 ) )
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**Table 2: The Selection Criterion Is Searching**

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Time line	2005-2025	Below 2005
Subject	Social sciences & Art and Humanities	others

### **Data Analysis**

VOSviewer is an accessible bibliometric software developed by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman at Leiden University in the Netherlands (van Eck & Waltman, 2017; 2010). Widely adopted for the visualisation and analysis of scientific literature, it supports the construction of network maps, clustering related elements, and creating density visualisations. Its functionality enables the examination of co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence networks, providing researchers with a holistic view of research trends and intellectual structures. The software's intuitive interface, continuous improvements, and ability to compute indicators and tailor visual outputs make it a valuable tool for investigating complex scholarly domains.

Additionally, a key advantage of VOSviewer lies in its ability to convert extensive bibliometric datasets into visually interpretable maps and graphical outputs. With an emphasis on network-based visualisation, the software effectively identifies thematic clusters, uncovers keyword co-

occurrence relationships, and produces density mappings. Its user-friendly environment accommodates both new and experienced researchers, enabling efficient navigation of large datasets. Ongoing development further ensures that VOSviewer remains a leading instrument in bibliometric analysis, offering customisable visualisations and compatibility with multiple data types, including co-authorship and citation networks.

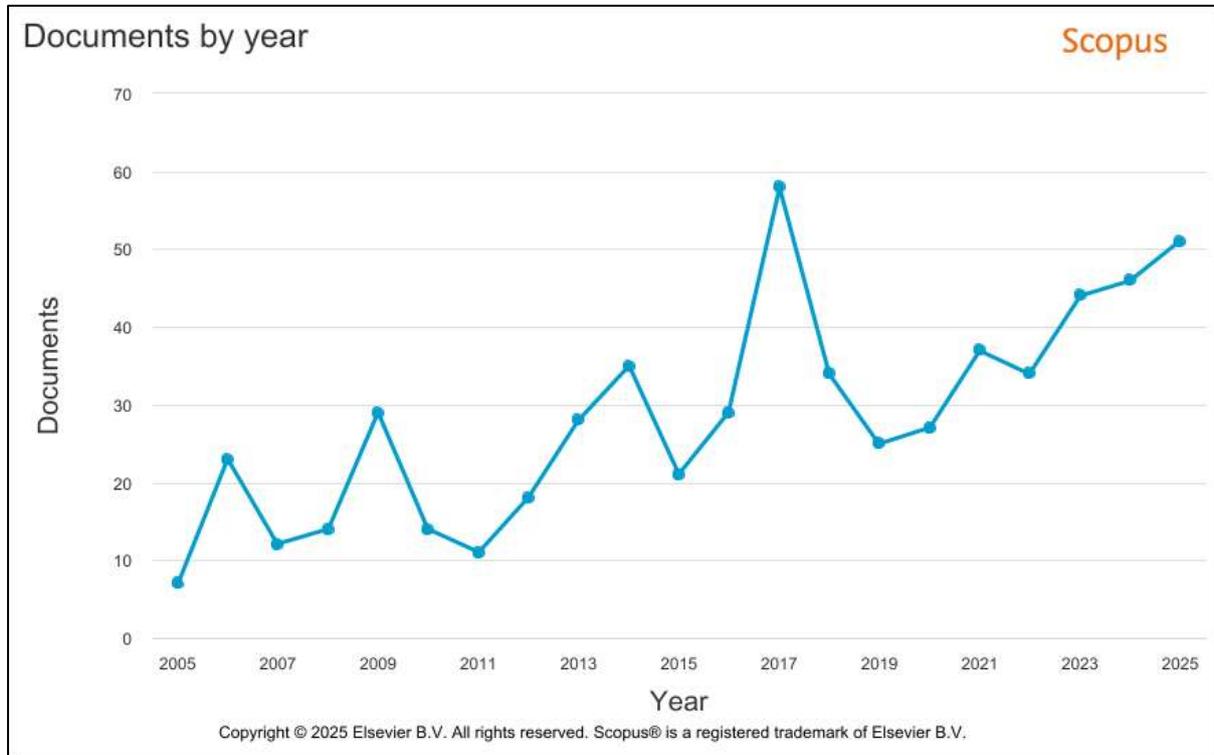
For this study, datasets containing publication year, title, author names, journal information, citation counts, and keywords in PlainText format were extracted from the Scopus database, covering the period from 2005 to December 2025. In particular, these data were analysed using VOSviewer version 1.6.19. Through VOS mapping and clustering techniques, the software enabled the generation and interpretation of visual maps. However, while offering an alternative to Multidimensional Scaling (MDS), VOSviewer positions items within low-dimensional spaces such that the distance between any two items represents their degree of relatedness (van Eck & Waltman, 2010), a characteristic it shares with the MDS approach (Appio et al., 2014). Unlike MDS, which typically uses similarity measures such as cosine or Jaccard coefficients, VOS employs a normalisation technique better suited for co-occurrence frequency data—Association Strength ( $AS_{ij}$ )—which is calculated as follows (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007):

$$AS_{ij} = \frac{C_{ij}}{w_i w_j},$$

which is “proportional to the ratio between the observed co-occurrence frequency of items  $i$  and  $j$ , and the expected co-occurrence frequency assuming that their occurrences are statistically independent” (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007).

## Result and Discussion

### *RQ 1: How Has Scholarly Production on Family Communication Evolved Over Time Based on Annual Publication Trends?*



**Figure 1: Trend Of Research in Family Communication by Years**

Figure 1 illustrates that the publication trend from 2005 to 2025 indicates steady, progressive growth in scholarly interest in *family communication*, with notable fluctuations across the two-decade span. Early output between 2005 and 2011 remained relatively modest, ranging from 7 to 18 publications per year, suggesting that the field was still gaining recognition as a distinct research focus. Notably, a gradual rise begins in 2012, culminating in a sharp peak in 2017 with 58 publications, which represents the highest output in the dataset. This surge may reflect growing academic attention to interpersonal dynamics in families as influenced by sociocultural and technological shifts. Following this peak, there is a temporary decline between 2018 and 2020, with publication numbers dropping to 27 in 2020, possibly influenced by research redirection during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Moreover, from 2021 onward, publication output demonstrates renewed momentum, rising significantly in the post-pandemic years. The numbers increase from 37 in 2021 to 51 in 2025, reaching the second-highest level in the dataset. This upward trajectory implies a resurgence in research on family communication, potentially driven by heightened awareness of family dynamics during and after global lockdowns, digital transformations in communication practices, and an increasing emphasis on mental health and relational well-being. Overall, the dataset reveals that family communication has evolved into a sustained research interest, with recent years depicting consistent scholarly engagement and highlighting the field's continued relevance and expansion.

***RQ2: Which Publications Represent the Most Influential Contributions to The Field, As Reflected by Citation Impact?***

The citation patterns of the top ten most cited works demonstrate how foundational theoretical contributions, and empirical studies have shaped the field of family communication, as depicted in Table 3. The most cited article by Dubow et al. (2009), with 408 citations, underscores the influence of family interaction on long-term developmental outcomes and highlights the interdisciplinary relevance of family communication to education and social psychology. Similarly, Lunkenheimer et al. (2007) and Goodwin and Cekaite (2013) emphasised emotional interaction and conversational practices within families, illustrating that emotional socialisation and discourse analysis remain central themes. Schrodt et al. (2008) established a pivotal meta-analysis connecting communication patterns with psychosocial outcomes, reinforcing the theoretical weight of communication models. Conversely, the inclusion of Koerner and FitzPatrick (2006) and Koerner and Schrodt (2014) reflected the enduring impact of FCPT, which continues to provide a conceptual backbone for research exploring interaction styles, relational outcomes, and social cognition within families.

Notably, the remaining highly cited studies extend the field's scope by connecting family communication to resilience, self-efficacy, entitlement, and digital behaviours. Givertz and Segrin (2014) and Lucas and Buzzanell (2012) revealed how communication shapes personal development and coping strategies, while Buelga et al. (2017) integrated contemporary concerns such as cyberbullying, exemplifying the roles of family climate and communication in adolescent online behaviour. On the other hand, Goodwin's (2007) micro-level analysis of knowledge construction within family discourse highlights the importance of everyday conversational practices in understanding meaning-making. Overall, these ten influential works indicate a balanced integration of theory-building, developmental psychology, communication processes, and emerging technological contexts. Collectively, this illustrates how family communication research has evolved to address both traditional relational dynamics and modern challenges.

**Table 3: Most Cited Author**

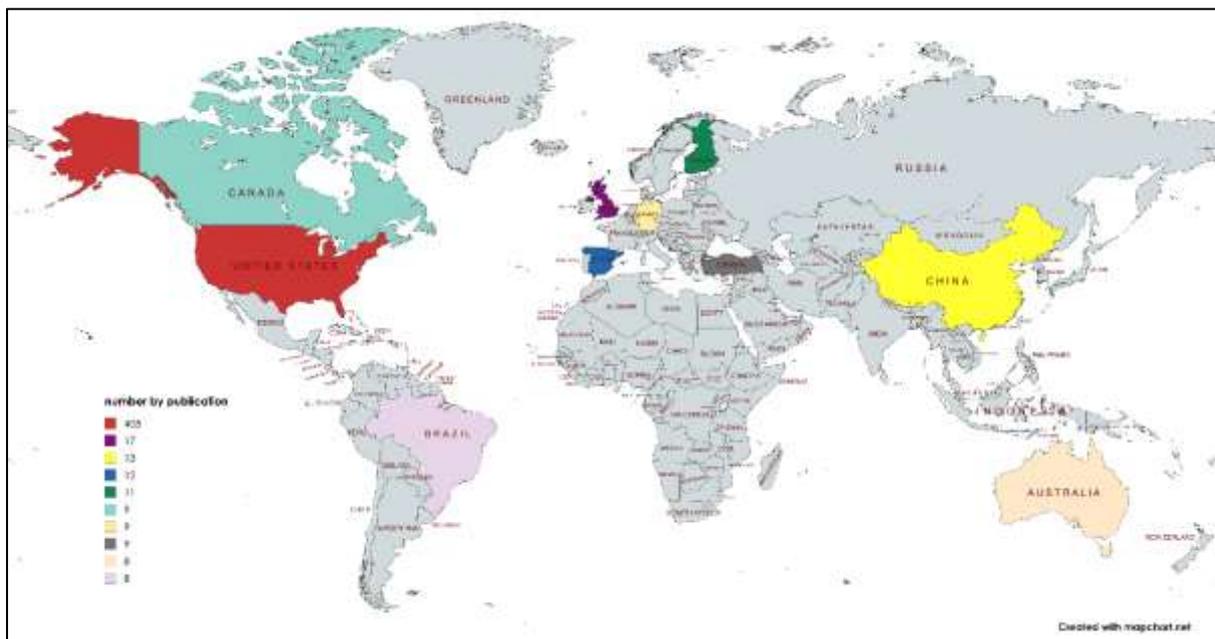
No.	Authors	Title	Year	Source title	Cited by
1	Dubow, E.F. et al.	Long-term effects of parents' education on children's educational and occupational success: Mediation by family interactions, child aggression, and teenage aspirations	2009	Merrill-Palmer Quarterly	408
2	Lunkenheimer, E.S. et al.	Parental emotion coaching and dismissing in family interaction	2007	Social Development	267
3	Schrodt, P. et al.	A meta-analytical review of family communication patterns and their associations with information processing, behavioral, and psychosocial outcomes	2008	Communication Monographs	255

4	Goodwin, M.H. & Cekaite, A.	Calibration in directive/response sequences in family interaction	2013	Journal of Pragmatics	181
5	Koerner, A.F. & FitzPatrick, M.A.	Family communication patterns theory: A social cognitive approach	2006	Engaging Theories in Family Communication: Multiple Perspectives - Book Chapter	174
6	Givertz, M. & Segrin, C.	The Association Between Overinvolved Parenting and Young Adults' Self-Efficacy, Psychological Entitlement, and Family Communication	2014	Communication Research	132
7	Koerner, A.F. & Schrodt, P.	An Introduction to the Special Issue on Family Communication Patterns Theory	2014	Journal of Family Communication	131
8	Lucas, K. & Buzzanell, P.M.	Memorable Messages of Hard Times: Constructing Short- and Long-Term Resiliencies Through Family Communication	2012	Journal of Family Communication	122
9	Goodwin, M.H.	Occasioned knowledge exploration in family interaction Differences in family climate and family communication among cyberbullies, cyber victims, and cyber bully-victims in adolescents	2007	Discourse and Society	119
10	Buelga, S. et al.		2017	Computers in Human Behavior	114

### ***RQ3: Which Countries Demonstrate the Highest Research Productivity and Visibility In Family Communication Studies?***

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of publications by country, revealing a strong concentration of research on family communication in the United States (US), with 405 publications, far surpassing those of any other country in the dataset. This dominance reflects the long-standing academic development of communication studies in the US, supported by well-established research institutions, extensive funding opportunities, and the institutionalisation of family communication as a subfield within communication, psychology, and sociology programmes. Notably, the significantly lower numbers from the United Kingdom (17) and China (13) indicate emerging, but still comparatively limited, research activity, suggesting that while interest exists, the field may not yet be as deeply embedded in these countries' academic structures. In particular, countries such as Spain (12) and Finland (11) revealed modest contributions, likely influenced by their strong SOCI traditions and interest in interpersonal and developmental research.

Furthermore, the middle tier of contributors—including Canada (9), Germany (9), Turkey (9), Australia (8), and Brazil (8)—pointed to a geographically diverse yet less concentrated global engagement with family communication studies. These countries' outputs may characterise contextual priorities such as multicultural family structures, migration-related dynamics, and social welfare systems, which shape research agendas in family relationships and communication. The relatively low publication numbers beyond the US underscore a potential gap in international representation and suggest opportunities for cross-cultural and comparative research. As a result, expanding scholarly participation across regions could enrich theoretical perspectives, diversify methodological approaches, and strengthen the global relevance of family communication research.



**Figure 2: Publication by Countries**

***RQ4: What Are the Most Frequently Occurring Keywords, And How Do They Reflect the Conceptual Landscape of Family Communication Research?***

In VOSviewer, keyword co-occurrence analysis refers to the process of identifying how frequently specific keywords co-occur within a set of publications, as presented in Figure 3. When two or more keywords are used repeatedly in the same articles, this indicates a conceptual relationship between them and helps map the intellectual structure of a research field. Co-occurrence mapping visualises these relationships as a network, where keywords are represented as nodes, and their connections reflect shared appearances across documents. The more often keywords co-occur, the stronger the link between them, allowing researchers to detect research themes, clusters of interest, and dominant conceptual trends related to *family communication*.

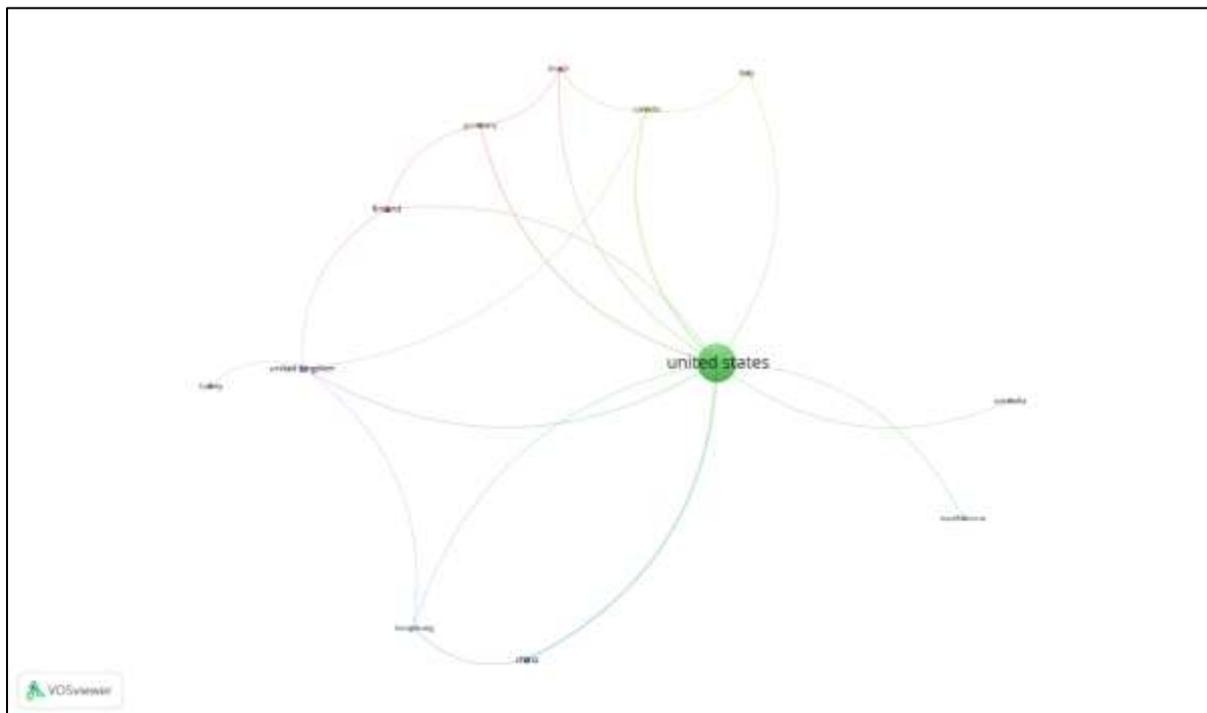
Thus, to generate this network map, the analysis used the full-counting method, which counts every instance of a keyword equally, regardless of how many times it occurs within an individual publication. Specifically, a minimum occurrence threshold of five was used to filter the total of 978 unique keywords, resulting in 32 keywords that met the criteria and were



between countries, the greater the total link strength, characterising the intensity of international partnerships. Consequently, this type of mapping helps reveal which countries serve as central hubs of collaboration, how knowledge flows across borders, and the extent to which global research networks support the advancement of a particular field—in this case, *family communication*.

To generate the network map, the full counting method was applied, meaning each collaborative publication was counted equally toward the link strength between countries. Notably, a minimum threshold of 5 documents per country was set to filter out countries with limited contributions or isolated outputs, reducing the dataset from 55 to 19 countries that met the criteria. This threshold ensures that only countries with substantial participation in the field are included in the visualisation, allowing the map to highlight significant collaboration patterns rather than sporadic or incidental contributions. Through this selective approach, the network structure focuses on core contributors and their collaborative ties, offering a more precise representation of research connectivity.

As a result, the findings implied that the US dominates the field, with the highest number of documents (406), citations (8,585), and the strongest link strength (19), confirming its role as the principal driver of global research and collaboration in family communication. Countries such as China, Canada, and the United Kingdom, although producing fewer publications, revealed strong collaboration, suggesting their active engagement in international research networks. However, several countries—including Malaysia, Spain, South Africa, and Iran—have multiple publications but zero international link strength, exemplifying limited cross-border collaboration despite growing research output. This disparity emphasised a key opportunity to expand global partnerships, which could enrich theoretical diversity, foster methodological innovation, and support more culturally grounded understandings of family communication.



**Figure 4: Co-Authorship by Countries in The Collaboration Of Publication**

## Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis aimed to map research developments in family communication and to address several guiding questions: publication trends, highly cited works, the geographical distribution of research output, conceptual directions derived from keyword analysis, and patterns of international collaboration. Consequently, the findings reveal that research activity has expanded steadily over the past two decades, with observable peaks that correspond to periods of heightened academic and societal attention to family dynamics and communication processes. Influential publications identified through citation patterns demonstrate sustained reliance on theoretical foundations such as Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT), alongside growing attention to mental health, digital contexts, and resilience-building within families. Moreover, in terms of productivity, research output remains concentrated in a small group of countries, with the United States accounting for an overwhelming share of publications, while many other nations produce research with limited cross-border collaboration.

Additionally, this analysis contributes to a broader understanding of family communication studies by emphasising dominant research themes and identifying how the field has gradually integrated classical communication theories with contemporary societal challenges. The keyword co-occurrence mapping indicates that long-standing concepts such as communication orientations coexist with emerging issues related to psychological well-being, adolescence, and digital interaction. This suggests that family communication research continues to evolve in response to technological and social change. Furthermore, practical implications include illustrating how these research directions may support the development of interventions, communication models, and policy guidance to enhance family cohesion, especially in diverse cultural settings.

However, the analysis also has limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study relies solely on the Scopus database, which, although widely recognised for its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals, does not include all scholarly publications in the field. As a result, relevant studies indexed in other databases such as Web of Science, Dimensions, or regional indexing platforms may not be captured in the dataset. Second, the analysis is restricted to English-language publications, which may limit the representation of research conducted in non-English speaking regions. Important contributions published in other languages or in regional journals may therefore be underrepresented in the dataset. This limitation may partially influence the geographical distribution of publications identified in the study, including the dominance of English-speaking countries in the bibliometric results. Consequently, the patterns identified in this analysis should be interpreted as reflecting the structure of internationally indexed English-language scholarship rather than the entirety of global family communication research.

Future investigations could address these limitations by incorporating multiple bibliographic databases and including publications in additional languages to provide a more comprehensive and globally representative understanding of the field. Further studies may also combine bibliometric analysis with qualitative or thematic approaches to examine how theoretical perspectives, and methodological practices evolve across different cultural contexts. Such efforts would contribute to a more inclusive mapping of family communication scholarship and provide deeper insights into how communication processes operate within diverse family systems worldwide.

Overall, the study underlines the value of bibliometric analysis for tracing conceptual, geographical, and collaborative trajectories within family communication scholarship. The results offer an evidence-based foundation that may guide future theoretical development, encourage stronger global research networks, and promote more inclusive and context-sensitive explorations of how communication shapes family life across different societies.

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