

TRENDS TOWARDS POLITICAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY ON SOCIAL MEDIA: A BIBLIOMETRICS ANALYSIS

**Annisa Atha Hanifah, La Mani, Zidane Ahmad Busthomi, Giovanni Sunrise,
Matthew Abrham Kristanto and Indra Prawira**

Communication Department, Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, Indonesia

Corresponding E-mail: annisa.hanifah@binus.ac.id; la.mani@binus.edu; zidane.busthomi@binus.ac.id; giovanni.sunrise@binus.ac.id; matthew.kristanto@binus.ac.id; iprawira@binus.edu

ABSTRACT. Social media has become the centre of digital political communication, enabling politicians to convey messages, form narratives, and mobilise public support directly and interactively. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok serve not only as campaign tools but also as deliberative spaces where political discourse is formed and debated. This study uses a bibliometric approach to analyse global trends in research on political communication on social media during the period 2020-2024. Data were collected in October 2025 from the Scopus database, comprising 608 documents from 253 publication sources and author affiliations in 24 countries. The search was conducted using queries with keywords “political communication”, “social media”, and “public response”. The analysis was conducted using VOS viewer and RStudio (Biblioshiny) to map author collaboration networks, keyword interrelationships, thematic distribution, and identification of most productive journals and institutions. The results show four main clusters in global literature: digital campaign strategies by political elites, issue mobilisation and public engagement, algorithmic influence on message framing and issue visibility, and ethical governance and the challenges of disinformation. These findings enrich the theory of digital political communication and provide new directions for research on the relationship between technology, democracy, and political participation in virtual public spaces.

Keywords: Political Communication; Social Media; Public Response; Bibliometric Analysis; Digital Campaign

ABSTRAK. Media sosial telah menjadi pusat komunikasi politik digital yang memungkinkan para politikus menyampaikan pesan, membentuk narasi, serta memobilisasi dukungan publik secara langsung dan interaktif. Platform media sosial seperti Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, dan TikTok berfungsi tidak hanya sebagai sarana kampanye, tetapi juga sebagai ruang deliberatif tempat wacana politik dibentuk dan diperdebatkan. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan bibliometrik untuk menganalisis tren global penelitian mengenai komunikasi politik di media sosial selama periode 2020–2024. Data dikumpulkan pada Oktober 2025 dari basis Scopus, mencakup 608 dokumen dari 253 sumber publikasi dan afiliasi penulis di 24 negara. Penelusuran dilakukan menggunakan kueri dengan kata kunci “political communication”, “social media”, dan “public response.” Analisis dilakukan menggunakan VOSviewer dan RStudio (Biblioshiny) untuk memetakan jaringan kolaborasi penulis, keterkaitan kata kunci, distribusi tematik, serta identifikasi jurnal dan institusi paling produktif. Hasil menunjukkan empat kluster utama dalam literatur global: strategi kampanye digital oleh elit politik, mobilisasi isu dan keterlibatan publik, pengaruh algoritmik terhadap framing pesan dan visibilitas isu, serta tata kelola etis dan tantangan disinformasi. Temuan ini memperkaya teori komunikasi politik digital dan memberikan arah baru bagi riset tentang hubungan antara teknologi, demokrasi, dan partisipasi politik di ruang publik virtual.

Kata Kunci: Komunikasi Politik; Media Sosial; Respon Publik; Analisis Bibliometrik; Kampanye Digital

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has fundamentally changed the landscape of global political communication, including in Indonesia and the Southeast Asia region. Social media, which initially only functioned as a tool for interpersonal communication, has now become a strategic arena for political campaigns, issue mobilisation, and public opinion formation (Subekti et al., 2023; Situmorang and Ritonga, 2025). Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok not only mediate interactions between politicians and the public but also serve as spaces for highly dynamic political narrative contestation. In this algorithmic era, political messages are increasingly personalised, enabling political actors to utilise big data to drive

messages to audience preferences (Shaffira et al., 2024).

In the Indonesian context, this phenomenon marks a transformation towards a form of digital democracy that increasingly integrates information technology into electoral practices and governance (Imawan, 2023). Imawan (2023) emphasises that the collaboration between advances in digital technology and politics has democratized citizen participation, expanded access to political information, and presented new challenges such as disinformation and polarisation. As internet penetration has increased to 66.48% of the total population, digital-based political participation in Indonesia has experienced a significant surge, especially in the last four elections. Social media facilitates direct engagement between candidates and voters, encourages more inclusive

participation, and strengthens the emotional bond between citizens and political actors (Kim et al., 2018; Dimitrova et al., 2014).

Furthermore, changes in political campaign strategies are now dominated by the practice of “digital politicking”, in which analytical data, crowdfunding, and online activism have become an integral part of the digital democracy ecosystem (Baber et al., 2022; Buente, 2015). However, as noted by Aspinall and Mietzner (2019), these dynamics also reinforce political polarisation and the spread of misinformation, which is more difficult to control. Although digitisation has opened broader opportunities for participation, it also raises ethical dilemmas related to data privacy, cybersecurity, and the potential for algorithmic manipulation of public opinion (van Dijck, 2020; Whyte, 2020).

On a regional scale, this issue has developed into a more complex phenomenon through the concept of digital sociocracy, which is a participative governance framework that combines digital technology with the principles of transparency, accountability, and equality in decision-making (Munajat and Irawati, 2025). The study by Munajat and Irawati (2025) shows that the implementation of digital sociocracy in Southeast Asia faces major challenges such as digital literacy gaps, uneven infrastructure, and the emergence of cyber-authoritarianism, where technology is used to strengthen political control and restrict freedom of expression (Sinpeng, 2023). Countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia show significant variations in levels of digital freedom, reflecting tensions between the potential for democratisation and repressive tendencies in the cyber realm (Sriyai, 2024).

However, opportunities for transformation towards inclusive digital governance remain open. The concept of digital sociocracy seeks to create a more transparent and adaptive system of government by promoting principles such as accountability, consent, empiricism, transparency, equivalence, and continuous improvement (Munajat and Irawati, 2025). In the Indonesian context, this idea is relevant for strengthening the integrity of democracy and increasing public trust in political institutions through participatory digital engagement.

The integration of digital democracy and digital sociocracy also shows how technology can be an instrument for expanding the public deliberative space. Government programs such as LAPOR! and other participatory platforms demonstrate how digitisation can improve government responsiveness to citizen complaints and strengthen the principle of accountability (Lim, 2024). However, as Munajat

and Irawati (2025) point out, the successful implementation of this system depends on the synergy between socio-political factors, infrastructure readiness, and the protection of citizen’s digital rights.

Both studies (Imawan, 2023; Munajat and Irawati, 2025) emphasise that digital democracy in Southeast Asia is not only oriented towards technological modernisation, but also towards the reconstruction of participatory values and public ethics in the digital age. By combining the principles of inclusivity from digital sociocracy and the participatory spirit of Indonesian digital democracy, there is a great potential to create a more equitable, open, and data-oriented model of political communication. However, without adaptive regulations and adequate digital literacy, this transformation could result in a new paradox of fragile democracy amid an abundance of information.

Therefore, this study uses a bibliometric approach to map global trends in digital political communication studies, particularly on social media such as Twitter. By combining analysis from 608 documents in the Scopus database (2020-2024), this study aims to identify thematic patterns, collaboration networks, and the geographical focus of current research in the field of digital political communication. This approach not only traces patterns of scientific publication but also attempts to understand how digital democracy and digital sociocracy practices in various countries reflect the relationship between technology, power, and public participation in an ever-evolving digital democracy era.

In an increasingly connected digital age, political communication has undergone a fundamental transformation marked by a shift from conventional media to digital platforms, particularly social media. Twitter, as one of the most dominant platforms in the digital political communication landscape, offers a strategic space for politicians to convey messages, build narratives, and mobilise public support in real time. With features such as retweets, mentions, hashtags, and trending algorithms, Twitter has become not only a channel for information distribution but also an open and interactive arena for political discourse. In this context, political communication is no longer one-way, but rather dialogical, personalised, and algorithm-based (Priyowidodo et al., 2024; Enli and Rosenberg, 2021).

The theoretical framework of this study combines three main approaches: political communication theory, media affordance theory, and the bibliometric approach. All three are used to explain how political communication strategies and public responses on

Twitter are formed, as well as how these phenomena are represented in global academic literature.

Political communication theory is the main foundation for explaining how politicians use social media to influence public opinion, build their image, and gain political legitimacy. Two main paradigms relevant in the context of social media are equalisation theory and normalisation theory. Equalisation theory emphasises that social media opens up a more egalitarian space for political participation for non-elite actors, reduces structural barriers, and expands democratic public engagement (Gainous and Wagner, 2014; Spierings et al., 2019). In contrast, normalisation theory argues that political elites still dominate the digital space by utilising greater resources and networks, making social media an extension of conventional political power (Bimber and Davis, 2003; Jungherr, 2016).

Imawan's (2024) research on digital democracy adds an important dimension to this framework. He highlights how the digitisation of politics not only expands access to information but also creates a participation paradox-where digital openness can be exploited by elites to strengthen their influence and suppress criticism. This is in line with the normalisation theory argument that digital democracy still operates within a hierarchical logic of power. However, Imawan also emphasises the importance of digital citizenship and participatory literacy to encourage more ethical and deliberative use of social media. Thus, in the context of this study, political communication theory is used not only to examine how political messages are conveyed, but also how social media has become an arena for the reproduction of and resistance to political power.

To explain how Twitter's technical features influence political communication practices, media affordance theory is used as a complementary framework. Affordance refers to the potential actions that technology provides to users, which can encourage or limit certain forms of interaction (Evaans et al., 2017). Twitter has distinctive affordances-such as the ability to retweet to expand the reach of messages, hashtags to shape collective discourse, and trending algorithms that determine the visibility of issues. These features allow politicians to strategically control public narratives, while ordinary users can form grassroots movements through hashtag activism (Hidayat and Kurniawan, 2025).

According to Hidayat and Kurniawan (2025), the affordance of social media is not only technical but also sociocultural, since users interpret and utilise digital features according to their social context. In Indonesian politics, for example, Twitter affordances

are used not only for electoral campaigns, but also for issue framing and solidarity mobilisation. Thus, understanding affordances is important for analysing the relationship between political communication strategies and public responses, including how algorithms can reinforce polarisation and create bias in public discourse.

Bibliometric Approach

The bibliometric approach is used to map how research related to political communication on social media is developing globally. Bibliometrics enables quantitative analysis of scientific publication metadata, including publication trends, author collaboration networks, keyword correlations, and thematic clusters. Song (2024), through a bibliometric study on framing in media and communication studies, shows that digital communication research is currently shifting its focus from institutional issues to social media-based public interactions. He found that the concepts of framing, political communication, and social media engagement have been the centre of academic attention over the past decade. In addition, cross-country and multidisciplinary collaboration has increased significantly, indicating that digital political communication studies have become a global and interdisciplinary field.

Referring to Song's (2024) methodology, this study uses VOSviewer and RStudio software through the Biblioshiny interface to visualise a conceptual map of global research related to political communication on Twitter. The analysis was conducted on 608 documents from the Scopus database (2020-2024) with the keywords "political communication", "public response", and "Twitter". This approach not only identifies the most productive authors and institutions but also maps the thematic links between political communication strategies, framing, and public engagement.

The integration of these three approaches provides a comprehensive understanding of how political communication on social media operates as a social, technological, and symbolic system. Political communication theory explains actors and messages; affordance theory explains the technological mechanisms that facilitate or limit interaction, while bibliometrics explains the epistemological landscape and the direction of research development in this field.

Through this combination, the theoretical framework asserts that political communication on Twitter is not merely a media phenomenon but also an epistemic arena where power, algorithms, and academic knowledge intertwine. Thus, this study

contributes to the expansion of digital political communication theory that not only explains elite communication strategies but also highlights citizen engagement and discourse dynamics in the digital public sphere.

METHOD

This study uses a bibliometric approach to map trends and patterns of research related to political communication strategies employed by politicians on Twitter and the public response they elicit. The main objective of this study is to identify developments in the global literature on political communication on Twitter, particularly in the context of the interaction between communication strategies and public engagement. The bibliometric method was chosen because it provides a comprehensive quantitative overview of the intellectual structure of a field of study, including publication distribution, author collaboration, institutional affiliation, and dominant thematic clusters (Álvarez-Peralta et al., 2023; Subekti et al., 2023).

The data search was conducted in October 2025 using the following query: TITLE-ABS-KEY (“political communication” AND “public response”) AND PUBYEAR > 2019 AND PUBYEAR < 2025. The main keywords used included political communication, Twitter, social media, and related to concepts such as digital campaigning, online political discourse, and public engagement. The search focused on journal articles that had been finally published between 2020 and 2024.

Table 1. Research Variables and Indicators

No	Variable	Indicator
1	Research Trends	Database Summary Research Productivity Trends Topics
2	Research Mapping	Thematic Maps Factorial Analysis

The search results generated 526 relevant documents from authors affiliated with institutions in 24 countries. The data obtained was then cleaned using OpenRefine to avoid duplication and metadata inconsistencies. Next, analysis was performed using VOSviewer and RStudio through the Biblioshiny interface, which enabled mapping of author collaboration networks (co-authorship), keyword co-occurrence, thematic distribution, and identification of the most productive journals and institutions. The use of Biblioshiny in RStudio provides flexibility in

visualisation and more in-depth statistical analysis of bibliometric data and supports interactive exploration of publication trends and literature structure (Aria and Cuccurullo, 2020).

This analysis aims to reveal how political communication strategies on Twitter are studied globally and how public responses to these strategies are represented in academic literature. The findings from this study are expected to contribute conceptually and practically to the development of digital political communication studies in the era of social media.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Database

Table 2. Database

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	2020:2024
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	381
Documents	526
Annual Growth Rate %	11.46
Document Average Age	2.81
Average citations per doc	18.21
References	4563
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	1918
Author's Keywords (DE)	1762
AUTHORS	
Authors	2418
Authors of single-authored docs	0
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	0
Co-Authors per Doc	9.37
International co-authorships %	25.48
DOCUMENT TYPES	
article	526

Based on the results of bibliometric data extraction, this study found 526 scientific documents published between 2020 and 2024, originating from 381 publication sources in the form of journals and scientific books. The annual growth rate of publications reached 11.46%, indicating that research on political communication on social media, particularly Twitter, has experienced consistent growth in the last five years. The relatively young average age of the documents (2.81 years) indicates that this topic is still a very current study in digital political communication studies.

From an academic influence perspective, each document received an average of 18.21 citations, with a total of 4563 references used, indicating conceptual depth and strong interconnectivity between studies. In addition, keyword analysis shows diversity in terminology with 1918 Keyword Plus (ID) and 1762 Author’s Keywords (DE), illustrating the broad scope of research ranging from digital campaign strategies and public engagement to issues of ethics and disinformation.

Collaboratively, this research involved 2418 authors, with an average of 0.37 authors per document and an international collaboration rate of 25.48%. No single-authored publications were found, confirming a highly collaborative nature of this field. All documents were journal articles (100%), indicating a strong research focus on indexed scientific publications. These data findings form the basis for further analysis using VOSviewer and Biblioshiny (RStudio) to map author collaboration networks, keyword correlations, and dominant thematic clusters related to political communication strategies on Twitter and the public response they generate.

b. Research Productivity

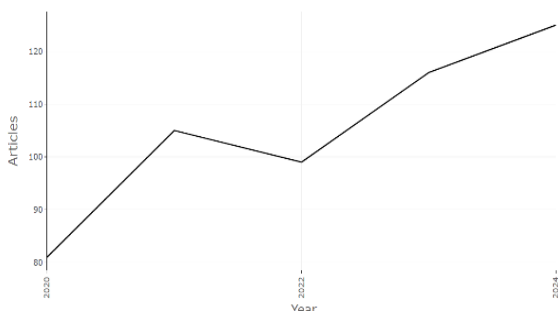


Figure 1. Research Productivity

Figure 1. shows the trend in scientific publications related to political communication on Twitter during the period 2020 to 2024. In general, the number of articles has increased significantly from around 80 articles in 2020 to more than 125 articles in 2024, indicating consistent and sustained growth in research in this field. A sharp increase was seen between 2020 and 2021, reflecting increased academic attention to the phenomenon of digital political communication during the COVID-19 pandemic, when political activities and campaigns moved online. However, there was a slight decline in productivity in 2022, which can be interpreted as a post-pandemic adjustment phase and diversification of research focus to other platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, as described in the main literature review.

However, the trend rose sharply again in 2023 and 2024, in line with the strengthening discourse on disinformation, content moderation, and the role of algorithms in shaping public opinion on social media. This increase also shows that topics related to political communication strategies and public responses on Twitter remain the centre of attention in global academic literature.

Overall, this publication growth pattern confirms the results of bibliometric analysis that the field of digital political communication shows an annual growth rate of 11.46%, indicating stable and dynamic development towards more interdisciplinary and global research.

c. Trending Topics

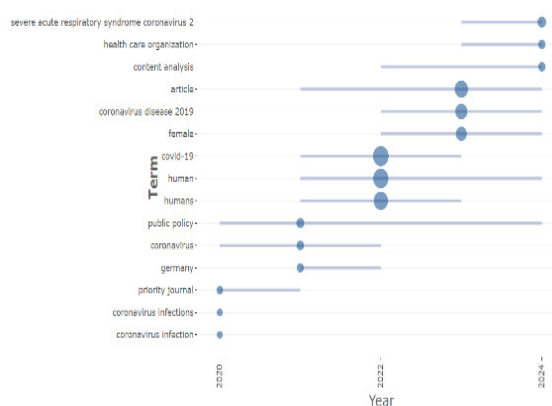


Figure 2. Trending Topics

The graph above (Figure 2.) illustrates the dynamics of the most frequently appearing topics in publications related to political communication on social media, specifically Twitter, during the period 2020-2024. The distribution pattern of terms shows that the early period (2020-2021) was dominated by themes related to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as “coronavirus disease 2019”, “health care organisation”, and “public policy”. This reflects the focus of research on how governments and politicians use social media to communicate health policies and manage public crises.

From 2021 to 2022, terms such as “content analysis”, “article”, and “human/female” began to increase, indicating a shift in the research approach from simply reporting policies to analysing communication and public representation in the digital space. This phase marked the emergence of studies that used content analysis methods on Twitter posts to understand issue framing, politician’s communication strategies, and public engagement in the discourse on the pandemic and social policies.

Entering 2023-2024, research trends are shifting from pandemic issues to broader themes

such as disinformation, digital ethics, and algorithmic affordance, as described in the main article. Topics such as “Germany” and “public policy” show an increase in research contributions from developed countries that focus on governance and digital content regulation.

Overall, this trend shows an evolution in research focus from the global health crisis to digital political communication and public response in the post-pandemic era, in line with a shift in studies toward digital democracy and information governance on social media.

d. Thematic Map

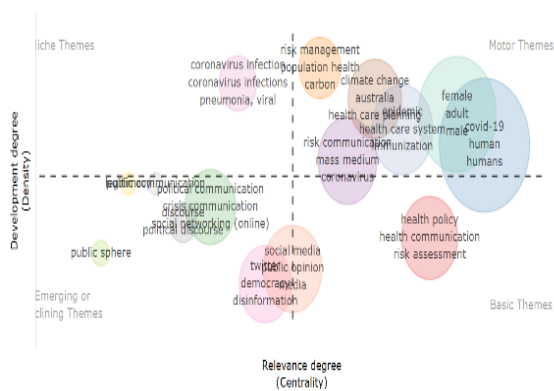


Figure 3. Thematic Map

The thematic map above (Figure 3.) visualises the interrelationships and levels of development of research themes related to political communication on social media, specifically Twitter, in the period 2020-2024. This analysis categorises themes into four quadrants based on their level of relevance (centrality) and level of development (density), which indicate the strategic position of each theme in the academic literature structure. In the upper right quadrant (Motor Themes), themes such as “covid-19”, “humans”, “female”, and “adult” appeared as the most central and rapidly developing dominant themes. These themes reflect the main focus of research during the pandemic; health issues and risk communication were the centre of study. Research in this phase highlights the role of social media in the dissemination of public health information and crisis communication strategies.

The lower quadrant (Basic Themes) contains concepts such as “health communication”, “risk assessment”, and “health policy”. These themes are fundamental and form the conceptual foundation for studies of digital political communication that discuss public policy and information governance during crises.

The upper left quadrant (Niche Themes) displays specific topics such as “coronavirus

infections” and “pneumonia viral”. These themes are more technical and limited to the medical-pandemic context. Meanwhile, the lower left quadrant (Emerging or Declining Themes) contains themes such as “social media”, “Twitter”, “democracy”, “public opinion”, and “disinformation”. Although their position is still evolving, these topics point to a new direction in research toward digital political communication, disinformation, and social media-based democracy.

Thus, this thematic map confirms a shift in research focus from health-based risk communication to broader exploration of political communication strategies, public engagement, and digital ethics in the post-pandemic era, in line with the four main clusters identified in the main file, namely digital campaigns, issue mobilisation, algorithmic affordances, and ethical governance.

e. Factorial Analysis

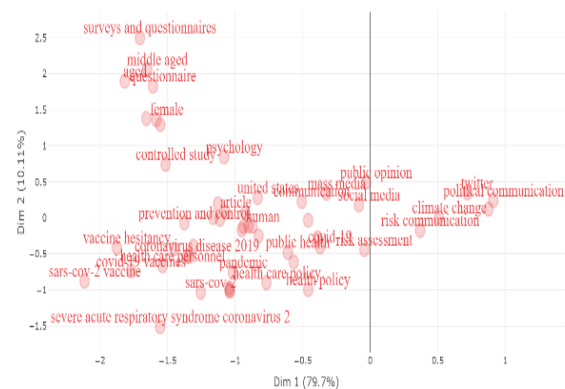


Figure 4. Factorial Analysis

Figure 4. shows the results of factor analysis mapping the conceptual relationships between topics in research on political communication on social media, specifically Twitter, during the period 2020-2024. This analysis illustrates the distribution of key words based on two dimensions-Dim1 (79.7%), which reflects the main thematic variations in the field of study, and Dim 2 (10.11%), which represents secondary variations or methodological relationships between topics.

In general, this map shows two large clusters that illustrate the evolution of research. On the right side of the graph (positive Dim 1), topics such as “political communication”, “Twitter”, “social media”, “public opinion”, and “risk communication” form the main cluster that focuses on digital political communication, message dissemination strategies, and public interaction. This cluster shows a research direction oriented towards political discourse analysis, message framing, and the role of algorithms in shaping public perception – in line with the “digital

campaigning” and “public engagement” clusters described in the main file.

Meanwhile, the left side of the graph (Dim 1 negative) is dominated by terms such as “COVID-19”, “vaccine hesitancy”, “health policy”, and “risk assessment”, reflecting the themes of risk communication and health policy during the pandemic. This cluster shows the conceptual roots of early research during the pandemic, in which social media was used as a crisis communication tool by governments and health institutions.

Additionally, a collection of terms such as “surveys and questionnaires”, “psychology”, and “controlled study” at the top (Dim 2 positive) indicates the use of empirical and survey-based methodological approaches based on surveys and public behaviour analysis, which are increasingly being adopted in digital political communication research.

Thus, this factorial analysis illustrates a conceptual transition in literature: from a focus on health crisis communication to strategic analysis of political communication, public participation, and disinformation in the digital space. This reinforces the bibliometric findings in the main file that political communication research on Twitter is evolving into an interdisciplinary field that combines dimensions of technology, policy, and public behaviour.

The results of bibliometric analysis show that research on political communication in social media has experienced stable and significant growth during the period 2020-2024, with an annual growth rate of 11.46%. This increase indicates that social media has become the main arena in the study of digital political communication, replacing the dominant role of conventional media in mediating the relationship between politicians and the public. This changing landscape shows that contemporary politics now takes place not only in institutional spaces such as parliament and the mass media, but also in digital spaces that are open, participatory, and algorithmic (Subekti et al., 2023).

The increase in productivity during this period correlates with global socio-political dynamics, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, which has driven a massive migration of political activity to the digital space. The pandemic has accelerated the digitisation of political communication, with social media becoming the main channel for conveying public policy messages, socialising government programs, and conducting health crisis-based campaigns (Situmorang and Ritonga, 2025). In this context, platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok not only function as media for information

distribution but also as arenas for political discourse, ideological debate, and real-time mobilisation of public issues.

Thematic analysis shows that the initial research focus during this period was dominated by issues such as “COVID-19”, “health communication”, and “risk assessment”, which reflect the concentration of studies on risk communication and health policy. These themes then evolved as the crisis period ended toward broader and more complex issues, such as digital campaigning, algorithmic affordances, public engagement, and disinformation governance. This shift marks an epistemological transition from crisis-based communication to more participatory and deliberate political communication in the digital realm. This supports Enli and Rosenberg’s (2021) view that social media is not only a channel for disseminating political messages, but also an arena for shaping public opinion and constructing political identities that are heavily influenced by algorithmic logic.

The results of factorial analysis in this study show that there are two major conceptual axes in the literature on digital political communication. The first axis describes research on risk and crisis communication, which developed strongly during the pandemic and focused on the role of social media in crisis mitigation and the spread of public information. The second axis centres on the theme of digital political communication, which highlights campaign strategies, political message framing, and public interaction on social media. This pattern shows that the field of political communication has become increasingly interdisciplinary, combining communication theory, social psychology, policy science, and even data science (Álvarez-Peralta et al., 2023).

This multidisciplinary involvement also represents a methodological transition from a descriptive approach to an analytical and predictive approach. Researchers now not only map political content, but also explore how algorithms, emotions, and social networks influence public perception. Recent studies have begun to explore how algorithmic bias can reinforce political polarisation and create echo chambers, where individuals are only exposed to information that reinforces their political views (Priyowidodo et al., 2024).

Besides thematic and methodological developments, the research results also show a high level of author collaboration – an average of 9.37 authors per document with an international collaboration rate of 25.48%. This indicates that digital political communication research is

becoming more global and collective. Collaborative networks across countries and institutions show an academic awareness that the phenomenon of political communication on social media is cross-border and cannot be understood only through the national context. This collaboration supports the theory of normalisation (Bimber and Davis, 2003), which explains that academic actors with access to technology and global networks tend to utilise digital resources to strengthen their scientific position and influence on the international research stage.

In a theoretical context, the results of this study confirm the continuation of two major paradigms in the study of digital political communication, which are equalisation and normalisation (Spierings et al., 2019; Gainous and Wagner, 2014). The equalisation paradigm emphasises the role of social media in opening up space for political democratization, where people can participate directly, criticise policies, and shape alternative discourses without going through mainstream media filters. In contrast, the normalisation paradigm explains how political elites and powerful institutions continue to dominate the digital space by utilising algorithms, professional communication teams, and analytical data to expand their political reach and influence. These two paradigms coexist, reflecting the paradoxical dynamics between democratisation and the reproduction of power in the digital space.

Furthermore, the phenomena of disinformation, digital ethics, and algorithmic affordance have now emerged as new focuses in political communication research. The biggest challenge for digital democracy is how to balance freedom of expression with ethical responsibility, and how to ensure that platform algorithms do not reinforce bias, hate speech, or polarisation. Future research is expected to deepen this aspect through a more empirical and big data analysis-based approach to understanding public behaviour in an increasingly complex political context.

Overall, these findings indicate that studies of digital political communication have reached a stage of theoretical maturity. Research is no longer merely describing phenomena but has begun to construct new conceptual models and theoretical frameworks that bridge technology, public behaviour, and digital democracy governance. The practical implications of these findings emphasise the importance of developing transparent, inclusive, and ethical public communication policies and the need for collaboration between academics, governments, and digital platforms to create a healthy and equitable political communication ecosystem in the algorithmic era.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that digital political communication, especially through social media platforms such as Twitter, has undergone significant and complex developments between 2020 and 2024. Based on a bibliometric analysis of 526 documents from 381 scientific sources, it was found that this field showed an annual growth rate of 11.46%, with international collaboration reaching 25.48%. This fact indicates that the study of digital political communication has not only undergone quantitative expansion, but also conceptual and methodological evolution towards a more interdisciplinary and global direction.

Twitter, as the main focus in this study, has evolved into a new political space that transcends its informational function. This platform serves as an interactive arena that allows political actors, the media, and the public to shape and negotiate political meaning in real time. With features such as retweet, mentions, hashtags, and algorithmic curation, Twitter presents a model of political communication that is dialogical, participatory, and data-driven. However, behind its democratizing potential lies a new power paradox that reinforces the relevance of two main paradigms in digital political communication theory – equalisation and normalisation.

The equalisation paradigm shows how social media opens space for non-elite actors to participate and shape alternative political discourse, strengthening the democratisation of the digital public space. In contrast, the normalisation paradigm asserts that political elites remain capable of maintaining their dominance by utilising digital infrastructure, professional teams, and analytical data to expand their influence. This study finds that the two paradigms are not mutually exclusive, but rather coexist, forming a dynamic power structure in the digital space. These findings reinforce the statements of Gainous and Wagner (2014) and Bimber and Davis (2003) that social media, despite opening opportunities for participation, remains a political arena that is heavily influenced by capital and technological resources.

The shift in research focus from crisis communication during the pandemic to strategic studies on digital campaigning, algorithmic affordances, and disinformation governance indicates epistemological maturity in this field. This evolution marks a transition from descriptive research to more analytical and predictive research, with greater attention to ethical aspects, participation, and digital governance. Through factorial analysis, two major clusters were found that form the conceptual foundation of the

research: (1) risk communication and health policy, and (2) digital political communication and public participation. The transition from the first cluster to the second reflects a global shift in academic focus from crisis management to digital democracy.

In addition, the results of the study show that scientific collaboration in the field of digital political communication is very high, with an average of 9.37 authors per publication. This pattern reflects that this topic has become the centre of attention across countries and disciplines, combining perspectives from communication, psychology, public policy, and data science. This dynamic indicates that the study of digital political communication now functions not only as a field of social research but also as an epistemic arena where power and technology interact in the production of global knowledge.

The theoretical implications of this study reinforce the importance of integrating political communication theory, media affordance theory, and bibliometric approaches in understanding political behaviour in the digital space. Twitter, and social media in general, not only shape the way political communication is conducted, but also influence how discourse, public opinion, and political legitimacy are constructed. Therefore, the study of digital political communication must be understood as a combination of technological dynamics, public behaviour, and power structures that influence each other.

Practically speaking, the results of this study highlight the urgency for policymakers, academics, and digital platforms to create a more ethical, transparent, and inclusive communication ecosystem. The biggest challenge in digital democracy is not only how to facilitate freedom of expression, but also how to overcome disinformation, hate speech, and algorithmic bias without sacrificing democratic principles. With the wise use of technology and adequate digital literacy, social media can be an important instrument in strengthening citizen participation, increasing public accountability, and deepening deliberative democratic practices.

Thus, this study concludes that digital political communication has reached a phase of theoretical maturity, where issues such as algorithms, ethics, and public engagement have become the main agenda of global research. Twitter is no longer just a medium for political communication but also a political arena in itself – a place where discourse, power, and technology interact to shape the direction of democracy in the digital age.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Credit authorship contribution statement

Annisa Atha Hanifah: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Validation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Resources, Data Curation, Writing-original draft, and Visualisation.

La Mani: Supervision, Methodology, Paper Evaluation, Writing-Review and Editing, and Paper Evaluation.

Zidane Ahmad Busthomi: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Writing-original draft, and Visualisation

Giovanni Sunrise: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Writing-original draft, and Visualisation.

Matthew Abrham Kristanto: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Writing-original draft, and Visualisation

Indra Prawira: Supervision, Methodology, Paper Evaluation, Writing-Review and Editing, and Paper Evaluation.

Data Availability Statement

The authors: Annisa Atha Hanifah, La Mani, Zidane Ahmad Busthomi, Giovanni Sunrise, Matthew Abrham Kristanto, and Indra Prawira. We demonstrate our commitment to data openness and transparency. To facilitate further research, we have made the data used in their study publicly available. The data that support the findings of this study are openly available. The data used by the author can be opened via the link: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JMwdYe-oJlcmYvUDDmU2KA7X1ExUAWks3wZihunL1Rk/edit?usp=sharing>

REFERENCES

- Álvarez-Peralta, M., Rojas-Andrés, R., & Diefenbacher, S. (2023). Meta-analysis of political communication research on Twitter: Methodological trends. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2209371>
- Aria, M., & Cuccurullo, C. (2020). Bibliometrix: An R-tool for comprehensive science mapping analysis. *Journal of Informetrics*, 11(4), 959–975. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2017.08.007>
- Aspinall, E., & Mietzner, M. (2019). *Southeast Asia's troubling elections: Nurturing illiberal democracy*. *Journal of Democracy*, 30(4), 141–155. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2019.0068>

- Baber, H., Imran, M., & Li, J. (2022). Digital political campaigning: A systematic literature review. *Government Information Quarterly*, 39(4), 101685. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2022.101685>
- Bimber, B., & Davis, R. (2003). *Campaigning online: The Internet in U.S. elections*. Oxford University Press.
- Buente, W. (2015). Political participation and the Internet: A global perspective. *International Journal of E-Politics*, 6(3), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJEP.2015070101>
- Chadwick, A. (2017). *The hybrid media system: Politics and power* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190696726.001.0001>
- Dimitrova, D. V., Shehata, A., Strömbäck, J., & Nord, L. W. (2014). The effects of digital media on political participation and civic engagement: Comparative evidence from four countries. *Information, Communication & Society*, 17(6), 750–766. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2013.837770>
- Enli, G., & Rosenberg, L. (2021). Algorithmic visibility and political communication on social media. *New Media & Society*, 23(8), 2296–2313. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820982786>
- Gainous, J., & Wagner, K. M. (2014). *Tweeting to power: The social media revolution in American politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Imawan, R. (2023). *Digital democracy: The evolution of Indonesia electoral politics*. In *Digital democracy: Political transformation in Southeast Asia* (pp. 65–78). UGM Press. <https://doi.org/10.15642/sarpas.2023.3.1.65-78>
- Kim, Y., Chen, H.-T., & Gil de Zúñiga, H. (2018). Stumbling upon news on the Internet: Effects of incidental news exposure and relative entertainment use on political participation. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 84, 144–150. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.02.021>
- Lim, M. (2024). *Participatory governance and digital platforms in Indonesia: Opportunities and challenges*. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 34(2), 117–134. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01292986.2024.1008741>
- Manohara, B. P., & Sartika, I. (2025). *Demokrasi, politik dan kepemimpinan di Indonesia dalam analisis bibliometrik*. *Journal of Accounting, Finance and Management (JAFM)*, 5(6), 1691–1701. Dinasti Publisher. <https://doi.org/10.38035/jafm.v5i6>
- Munajat, Q., & Irawati, R. (2025). *Digital sociocracy: Navigating governance challenges in Southeast Asia*. *Journal of Governance and Innovation*, 5(2), 45–62.
- Obreja, M. C. (2022). *Mapping the political landscape on social media using bibliometrics*. *Media Studies and Applied Ethics*, 8(2), 45–67. <https://doi.org/10.24193/msaed.2022.8.2.5>
- Ott, B. L. (2017). The age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the politics of debasement. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 34(1), 59–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2016.1266686>
- Prawira, I., & Ekaputri, R. A. (2023). Capitalizing the Social Media. In *The Routledge Companion to Journalism in the Global South* (pp. 269–278). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003298144-28>
- Prawira, I., Irawan, R. E., & Karen, K. (2021). OBJEKTIVITAS TIGA MEDIA SIBER INDONESIA: STUDI KONTEN BERITA KONFLIK ISRAEL-PALESTINA. *JWP (Jurnal Wacana Politik)*, 6(2), 95. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jwp.v6i2.35073>
- Priyowidodo, G., Abd Rahman, N. A., Luik, J. E., Indrayani, I. I., & Hadi, I. P. (2024). Political influencers on social media: Language used and content of communication strategy of Indonesian politicians' Twitter accounts. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 40(1), 99–199. <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2024-4001-06>
- Priyowidodo, G., Nurmandi, A., & Subekti, A. (2024). *Digital campaigning and public engagement in Southeast Asian democracies*. *International Journal of Digital Politics*, 6(1), 15–33.
- Ramadhani, R. W., & Pratiwi, D. A. (2024). *Analisis bibliometrik: Perkembangan social network analysis dalam riset komunikasi politik pada media sosial di Indonesia*. *Orasi: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi*, 15(1), 14–29. Universitas Islam Negeri Syekh Nurjati Cirebon. <https://syekh Nurjati.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/orasi>
- Risca, M., Santosa, R., & Damanik, F. (2025). Social media strategies in political campaigns:

- A global bibliometric analysis. *Journal of Political Communication Research*, 14(2), 88–105.
- Shaffira, N., Dharmayanti, N. P. G., Gantira, M., Rahmani, M. F. S., & Syaifuddin, M. (2024). Analisis bibliometrik: Perkembangan penelitian agenda setting dan political communication. *Comdent: Communication Student Journal*, 2(1), 100–119. <https://doi.org/10.24198/comdent.v2i1.54407>
- Sinpeng, A. (2023). Digital authoritarianism in Southeast Asia: Technology and state power. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 53(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2022.2104897>
- Situmorang, J., & Ritonga, M. (2025). Digital democracy and political discourse on emerging platforms. *Asian Journal of Political Communication*, 4(2), 120–137.
- Spierings, N., Jacobs, K., & Mugge, L. (2019). Equalization or normalization through social media? Patterns of online political engagement across gender and class. *Information, Communication & Society*, 22(5), 661–678. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1573911>
- Sriyai, D. (2024). Freedom and control in Southeast Asia's digital politics. *Asian Politics & Policy*, 16(3), 450–465. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aspp.12743>
- Stieglitz, S., & Dang-Xuan, L. (2013). Emotions and information diffusion in social media—Sentiment of microblogs and sharing behavior. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 29(4), 217–248. <https://doi.org/10.2753/MIS0742-1222290408>
- Subekti, A., Mutiarin, D., & Nurmandi, A. (2023). Mapping the digital transformation of political communication research: A bibliometric analysis. *Journal of Media and Politics*, 8(2), 98–114.
- Subekti, A., Nurmandi, A., & Priyowidodo, G. (2024). Algorithmic personalization and political engagement on social media: Insights from Southeast Asia. *Digital Communication Review*, 11(1), 55–72.
- Subekti, D., Mutiarin, D., & Nurmandi, A. (2023). Political communication in social media: A bibliometrics analysis. *Studies in Media and Communication*, 11(6), 299–304. <https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v11i6.6214>
- van Dijck, J. (2020). Governing digital societies: Private platforms, public values. *Computer Law & Security Review*, 36(3), 105377. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clsr.2019.105377>
- Whyte, C. (2020). The cyberpolitics of democracy: Digital threats and opportunities. *Journal of Cyber Policy*, 5(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23738871.2020.1714549>
- Zhang, X., & Wang, Y. (2023). Bibliometric analysis of social media in government public communication using CiteSpace software. *Journal of Information and Communication Studies*, 10(4), 203–221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00288233.2023.1001425>