

The State of Asian Communication Research and Directions for the 21st Century

Edited by
Ran Wei

The State of Asian Communication Research and Directions for the 21st Century

The 21st century has been called 'the Asian Century' by Eastern and Western academics, largely due to the economic and cultural rise of China and India. This volume explores both what this means for communication research, and the implications of Asia's rising global power for communication scholars in Asia and from around the world. Hot topics and emerging trends are explored, encapsulating the new opportunities as well as the challenges for Asian communication scholars.

Asia represents diverse cultural, economic, social and political systems that shape different media systems in various countries with fertile contexts for communication research. The scope of the chapters in this book includes mass communications, mobile technology, intercultural and political communication, news and entertainment, health communication, public relations, and comparative analyses of mainstream mass communication theories.

The articles in this book were originally published in the *Asian Journal of Communication*.

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Contents

<i>Citation Information</i>	vii
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	ix
Introduction: Taking stock and showcasing communication research on Asia for a global audience <i>Ran Wei</i>	1
1. The Pivotal Role of AJC in the Growth of Communication Research in Asia: A semantic network analysis <i>Daewook Kim, Soo-Yeon Kim and Myung-Il Choi</i>	5
2. Mapping the field of communication technology research in Asia: content analysis and text mining of SSCI journal articles 1995–2014 <i>Pei Zheng, Xuan Liang, Guanxiong Huang and Xun Liu</i>	25
3. Asian mobile communication research: current status, enduring issues and future trends <i>Yue Zheng, Ran Wei and Elmie Nekmat</i>	46
4. A retrospective overview of health communication studies in Asia from 2000 to 2013 <i>May O. Lwin and Charles T. Salmon</i>	62
5. Mapping public relations scholarship in Asia: a longitudinal analysis of published research, 1995–2014 <i>Jie Xu and Guanxiong Huang</i>	75
6. East meets West: a new contextual perspective for crisis communication theory <i>Fang Wu, Yi-Hui Christine Huang and Lang Kao</i>	93
7. Is the agenda set? State of agenda-setting research in China and Korea <i>Shuhua Zhou, Yeojin Kim, Yunjuan Luo and Fei Qiao</i>	114
8. Theoretical and methodological patterns of third-person effect research: a comparative thematic analysis of Asia and the world <i>Ven-Hwei Lo, Ran Wei, Xiao Zhang and Lei Guo</i>	131
9. Effectiveness of entertainment education in communicating health information: a systematic review <i>Fuyuan Shen and Jiangxue (Ashley) Han</i>	153

CONTENTS

10. A content analysis of research on China in top-ranked communication journals from 1995 to 2014: a comparison with other Asian countries <i>Xun (Sunny) Liu, Xuan Liang and Pei Zheng</i>	165
11. Mass communication research on China from 2000 to 2010: a meta-analysis <i>Shi Li and Shuo Tang</i>	186
<i>Index</i>	209

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Taking stock and showcasing communication research on Asia for a global audience

Ran Wei

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Chapter 1

The Pivotal Role of AJC in the Growth of Communication Research in Asia: A semantic network analysis

Daewook Kim, Soo-Yeon Kim and Myung-Il Choi

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Chapter 2

Mapping the field of communication technology research in Asia: content analysis and text mining of SSCI journal articles 1995–2014

Pei Zheng, Xuan Liang, Guanxiong Huang and Xun Liu

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Chapter 3

Asian mobile communication research: current status, enduring issues and future trends

Yue Zheng, Ran Wei and Elmie Nekmat

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Chapter 4

A retrospective overview of health communication studies in Asia from 2000 to 2013

May O. Lwin and Charles T. Salmon

Asian Journal of Communication, volume 25, no. 1 (February 2015), pp. 1–13

Chapter 5

Mapping public relations scholarship in Asia: a longitudinal analysis of published research, 1995–2014

Jie Xu and Guanxiong Huang

Asian Journal of Communication, volume 26, no. 6 (December 2016), pp. 548–565

Chapter 6

East meets West: a new contextual perspective for crisis communication theory

Fang Wu, Yi-Hui Christine Huang and Lang Kao

Asian Journal of Communication, volume 26, no. 4 (February 2016), pp. 350–370

Chapter 7

Is the agenda set? State of agenda-setting research in China and Korea

Shuhua Zhou, Yejin Kim, Yunjuan Luo and Fei Qiao

Asian Journal of Communication, volume 26, no. 6 (December 2016), pp. 566–582

Chapter 8

Theoretical and methodological patterns of third-person effect research: a comparative thematic analysis of Asia and the world

Ven-Hwei Lo, Ran Wei, Xiao Zhang and Lei Guo

Asian Journal of Communication, volume 26, no. 6 (December 2016), pp. 583–604

Chapter 9

Effectiveness of entertainment education in communicating health information: a systematic review

Fuyuan Shen and Jiangxue (Ashley) Han

Asian Journal of Communication, volume 24, no. 6 (July 2014), pp. 605–616

Chapter 10

A content analysis of research on China in top-ranked communication journals from 1995 to 2014: a comparison with other Asian countries

Xun (Sunny) Liu, Xuan Liang and Pei Zheng

Asian Journal of Communication, volume 26, no. 6 (December 2016), pp. 605–625

Chapter 11

Mass communication research on China from 2000 to 2010: a meta-analysis

Shi Li and Shuo Tang

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INTRODUCTION

Taking stock and showcasing communication research on Asia for a global audience

Ran Wei

Taking stock

Communication research on Asia has enjoyed remarkable growth at the turn of the twenty-first century (Kuo, 2010; So, 2010). Scholarly interest in Asia has grown largely due to the economic and cultural rise of China and India. Then, what are the implications of Asia's rising global power for communication scholars, in Asia and around the world? For example, the on-going mobile revolution in Asia merits a timely and thorough review to document the scope, depth, and achievements of past research in understanding the social change in Asia triggered by the ubiquitous mobile phone. This volume takes stock of accomplishments in communication research on Asia for the global audience, examines some enduring issues, and points out new directions for future research.

The idea for this volume that highlights achievements and challenges in Asian communication research originated from a panel at the 2015 Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication (AEJMC) convention in San Francisco, USA. A range of papers presented at the panel took retrospective and forward-looking views of the fast-growing Asian communication research (Wei, 2015). Panelists as well as audiences were happily surprised about the rapid growth and the quickly accumulated communication research concerning Asia in recent years. The panel resulted in a consensus among the participants that it is about time to take stock of this rising tide of Asian communication research. A more comprehensive disciplinary review will showcase the status as well as benefit future research.

Fueled by a sense of optimism after the panel and a feeling of resolve to expand it into a forum of more systematic reviews of various fields and research trends, I made a pitch to Dr. Xiaoming Hao, Editor-in-Chief of *Asian Journal of Communication*, for a special issue to assess the state of communication research in the world's largest region. Dr. Hao and his editorial board vetted the proposal promptly and generously agreed to provide journal space for a special issue (issue 6 of volume 26) in 2016. The response to the call was strong; more than 20 submissions were received, among which seven were selected for inclusion after several rounds of peer reviews.

The eleven studies in this compilation examined a large number of published articles in most influential communication journals. According to Frost and Taylor (1985), published articles are important because they are permanent records of scholarly output and can influence the direction of a scientific field. Therefore, reviewing published articles helps to reveal academic trends – taking stock, if you will – and also provides an opportunity to foresee the direction of future research.

Showcasing Asian communication research for a global audience

When addressing publications in English-language communication journals, Kuo (2010) noted a distinctive growth in communication research on Asia and by Asian scholars between 1990 and 2010. The articles in this volume, which have all been selected for their respective and systematic insights, showcase the continued growth in Asian communication research, which increased exponentially over the past five years. The growth was most notable in

communication technology and emerging new media, as well as in strategic communication. For instance, articles on mobile media in Asian countries increased tenfold in 2010–2015. ‘Internet’ was the most popular keyword, and it was also the most studied communication technology, followed by the mobile phone, ICTs and social media. Incidentally, these also are the fastest-growing areas of the global research field as well.

Measured by the upward trajectory in published output and trends in research focus on Asia, it is clear that Asian communication research is at the forefront of the field as a whole, and experiencing a paradigm shift from theorizing analogue media to formulating new understandings of digital and mobile media.

In the call for papers for this publication, manuscripts were solicited that offered a comprehensive and updated review of existing literature on the current status and future trends of communication research on Asian countries. Additionally, reviews of mainstream communication theories (e.g. agenda-setting, spiral of silence, and cultivation, etc.) as applied in Asian countries were also welcomed. Accordingly, the chapters in this volume reflect these two types of submissions. To be exact, five reviewed a specific research field or area; three focused on applications of mass communication theories in Asia. The remaining three chapters were comparative analyses of communication research on Asia.

The first chapter is on mapping Asian communication by Kim, Kim and Choi who explored how such scholarship has developed in *Asian Journal of Communication (AJC)* from 1990 to 2015. They used the semantic network analysis of keywords. To validate their analysis, they used AEJMC’s flagship journal, *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly (JMCQ)* as a benchmark. Their analysis shows that scholarship, in terms of published articles in *AJC*, reflects its Asian distinction by exploring social and cultural comparisons of a few East Asian countries; it has also followed Western communication scholarship by investigating effects of political communication and news media, as well as advertising on television in the United States. Like *JMCQ*, *AJC* contributes to mainstream mass communication scholarship while keeping its own Asian perspectives.

Next, Zheng, Liang, Huang and Liu used a combination of techniques in content analysis and semantic network analysis to trace and analyze patterns in major research themes, popular keywords, theoretical frameworks, geographic landscapes, and research methods in published articles from leading communication and new media journals between 1995 and 2014. They argued that Asia’s robust economic, cultural and technological performance in the new century provided an impetus that resulted in booming Asian communication technology research. They also report that more than half of the publications in top-tier journals of the field were contributed by scholars from Asia-based institutions. One of the insights of their analyses is that disciplinary boundaries have limited researchers from seeing the whole picture of the communication process. However, communication technologies enable scholars to rethink definitions and redefine categories.

In the next chapter, Zheng, Wei and Nekmat explore whether and how Asia’s leadership in embracing mobile media stimulated mobile communication research on Asian countries. Their comprehensive analysis of 120 articles published in 18 journals documents some interesting patterns: collaborations with American and European scholars were common, but Asia-based authors outnumbered non-Asian authors in the published scholarship about Asian mobile communication. The most common collaborating authorships were formed between North American-based and Asian scholars. This particular result indicates that mobile communication research on Asian countries attracts attention from scholars worldwide. Furthermore, the increasing scholarship is more likely to be theoretically-guided and driven by the social science paradigm. They conclude that the rise in Asian mobile communication research in the twenty-first century appears to be a product of global scholarship.

In chapter 4, Lwin and Salmon reviewed the status of twenty-first century health communication studies in Asia, and found large gaps in several areas, particularly in relation to employing established communication theories. They also found that most studies did not focus on

specific diseases, and that East Asian and South Asian scholars largely ignored topics of environmental health. The trends, patterns, and scholarly rigor in public relations research is examined in chapter 5 by Xu and Huang. Focusing on 162 articles published in eight leading communication journals between 1995 and 2014, they provided a longitudinal view. Consistent with other review studies, they found an increasing productivity, particularly from Asia-based scholars and also on topics concerning public diplomacy. Almost all articles in the sample stated that they have noted practical implications to PR practitioners in the field.

Wu, Huang and Kao developed a Chinese model of crisis communication by using a contextual perspective to identify influences at the crisis-event level (crisis type, stakeholders, crisis stages and systems) and at the societal level (politics, economic and media systems) in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Their study of 93 articles not only identified such influences, but also found that context-specific factors, among other general contextual factors, also affect crisis communication.

The next two chapters – by Lo and his associates, and by Zhou and his team – analyzed two leading mass communication theories, agenda-setting and third-person effect, as they were applied in Asian countries for empirical research. Both found wide applications of the two theories in Asian countries. Unlike other reviews, Zhou's team analyzed articles published in Chinese and Korean languages. They reported that agenda-setting has become a fertile area of research in China and South Korea. Similarly, Lo et al. conclude that third-person effects research exemplifies Asian perspectives, adding to a globally popular theory.

In chapter 9, Shen and Han conducted a meta-analysis of 22 studies focusing on the effects of entertainment education on health outcomes (knowledge, attitudes, intention, and behavior) and found the effects were small, but significant. Communication research about China, Asia's most populous country and rising global economic powerhouse, was compared to that of other Asian countries as reviewed in top-tier communication journals by Liu, Liang and Zheng in chapter 10. Their findings confirm that China has been the most researched East Asia country; published articles on China comprised more than twice as many articles as the second most researched country. Furthermore, over the years, scholars' interests in political topics, culture, communication behavior, and health gradually increased, while scholarly attention to media was reduced. Interestingly, they revealed that China's political system was the most common rationale for such studies.

Last but not the least, Li and Tang content analyzed 159 articles from 20 journals published between 2000 and 2010, and found that very few of the authors were located in mainland China, very few scholars employed communication theories in their studies, and most used a qualitative method to examine either media effects or to perform critical studies. The authors detected gaps in studies about entertainment, public relations, education, and social networking, and propose new scholarship to help illuminate the changing face of China.

Taken together, a grand total of 3956 articles (some may be duplicated) were identified and analyzed concerning research on Asia in highly ranked communication journals over a period of 20 years. The quantity of research production reviewed in this compilation is remarkable; it provides a wealth of communication research findings about Asia. More important, communication scholarship on Asia adds to the field and is a valuable body of literature in its own right. As Craig (1999, p. 129) argued, 'In a practical discipline of communication, theory is designed to provide conceptual resources for reflecting on communication problems.' I hope that these comprehensive reviews, longitudinal analyses, and comparative studies will serve as valuable resources for scholars around the world who conduct communication research about Asia.

Enduring issues

An objective of this volume is to provide a thorough and updated review of the range and status of fields or research streams, from which enduring issues can be revealed in order to

inform future communication research on Asia. In a way, I hope the gaps and deficiencies as identified in these reviews will open a new scholarly agenda in Asia's communication research.

In his editorial introduction to a special issue called *Asian Communication Research: The Past 20 Years, and the Next*, noting the 20th anniversary of the *AJC*, Kuo (2010), a founding editor of the journal, observed a regional imbalance due to the fact that most studies on Asian communication were about East Asia, and most Asian scholars were from East Asia. The dominance by scholars from China, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore resulted in a body of communication research that focused predominantly on East Asia. This imbalance was found to persist in the review studies in this compilation.

In addition, no clear Asian perspective emerges from published scholarship. As reported in these review studies, the communication research literature largely has been focused on and driven by studies limited to discrete Asian countries, such as China, Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The country-specific studies are valuable and offer insights into the processes and media effects of a particular Asian society, and contribute to the field. On the other hand, a broader, trans-national perspective is unlikely to evolve from these studies. This is clearly a daunting challenge for communication research in Asia as we move farther into the twenty-first century.

Given the vast geographic area of Asia, and the differences in all aspects of Asian societies in the dimensions of politics, religion, economic development, culture, language, and traditional norms, an 'Asian perspective' means different things to different scholars. Therefore, articulating the Asian perspective will likely be a long and difficult task. Nevertheless, it does not mean it is mission impossible. For example, comparative studies of Asian countries or comparing Asian countries with non-Asian countries may yield insights into the role of macro-level differences in culture and social systems in shaping their media systems and user behavior.

Conclusion

Periodic review of a discipline is considered desirable and beneficial to its further growth (Pasadeos, Berger, & Renfro, 2010). The overall trend emerging from the longitudinal analysis is clear: scholarly attention to Asia in general and to China in particular is increasing. Asian communication research adds diversity to the field and makes insightful contributions to general communication theories as well. Asian communication research has the momentum for continued growth. There is no better time than now to do research about this part of the world. By taking stock, this compilation, based on an *AJC* special issue, reviews the state of the communication research on Asia, and disciplinary reviews such as this should continue. This collection will not be the last, but it is surely an important one.

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The Pivotal Role of AJC in the Growth of Communication Research in Asia: A semantic network analysis

Daewook Kim, Soo-Yeon Kim and Myung-Il Choi

ABSTRACT

This study explored how Asian communication scholarship has evolved by using semantic network analysis on keywords in titles of publications in *Asian Journal of Communication (AJC)* from 1990 to 2015. It also compared those results with the results of a similar analysis of *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly (JMCQ)* to find both Western and unique aspects of AJC. AJC scholarship has shown its Asian uniqueness by exploring social and cultural comparisons focusing on a few East Asian countries. It has also followed Western communication scholarship by investigating effects of political communication and news media, as well as advertising using television in the United States, similar to JMCQ. AJC contributes to mainstream mass communication scholarship while keeping its own Asian perspectives.

Founding editors of the *Asian Journal of Communication (AJC)*, Eddie Kuo and Anura Goonasekera, have expressed the difficulties of developing Asian communication theories and have discussed the paradox of requiring both relativism and universalism:

Communication theories focusing on Asian values and cultural practices will therefore need to address the universal aspects of those values in order to have any implications for a scientific theory. To be Asian it has to be particularistic; to be theoretical it has to be universalistic. Herein lies the paradox, and the challenges an Asian theory of communication needs to face. (Goonasekera & Kuo, 2000, p. xii)

The development of Asian communication theories is a complex issue, since a theory cannot exist region-free (McQuail, 2000; Wang & Kuo, 2010; Wasserman & de Beer, 2009). While acknowledging the inevitability of involvement of Western culture in established media theories, McQuail (2000) notes that normative theories should be open to non-Western values and should seek diversity. Similarly, Wasserman and de Beer (2009) stressed that journalism studies should be set beyond a Western focus and be globally inclusive. Others have pointed out the limitations of an Asia-centric focus because of its narrow view on Asia and have argued for going beyond that in developing Asian communication theory (Wang & Kuo, 2010; Wang & Shen, 2000).

One of the goals of communication scholarship is to examine chronological developments in the field. Frost and Taylor (1985) emphasize the importance of published studies, stating that 'one powerful source of influence on the direction of a scientific field is the academic journal' (p. 35). Therefore, reviewing published articles can help reveal academic trends and provide an opportunity to predict the direction of future research. *AJC* is a peer-reviewed publication devoted to communication in Asian-Pacific regions. On the editorial page of the 2010 special issue of *AJC*, 'Asian Communication Research: The Past 20 Years, and the Next,' the founding editor, Eddie Kuo, offered a conclusion regarding Asian scholarship. He noted that the amount of research on Asian communication conducted by Asian scholars significantly increased between 1990 and 2010, not only by observing the growth of *AJC*, but also by examining top journals' openness to Asian communication studies (Kuo, 2010).

This study has two objectives. The first is to explore how Asian communication research has developed by reviewing *AJC* chronologically. While scholars have confirmed that *AJC* is the most influential Asian communication journal (Cheng & Kim, 2010; Ha & Pratt, 2000), few, if any, efforts have been made to examine this particular journal longitudinally. Some bibliometric studies have examined *AJC* as one of various publications (e.g. Cheng & Kim, 2010; Li & Tang, 2012; Lo & Wei, 2010), and Xiaoming (2012) conducted a simple content analysis of *AJC* studies. In addition, few efforts have been made to track *AJC* using methods other than content analysis; thus, this study applied semantic network analysis to explore the intellectual development of Asian communication scholarship by discovering the salient keywords with no predetermined criteria or associated frames between significant keywords. Considering that the role of *AJC* is to be the primary outlet for Asian communication studies, tracking *AJC* chronologically using semantic network analysis is meaningful in that it provides a historical picture of Asian communication research by finding the most prominent keywords and associated frames of those keywords. The second objective complements the first objective. Xiaoming (2012) stressed *AJC*'s role as a regional journal, mentioning that 'AJC complements rather than competes with the mainstream communication journal' (p. 264). We believe that direct chronological comparison of Asian communication research with Western research would help to assess the unique contribution of *AJC* to finding both Asian and Western perspectives in communication scholarship. To that end, this study also chronologically reviewed studies in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* (*JMCQ*), the flagship publication of the major Western academic association for communication, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC).

Literature review

Development of communication research on Asia

Numerous scholars contend that Asian communication theory should be unique, rooted in Asian cultures (Dissanayake, 2011; Goonasekera & Kuo, 2000; Wang & Kuo, 2010). Dissanayake (2011) defines Asian communication theory in the following way:

[It is] a body of work that has been produced by Asian and Western scholars underlining the need to fashion alternative ways of conceptualizing human communication, drawing on the conceptualities and formulations of traditional Asia thinkers as well as on communication

principles embedded in rituals, art forms as well as everyday practices of people living in Asian societies. (p. 223)

More simply, Goonasekera and Kuo (2000) referred to Asian communication theories as ‘communication taking place within the values, preferences and practices of an Asian group as against another group’ (p. xii). Chitty (2010) mentioned the term ‘Asian exceptionalism,’ explaining it as ‘an assertive response to western cultural dominance that emphasizes differences in Asian and European cultures and contexts, differences discussed in terms of Asian values’ (p. 186). Following these arguments, some scholars have argued for applying Asia-centric features in communication studies (Chen, 2006; Miike, 2006; Miike & Chen, 2006). For example, *yin* and *yang* can be applied as dichotomous but complementary forces to achieve the *Tao* in Asian communication studies (Chen, 2006). Kuo (2010) stresses that Asian communication scholars have attempted to show their own characteristic views in communication studies, particularly in intercultural communication, international communication, and new media communication.

Only a few previous bibliometric studies have reviewed communication research on Asia as a whole (e.g. So, 2010; Zhou, Thijs, & Glänzel, 2009). So (2010) examined 23 Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) communication journals from 1990 to 2009 and found that the total number of Asian-focused studies increased significantly during the 2000–2009 timeframe as compared to the 1990–1994 timeframe. While it was confirmed that Asian communication research has been on the rise, new media and public relations were found to be the most often studied individual fields within the communication discipline. In terms of the highest frequencies of individual Asian countries in studies, China, Japan, and South Korea ranked as the top three countries. When Zhou et al. (2009) reviewed all SSCI journals, they found that in social, political, and communication fields within the 1997–2006 timeframe, Singapore ranked first in terms of total number of studies, followed by China, South Korea, and Japan among Asian countries. In the cases of Singapore, China, and South Korea, their studies tend to focus more on economics and business disciplines, while articles focusing more on social, political, and communication fields are less prevalent than the world standard. Interestingly, Japan’s publication activity was more active in psychology and showed different aspects than other Asian countries.

Several bibliometric studies have examined the development of communication research focusing on a specific Asian country, such as China (Ha & Pratt, 2000; Li & Tang, 2012) or Korea (Chung, Jeong, Chung, & Park, 2005; Chung, Lee, Barnett, & Kim, 2009). Conducting a meta-analysis on mass communication research on China from 2000 to 2010 using a content analysis of 159 articles in 20 major English-language, peer-reviewed communication journals, Li and Tang (2012) demonstrated that the number of publications about China significantly increased after 2005, and qualitative studies were found more often than quantitative ones. Main communication theories were seldom applied, while interdisciplinary and cultural theories were commonly found in China-related studies. News and advertising were the most frequently studied media content areas. As Ha and Pratt’s (2000) findings support, China has been investigated as a single country more frequently than as one of multiple countries in published communication research on China.

Regarding communication studies on Korea, comparative studies have frequently been undertaken to examine Korean communication scholarship by comparing it with that of

the United States. For example, Chung et al. (2005) conducted a thematic meta-analysis of communication books published in Korea and the United States from 2002 to 2004, finding that mass communication and Internet/communication technologies were the most prevalent communication topics in both countries. Chung et al. (2009) conducted a semantic network analysis to compare organizational structures of communication associations in the West (International Communication Association) and in Korea (Korean Society of Journalism and Communication Studies) in 2007. In both organizations, mass media and new media were the core research topics. With the Korean organization, policy, media education, and journalism were the key divisions, while intercultural, political, and organizational communication were the core divisions in the United States. Therefore, the past bibliometric studies on Korea actively explored finding similarities and differences between Korean and American communication scholarship.

Numerous bibliometric studies have investigated the trends of individual fields within Asian communication research, such as political communication (e.g. Lo & Wei, 2010; Willnat & Aw, 2004), advertising (e.g. Cheng & Kim, 2010), intercultural communication (e.g. Kim, 2010), health communication (e.g. Lwin & Salmon, 2015), and social media (e.g. social media research in China: Gan & Wang, 2015). For example, advertising research in Asia increased substantially in the 2000s as compared to the 1990s, and the most frequently investigated Asian countries were found to be the Chinese mainland, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan (Cheng & Kim, 2010). Kim (2010) notes that intercultural communication studies have been actively conducted as one sub-area of Asian communication disciplines since the 1990s. However, those bibliometric studies about Asia have noted the lack of application of communication theory in general, as well as the heavy dependence on Western theories (Lwin & Salmon, 2015; Willnat & Aw, 2004). Specifically, Lwin and Salmon's (2015) analysis on Asian health communication scholarship found that more than 60% of studies did not apply any communication theories, and even those that did used mostly Western communication theories such as framing theory, culture-centered approach, diffusion of innovation, and theory of planned behavior.

Semantic network analysis

Semantic network analysis is a research paradigm that uses 'network analytic techniques on paired associations based on shared meaning' (Doerfel, 1998, p. 16). Krippendorff (2004) classifies semantic network analysis under computational content analyses and states that 'a network is called *semantic* when its nodes represent concepts or clauses and when these are linked to each other by more than one kind of binary relation' (p. 292). Content analysis is based on deductive reasoning because it requires the use of an a-priori coding scheme, which 'establishes the categories before the data are collected, based on some theoretical or conceptual rationale' (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 159). However, semantic network analysis is different from typical tools of content analysis because it does not require predetermined categories and is rooted in inductive reasoning. Therefore, it has a potential advantage of being open to new themes and maintaining objectivity when gathering data (Matthes & Kohring, 2008; Rice & Danowski, 1993). Accordingly, semantic network analysis can be better than content analysis at increasing reliability and validity (Matthes & Kohring, 2008).

Due to these benefits of semantic network analysis, there have been efforts to use it to examine scholarly literature in many fields, including communication (e.g. Doerfel & Barnett, 1999), public relations (Kim, Choi, Reber, & Kim, 2014), management information systems (MIS) (e.g. Choi, Yi, & Lee, 2011; Lee, Choi, & Kim, 2010), and scientific papers (e.g. Pereira, Fadigas, Senna, & Moret, 2011). For example, Doerfel and Barnett (1999) reviewed the titles of 703 conference papers presented at the 1991 International Communication Association conference using semantic network analysis. They found a high degree of association between the semantic network of papers and the membership affiliation. Lee et al. (2010) compared and contrasted Korean and international scholarship in the field of MIS using semantic network analysis, finding that Korean scholarship focused more on practical topics, while international scholarship was more oriented to academic topics.

Semantic network analysis has been also used to explore associated frames or main themes in diverse topics, including the content of U.S. presidential debates (Doerfel & Connaughton, 2009), press releases and news during the BP crisis (Schultz, Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, Utz, & van Atteveldt, 2012), and consumers' interviews about corporate reputations (Podnar, Tuskej, & Golob, 2012). Doerfel and Connaughton (2009) analyzed the content of U.S. presidential debates from 1960 to 2004 using semantic network analysis and found the importance of centrality of repeated topics for winners. Schultz et al. (2012) found the associated frames between BP press releases and news media using semantic network analysis and confirmed the agenda-setting role of corporate communications. These previous studies provided insights into the meanings of associated frames or main themes beyond that of counting frequencies of predetermined indicators by using semantic network analysis in diverse fields. Semantic network analysis can offer overarching perspectives to analyze texts because it helps to find the structural patterns in given texts (Doerfel & Connaughton, 2009; Krippendorff, 2004).

Research questions

The goal of this study was to examine the chronological development of Asian communication scholarship. *AJC* was selected to represent communication studies focusing on Asia, since it is the most influential peer-reviewed publication devoted to communication in the Asian-Pacific region and has been a leading publication outlet for Asian communication studies (Cheng & Kim, 2010; Ha & Pratt, 2000). In tracking *AJC*, the Western counterpart of *AJC* was determined to be *JMCQ*. *JMCQ*, the oldest referred journal in mass communication academia, is the flagship publication of the major Western academic association for communication studies, AEJMC, and was therefore chosen to represent Western communication scholarship. In addition, while *JMCQ* includes studies that embrace international perspectives and is frequently included as one of the representative journals in the communication field to embrace Asian perspectives (e.g. Cheng & Kim, 2010; Ha & Pratt, 2000; Lo & Wei, 2010; So, 2010), it obviously focuses on Western communication scholarship. For example, out of Li and Tang's (2012) sample, *AJC* included 26 China-related studies, while *JMCQ* published only three China-related publications from 2000 to 2010. In 1990–2009, only 1.5% of the total articles in *JMCQ* involved Asian countries, while 11.6% of the articles were produced by Asian scholars (So, 2010, p. 228).

The first set of research questions for this study explores the topical and keyword association trends of *AJC* scholarship compared to *JMCQ* scholarship as a whole. One

of the strengths of semantic network analysis is its ability to analyze the paired associations between words (Doerfel, 1998; Schultz et al., 2012). Schultz et al. (2012) state that ‘associative frames are constructs of higher complexity and associations between issues, actors, attributes, etc., which can be measured as semantic networks via asymmetric conditional probabilities’ (p. 104). Co-word analysis provides information about co-occurrences of pair of words (Zong et al., 2013), and revealing co-word associations helps to understand the specific role or meaning of keywords in scholarship (Leydesdorff & Hellsten, 2006; Wang, Li, Li, & Li, 2012). The first set of research questions are as follows:

Research question 1-1: What are the salient keywords as identified through published scholarship in *Asian Journal of Communication* as compared to *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*?

Research question 1-2: How are the salient keywords associated in *Asian Journal of Communication* as compared to *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*?

The second set of research questions regard how topical and keyword association trends of *AJC* have developed chronologically as compared to *JMCQ*.

Research question 2-1: What were the salient keywords in *Asian Journal of Communication* in the 1990s, 2000s, and since 2010 (2010–2015) as compared to *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*?

Research question 2-2: How were the salient keywords associated within *Asian Journal of Communication* in the 1990s, 2000s, and since 2010 (2010–2015) as compared to *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*?

Methods

Data collection

AJC has published studies since 1990, while *JMCQ* began publication in 1955. To compare and contrast publications in two journals chronologically, it was decided that 1990 would be the first year included in this study. At the time of data collection in 2015, volume 25 issue 5 of *AJC* and volume 92 issue 3 of *JMCQ* were the last publications eligible and were the last issues included in the study. Book reviews and editor’s notes were excluded from the sample. A total of 477 articles from *AJC* (122 in the 1990s, 171 in the 2000s, and 184 in the 2010–2015 period) were included in the study. The total number of publications in *JMCQ* was 1313 (682 in the 1990s, 428 in the 2000s, and 203 in the 2010–2015 period).

Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis was determined to be all of the words in the titles of articles published in both journals from 1990 to 2015. The reasoning for this selection of title words is twofold. Initially, we considered the use of abstracts, as they provide more in-depth summary than titles because of their longer length. However, abstracts in journal articles tend to include numerous generally used words in journal articles such as ‘question, form, project, important, part, related, approach, activities, various, etc.’ (Rice, 2005, p. 17), and analyzing abstracts in journal articles hinders clear justification of word associations because of the large number of words (Rice, 2005). Therefore, using words in abstracts as the unit of analysis for a semantic network analysis was determined to be less efficient

than using words in titles. Second, scholars (Rice, 2005; Zong et al., 2013) contend that title words in a journal article offer significant guidelines for determining the characteristics of the article by succinctly informing readers of the article's core content. Therefore, title words in texts can make audiences understand the intentions of main texts and help them keep to concentrate on the main text (Condit et al., 2001; Rothman, 1998). For those reasons, the majority of semantic network analysis studies have used titles of journal articles to find the structure and patterns of academic disciplines (e.g. Doerfel & Barnett, 1999; Kim et al., 2014; Pereira et al., 2011). For these reasons, words in titles of articles were chosen as the unit of analysis in this study.

Data analysis procedures

Prior to the computational analysis, data were carefully examined. Following Doerfel and Barnett's (1999) practice, unimportant words such as articles, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, and intransitive verbs (e.g. if, and, that, the, to, is) were excluded from the analysis. In addition, abbreviations were used to represent accurate meanings. For example, words having virtually the same meaning but different grammatical functions (e.g. adjectives, singular and plural nouns) were coded as one consistent singular noun. For example, 'Asia' and 'Asian' were coded as 'Asia,' and 'cultural,' 'culture,' and 'cultures' were coded as 'culture.' When there was more than a noun form, the most frequently mentioned word was determined to be one singular noun. For example, 'advertising,' 'ads,' and 'advertisements' were coded as 'advertising' because 'advertising' was mentioned 29 times, 'advertisements' six times, and 'ads' six times in *AJC*.

In the case of *AJC*, a total of 11,149 keywords were found, excluding articles (i.e. the, an, and a) and prepositions (e.g. in, toward, about, etc.). Out of all keywords, 98 keywords mentioned more than seven times were selected and analyzed because they constituted half of the total (47.9%) of total keywords. For *JMCQ*, a total of 2,916 keywords were detected after deletion of articles and prepositions. Of these, 91 keywords mentioned more than 16 times were chosen for analysis because they covered half of the total (45.1%) keywords. To perform a semantic network analysis, this study used the TI program (Leydesdorff, 1995), which provides frequencies of keywords and combination matrices among all keywords. To perform a co-word analysis, a list of keywords was entered into the TI program (Leydesdorff, 1995), and a series of combination matrices between keywords was made.

Results

To answer the first research question, frequency analyses were conducted. As shown in Table 1, China ranked first in *AJC* scholarship, followed by media, Korea, culture, communication, news, study, political, television, and analysis. In *JMCQ*, news ranked first, followed by effect, media, newspaper, coverage, advertising, USA, analysis, and journalist. In both journals, media, news, television, analysis, advertising, and USA ranked in the top tier. In *AJC*, specific names of countries or locations (or their adjective versions), such as China ($n = 88$), Korea ($n = 74$), Taiwan ($n = 47$), USA ($n = 45$), Asian ($n = 42$), Hong Kong ($n = 29$), Singapore ($n = 18$), India ($n = 17$), Japan ($n = 15$), Thai ($n = 9$), Malaysia ($n = 8$),

Table 1. Frequency and centrality of top 20 salient keywords in *AJC* and *JMCQ*.

Keywords	Asian Journal of Communication				Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly			
	Frequency	DCR (%)	BCR (%)	CCR (%)	Keywords	Frequency	DCR (%)	BCR (%)
China	88	0.042	2.993	87.387	News	324	0.116	2.243
Media	81	0.046	3.345	88.991	Effect	220	0.053	2.17
Korea	74	0.038	3.12	87.387	Media	197	0.044	1.996
Culture	68	0.033	2.126	80.165	Newspaper	193	0.046	1.659
Communication	67	0.028	2.071	78.862	Television	120	0.022	1.035
News	60	0.034	2.122	81.513	Coverage	111	0.026	1.157
Study	59	0.028	1.716	78.226	Advertising	98	0.017	0.805
Political	57	0.029	2.305	81.513	USA	91	0.022	1.578
Television	57	0.024	1.663	75.781	Analysis	86	0.02	1.14
Analysis	53	0.028	2.095	78.226	Journalist	86	0.015	0.685
Taiwan	47	0.022	1.898	78.862	Political	80	0.017	1.089
Advertising	45	0.019	0.94	69.286	Use	76	0.021	1.389
USA	45	0.026	1.786	76.984	Content	69	0.014	0.574
Asian	42	0.019	1.643	74.615	Study	65	0.014	0.899
Use	41	0.023	1.756	76.378	Communication	63	0.01	0.608
Effect	36	0.019	1.612	74.046	Journalism	63	0.01	0.537
Coverage	32	0.019	0.949	69.286	Press	62	0.009	0.814
Social	31	0.018	1.728	75.781	Public	60	0.014	1.172
Comparison	29	0.018	1.137	72.388	Framing	60	0.016	0.897
Hong Kong	29	0.01	0.354	62.987	Source	59	0.016	1.148

Note: DCR (degree centrality ratio) refers to how connected a word is with other words within the network. BCR (between centrality ratio) refers to how often a word is located on a bridge between other words within the network. CCR (closeness centrality ratio) describes how a word has the shortest distance with other words within the network (Borgatti, Everett, & Johnson, 2013).