

The Evolution of Crisis Communication Scholarship in the Arab World: A Scoping Review (1989–2025)

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ABSTRACT

This scoping review addresses the scholarly gap in Arab crisis communication literature by mapping its evolution from 1989–2025. Guided by PRISMA-ScR and PRESS protocols, the article analyses 201 studies to map publication trends, thematic orientations, methodological approaches, and theoretical frameworks. Findings reveal significant growth in the field, particularly after the Arab Spring and during the COVID-19 pandemic, yet scholarship remains largely reactive, event-driven, and concentrated on post-crisis response, media effects, and government institutions. Quantitative survey methods and superficial application of Western theories dominate, while proactive, qualitative, and locally grounded research is limited. The review identifies four key gaps relating to content, method, context and theoretical conceptualisation, and proposes a future research agenda aimed at advancing strategic, anticipatory, and contextually anchored Arab crisis communication scholarship.

Keywords: Crisis communication, scoping review, Arab crisis communication.

INTRODUCTION

Crises exert significant impacts on institutions and necessitate the adoption of effective crisis communication strategies to ensure organizational survival (Paath & Hayunaji, 2024). Events such as the COVID-19 pandemic exposed systemic fragilities and underscored the importance of drawing on global knowledge to inform and strengthen crisis communication practices. In this context, Diers-Lawson (2017) argued for a deeper understanding of intercultural crisis communication, highlighting its importance in advancing a more comprehensive and globally oriented perspective of the discipline. Extending this line of argument, Upadhyay and Upadhyay (2023) emphasized cross-national collaboration in crisis communication as a critical mechanism for the continued development of the field.

Against this backdrop of an increasing need for globally informed crisis communication scholarship, Arab crisis communication literature remains largely inaccessible to Western

scholars, primarily due to language barriers. Nevertheless, the field has developed substantially in response to region-specific geopolitical crises and rapid technological transformations. The events of the Arab Spring marked a decisive turning point, generating an urgent need to examine communication dynamics under conditions of prolonged instability and crisis (Barry & Hafiz, 2024). Furthermore, advances in digital communication technologies contributed to a notable increase in Arab academic publications after 2011 (Abu Arqoub et al., 2023). Despite this growth, meaningful integration between Arab and Western crisis communication scholarship remains limited.

To address this gap, this study traces the development of Arab crisis communication scholarship from 1989 to 2025, offering a systematic overview of the field across Arab countries. It examines key research characteristics, theoretical frameworks, and methodological approaches to elucidate prevailing trends and support greater integration with global crisis communication scholarship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical Review of Arab Crisis Communication Scholarship

Existing reviews of Arab communication research have contributed valuable baseline knowledge. However, when examined critically, they reveal significant conceptual, methodological, and epistemic limitations that constrain cumulative understanding of crisis communication in the Arab world. In scoping review terms, the current body of review literature offers fragmented coverage, narrow sampling frames, and limited analytical integration of Arab scholarly work.

The most extensive mapping effort to date is provided by Abu Arqoub et al. (2023), who reviewed 363 Arab communication studies published between 2000 and 2021. While the work represents an important step toward documenting the breadth of Arab communication scholarship, its scope remains disciplinary rather than thematic. Crisis communication appears only as one sub-area among many, limiting the depth of theoretical and methodological insights that can be derived for this specific domain. Moreover, the authors' reliance on selected Arab digital databases introduces a structural bias, likely excluding non-digitized, locally circulated, or regionally published studies. Similar limitations characterize Alkathiri and Alharbi's (2024) review of public relations research spanning 1979 to 2023. Although notable for its extended timeframe, this review again relies on a restricted set of indexed sources. From a scoping review perspective, these constraints highlight the risks of equating database visibility with scholarly activity, and underscore the need for broader, more inclusive mapping strategies.

Further narrowly focused reviews illustrate the fragmented state of knowledge. Salem (2020) examined crisis communication management research between 2005 and 2019, comparing Arabic and English-language studies. While this comparative approach is conceptually promising, the study treats non-Arab scholarship as a homogenous block and confines its analysis to crisis management rather than crisis communication more broadly. As a result, theoretical diversity, discursive variation, and contextual nuance remain underexplored. Similarly, Barry and Hafiz (2024) analyzed research methods used in Arab university theses from 2012 to 2022, offering insight into research training practices but not into mature scholarly trends. The exclusive focus on postgraduate theses limits the analytical relevance of their findings for assessing the intellectual direction of the field as a whole.

Research addressing specific transformations, such as digital public relations, has further enriched the literature. Studies on digital public relations (Abu Al-Ala, 2020), social media communication (Zahra & Al-Khamshiya, 2022), and time-bound disciplinary developments (Junaid, 2017; Al-Furaih & Junaid, 2021) provide important thematic insights. However, these studies do not systematically map crisis communication scholarship, nor do they adopt a scoping review approach capable of tracing theoretical, methodological, geographical, or

longitudinal patterns. Collectively, although valuable in their own rights, they highlight the absence of a dedicated scoping review of Arab crisis communication research.

At a theoretical level, this absence has broader consequences. Western crisis communication scholarship has evolved through sustained theoretical diversification, moving from prescriptive models toward multidisciplinary, evidence-based frameworks that incorporate emotional, psychological, organizational, and political dimensions of crises (Frandsen et al., 2025; Salem, 2020). In contrast, Arab scholarship has frequently been characterized by what Ayish (2003) termed “theoretical dependency,” whereby Western theories such as the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), are imported and applied with minimal contextual interrogation (Abu Arqoub et al., 2023).

A critical review of existing Arab studies suggests that many well-established crisis communication frameworks remain underutilized or entirely absent from the regional literature. These include rhetorical and reputation-based approaches (e.g. Image Repair Theory, Corporate Apologia), emotion- and threat-oriented models (e.g. Integrated Crisis Mapping, Threat Appraisal), digitally networked perspectives (e.g. Social-Mediated Crisis Communication), and complexity-oriented frameworks (e.g. Rhetorical Arena Theory, Crisis Exploitation Theory). The limited engagement with such models reflects not only theoretical selectivity, but also structural patterns in research limitations.

Importantly, attempts at local theorization do exist. Al-Qarni’s (2022) Theory of the Gradual Landing of Public Opinion during Crises represents a rare example of culturally grounded theoretical innovation, conceptualizing crisis dynamics through an aviation metaphor sensitive to media cycles and public attention. However, its minimal citation and application within subsequent Arab research illustrates a broader issue: local theories struggle to gain institutional traction in a field dominated by imported paradigms.

From a scoping review perspective, these patterns indicate a body of literature that remains unevenly developed, theoretically fragmented, and methodologically constrained. As Abu Arqoub et al. (2023) observed, theory is frequently invoked in a formal or symbolic manner rather than functioning as a substantive analytical framework, thereby reinforcing descriptive research cycles and limiting theory-building. This condition echoes earlier calls for the development of normative Arab communication frameworks grounded in indigenous cultural and sociopolitical contexts (Ayish, 2003). Consequently, although existing reviews have made valuable contributions, they have not systematically mapped Arab crisis communication scholarship in ways that capture its evolution, theoretical configurations, or methodological practices.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted a scoping review methodology to systematically map the breadth, characteristics, and conceptual contours of Arab crisis communication scholarship. Scoping reviews are particularly suitable for examining complex or underexplored fields, as they enable the identification of key concepts, mapping of available evidence, and clarification of research gaps without imposing restrictive methodological quality thresholds (Mays et al., 2001; Arksey & O’Malley, 2005). Unlike systematic reviews, which typically focus on narrowly defined questions and formal quality appraisal, scoping reviews facilitate comprehensive field mapping and agenda-setting, particularly within evolving bodies of literature in the social sciences (Colquhoun et al., 2014; Peters et al., 2020).

Consistent with prior scoping studies in communication and crisis research (Salem, 2020; El-Jardali et al., 2014; Cheng et al., 2025), this review sought to trace longitudinal scholarly development, highlight theoretical and methodological patterns, and identify areas of

conceptual omission. The review period spans 1989 to 2025, capturing thirty-five years of academic production and enabling examination of the field's emergence, consolidation, and recent growth.

Scoping Review Framework and Reporting Standards

The review followed the five-stage framework proposed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005), incorporating methodological refinements advanced by Levac et al. (2010). To enhance transparency and replicability, reporting was guided by the PRISMA-ScR checklist (Tricco et al., 2018). Additionally, the PRESS checklist (McGowan et al., 2016) was employed to ensure the clarity, reliability, and conceptual coherence of the search strategy.

Consistent with scoping review conventions, no formal quality appraisal or exclusion based on methodological rigour was undertaken (Armstrong et al., 2011; Ahmed et al., 2022). Instead, limitations and research gaps identified across the literature are addressed analytically in the Discussion section.

Data Sources and Search Strategy

Given the limited coverage of Arabic-language scholarship in global bibliographic databases such as Scopus and Web of Science (Tranfield et al., 2003), the search strategy prioritized regionally recognized Arabic academic repositories. Searches were conducted in January 2026 across Dar Al-Manduma, AskZad, and Google Scholar. These platforms are widely regarded as leading repositories for Arab academic research and have been used extensively in previous Arabic scoping studies (Zaghouni, 2017; Ahmed et al., 2022; Abdel-Hadi, 2023).

The search strategy was structured using the PCC framework (Population, Concept, Context) recommended for scoping reviews (Peters et al., 2015). The population included Arabic-language scholarly outputs, including peer-reviewed journal articles and graduate theses. The concept was crisis communication scholarship, and the context, Arab countries and Arab institutional contexts.

Search terms included the Arabic phrases "اتصال الأزمات" (crisis communication) and "إدارة الأزمات" (crisis management). The latter was included due to its frequent interchangeable usage within Arab scholarship. Excluding this terminology would have risked substantial omission of relevant studies.

Eligibility Criteria

The inclusion criteria comprised full-text Arabic-language peer-reviewed journal articles and postgraduate theses that explicitly referenced crises or crisis communication in their titles, abstracts, or keywords, and that demonstrated empirical or conceptual engagement with Arab crisis contexts or institutions. Studies were excluded if they consisted of books, book chapters, conference papers, editorials, reviews, or other non-scholarly materials. Records without accessible full texts or abstracts were also excluded, as were studies that referenced crisis-related terms but were not substantively related to crisis communication.

To capture the field's full historical development, no initial publication date restrictions were applied. Searches retrieved records published up to 31 December 2025, with eligibility screening identifying 1989 as the earliest relevant publication year, thereby establishing the final review timeframe of 1989 to 2025.

Study Selection Process

The initial database search yielded 4,961 records (Dar Al-Manduma n=896, AskZad n=1465, Google Scholar n=2600). Duplicate removal was conducted using Rayyan software, supplemented by manual verification to address limitations in Arabic text matching. A total of 453 duplicates were removed, leaving 4,508 records for screening.

Screening proceeded in two stages. First, titles, abstracts, and keywords were reviewed for relevance to crisis communication within Arab contexts, yielding 208 records. Second, full-text screening resulted in the exclusion of seven records due to unavailability of full texts or abstracts. The final sample comprised 201 studies. Throughout the screening process, flexibility was exercised regarding terminological overlap between crisis communication and crisis

management. Case study location and researcher institutional affiliation were also recorded, covering 22 Arab countries as well as an international category.

Data Extraction and Analysis

Data were charted using a structured extraction framework capturing bibliometric characteristics (publication year, country, outlet), methodological approaches, institutional contexts, and theoretical frameworks. Analysis combined descriptive statistical techniques (frequencies and percentages) to visualize patterns of research output (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005) with qualitative content analysis to identify both explicitly stated and implicitly applied theoretical models (Schreier, 2012; Steimle et al., 2024).

Reliability and Coding Consistency

To ensure analytical rigor, coding reliability was assessed through blind independent coding by two researchers on a randomly selected 15% sample of the studies. Inter-coder agreement reached 89.4%, exceeding acceptable thresholds for qualitative content analysis and confirming the robustness of the coding framework (Schreier, 2012).

FINDINGS

Overview of Publication Trends

The findings indicate substantial growth in Arab crisis communication scholarship over the past three decades, marking a shift from a marginal area of inquiry to an expanding, though uneven, field. Consistent with scoping review objectives, the analysis first outlines the sample's general characteristics before examining methodological approaches, theoretical framing, and dominant research orientations.

Of the 201 studies included in the review, the majority were peer-reviewed journal articles (n=140; 69.7%), while 61 publications (30.3%) consisted of Masters and Doctoral theses. This distribution suggests both an established publication presence and strong postgraduate engagement with crisis communication topics, reinforcing the field's institutional embedding within Arab academic contexts.

Regarding source repositories, Dar Al-Manduma accounted for the largest share of studies (n=111; 55.2%), followed by AskZad (n=50; 24.9%) and Google Scholar (n=40; 19.9%). This pattern confirms the centrality of regionally focused databases for accessing Arabic-language scholarship and supports earlier claims regarding the limitations of global indexing platforms in representing Arab research output.

Longitudinal Development of the Field

The temporal distribution of publications reveals a clear post-2011 inflection point. While early engagement with crisis communication topics appeared sporadically prior to the Arab Spring, publication output increased steadily thereafter, with the most pronounced growth occurring from 2016 onwards. A marked peak was observed in 2022, which alone accounted for 26 studies (12.9%). Notably, publication activity also intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic period (2020–2022), reflecting heightened scholarly attention.

Earlier growth phases were evident between 2016 and 2018 (2016: n=15; 2017: n=14; 2018: n=15), suggesting a consolidation phase preceding the more dramatic expansion of the early 2020s. In contrast, the period prior to 2011 was characterized by consistently low output, underlining the relative recency of crisis communication as a sustained research focus in the Arab world. These findings largely corroborate Alkathiri and Alharbi's (2024) characterization of Arab public relations research as emergent and fluctuating, albeit increasingly productive in the past decade.

Geographical Distribution and Research Focus

Analysis of publication origin demonstrates significant geographical concentration. Egypt emerged as the most prolific contributor, accounting for 62 studies (30.8%), followed by Algeria (n=33; 16.4%), Jordan (n=32; 15.9%), and the State of Palestine (n=28; 13.9%). Among Gulf countries, Saudi Arabia contributed 19 studies (9.5%), while publication output from Sudan, Oman, Kuwait, Iraq, and other Arab states remained comparatively limited. The predominance of Egyptian outlets suggests that many scholars preferentially publish in Egyptian Arabic-language journals, reflecting their long-standing institutional legitimacy and circulation.

A parallel pattern emerged when examining the geographical focus of case studies. Egypt again dominated (n=34; 16.9%), followed by non-country-specific conceptual or narrative studies (n=32; 15.9%). Palestine (n=23; 11.4%), Jordan (n=22; 10.9%), Saudi Arabia (n=20; 10.0%), and Algeria (n=17; 8.5%) followed. Comparative and multinational studies, as well as research focused on Gulf and Levant states, constituted smaller proportions.

Comparing publication origin with case study location reveals an important asymmetry: Egyptian and Algerian scholars frequently examined crises beyond their national contexts, whereas researchers in Gulf countries tended to focus primarily on domestic cases. This pattern reinforces Abu Arqoub et al.'s (2023) identification of a dominant North African publishing block and suggests that Egyptian academic institutions, owing to their early establishment of media education and state-supported public relations programmes, occupy a central epistemic position.

Organisational and Sectoral Focus

The organizational focus of the literature demonstrates a pronounced public sector orientation. Nearly half of the reviewed studies examined governmental organizations, including ministries, public agencies, and official bodies (n=97; 48.3%). Research on local or Arab private-sector organizations accounted for 60 studies (29.9%), while international and multinational corporations were examined in a comparatively marginal share of the literature (5.5%).

Sectoral analysis further highlights this orientation. The education sector attracted the greatest research attention (n=33; 16.4%), followed by the health sector (n=28; 13.9%), a finding consistent with increased crisis salience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Multi-sectoral or comparative studies accounted for 24 studies (11.9%), while the media sector constituted 19 studies (9.5%). The remaining studies examined a variety of sectors.

Theoretical Frameworks and Conceptual Approaches

Theoretical analysis revealed a strong reliance on conceptual borrowing rather than Arab theory-driven inquiry. A substantial majority of studies (n=172; 85.6%) employed loosely defined concepts derived from established theories without explicitly adopting or testing those theories. Explicit use of theories was found in only 18 studies (9.0%), while models were applied in 7 studies (3.5%). Two studies did not reference conceptual or theoretical frameworks at all. These findings contrast with Abu Arqoub et al.'s (2023) broader communication review, which reported that over half of Arab communication studies lacked a theoretical basis entirely.

Among studies that explicitly referenced theory, SCCT was most frequently employed (n=11; 32.4%), followed by the Social-Mediated Crisis Communication framework (n=4; 11.8%). Media Dependency Theory and Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) were each used in three studies (8.8%), with all CERC applications published after 2020, indicating growing awareness of health and environmental crisis frameworks.

Qualitative analysis, however, suggests that theoretical engagement was often peripheral. In many cases, theory was confined to the literature review rather than serving as an interpretive or analytical lens. Few studies critically assessed theoretical applicability to Arab sociopolitical or cultural contexts, or locally developed theoretical frameworks. This pattern reinforces earlier

critiques of theoretical dependency and under-theorization in Arab crisis communication research (Salem, 2020; Ayish, 2003).

Research Methods

Methodologically, the sample demonstrated a clear dominance of quantitative approaches. Over half of the studies employed quantitative designs (n=107; 53.2%), followed by qualitative studies (n=76; 37.8%) and mixed-methods research (n=16; 8.0%). Questionnaires were by far the most frequently used data collection tool (n=87; 43.3%), confirming findings by Barry and Hafiz (2024) regarding methodological homogenization in Arab communication research.

Other methods were employed with considerably lower frequency, including conceptual analyses (11.4%), qualitative content analysis (10.4%), case studies (10.0%), and quantitative content analysis (8.5%). In-depth qualitative techniques such as semi-structured interviews (6.5%), narrative inquiry (6.5%), and in-depth interviewing (3.0%) remained underutilized, while observational methods were nearly absent (0.5%).

This methodological imbalance contrasts sharply with Western public relations and crisis communication scholarship, which frequently favors qualitative and mixed approaches to unpack complex organizational, emotional, and political dynamics (Vanc & Fitzpatrick, 2016; Eriksson, 2018). Although isolated studies have begun to adopt mixed-method designs (e.g., Binlibdah, 2025), such approaches remain exceptions rather than indicative of a broader methodological shift.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The findings of this scoping review reveal that Arab crisis communication scholarship has expanded markedly over the past three decades, yet this quantitative growth has not been matched by equivalent conceptual, methodological, or strategic maturation.

Reactive Knowledge Production and Event-Driven Research Cycles

The temporal patterns identified in this review strongly support the conclusion that Arab crisis communication research operates predominantly within a reactive research system. Publication output increased significantly following the Arab Spring events in 2011 and again after 2016, with the sharpest escalation occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic. This trajectory closely mirrors the patterns identified by Abu Arqoub et al. (2023), who documented comparable post-2011 publication surges, and by Salem (2020), who attributed intensified scholarly attention to technological and environmental disruptions rather than to sustained theoretical accumulation.

The present findings extend this argument by demonstrating that the pandemic further amplified this reactive logic, reinforcing a mode of research production in which crises function as external triggers rather than as objects of systematic anticipatory inquiry. In this sense, Arab crisis communication scholarship appears to evolve horizontally, responding episodically to major events, rather than vertically, through cumulative knowledge-building where one strand of research consistently informs and refines subsequent work.

This pattern may be critically interpreted through Abrahamson's (1996) notion of fashion setters, whereby scholars gravitate toward trending topics to maintain relevance and institutional legitimacy. Such dynamics create incentives to study widely visible crises using familiar tools, often at the expense of theoretical depth or methodological innovation. Coombs' (2014) distinction between reactive response and anticipatory issues management further clarifies this condition: Arab research largely remains confined to responding to crises after they occur, rather than engaging in proactive forecasting and preparedness.

Heath's (1997) concept of time lag is also instructive here, as it explains how delay emerges between global theoretical advancements and their local scholarly uptake. Abu Al-Ala (2020)

and Binlibdah (2025) similarly argue that Arab crisis communication research often lags behind international developments, particularly regarding digitalization, artificial intelligence, and hybrid crisis response systems that are now central to Western scholarship.

Thematic Imbalance and the Dominance of Event Management

At the thematic level, the findings reveal a pronounced imbalance across the three identified axes. Arab studies overwhelmingly prioritize media-centered analyses and post-crisis response strategies, while marginalizing preparedness and prevention. The concentration on media effects and digital reputation management positions communication as a reactive tool for managing public perception rather than as a strategic function embedded across the crisis lifecycle.

The strong emphasis on image repair and organizational defense reflects what may be described as a defensive justificatory paradigm, particularly within government-focused research. Crisis communication is thus framed predominantly as a mechanism for restoring legitimacy, rather than as part of a broader risk governance system oriented toward resilience, learning, and institutional reform. In contrast to Western literature, which increasingly integrates crisis communication within strategic management, foresight, and organizational learning models (Paath & Hayunaji, 2024; Cheng et al., 2025), Arab scholarship continues to privilege post-hoc explanation over proactive planning.

Methodological Constraints and Cognitive Limitations

Methodologically, the dominance of quantitative approaches emerges as a defining feature of Arab crisis communication scholarship. While partially explained by practical constraints related to data access (Fleischer & Sadek, 2024), this reliance reveals deeper epistemological issues. Bryman's (2006) critique of quantitative dominance is particularly relevant, as such approaches tend to capture static snapshots of perception rather than the evolving processes through which crises unfold, meanings are contested, and power relations operate.

The consequences are evident: Arab crisis communication research has generated extensive descriptive data on audience attitudes (what people think), while offering limited insight into contextual dynamics, sense-making processes, and institutional decision-making (why and how crises develop and are communicated). This imbalance reinforces surface-level knowledge production and restricts theory development, especially in a field where temporality, emotion, and interaction are central.

Repetition, Academic Dependency, and Theoretical Stagnation

The findings further reveal a pattern of geographical repetition and thematic recycling, particularly evident in post-pandemic research. Similar studies—often identical in design, theory, and instruments—are replicated across multiple national contexts with minimal adaptation. While cross-contextual comparison can enrich crisis communication theory, such replication seldom produces intellectual advancement when it lacks critical differentiation. Combined with the superficial application of Western theories such as SCCT, this pattern entrenches academic dependency (Alatas, 2003) and constrains the development of indigenous theoretical perspectives. As Ayish (2003) argues, moving beyond dependency requires neither rejection nor imitation of Western theory, but rather its critical adaptation and extension through locally grounded conceptual work.

The marginal impact of Al-Qarni's (2022) Theory of the Gradual Landing of Public Opinion during Crises exemplifies this challenge. Despite its cultural relevance and conceptual originality, the theory has not been substantively tested or developed further, underscoring the structural barriers facing Arab theorization within a globally stratified knowledge system.

Research Gaps and Future Research Agenda

In fulfilment of the study's aim to identify research gaps and propose a future research roadmap, four interrelated gaps emerge from the analysis.

First, a content gap is evident in the scarcity of proactive, pre-crisis studies and the limited engagement with emerging technologies. Second, a methodological gap persists due to the marginalization of qualitative and mixed-method approaches capable of capturing complexity and process. Third, a contextual gap is reflected in the overconcentration on government institutions at the expense of private, non-profit, environmental, and sports sectors. Fourth, a theoretical gap is characterized by the absence of rigorous theory testing, adaptation, and development within Arab crisis communication scholarship.

Addressing these gaps necessitates a strategic research agenda. Future studies should prioritize the testing and contextual adaptation of crisis communication theories, moving beyond nominal citation toward empirical validation within Arab sociocultural settings. Methodological diversification, particularly through qualitative and mixed designs, is essential for overcoming descriptive inertia. Expanding the substantive scope of research to include marginalized sectors would enrich both empirical insight and theoretical relevance.

Finally, greater international integration through co-authorship, cross-regional collaboration, and publication in indexed journals, would help break isolation while amplifying Arab scholarly voices within global academic dialogue.

Concluding Reflections

Despite the limitations identified, the findings also point to early signs of transformation. Emerging work on non-traditional sectors and digital crises suggests growing recognition of the field's limitations and possibilities. While these contributions remain modest, they signal a potential shift toward a more reflective, theoretically grounded, and globally engaged Arab crisis communication scholarship.

CONCLUSION

By focusing exclusively on Arabic-language scholarship, this study maps the internal dynamics and epistemic patterns of Arab crisis communication research, offering a focused view of local academic discourse rather than the full spectrum of Arab contributions published globally. The findings show that while the field has grown rapidly particularly following the Arab Spring and the COVID-19 pandemic its development remains uneven and largely reactive, with a continued emphasis on post-crisis response, media effects, and institutional image repair. At the same time, emerging work on non-traditional sectors, digital crises, and mixed methodologies signals growing awareness of the field's limitations and potential. Advancing Arab crisis communication scholarship now requires a strategic shift toward anticipatory, theoretically grounded, and methodologically diverse research that is locally contextualised and globally engaged. Such efforts are essential not only for enriching Arab scholarship but also for diversifying and strengthening global crisis communication knowledge.

LIMITATIONS

This study should be interpreted in light of its scoping review design and data source limitations. It relied on three major Arabic academic repositories (Dar Al-Manduma, AskZad, and Google Scholar), which may have excluded relevant studies published in non-digitised local journals, institutional bulletins, regionally circulated conference proceedings, or materials held exclusively in subscription-based international databases or institutional archives. Consequently, the review reflects the digitally visible segment of Arab crisis communication scholarship. Future reviews could enhance representativeness by incorporating archival searches, institutional repositories, and additional databases.

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Figure 1: Date of publications of studies

