

# Research Question Examples: Communication

## About this document

This PDF contains 72 **communication research question examples**, each quoted word for word from one of 37 completed dissertations and theses (2011–2026), grouped into 5 sections. Each question links to the thesis that asked it, so you can read how it was answered. Use them to see what a well-formed communication research question looks like, then adapt the shape to your own study.

By [Derek Jansen](#) (MBA) · Reviewed by [Eunice Rautenbach](#) (DTech) · Grad Coach · October 2026

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## Exploratory questions

These questions ask how or why something happens, usually where little research exists yet. They are common in qualitative studies built on interviews or observation.

**1. How do employees on the autism spectrum communicate their diagnosis of autism to their managers/HR representatives?**

Asked in: [“Our disability is communication and everything about getting help is communication”: A grounded theory analysis of disclosure and negotiation for autism-related accommodations at work](#) · Margaretta Underhill · University of Kansas · 2022

**2. How do employees on the autism spectrum request and/or negotiate for disability accommodations needed to be successful in their jobs?**

Asked in: [“Our disability is communication and everything about getting help is communication”: A grounded theory analysis of disclosure and negotiation for autism-related accommodations at work](#) · Margaretta Underhill · University of Kansas · 2022

**3. How do employees on the autism spectrum experience organizational responses after communicating their diagnoses and negotiating for accommodations?**

Asked in: [“Our disability is communication and everything about getting help is communication”: A grounded theory analysis of disclosure and negotiation for autism-related accommodations at work](#) · Margaretta Underhill · University of Kansas · 2022

**4. How does the digital environment shape youths' perceptions of gender roles, feminism, and gender equality?**

Asked in: [A study on how digital media shapes young people's perceptions and behaviors regarding gender roles, feminism and gender equality](#) · Gabriele Cepulyte · Halmstad University · 2024

**5. How do individuals in the communication profession define AI within the context of their profession?**

Asked in: [AI, is it an asset or a threat to communicators? : A qualitative study on communicators' perspectives and experiences of AI](#) · Ericson, Johanna · Uppsala University · 2024

**6. How do individual within the communication profession understand AI as reshaping the profession?**

Asked in: [AI, is it an asset or a threat to communicators? : A qualitative study on communicators' perspectives and experiences of AI](#) · Ericson, Johanna · Uppsala University · 2024

**7. How do actors negotiate repair through relationships in born-sustainable supply chains?**

Asked in: [Care, sustainability and supply chains: a communicative relational framework](#) · Mackenzie Shekar · University of Texas at Austin · 2026

**8. How are news values emphasized in media coverage of the tomato soup incident, as reflected in both news articles and Twitter posts?**

Asked in: [Climate Activism and Media : A Critical Discourse Analysis on Activists' Tomato Soup Attack on Van Gogh's Sunflower](#) · Adolfsson, Elin Tafjord · Malmö University · 2023

**9. Through the lens of media logic, how do media discourses shape perceptions of the climate action?**

Asked in: [Climate Activism and Media : A Critical Discourse Analysis on Activists' Tomato Soup Attack on Van Gogh's Sunflower](#) · Adolfsson, Elin Taffjord · Malmö University · 2023

**10. How have contemporary media activists and advocacy organizations pressed for increased employment of Latinos in English-language media from the 1980s to 2019?**

Asked in: [Deploying Latinidad: Citizenship, Activism, and Media Advocacy from the 1980s to the Present](#) · Gutierrez, Arcelia · University of Michigan · 2019

**11. How have processes of media deregulation and neo-liberalization altered media advocacy and activism?**

Asked in: [Deploying Latinidad: Citizenship, Activism, and Media Advocacy from the 1980s to the Present](#) · Gutierrez, Arcelia · University of Michigan · 2019

**12. How can illustrations, through their visual narrative, semiotic components, anchorage, and cultural discourse, reveal the potential to communicate the [biosphere reserve] concept and vision?**

Asked in: [Drawing the Biosphere : A case study on visually communicating UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme](#) · Krabbe, Marie Louise · Malmö University · 2025

**13. How can stakeholder perspectives on creating compelling narratives for [biosphere reserves] link to communication tools, like illustrations?**

Asked in: [Drawing the Biosphere : A case study on visually communicating UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme](#) · Krabbe, Marie Louise · Malmö University · 2025

**14. How did different institutions approach television as archivable in the 1950s to the 1970s?**

Asked in: [From Ephemeral to Legitimate: An Inquiry into Television's Material Traces in Archival Spaces, 1950s -1970s](#) · Bratslavsky, Lauren · University of Oregon · 2013

**15. How did these institutional structures confer television with status as historically and culturally valuable?**

Asked in: [From Ephemeral to Legitimate: An Inquiry into Television's Material Traces in Archival Spaces, 1950s -1970s](#) · Bratslavsky, Lauren · University of Oregon · 2013

**16. How are shelter patrons learning of the animals available for adoption?**

Asked in: [How the Community Outlook Affects Pitt County Animal Services](#) · Ashley N. French · East Carolina University · 2020

**17. What is the rhetorical function of mental illness during the time period 1951-2016?**

Asked in: [Mental illness as a rhetorical reflection of time : A study of the construction of mental illness in textbooks](#) · Caroline Lindström · Södertörn University · 2017

**18. How has the language used to describe mental illness changed over time?**

Asked in: [Mental illness as a rhetorical reflection of time : A study of the construction of mental illness in textbooks](#) · Caroline Lindström · Södertörn University · 2017

**19. How does language use construct and deconstruct the public view on mental illness?**

Asked in: [Mental illness as a rhetorical reflection of time : A study of the construction of mental illness in textbooks](#) · Caroline Lindström · Södertörn University · 2017

**20. How are negative representations of artificial life forms in science fiction film related to technophobic, heteronormative ideology associated with assisted reproductive technologies?**

Asked in: [Mom-Bots and Cyborg Babies: Artificial Life and Artificial Reproduction in Contemporary Science Fiction Narratives](#) · Veysey, Emily · Queen's University · 2024

**21. How do physicians make sense of medical malpractice in Texas and what strategies do they employ to cope with risk?**

Asked in: [Physicians and Medical Malpractice: Why do Doctors have Unwarranted Fears?](#) · Carter, Misti Hill · Texas A&M University · 2016

**22. How are the meanings involved in the consumption of and production with analog and digital technologies related?**

Asked in: [Political economy of the hip hop DJ and the relationship between culture, industry, and technology](#) · Sirois, Andre G., 1980- · University of Oregon · 2011

**23. How does tension between subculturalists and post-subculturalists influence the understanding of how the hip-hop community is shaped by hip-hop music and art?**

Asked in: [Re/presentation Of Hip-Hop: An Exploration Of White Hip-Hop Fans, Consumers And Practitioners](#) · Anderson, Dale Compton · Wayne State University · 2014

**24. In what ways do white hip-hoppers conceptualize authenticity in hip-hop?**

Asked in: [Re/presentation Of Hip-Hop: An Exploration Of White Hip-Hop Fans, Consumers And Practitioners](#) · Anderson, Dale Compton · Wayne State University · 2014

**25. In what ways do whites re/present an authentic hip-hop identity?**

Asked in: [Re/presentation Of Hip-Hop: An Exploration Of White Hip-Hop Fans, Consumers And Practitioners](#) · Anderson, Dale Compton · Wayne State University · 2014

**26. How is health information communicated and engaged with on short video platforms?**

Asked in: [Short video platformisation of health in China: Health communication and education on Douyin](#) · Li, Xinna · University College Dublin · 2025

**27. How do health professionals engage in health communication and education using short video platforms?**

Asked in: [Short video platformisation of health in China: Health communication and education on Douyin](#) · Li, Xinna · University College Dublin · 2025

**28. How is public service enacted in the social media practice by municipal communicators?**

Asked in: [Social Media as Sociomaterial Service : On Practicing Public Service Innovation in Municipalities](#) · Norström, Livia · University West · 2019

**29. In what ways do Swedish PR practitioners reflect on the risks of working with influencer marketing in relation to cancel culture?**

Asked in: [The Cancellation of Margaux Dietz : How Public Relations Practitioners Reflects on the Intersection of Influencer Marketing and Cancel Culture in Sweden](#) · Ljung, Ellinor · Uppsala University · 2023

**30. How does the body language of the female television news anchors influence the older viewers' choice of the television broadcast to view?**

Asked in: *The Older Viewers' Perception of Female News Anchors' Attractive Body Language and its Influence on Attention to News: A Case of Two Television Channels in Kenya* · John Obunga Oyaró · Daystar University · 2024

**31. How do young adults practice, experience and value mediatized friendship on social media?**

Asked in: *To follow someone is a social proof of friendship : A qualitative study on how young adults practice, experience, and value mediatized friendship on social media* · Saga Gonzalez Niklasson · Karlstad University · 2026

**32. How do the main semiotic choices in the memes interact with each other?**

Asked in: *"This is not a "meme", but our and your reality right now." : - en multimodal kritisk diskursanalys av memes som kommunikativt verktyg för historieberättande och förmedling av samhällseliga diskurser på Ukrainas officiella Twitterkonto* · Lindell, Hanna · Uppsala University · 2022

**33. How do chick flick films and TikTok's aesthetics-focused micro-trends visualize ideals of normative and alternative femininity?**

Asked in: *Från chick flicks till TikTok : En multimodal kritisk diskursanalys* · Gelfgren, Svea · Uppsala University · 2026

## Descriptive questions

These questions ask what is happening: how much, how often, or what kinds. They describe a situation rather than explain it.

**34. Is the company (Torrecid S.A.) making the most of interviews to spread the company's identity?**

Asked in: *A Multimodal Approach to Promotional Interviews: Inspecting Delivery Competences in Torrecid S.A.* · Noelia Jiménez Almansa · Jaume I University · 2020

**35. What do communicators see as the key challenges and opportunities when incorporating AI into the creation and dissemination of an organization's communication?**

Asked in: *AI, is it an asset or a threat to communicators? : A qualitative study on communicators' perspectives and experiences of AI* · Ericson, Johanna · Uppsala University · 2024

**36. What other salient themes are present in the content expressed by the in-group towards the out-group?**

Asked in: *Assessing The Expression of Identity in Propagation of Extreme Speech: A Case Study of The Facebook Page 'State House Kenya'* · Jacob Muia Mutinda · Daystar University · 2024

**37. How do nurse managers categorize and perceive alternative work arrangements?**

Asked in: *Career Construction and Narratives in the Nursing Profession: Nurse Managers and Registered Nurses on Alternative Work Arrangements* · Gan, Ivan Zhi Hong · Texas A&M University · 2019

**38. What are the main gratifications students receive from music listening?**

Asked in: *College Students' Uses and Gratifications of New Media for Music Listening* · Benjamin Chad Whittle · Valdosta State University · 2014

**39. To what extent do images on Instagram (of the selected brands) present diversity of the people in terms of the skin tone, body size, gender, ableness, and age?**

Asked in: [Corporate Branding via Instagram: Does Visual Representation of Diversity in Business Communication Matter?](#) · Hope, Krystal Anne · University of Hawaii at Manoa · 2019

**40. How is female sexuality portrayed in the lifestyle magazine Baaam?**

Asked in: [Different shades of the sexual woman : A study of how female sexuality is portrayed on Baaam.se](#) · Karlsson, Clara · Linnaeus University · 2020

**41. How is public relations portrayed in New Zealand news media coverage?**

Asked in: [Framing Public Relations: Media Portrayals and Journalistic Perceptions in New Zealand. A Qualitative Study Using Framing and Attribution Theories](#) · Bedi, Daljit Singh · Auckland University of Technology · 2026

**42. How do New Zealand news media journalists perceive public relations and its practitioners?**

Asked in: [Framing Public Relations: Media Portrayals and Journalistic Perceptions in New Zealand. A Qualitative Study Using Framing and Attribution Theories](#) · Bedi, Daljit Singh · Auckland University of Technology · 2026

**43. What are the sources of New Zealand news media journalists' perceptions of public relations and its practitioners?**

Asked in: [Framing Public Relations: Media Portrayals and Journalistic Perceptions in New Zealand. A Qualitative Study Using Framing and Attribution Theories](#) · Bedi, Daljit Singh · Auckland University of Technology · 2026

**44. What were the factors that enabled television's material traces to enter archival spaces?**

Asked in: [From Ephemeral to Legitimate: An Inquiry into Television's Material Traces in Archival Spaces, 1950s -1970s](#) · Bratslavsky, Lauren · University of Oregon · 2013

**45. What does the community know about Pitt County Animal Services?**

Asked in: [How the Community Outlook Affects Pitt County Animal Services](#) · Ashley N. French · East Carolina University · 2020

**46. What common threads can be identified between these representations and technologies and the real-world bodies and systems they are entangled with?**

Asked in: [Mom-Bots and Cyborg Babies: Artificial Life and Artificial Reproduction in Contemporary Science Fiction Narratives](#) · Veysey, Emily · Queen's University · 2024

**47. What historical developments in intellectual property rights and music playback and delivery formats contribute to a political economy of the hip hop DJ?**

Asked in: [Political economy of the hip hop DJ and the relationship between culture, industry, and technology](#) · Sirois, Andre G., 1980- · University of Oregon · 2011

**48. What has been the role of intellectual property exchange and standardization in the DJ product industry relevant to hip hop DJs?**

Asked in: [Political economy of the hip hop DJ and the relationship between culture, industry, and technology](#) · Sirois, Andre G., 1980- · University of Oregon · 2011

**49. What are health professionals' views on using short video platforms for health communication and education?**

Asked in: [Short video platformisation of health in China: Health communication and education on Douyin](#) · Li, Xinna · University College Dublin · 2025

**50. How do Swedish PR practitioners reflect on the cancellation of Swedish social media influencer Margaux Dietz in November 2022, and how would they have handled the situation?**

Asked in: [The Cancelling of Margaux Dietz : How Public Relations Practitioners Reflects on the Intersection of Influencer Marketing and Cancel Culture in Sweden](#) · Ljung, Ellinor · Uppsala University · 2023

**51. What are the perceptions of the older viewers on the body language of Kenyan female television news anchors?**

Asked in: [The Older Viewers' Perception of Female News Anchors' Attractive Body Language and its Influence on Attention to News: A Case of Two Television Channels in Kenya](#) · John Obunga Oyaró · Daystar University · 2024

**52. How are portrayals of African American female therapists in television perceived by African Americans?**

Asked in: [The Perception of African American Female Therapists in Television](#) · Dupree, Taylor Kourtney · University of Nevada, Reno · 2021

**53. How are texts and pictures about (un)sustainable travel described in travel- and lifestyle magazines, respectively?**

Asked in: [Travelling sustainably on holidays abroad - how hard could it be? : A study about media's descriptions about \(un\)sustainable tourism travel and its potential to influence young travellers' knowledge, attitudes and habits](#) · Helena Sandmer · Karlstad University · 2014

**54. Do memes function as a multimodal tool for intermediation of narratives and societal discourses on the official Twitter account of Ukraine?**

Asked in: ["This is not a "meme", but our and your reality right now." : - en multimodal kritisk diskursanalys av memes som kommunikativt verktyg för historieberättande och förmedling av samhällseliga diskurser på Ukrainas officiella Twitterkonto](#) · Lindell, Hanna · Uppsala University · 2022

**55. Which semiotic choices in language and visual communication mainly appear in the memes?**

Asked in: ["This is not a "meme", but our and your reality right now." : - en multimodal kritisk diskursanalys av memes som kommunikativt verktyg för historieberättande och förmedling av samhällseliga diskurser på Ukrainas officiella Twitterkonto](#) · Lindell, Hanna · Uppsala University · 2022

**56. Are, for Ukraine, societal discourses and/or narratives present within the memes?**

Asked in: ["This is not a "meme", but our and your reality right now." : - en multimodal kritisk diskursanalys av memes som kommunikativt verktyg för historieberättande och förmedling av samhällseliga diskurser på Ukrainas officiella Twitterkonto](#) · Lindell, Hanna · Uppsala University · 2022

**57. How do the store employees perceive the identity of the organisation, and in what way do they convey this to their customers?**

Asked in: [CSR + Hudvård = SANT? : En studie om The Body Shops organisationsidentitet](#) · Wahlsten, Lina · Uppsala University · 2019

**58. How did candidates use frames to redraw the attention of issues?**

Asked in: [Vad avgör vem som går vidare? : En kvantitativ studie av förekomsten av första och andra nivån av dagordningsteorin samt issue ownership i demokraternas primärdebatter 2020](#) · Boström, Lovisa · Karlstad University · 2021

## Comparative questions

These questions compare two or more groups or settings, such as two schools or two teaching methods, to see whether they differ.

### 59. Are district statements that do/do not address race directly more/less likely to have negative news coverage?

Asked in: [Apology : a content analysis of public school district apologies in race-related incidents and crises.](#) · Magen C. Davis · Baylor University · 2019

### 60. How do nurse managers communicate with nurses in alternative work arrangements and nurses not in alternative work arrangements?

Asked in: [Career Construction and Narratives in the Nursing Profession: Nurse Managers and Registered Nurses on Alternative Work Arrangements](#) · Gan, Ivan Zhi Hong · Texas A&M University · 2019

### 61. Does the selected articles from Baaam confirm or change the traditional, dominant view of female sexuality?

Asked in: [Different shades of the sexual woman : A study of how female sexuality is portrayed on Baaam.se](#) · Karlsson, Clara · Linnaeus University · 2020

### 62. How did volume and tone in economic news change during the financial crisis among public and commercial news outlets?

Asked in: [Sentiments on the economy: how economic news affects collective economic expectations and behaviour](#) · Lischka, Juliane A. · University of Zurich · 2014

### 63. What differences and similarities are there in the way women and men are framed?

Asked in: [The representation of male and female floorball players in Swedish media](#) · Moa Rosenlöf · Umeå University · 2022

### 64. Does the given picture of the organizational identity as seen through the website correspond with the one perceived by the store employees?

Asked in: [CSR + Hudvård = SANT? : En studie om The Body Shops organisationsidentitet](#) · Wahlsten, Lina · Uppsala University · 2019

### 65. How do TikTok's aesthetics-focused micro-trends reflect and differ from feminine characters in the chick flick film genre?

Asked in: [Från chick flicks till TikTok : En multimodal kritisk diskursanalys](#) · Gelfgren, Svea · Uppsala University · 2026

## Causal questions

These questions ask whether one thing causes a change in another. Answering them usually takes an experiment or a careful design that rules out other explanations.

### 66. How do subtitle errors impact the evaluation of the speaker and the content?

Asked in: [Beyond Fairness Metrics: Human Experiences and Differential Outcomes in AI-Mediated Work Settings](#) · Kowe Kadoma · Cornell University · 2026

**67. How does the speaker's accent impact their evaluation when subtitle errors occur?**

Asked in: [Beyond Fairness Metrics: Human Experiences and Differential Outcomes in AI-Mediated Work Settings](#) · Kowe Kadoma · Cornell University · 2026

**68. How do network structure and actors' attributes influence sustainable development-related communication flows on Twitter?**

Asked in: [Focused on Sustainable Development](#) · SHANG, YUANYUAN · Ewha Womans University · 2017

**69. How strongly does economic news influence both the public and expert economic sentiment?**

Asked in: [Sentiments on the economy: how economic news affects collective economic expectations and behaviour](#) · Lischka, Juliane A. · University of Zurich · 2014

## Relational questions

These questions ask whether two things tend to go together, such as study time and exam results, without claiming that one causes the other.

**70. To what extent can images containing diverse skin tones on Instagram (of the selected brands) be associated with the numbers of "like," "shares," or "comments"?**

Asked in: [Corporate Branding via Instagram: Does Visual Representation of Diversity in Business Communication Matter?](#) · Hope, Krystal Anne · University of Hawaii at Manoa · 2019

**71. What is the relationship, if any, between a candidate whose statements focused primarily on the three issues considered most important by the public according to opinion polls and whether this candidate qualified for future debates?**

Asked in: [Vad avgör vem som går vidare? : En kvantitativ studie av förekomsten av första och andra nivån av dagordningsteorin samt issue ownership i demokraternas primärdebatter 2020.](#) · Boström, Lovisa · Karlstad University · 2021

**72. What is the relationship, if any, between the extent to which a candidate's statements discussed performance issues more than Republican-owned or Democratic-owned issues and whether this candidate qualified for future debates?**

Asked in: [Vad avgör vem som går vidare? : En kvantitativ studie av förekomsten av första och andra nivån av dagordningsteorin samt issue ownership i demokraternas primärdebatter 2020.](#) · Boström, Lovisa · Karlstad University · 2021

## How to adapt a question to your own study

Every question here was asked by someone else, about their own setting. These four steps turn one into a question that is yours.

- 1. Pick the shape, not the wording.** Notice whether the question compares, explores, explains or measures. That shape is what transfers to your study.  
Recommended reading: [How to write a research question](#)
- 2. Swap in your own population and setting.** Change who, where and when, and check the question still makes sense.  
Recommended reading: [How to find a research gap](#)
- 3. Check it fits your method.** A "how" or "why" question usually points to qualitative work; "how much" or "is there a relationship" to quantitative.  
Recommended reading: [Qualitative vs quantitative research](#)
- 4. Line up your aims, objectives and questions.** Your committee will check that they agree.  
Recommended reading: [Research aims, objectives and questions](#)

Do this with two or three questions and compare them: the one you can actually answer with the time and access you have is usually the right one.