

## The paradigm of Corporate Communication research in the decade (2007 - 2016)

Chomphunut Makemuengthong<sup>1</sup>

### บทคัดย่อ

กระบวนทัศน์ในการวิจัยทางการสื่อสารองค์กรในรอบทศวรรษ (พ.ศ. 2550 - 2559) ประกอบด้วยประเด็นปัญหา 2 ประเด็นหลักคือ 1) ประเด็นปัญหาการวิจัยตามบทบาทการบริหารจัดการการสื่อสารองค์กร ซึ่งจะกำหนดประเด็นปัญหาย่อยเป็นด้านการกำหนดกลยุทธ์การสื่อสาร ด้านการวิจัยและประเมินผล ด้านการพัฒนาบุคลากร และด้านการบริหารจัดการสื่อ และ 2) ประเด็นปัญหาการวิจัยตามบทบาทการปฏิบัติงานการสื่อสารองค์กร กำหนดประเด็นย่อยคือ ด้านภาพลักษณ์และแบรนด์ ด้านการสร้างชื่อเสียงองค์กร ด้านการสื่อสารการตลาด ด้านความรับผิดชอบต่อสังคมขององค์กร ด้านการสื่อสารในภาวะวิกฤติ ด้านการประสานความสัมพันธ์ ด้านการสื่อสารสากลในยุคดิจิทัล และด้านการสื่อสารภายในองค์กร ซึ่งแต่ละกลุ่มจะมีการนำมากำหนดทางเลือกในการวิจัย โดยกลุ่มบทบาทการบริหารจัดการการสื่อสารองค์กรจะมีการกำหนดทางเลือกใน 4 ลักษณะ ในส่วนกลุ่มบทบาทการปฏิบัติงานการสื่อสารองค์กรจะมีการกำหนดทางเลือกใน 4 ลักษณะเช่นกัน ซึ่งลักษณะทางเลือกที่กำหนดนั้นมีทั้งที่สัมพันธ์กันและแตกต่างกันซึ่งโดยภาพรวมจะปรากฏทางเลือก 5 ทางเลือก เมื่อนำมากำหนดวิธีการวิจัยก็จะพบว่าการศึกษาวิจัยทางการสื่อสารองค์กรในรอบทศวรรษ (พ.ศ. 2550 - 2559) จะใช้วิธีการวิจัย 3 ลักษณะคือ การวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ เชิงคุณภาพ และเชิงผสมผสาน ซึ่งการวิจัยแบบผสมผสานเป็นวิธีการวิจัยที่นิยมใช้มากที่สุด

**คำสำคัญ :** กระบวนทัศน์ งานวิจัยการสื่อสารองค์กร

### Abstract

The paradigm of Corporate Communication research in the decade (2007 - 2016) consists of two main issues: 1) Research issues based on managerial representation, which will address sub-issues as communication strategies, research and evaluation, staff development and media management, and 2) Research issues based on technical representation, which will address sub-issues as image and brand, reputation, marketing communications, Corporate Social Responsibility, risk and crisis communications, relations, global digital communications and internal communications. Each group will have a choice of research options. The managerial representation will have four options as well as the technical representation. The options given have both relevance and differentiation. In general, there will be five options appeared. When determining the research methodology, three research methods, quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research, have been used in corporate communication research in the decade (2007 to 2016), and mixed methods research is the most commonly used.

**Keywords:** Research Paradigm; Corporate Communication

Research Paradigm is the key to determine the process and design of research. The study of paradigm in corporate communication research is the starting point for understanding which way the corporate communication research is using to determine

the process in order to gain knowledge and what research method is employed. Understanding the paradigm is a research navigator for researchers before defining the direction for further research.

<sup>1</sup> Asst. Prof. Dr. Thai Language for communication, Rajabhat Maharakham University.

Corporate communication research is an attempt to understand the various situations that are related to the organization as well as seeking the proper form and method of corporate communication is an important role for academics and business executives who wish to develop their organizations towards excellence. Corporate communication research is an important part of seeking ways and tactics for communication both within and outside the organization in order to drive organizational excellence or achieve the highest goals that are set by each organization. As van Riel & Fombrun, the famous corporate communicators, clearly identify the importance of communication in the book entitled "Essentials of Corporate Communication", "Communication is the heart of corporate performance and efforts are being made to find and develop appropriate communication methods to communicate with stakeholders." (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007, pp. 2-3), and the presentation of the research results of Mohamada, Bakara, Halima and Ismailb (2014) clearly confirmed their research in international communications academic conferences on Corporate communication management and the efficiency of organization, "Corporate Communication Management (CCM) has been very popular among academics and businessmen for more than 40 years due to the progress and changes in business conditions around the world. Most academics believe that corporate communication management has an impact on organizational performance which affects the progress of the organization. Thus, the efforts are being made to find the corporate communication management methods to maximize the efficiency of corporate communication." (Mohamada, Bakara, Halima, & Ismailb, 2014, p. 115).

By synthesizing the status of corporate communication research in the decade (2007 - 2016), it is found that research is ongoing. The research both in domestic and international in corporate communication has progressed on paradigms and research approaches. Based on a collection of research findings

in corporate communication over the past 10 years, the author analyzed and synthesized corporate communication research to present the paradigm in three ways: filed, research claim and methods, in order to make the ones who are interested in understand the basics and apply them in conducting research in corporate communication. The three paradigms were as followed:

### 1. Filed

Research in corporate communication in the decade (2007 - 2016) presented in this book is based on the synthesis of documents and the view of the author's personal experience to define a range of issues. For the documents, the author analyzed the documents of the scholars who are internationally recognized in order to synthesize the primary points, and then the author brought the experience of studying research on corporate communication both domestically and internationally to conclude the issues. The documents were "The Handbook of Communication and Corporate Reputation" by Craig E. Carroll, the book entitled "Essentials of Corporate Communications: Implementing Practices for Effective Reputation Management" by Cees B.M. van Riel and Charles J. Fombrun, and "The Handbook of Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility" by Øyvind Ihlen, Jennifer L. Bartlett and Steve May. The issues defined by the author were as followed:

#### 1.1 Managerial representation

The role of managerial representation is the role of the management group. It represents a communication or connection between senior executives and corporate communication employees, including jointly setting the corporate communication strategies to meet the success in human resources, marketing, finance, administration, etc. In addition, corporate communication management also provides an advice on developing corporate communication plans, activities, and projects in order to drive the strategies by promoting and supporting the corporate communication department to implement it according to corporate communication duty. From synthesizing

the corporate communication research in the decade, it was found that the research had identified the issues that needed to be sought for the answers and knowledge in order to use them in working according to the corporate communication management role. Most of the time, the research emphasized on the research problems according to the role of managerial representation in communication strategies, communication research and evaluation, staff development and media management.

### 1.2 Technical representation

The role of technical representation is the role of employees in the operation department or in the role of corporate communication which can be divided into two main duties: Internal communication activities and Additional daily

activities. However, from synthesizing the corporate communication research in the decade, it was found that the research had identified the issues that needed to be sought for the answers and knowledge in order to use them in working according to the corporate communication management role in the aspect of technical representation by addressing the research problem issues in technical representation both inside and outside the organization. Most of the time, the research emphasized on the research problems according to the role of corporate communication management in Image and brand, Reputation, Marketing communications, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Crisis communication, Relations, Global Digital communications and Internal communications.

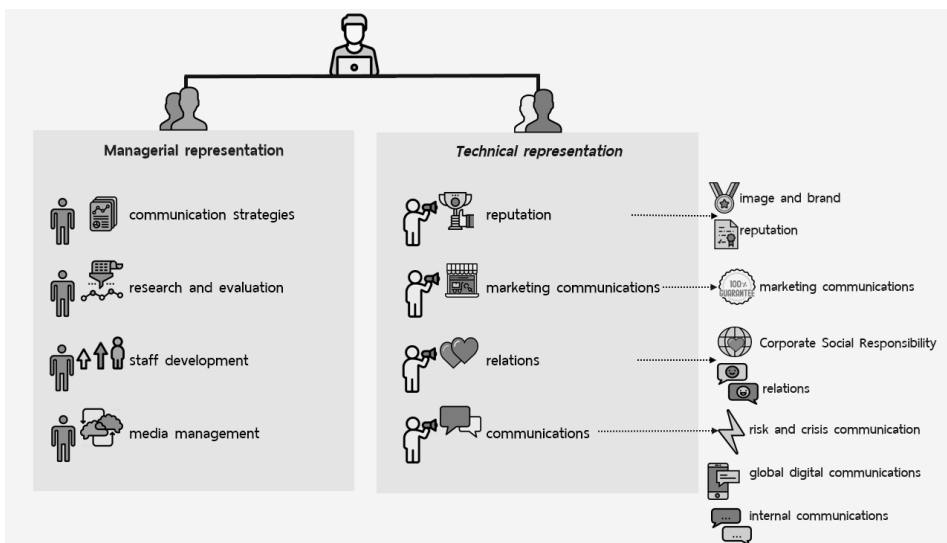


Figure 2 shows the research issue on corporate communication in the decade (2007 - 2016)

The figure shows that the synthesis of corporate communication research in the decade (2007 - 2016) will determine two research issues that need to be researched in order to seek answers and gain knowledge in operating corporate communication: 1) Research issues which are based on the role of managerial representation. This will address sub-issues: communication strategies, research and evaluation, staff development and media management, and 2)

Research issues which are based on the role of technical representation. This will define sub-issues: image and brand, reputation, marketing communications, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), risk and crisis communication, relations, global digital communications and internal communications.

### 2. Research Claim

Research claim is a research approach that the researchers use to determine their knowledge

of research before deciding if they will use Quantitative Research, Qualitative Research, or Mixed Methods Research. The result of the synthesis of the research issues in corporate communication in No. 1, it was found that there were two research issues that need to be researched in order to seek answers and gain knowledge in operating corporate communication, and each issue can be subdivided as the researcher defined. In depth study of each issue, it was found that corporate communication research in the decade (2007 - 2016) used a variety of research claims, classified according to the following research issues:

### **2.1 Research claim according to the role of managerial representation**

2.1.1 Research problem issues according to the role of managerial representation in an aspect of communication strategies would be conducted to find the answers related to the communication strategies of the organizations in corporate communication issue, which appeared in both the overall study of corporate strategies and the specific study of the strategies which included administrative issues and operational issues. On the administrative side was, for example, customer relationship management strategy and change management communication strategy. On the operational issues were, for instance, marketing communications strategy, persuasive communication strategy, social communication strategy, public relations strategy, new media communication strategy, social media communication strategy, corporate social responsibility strategy, project communication strategy, media strategy, communication strategy for development, crisis communication strategy and risk communication and management strategy. The results of the synthesis of research claim in an aspect of the research problem issues based on the role of managerial representation could be summarized in three types of communication strategies:

1) Exploring communication strategies was to determine the strategies that organizations used in communicating, to study

strategy or communication processes that drive strategies, or the results of the communication strategies.

2) Studying the relationship of the variables from the situation or that affects the corporate communication strategies by studying the relationship of communication factors that influenced the decisions of those involved, or affected the satisfaction.

3) Setting communication strategic framework, the researcher would start from the preliminary survey, finding factors that influence or correlate with communication success, then identify the strategic conceptual framework, after that validate the strategy by presenting it to the meeting or a real trial to review before revealing the strategy publicly.

2.1.2 Research problem issues according to the role of managerial representation in an aspect of managerial representation would be conducted to find answers about managerial representation whether it was communication training, media management and team working. It was conducted in three ways:

1) Exploring managerial representation in an aspect of surveying communication management, the executive features that support communication success explored communication management competency, or communication management methods to know the situation or the truth in managerial representation

2) Studying the relationship of corporate communication variables, or managerial representation, or that affects the operation in corporate communication by studying the relationship of factors affecting the organization management and the corporate communication administration.

3) Developing qualification competencies or skills required for the executives by creating a communication development model for executives, including managerial representation development model. The competencies or attributes that are researched to find the right model for development are that in interests or an area that the

corporate communications industry mentions. In the corporate communication research in the decade (2007 - 2016), there has been an interesting model for developing competencies, such as Interpersonal Communication by Birch (2014) which was a dissertation from the University of Manchester, where the researcher developed a "Forum conversations." The researcher proposed that it was an effective way to change interpersonal communication skills for the executives in communications, because it was a powerful way to assist them to learn, to develop and to change sustainably, or in the research of DuHamel (2010), the dissertation of University of Stirling, the researcher developed a communication management model in disclosure and organizational transparency. The researcher identified that the developed model could develop communication of the executives and corporate communication staff through the created steps effectively. The research guidelines for developing qualification competencies or skills required for the executives will use an in-depth exploration of the competencies that need to be developed by using the research methodology. After that, it will be developed as a conceptual framework or a development model, and then they try-out will be employed to evaluate the performance of the model before presenting the results to the public.

## **2.2 Research claim according to the role of technical representation**

Research problem issues according to the role of technical representation would be conducted to find the answers related to the technical representation that was defined whether it was reputation, corporate social responsibility, relations and communications, which was divided into sub-issues according to the researcher, such as image and brand, reputation, marketing communications, corporate social responsibility, risk and crisis communication, relations, global digital communications, internal communications and additional daily activities.

Research claim according to the role of technical representation that the researcher

selected had a range of choices whether it was the exploration, the study of the relationship of variables from the situation, or it could be a model or performance development. This is similar to research claim in research problem issues according to the role of managerial representation, but there would be a variety of claims to employ in exploring the facts. There were three types of research methodology:

1. Surveying corporate communication would define the research claim exploration or seeking the answers from the samples both in and outside the organization, such as the executives, the employees, the stakeholders, the customers, the consumers and the members of the community, to describe the behavior, such as organization communication behavior, online social networking behavior, participation in organization behavior, comparative analysis of local and national corporate communicators, Internet exposure behavior, service behavior, travel seeking behavior through the Internet and participation in global warming behavior, to describe an opinion, such as opinion on information technology and communication media for corporate communication, on public relations media, on new practices and on travel documentary program, to describe the attitude, such as employees' attitudes toward public relations media, new logo and consumers' attitudes toward billboards, to describe exposure, such as exposure of information, public relations media, new logo and service, to describe the used, such as selecting media, utilizing information, utilizing the website and using of public relations media to create community participation, to describe expectations, such as the expectations of investors through the Internet, to describe the perceptions, such as perceiving image, perceiving and recognizing hidden advertisement, perceiving reputation of organization and perceiving public relations project, to describe needs, such as the need for reliable health communication, to describe satisfaction, such as satisfaction towards communication through the intranet, the tourism public relations plan, job satisfaction, to describe recognition, such as brand

recognition, to describe management such as crisis communication management, Corporate Social Responsibility management, the role of corporate communication, crisis management by media in digital age, the role of (new) information communication, communication with stakeholders through the website and identity of the organization in social responsibility communication, to describe the study, such as study of conflict management, marketing communication process, to describe evaluation, such as evaluation of being excellent organization, evaluation of communication and evaluation of media utilization.

2. Studying the relationship of corporate communication performance variables, or organizational communication success. The researcher would define research claim for creating knowledge and finding the truth that causes the phenomenon of corporate communication. It may be to study the factors or relationships of phenomena with corporate communication, seeking ways to prevent or resolve potential problems, including efforts to seek the way to develop a better corporate communication. This is the development of knowledge in corporate communication. The research that creates knowledge will appear in both theses in Thailand and abroad. Most of them are master's degree work, as well as academic research of scholars from educational institutes and related business organizations, where research data were collected from the samples both in and outside the organization by studying the factors or relationships of phenomena with corporate communication. It will look for some variables or attributes that affect corporate communication management, or perhaps study the relationship of one variable or attribute that is expected to affect the corporate communication management, including the study of the impact of one or more variables or attributes on corporate communication as follows: **factors affecting**, such as factors that will affect managerial support to develop corporate communication, the achievement of the corporate communication policy, the reputation of the organization, communication factors that will af-

fect consumer decisions, consumer behavior and satisfaction, **correlation**, such as the relationship of marketing communication and consumer decision-making, of communication and the effectiveness of process improvement in the organization, of corporate communication ethics and public service, of personality and positive psychology in social media, of organizational values and crisis management, of trust, communication and creativity and the design of corporate culture to success, of social capital, international communication and social responsibility and the challenge of solving corporate communication crisis and the relationship of values and behavior through online media and **impact**, such as the impact of information communication on corporate reputation, of social performance on perceptions of corporate sustainability, of executives' attitudes on Corporate Social Responsibility and corporate communication and the impact of language used in multicultural corporate communication on creativity and organizational performance.

3. Seeking the methods to prevent, solve, or develop for a better corporate communication management. This type of research will look for methods to manage corporate communication, analyze organization, study corporate success, develop indicators, including finding the management approach to excellence as follows: **find out ways of managing**, such as the methods to be a leader that empowers employees, and succeeds in organizational change, to manage media in the digital age, to manage the organization reputation, to manage risk and the methods to manage data communication, **analysis on organization**, such as exploring the case study on conversion of belief into practice and risk information of the organization, **development of indicators**, such as reputation indicators, corporate image indicators and progressive data communication technological indicators and **management guideline towards excellence**, such as the approach to excellence in public relations and communication and to excellence in creating organization image.

4. Developing the qualification competencies or skills required for corporate communication officers. The researcher will define research claim. That is to say, the results of the research at the level of creating knowledge will be developed into a model or developmental approach to experiment or develop into a clear model to be an option for organizations or ones who are interested in to apply in their organization in two major areas: the development of a theoretical framework and the pursuit of the development model.

4.1) Research to develop a theoretical framework in corporate communication, such as the theoretical framework of election campaign, development of theoretical framework for exploring the impact of organizations, for communicating the meaning of social responsibility and for educational theories transforms corporate cultures. In addition, the developments of index and of measuring tools have been developed; for example, developing a customer engagement in the service brand and sustainable social responsibility communication concept and indicators.

4.2) Research to create a model for corporate communication development and professional competence in corporate communication development. The creation or development of a model for developing corporate communication or professional competency in corporate communication is to be defined as the development framework for application, such as a model of an expert and a novice advice communication, of creating leader of relationship, of social and environment responsibility, in an area of the development, there will be an appropriate communication process development model, a model of interpersonal communication competency development, of alarm communication development and creating the model of emotional components of crisis communication.

From the synthesis of research claim in corporate communication in the decade (2007 - 2016) presented above, the results of the synthesis of research claim in corporate communication can be summarized for a comprehensive understanding and applying as the figure shown below.

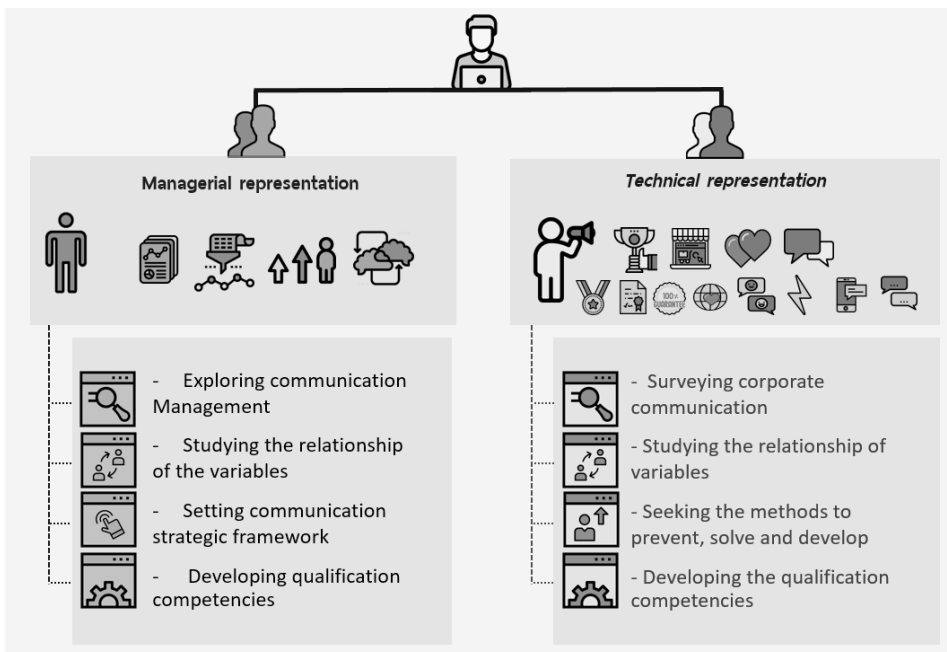


Figure 2 shows research claim in corporate communication in the decade (2007 - 2016)

From the figure above, the research claim in corporate communication in the decade (2007 - 2016) was displayed. When classifying the claim by the problem issues, two groups of the research problem issues were found: research problem issues according to the role of managerial representation and research problem issues according to the role of technical representation. It could be seen that the research problem issues according to the role of managerial representation had defined four claims: (1) exploring communication management, (2) studying the relationship of the variables, (3) setting communication strategic framework, and (4) developing qualification competencies. For the research problem issues according to the role of technical representation, it had also defined four claims: (1) surveying corporate communication, (2) studying the relationship of variables, (3) seeking the methods to prevent, solve and develop, and (4) developing the qualification competencies. The research claims were both related. That is to say, the two groups, the managerial representation and the technical representation, were similar in three claims: exploring, studying the relationship and developing performance competencies. The difference was that the managerial representation defined the communication strategic framework while the technical representation would provide an approach to prevent, solve and develop. Therefore, it is concluded that the research claim of corporate communication research in the decade (2007 - 2016) consists of five claims: (1) surveying, (2) studying the relationship, (3) developing performance competencies, (4) defining communication strategic framework, and (5) seeking ways to prevent, solve and develop.

Methods

From the results of the synthesis of the research claim in corporate communication in the decade (2007 - 2016) found that there were five claims: (1) surveying, (2) studying the relationship, (3) developing performance competencies, (4) defining communication strategic framework, and (5) seeking ways to prevent, solve and develop. Thus, the author

selected all five claims to study the research methods; it was found that there were three research methods used: Quantitative research, Qualitative research and Mixed methods research. The research methods were concluded as followed:

### 3.1 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research in corporate communication research is the research method used by many researchers. The use of quantitative research method can be used in both Quantitative research itself and mixing with Qualitative research, which it is called Mixed methods research. Quantitative research is used to employ in applied research, such as the study of the relationship of factors affecting corporate communication, the development of management and operation models, including the model in which will be used to develop corporate communication as well as to evaluate any parts related to corporate communication. It can be divided into two types of the research method:

3.1.1 Survey research, it will be used to survey basic information and the various conditions involved in the management and operation of corporate communication whether it is an exploring behavior, opinion, attitude, utilization, perception, image, needs, satisfaction, study of corporate communication process, including corporate communication performance evaluation. The researcher will use the questionnaire to collect data from the samples that are related to the problem issues and the scope of the research, for example, if the researcher defines the problem issues according to the role of managerial representation in the sub-issue which is the qualifications of the corporate communication executives, and defines the research claim that is studying the expectations of employees toward the qualifications of the corporate communication executives, the survey research method will be used to explore expectations. The samples are the employees in the organization, or if the researcher defines the problem issues according to the technical representation in the sub-issue which is building the relationship with the mass media,



and defines the research claim that is the media's opinions toward the relations of corporate communication employees with the media, the survey research method will be used to explore the opinion. The samples are the mass media. In the survey research, the data will be collected by questionnaire and then analyzed by using analytical statistics to report the results statistically. Frequency, percentage, arithmetic means, standard deviation, Paired sample t-test, Independent t-test, one-way ANOVA, or higher-level statistical tests are examples. The author will explain in more detail in the next chapter.

3.1.2 Research to find the relationship or composition: it will be used to study the relationships of corporate communication performance variables, or organizational communication success in an aspect of studying the factors or relationships of phenomena with corporate communication. The researcher will use the questionnaire to collect data from the samples that are related to the problem issues and the scope of the research. For example, if the researcher defines the problem issue according to the role of managerial representation in the sub-issue that is the executive's character that supports the communication success, and defines the research claim which is studying the relationship of some executive attributes and the communication success, the correlation research method will be employed. The samples are the executives. In the research to find the relationship or composition, the data will be collected by questionnaire, and then the obtained data will be analyzed by using analytical statistics as mentioned in under 3.1.1, but test statistics will be applied, such as multiple regression analysis and factor analysis. The author will explain in more detail in the next chapter.

### 3.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative Research in corporate communication research is the research method used by many researchers as well. The use of qualitative research method can be used in both Qualitative research itself and mixing with Quantitative research,

which it is called Mixed methods research. Qualitative research is used both in survey research, and research to find relationships or components, as well as quantitative research, but data collection will use qualitative research methods. International corporate communication research will use qualitative research the most. Data collection methods are, for instance, interview, focus group, observation, connoisseurship, textual analysis and documentation analysis. However, it can normally be seen that qualitative research in corporate communication does not use only one of these methods. It will be used with others, such as documentation analysis with in-depth interviews, or observation with interview. Qualitative data analysis includes analytic induction, typological analysis and constant comparison, and descriptive analysis will be used in report. The author will explain in more detail in the next chapter.

### 3.3 Mixed Methods Research

Mixed methods research is the most widely used in corporate communication research in the decade (2007 - 2016), with quantitative and qualitative research being used together. The dominant use of quantitative or qualitative research depends on defining the research claim. If using the survey research, quantitative research may be used dominantly. If it is related to the development of the strategies, it may be important to focus on qualitative research. As in the case where the research claim is a survey, qualitative research is often used in interviews with the informants, and then quantitative research will be used with a group of surveyed informants surveyed or to confirm. For example, in the case where the researcher identifies the problem issue according to the managerial representation with crisis communication management as a sub-issue, the research claim is to study the management model used in crisis communication and employees' attitudes toward the management model used in crisis communication. Therefore, the research methodology is mixed methods research that brings qualitative research as a tool to find the answers, which is an in-

depth interview to interview the executives and the corporate communication officers, and quantitative research is used to explore the attitudes of employees toward the management model used in crisis communication. The author will explain in more detail in the next chapter.

From the synthesis of the filed, the research claim and the methodology of corporate communication in the decade (2007-2016) stated

above, it shows an overview of the paradigm in corporate communication research and what filed of corporate communication research in this decade are, what research claim can be used to determine the research approach and what method is used to find the answers to the research questions. The author combined the three syntheses to present as in the paradigm of the corporate communication research below.

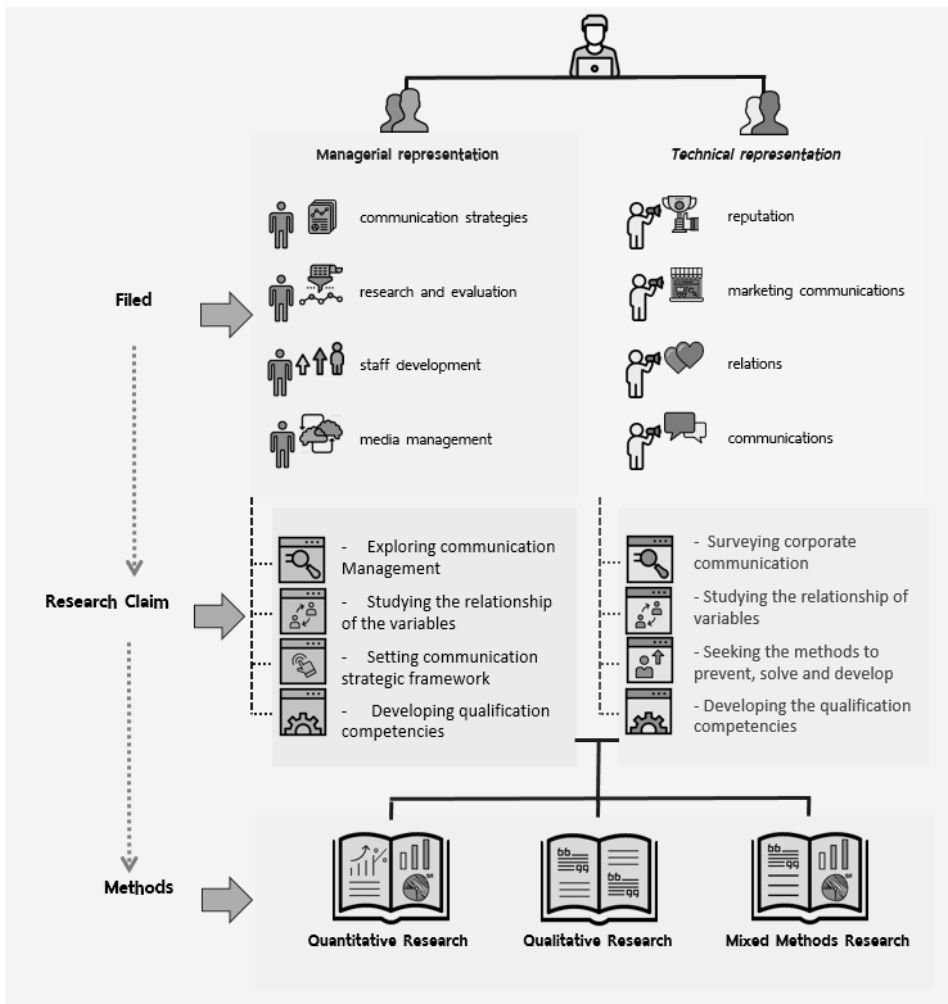


Figure 3 the paradigm of Corporate Communication Research in the Decade (2007 - 2016)

The figure shows that the paradigm of corporate communication research in the decade (2007 - 2016) consists of two main issues: 1) managerial representation, it will address sub-issues; they are

communication strategies, research and evaluation, staff development and media management, and 2) technical representation, it will define sub-issues; they are image and brand, reputation, marketing commu-

nications, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), risk and crisis communication, relations, global digital communications and internal communications. Each main group will define the research claim. It could be seen that managerial representation has defined four claims: (1) exploring communication management, (2) studying the relationship of the variables, (3) setting communication strategic framework, and (4) developing qualification competencies. For the technical representation, it has also defined four claims: (1) surveying corporate communication, (2) studying the relationship of variables, (3) seeking the methods to prevent, solve and develop, and (4) developing the qualification competencies. The research claims are both similar and different. Therefore, it is concluded that the research claim in overall consists of five claims: (1) surveying, (2) studying the relationship, (3) developing performance competencies, (4) defining communication strategic framework, and (5) seeking ways to prevent, solve and develop. When determining research methodology from the research claim, it can be found that research on corporate communication in the decade (2007 - 2016) will employ three types of research methods: quantitative research, qualitative research and mixed methods research which is the most commonly used.

### Conclusion

From the synthesis of the paradigm of corporate communication research in the decade (2007 - 2016), it was found that there are two main problem issues: 1) the filed according to the managerial representation, which will address sub-issues; they are communication strategies, research and evaluation, staff development and media management, and 2) the filed according to the technical representation, which will define sub-issues; they are image and brand, reputation, marketing communications, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), risk and crisis communication, relations, global digital communications and internal communications. Each main group will define the research claim. The research claims are both

similar and different. In overall, the research claim in overall comprises of five claims: (1) surveying, (2) studying the relationship, (3) developing performance competencies, (4) defining communication strategic framework, and (5) seeking ways to prevent, solve and develop. When determining research methodology from the research claim, it can be found that research on corporate communication in the decade (2007 - 2016) will employ three types of research methods: quantitative research, qualitative research and mixed methods research which is the most commonly used.

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