

Editorial

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The September 2026 issue of the *SJCC International Journal of Communication Research* brings together five studies that examine the evolving dynamics between media, technology, and society. Despite their diverse topics, these studies converge on a central theme: media does not just show us what is real, it actually helps create our perceptions, identities, and social relationships, and influences how we talk about things in public. This means that media plays a big role in shaping who we are, how we see the world, and how we interact with each other. By exploring this complex relationship, the studies in this issue can help us better understand the impact of media on both individual lives and societal structures.

The study of media coverage of the Prayag Maha Kumbh 2025 examines how Media Logic influences the representation of cultural and religious institutions. The research highlights significant differences between Hindi and English newspaper coverage and draws attention to the tendency of media to privilege events and personalities over deeper cultural and historical contexts.

The study on digital memes and human-wildlife conflict in Kerala demonstrates how social-media narratives increasingly influence mainstream journalism. Viral memes and online sentiment can shape news framing, reminding us that the flow of influence between media and audiences is no longer one-directional.

The third article looks at how people communicate within organizations. It talks about something called gender-responsive organizational communication, which is all about how the way we communicate at work can affect the culture and whether everyone feels included and treated equally, regardless of their gender. What is important here is that communication is not just about sending emails

or memos, it is actually a crucial part of what makes an organization work. It is not just an administrative thing, but it is really about how we build and maintain our workplace culture. By focusing on this, we can create a more inclusive and equal environment for everyone.

The fourth article takes us from institutions to individuals and asks a profound contemporary question: Where do people find meaning when traditional sources of belonging weaken? Its exploration of Harry Potter and BTS fandoms demonstrates how popular media narratives can become spaces for emotional connection, identity formation, and community. At the same time, the research highlights the tensions involved when belonging itself becomes mediated, commodified, and potentially fragmented.

The fifth study investigates the adoption of Generative AI for academic inquiry among graduate students, analysing how they navigate information discovery beyond traditional search engines. The research demonstrates that while AI tools offer speed, conversational interaction, and synthesized responses, they also alter cognitive engagement with scholarly material and introduce new ethical, critical, and evaluative challenges.

Collectively, these studies portray a communication landscape that is increasingly participatory, interconnected, and technologically advanced. Social media, algorithms, digital cultures, and emerging technologies are transforming not only the production and consumption of information but also how individuals perceive themselves and the world. This issue thus emphasizes the need for critical, ethical, and interdisciplinary communication research.

As technology accelerates the evolution of communication, it is crucial for media professionals, researchers, and audiences to ensure accuracy, consider context, foster inclusivity, exercise sound judgment, and critically evaluate the content they engage with.

We hope the articles in this issue will inspire further dialogue and research on the evolving media landscape, fostering a more thoughtful and compassionate approach to communication.

Mathew Muriankary
Chief Editor