

EDITORIAL

Having recently returned to an academic role after five years, I was eager to see how the discipline of communication had developed during my absence. I think much of what I have encountered is reflected in the composition of this edition of *Communicare*.

I was pleased to find a discipline that has been enriched by a diversity of researchers, research topics and methodologies. There are clearly many active young researchers who are contributing to both the relevance and vibrancy of the discipline.

It would appear as though the discipline has evolved into two broad research focus areas: the impact of shifting paradigms on our conceptualisation of the various levels of human communication (individual, organisational and societal) and what is broadly referred to as media and culture studies. Clearly, these two broad focus areas have been subjected to the same shifting paradigms resulting from the emergence of new communication technologies and their concomitant large-scale social changes.

Certainly, both broad research areas challenge our ability to be critical of our own intellectual assumptions and moreover to evaluate and research communication through different lenses.

In this edition of *Communicare*, the focus falls squarely on strategic communication management in the South African context. Steyn and Everett report on public relations roles research that forms part of an international comparative study, and which clearly indicates that the international community is increasingly taking note of theoretical developments in South Africa. Liam and Barker address the importance of crisis response and provide a framework for guiding decision making during the critical crisis-response phase in which the recovery from the crisis is profoundly affected by what an organisation says and does. Wiggil, Naudé and Fourie analyse strategic communication management practices in non-profit organisations (NPOs), and make a number of recommendations in respect of relationship building in this sector. Le Roux and Naudé investigate how gender perceptions of female employees impact on employer-employee relationships and on communication management in a mining company.

Two articles deal with the importance of information sources. Krige and De Wet argue that patient package inserts (PPI) should be regarded as a valuable health communication tool that fulfils a necessary role in health literacy, especially in a multicultural, developing country such as South Africa. Wiese, Van Heerden and Jordaan investigate the usefulness of information sources to prospective students at higher education institutions. Their findings should assist towards improved efficiency in respect of student recruitment at higher education institutions.

Finally, Ekeanyanwu examines the global context of communication in his article on the relevance of cultural imperialism theory. He concludes that cultural imperialism theory needs to be re-examined in line with contemporary realities of today's world as a global village made possible by the advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Although *Communicare* has a new editorial team, the journal remains committed to providing a forum for the dissemination of original research results, especially within the broader Southern African and African context. Over the past twenty eight years, the journal has made a substantial contribution towards establishing and developing a body of knowledge for communication sciences and its related fields, and will continue to take its place among the leading accredited South African academic journals in the field.

Prof Sonja Verwey
Editor-in-Chief