

EDITORIAL

In 2013 two University of Johannesburg professors Nina Overton-de Klerk and Sonja Verwey published an article in *Communicatio* "Towards an emerging paradigm of strategic communication: Core driving forces" where they argued that a shift in communication theory and practice was taking place that had a profound impact on the role of communication practitioners in business and society. The same year the University of Johannesburg introduced the first BA Strategic Communication degree in South Africa. Sadly, prof Verwey passed away in 2019. In March 2023 the Department of Strategic Communication held a memorial lecture for Prof Sonja Verwey with Prof Nina Overton-de Klerk delivering the keynote lecture, where she revisited the assumptions, theses and developments in the discipline of strategic communication during the decade since the article was published. The lead article in this issue "Reflections on the current state and future of strategic communication as paradigm and practice" is based on that lecture. In the article, Overton-de Klerk provides a review of paradigm shifts in strategic communication since 2013, considers the effect of global disruption in recent years and offers the prognosis for the future of the discipline.

In the second article of this edition, Rens through the lens of uses and gratification theory, explores why South African millennials consume self-help media, concluding that by so doing, they partly gratify a need for self-knowledge, relational identification and achieve self-improvement.

Muasya provides a nuanced analysis of the mediated motherhood discourses in Kenya, particularly focusing on intense mothering and co-mothering discourses in the African context.

Motloutsi and Lubinga assess awareness, knowledge, and perceptions of hubbly bubbly smoking health risks among South African university students, identifying some worrying misconceptions about the health risks associated with the habit.

Several articles in the current issue pay attention to social media and digital communication. Makananise

explores how in the context of the 4th industrial revolution (4IR) with pervasive uses of digital media technology, social media, and the internet, indigenous language posters for political election campaigns are utilised in South Africa. Van Wyk and Du Plessis propose adopting a social identity theory as a novel approach to how political brands could drive political issues on social media by utilising political brand stories and creating an online political brand persona on social media to position themselves in a dynamic online political space. Klyueva and Ngondo study the perceptions of Zimbabwean public relations practitioners about ethical public relations practices on social media, concluding that the views on what constitutes ethical or unethical practices are somewhat ambiguous.

Staying with the topic of 4IR Cherry, Mohamed and Brahmbhatt contribute to the debate on the application of artificial intelligence tools to analyse textual data. In this case, FinBERT, an advanced machine learning model of natural language processing (NLP), was used to investigate the change in the sentiment expressed in the Chairman's Statements of a sample of South African JSE-listed companies before and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the current issue of *Communicare*, we are proud to introduce a new section named Practice-Based Case Studies where we invite communication practitioners in different communication sub-disciplines to share their best practices and case studies. The section aims to provide additional resources to academics, teachers, practitioners and students and provide a bridge between communication theory and practice. The very first case study by Oberholzer, Lethoko, Lee, Benecke and Phumo illustrates how the stakeholder engagement approach has been applied to a communication programme at Sappi - a global wood fibre company, with headquarters in South Africa.

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REFERENCES

- Overton-de Klerk, N. & Verwey, S. 2013. Towards an emerging paradigm of strategic communication: Core driving forces. *Communicatio*, 39 (3): 362–82.