

Editor's Note

New Initiatives and Significant Changes in *Asian Communication Research*

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The inaugural issue of *Asian Communication Research (ACR)* was published in 2004 after two years of preparation. At that time, even though a number of articles on Asian issues had been published in the major communication journals (Bryant & Yang, 2004), there were no established international journals with an Asian focus for a global audience (Xiaoming, 2012). The launch of *ACR* was timely, and the future of the journal was promising. Over the past 17 years, *ACR* has achieved significant growth under the leadership of four former editors. However, *ACR* has not yet established itself as a respectable international journal as initially aimed.

The 5th editorial team was formed in January 2021. I became the editor-in-chief, and Drs. Borae Jin, Kyun Soo Kim, and Minsun Shim were appointed as the associate editors. All the editors had a lot of experience in contributing and reviewing international journal articles. We all agree that now is the time to transform *ACR* into a truly international journal. We have worked hard to reform *ACR* over the past few months, and this issue (Vol. 18, No. 1) is the first fruit of our efforts on the vision of *ACR*. Compared to previous issues, there are significant changes in this issue.

First of all, we newly opened the *ACR* website (<http://acr.comm.or.kr>). Through the website, all previous and current articles are now freely available to any reader. *ACR* is not an open-access journal, but Nurimedia Publishing has allowed *ACR* articles to be open and accessible. Second, online articles are presented in meta XML with CrossRef service, enabling readers to use articles interactively. In addition, articles are provided in various formats, including PDF, PubReader, and ePUB. We also have entirely revised the design and layout of the PDF of the articles to give readers more satisfying reading experiences. Third, while building the new homepage, we also updated and created the information about the journal and manuscript submission. The aims and scope of the

journal were newly written. We offered new detailed instructions for paper submission and ethical guidelines for the authors. Fourth, the review process has been radically reformed to make it more effective, reliable, and transparent. In particular, the authority and accountability of the editors are greatly strengthened. Every submitted manuscript is under the review of multiple anonymous reviewers. The decision to publish the paper is made based on the evaluation of those reviewers, but the editor-in-chief makes the decision with the assistance of the associate editors. The editor-in-chief is obliged to elaborate on the decision to the contributors. For a rigorous and high-quality review, a new editorial board was formed with 61 well-respected and internationally recognized scholars (http://acr.comm.or.kr/_common/do.php?a=html&b=2). We expect that contributors will be greatly benefitted from the comments provided by the reviewers. A brand new online review system was also built for ACR. The submission and review process will be more systematic and convenient.

Academic journals are the most widely accepted medium for communicating scientific knowledge (American Psychological Association, 2020). Once findings and claims appear in an academic journal, they are likely to be qualified as social knowledge and start to be circulated in both scholarly and public domains. Thus, ACR puts the ethics and the accuracy of findings on the highest priority in publication. While editing articles for this issue, we worked very closely with the authors to ensure the accuracy in content and the preciseness in style. We will do our best to perfect the style of articles. When substantive errors appear in the published articles despite careful preparation, we will publish a corrigendum in the earliest issue.

Over the past 17 years, the quantity of Communication studies has grown enormously. According to Journal Citation Report (Clarivate Analytics, 2019), the number of communication journals indexed in the Social Sciences Citation

Index increased by 219% (from 44 to 92), the number of articles increased by almost four times (from 1,110 to 4,300), and the aggregated impact factor by 253% (from 0.631 to 1.594). However, it is doubtful whether our understanding of communication and media at the collective level has deepened and widened as the amount of knowledge has increased. As individual and fragmented knowledge increases, what is more needed is to synthesize such particular pieces of knowledge, resolve discrepancies among findings and claims, and develop comprehensive theoretical frameworks to cover a wide range of phenomena. Such a process also involves the expansion, modification, or falsification of existing theories, which is an evolutionary process of theory development (Kuhn, 1970). Synthesizing fragmentary knowledge and making advances in theory development do not result from individual effects but rather collective efforts such as dialogue, collaboration, and debates. One of the main functions of academic journals is facilitating dialogue and debates among different ideas. ACR intends to make such an effort. ACR will organize special forums to discuss notable findings, claims, and theories and publish the outcomes of the forums. To this end, in the 2021 Spring Convention of KSJCS, we held a special seminar titled *Challenging Ideas and Scholarly Responses*, and discussed issues proposed in a recent article published in ACR (Kim, 2020). We plan to publish the discussants' commentaries and the article author's responses to comments in the form of a special forum in a future issue.

ACR seeks to publish not only original research articles but also essays with theoretical or methodological insights. We categorized types of manuscripts as *original research* that presents new research findings with methods that make a significant contribution to knowledge, *research insight* that offers new ideas regarding theoretical or methodological issues in Communication studies without substantial analysis of data, and *book reviews* that present critical reviews on a

set of recently published books that focus on a central theme within the discipline.

This issue presents one theoretical insight article written by Dr. Young Min Baek. Dr. Baek reviewed the history of two conflicting principles of democracy, *constitutionalism* and *populism*, and journalistic values relevant to each principle. Based on the historical review and the analysis of recent changes in the ideological landscape, he suggests “social empathy” as an alternative journalistic value to “objectivity.” He proposes thought-provoking arguments and claims on one of the critical issues in journalism studies.

This issue also presents one methodological insight article written by Dr. Sang-Yeon Kim and colleagues. They illuminated the differential advantages of Bayesian approach over the well-known frequentist hypothesis testing procedure, and how it can be better taught to students in communication. While Bayesian or similar approaches center on most statistical machine learning models, the core ideas underlying such modeling procedures have not been duly covered in most statistics/methods courses in social sciences. Their article provides timely and actionable insight for those who consider incorporating the subject into their courses.

In this issue, we have one special review article written by Dr. Wansoo Lee. Dr. Lee reviewed journalism education programs of ten universities in South Korea. Based on the review, he found that those universities apply “the department store model of journalism education,” which focuses on teaching various media and communication theories but puts little emphasis on practical training for future journalists. Dr. Lee also found that the goals of journalism education in those programs are rather abstract and ambiguous and proposes a new model of journalism education for the digital media era. We also publish one book review in this issue. Dr. John A. Lent reviewed Jaehyeon Jeong’s recent book, *Korean Food Television and the Korean Nation*, which examined the globalization of

Korean food with the twenty-first century *hallyu* campaign that promoted Korean popular culture, *K-pop*. We hope readers find these articles interesting and helpful for their research.

With significant reformations in the management of the journal, ACR starts a new journey toward a truly international journal. The beginning of this new journey seems humble, but I believe the future of ACR will be prosperous. Last, we express our sincere gratitude to the president, Dr. Seungchan Yang, and the executives of the KSJCS for their continuing support for ACR.

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