

A Pandemic Retrospective

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Who could have imagined 2 years ago that we would still be in a global pandemic? COVID-19 has undoubtedly changed how we as journalism educators and scholars do our job: from teaching remote classes and participating in online faculty meetings to attending virtual conferences and limiting research travel and face-to-face data collection. The pandemic has shown us the importance of staying connected as a community and unearthed some systemic inequalities regarding digital access, inclusive practices, and flexible work policies (UMass ADVANCE, 2020). It is essential to acknowledge that such structural barriers have had an uneven impact across different groups, genders, ethnicities, types of academic institutions, and locations (Mickey et al., 2020). Ultimately, the pandemic has taught us to be adaptable and resilient and offered us novel perspectives on coping better with the new global reality in our personal and professional lives.

Two years into the pandemic, a retrospective look shows an increased number of journal submissions that deal with science, risk and health communication topics, and COVID-related research questions. This first issue of 2022 highlights some of the innovative studies in this area. You can also find them as open-access articles in the Online First section at the *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* (JMCQ) website (<https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/JMQ/0/0>).

The first journal issue of the year also offers an opportunity to thank all our contributors, editorial board members, and ad hoc reviewers who make the journal what it is today. Thank you to all JMCQ reviewers who continued to offer thoughtful and cogent feedback to authors, despite the extra challenges presented by the pandemic. The names of all 2021 reviewers are acknowledged below.

Article Summary

The first set of articles in the spring issue focus on COVID-19 and health communication, broadly defined. Comparing Spanish newspaper coverage of the 1918 flu and the COVID-19 pandemic, Edwards identifies certain similarities in the media framing of two different outbreaks and the associated epidemiologic risks. She positions news narratives as reflective of dominant public perceptions of infectious diseases at two different points in time, and traces how media themes evolve from societal complacency to incitement of panic and search for solutions.

Lee, Yamamoto, and Tandoc examined pandemic information-seeking behaviors in the United States and Singapore. They found that while people who seek news on social media believe they are well informed, news on social media negatively affects factual knowledge and is a positive predictor of subjective knowledge and miscalibration. The effect of traditional news seeking differed between Singapore and the United States, but traditional news did not harm factual knowledge gains in either country.

Using an online survey of over 700 respondents in China, Li and Zheng showed that emotional responses, subjective information norms, and insufficient information about COVID-19 were positively associated with online information seeking. Authors also found that social pressure and expectations could drive people to seek more information online, so policy makers may facilitate positive outcomes by encouraging and assisting the public in searching for prevention information online.

To determine the effects of exposure to COVID-19 information, Chu, Yeo, and Su conducted a meta-analysis integrating 47 empirical studies comprising 89,826 participants from 21 countries. They examined the cumulative effects and moderators of exposure to COVID-19 news and shared information on emotions, appraisals, and behaviors. The study found that the associations of overall media exposure with anxiety and psychological distress were weaker among those with direct COVID-19 contact, and there were psychological impacts from media exposure among health care professionals who were exposed to social media. The impacts from traditional media, however, did not have significant effects.

Through in-depth interviews, the next study explores the voices of Asian American journalists who faced racist discourse aimed at Asian Americans as perceived carriers of disease during the COVID-19 pandemic. Oh and Min argue that because of the intersectional identification of Asian American women as both raced and gendered, abuse was not disentangled because gender abuse is simultaneously racialized. Thus, racial activation was more pronounced for female journalists of color because they are the subjects of intersectional marginalization in their lives and newsrooms.

The majority of research about the effect of health-related news about public figures focuses on well-liked or famous people, but this study looks at peoples' feelings of pleasure at someone else's misfortune, or *schadenfreude*. *Schadenfreude* is linked to decreased information seeking and preventive health intentions of news consumers. To mitigate the effects of *schadenfreude*, Myrick and Chen recommend that public health advocates initiate empathy-focused campaigns to encourage acts of kindness when disliked public figures announce illness.

The following section looks at the role of gender in media production. In a study of the Chilean press, Leiva and Kimber found persistent gender bias in the newsroom favoring men, including the gender of quoted sources. However, when the news writer or the section editor is female, the likelihood of quoting female sources increases. The study suggests that men's privileged position is maintained through the news media and that women continue to be undervalued and minimized.

Similarly, Paul, Sui, and Searles argue that female reporters continue to be under-represented in newsrooms today. Their survey experiments indicate significant advantages to diversifying the newsroom and that there is little reason to worry about audience repercussions from doing so. They found that readers do not tend to doubt the credibility of a reporter or news outlet based on the gender of a reporter, source, or gendered nature of the issue.

Also, using experimental research design, Heo, Choi, and Overton investigated corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts that support empowering women and how different communication strategies influenced consumer evaluations of a CSR activity. The results showed that message types, social distance, and gender could increase or decrease someone's CSR cause involvement. This research offers guidance to companies for effective message construction and targeting key audiences.

The last set of articles offer insights into media adoption and use among different audience segments. Using a four-wave panel survey in Sweden, Andersen, Johansson, Johansson, and Shehata identified four groups of news repertoires based on news interest, trust in mainstream news media, and sociodemographic information. They found that even in complex media environments and crises, each group's news repertoires remain stable and ritualized, even during profound contextual changes.

Through a national survey in the United States, the next article explored function preferences of millennial radio users regarding radio station-specific apps, factors that affect their adoption intentions versus their actual adoption behaviors, and brand loyalty. Chan-Olmsted and colleagues' findings contribute to literature about technology acceptance, mobile marketing, and media management.

Shifting to adolescent media consumption, this study of 13- to 18-year-olds from the United States used cultivation theory to examine the association between time spent with the media outlets of television, video games, and YouTube and participants' beliefs about masculine roles and norms. Scharrer and Warren found that heavy users of the aforementioned platforms endorse traditional views of masculinity such as emotional detachment, dominance, and avoidance of femininity more often than light users.

Thank you for being part of the JMCQ community—stay healthy, adaptable, and resilient!

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