EDITORIAL: Reframing the world

ESCALATING global crises underscore the profound influence of media in shaping public perception, policy debates, and collective action. Wars and humanitarian emergencies, widening economic divides, climate disasters, and the disruptive impact of artificial intelligence have all tested journalism's ethical and social responsibilities. Within this turbulent context, the concepts of **media construct** (how media frames reality) and **constructive media** (media that informs while fostering solutions, dialogue, and empathy) offer critical frameworks for understanding and addressing these interconnected world issues.

Global crises shine the spotlight on media framing. The ongoing Israeli war on Palestine, intensified by the 2023–2024 Gaza bombardments, has triggered one of the most widespread global protest movements in decades. Demonstrations for Palestine across Europe, Asia, and the Americas reflect public discontent with media framing and the perceived imbalance in coverage between Israeli and Palestinian narratives (Cherkaoui, 2024; Doyle, 2025; Jaber, 2024; Robie, 2024). This tension has reignited debates about media bias, disinformation, and the ethics of representation during war. Conflicts in Ukraine, Sudan, and Myanmar have also highlighted how geopolitical interests and algorithmic amplification distort global empathy (Al-Awad, 2025; Amnesty International, 2022; Paziuk, 2025).

Technological disruption, particularly from generative AI and automation, has transformed labour markets and news production, raising new questions about authenticity, human creativity, and the ethics of synthetic media (Cools & Diakopoulos, 2024; Gutiérrez-Caneda et. al., 2024). Meanwhile, climate change continues to accelerate, with extreme weather events, deforestation, and biodiversity loss demanding urgent and solution-oriented communication strategies.

Constructive media critiques media structures and reimagines journalism's purpose. Rather than emphasising conflict, outrage, or despair, constructive journalism promotes solutions-oriented, context-rich, and inclusive storytelling. In the context of Gaza and other humanitarian crises, this means amplifying civilian experiences, peacebuilding efforts, and long-term reconciliation perspectives alongside factual reporting. In addressing technological and environmental issues, constructive approaches encourage citizen engagement, highlight local innovations, and connect individual agency to global sustainability goals. By reframing news from 'what's wrong' to 'what's being done,' constructive media fosters media literacy, resilience, and civic participation. This shift is particularly vital in an age of disinformation, where audiences increasingly seek trustworthy and empathetic media that empowers rather than divides.

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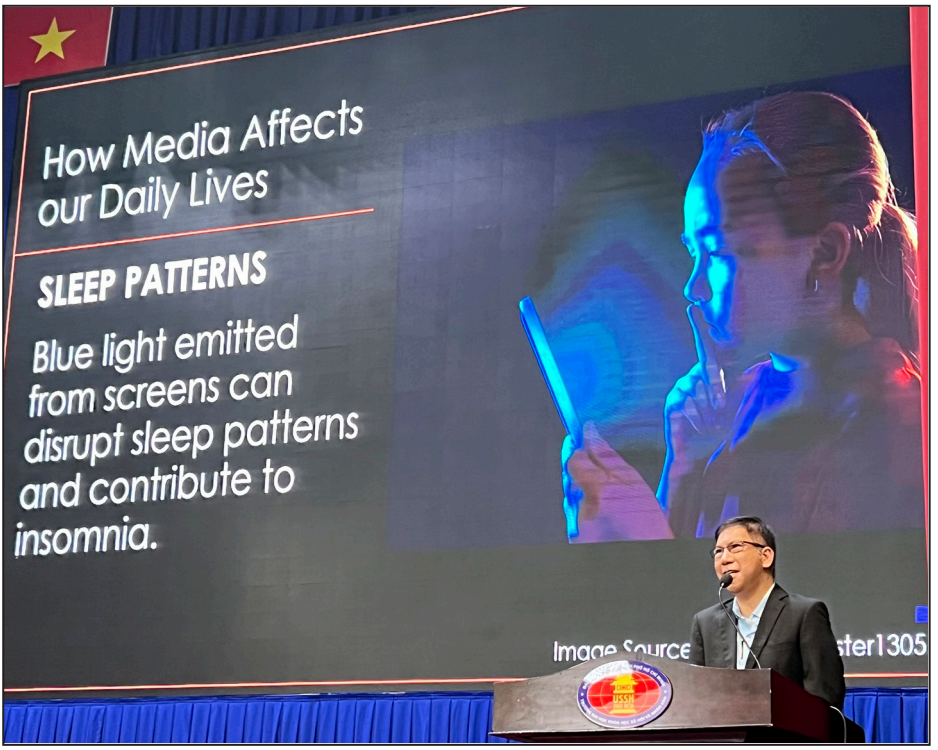

Figure 1: 'How media affects our daily lives', a presentation at the Media construct and contructive media conference in Vietnam, 2024.

of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University. The theme 'Media Construct and Constructive Media' highlights research in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia and New Zealand (Figure 1).

The studies in this collection are bound by a single common thread that supports an interculturally acknowledged old adage. In Māori, *He aroha whakatō, he aroha puta mai* explains that sowing kindness reaps kindness. In Western understanding, we reap what we sow. A Chinese equivalent conjures an imagery of positive abundance: 'Bestow kindness and sow a field of happiness'. From the Malay Archipelago, there is the same concept of reaping what is sowed: *Apa yang kau tanam, itulah yang akan kau tuai.* These ideas point to the revelation that at the heart of media construction, kindness reaps positive social change. And kindness in a holistic sense involves consideration, balance, justice and fairness. These defining aspects support constructive media values, which emphasise inclusion, transparency and dialogue. Such principles underpin good practice and strengthen trust, accountability, and ethical practice in journalism and development communication. The theme of media construct and constructive media is central across all eight studies, each demonstrating how communication, ethics,

and inclusivity shape responsible journalism and media practice.

'Communication for All' by **Jan Servaes** and **Patchanee Malikhao** argues for an 18th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to support the success of the existing 17 goals. They position communication as an enabler of sustainable development and emphasise that equitable access to information, media diversity, and cultural inclusion are fundamental for real social progress. Highlighting lessons from global crises like COVID-19, the authors show that communication is a core infrastructure for civic engagement and sustainable change. Their argument reflects constructive media values of fairness, transparency, and dialogue.

Karol Ilagan examines the resources created by news start-ups in several Southeast Asian countries in terms of their level of value, rarity, imitability, organisation and business model. Her work highlights how media start-ups meet audiences' needs with high levels of valuable and rare news products and services, beyond the contents of legacy media. Start-ups differ in sustainability where diverse and steady funding streams can support some outlets while others face the challenge of keeping afloat. Ilagan's exploration of Southeast Asian news start-ups shows how innovation in media production fosters audience engagement and democratic diversity. These new outlets challenge legacy media by prioritising relevance, inclusiveness, and responsiveness to community needs, aligning with constructive journalism's goal of empowering audiences through meaningful participation.

Annie Fe G. Perez-Gallardo's study explores how journalists in Central Visayas, the Philippines, respond to the rise of Generative AI (GAI) in news production. While GAI offers potential to enhance reporting and efficiency, many journalists lack awareness of and access to these tools. The research calls for stronger digital skills training, education reform, and adaptability, emphasising technological readiness as vital for the future of Philippine journalism. Perez-Gallardo illustrates how technological advancement can reinforce constructive practices when guided by education and inclusivity. This study of Generative AI adoption among Filipino journalists highlights the need for adaptability, digital literacy, and fairness in newsroom transitions.

Kara Patria David and **Adelle Liezl Chua** evaluated YouTube-based Media and Information Literacy (MIL) videos created by the University of the Philippines Department of Journalism to assess if they met the needs of teachers, students, and experts. Focusing on disinformation and fact-checking, the videos effectively addressed both traditional media needs, like learning and engagement, and new media needs such as interactivity. Survey results showed the videos were useful and engaging, underscoring social media's value for effective MIL education. The evaluation of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) videos demonstrates that educational media, when designed for engagement and interactivity, can counter disinformation and support informed civic participation.

Another study on online messages explored how stakeholders' responses to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can be explained by attribution theory. **Chanapa Itdhiamornkulchai** and **Duang-Kamol Chartprasert** showed that when organisations communicate CSR with genuine, intrinsic motives, audiences develop trust, positive attitudes, and stronger engagement. Conversely, extrinsic or self-serving motives cause scepticism and mistrust. The study shows that sincerity and clarity in media messaging nurture credibility. The authors emphasise clear, interactive, and evidence-based message design as crucial for fostering authentic CSR attributions and strengthening stakeholder relationships in digital communication.

Khairiah A Rahman and **Adam Brown** examine how the Asia Pacific Media Network (APMN), founded in 2022, responds to the lack of representation of Pacific and Asian issues in New Zealand's mainstream media. Their study finds that the APMN embodies constructive media principles through ethical reporting, inclusivity, and solution-oriented journalism. By engaging academics, journalists, and activists, the APMN promotes civic participation, social justice, and empowerment of marginalised groups, offering a positive alternative to conventional, problem-focused news narratives. Rahman and Brown's research on the APMN advances Constructive Journalism by highlighting APMN's media practices using community-rooted journalism to amplify underrepresented Pacific and Asian voices.

A study of over-the-top (OTT) streaming platforms in India observed that even after the pandemic, OTT platforms remain central to media consumption, especially among Gen Z audiences. **Dipika Mondial** and **Bandita Kumari Panda** examine how the COVID-19 pandemic transformed global entertainment habits, rapidly increasing the use of OTT streaming platforms. The research explores consumer preferences, motivations, and usage patterns, revealing persistent streaming habits but also challenges in maintaining audience engagement and loyalty in a competitive, evolving post-pandemic digital media environment. This study of OTT reveals how digital platforms can engage audiences meaningfully when guided by consumer needs and expectations.

Trieu Thanh Le explores Vietnam's higher education reforms, which emphasise greater university autonomy, international quality standards, and learner-centred teaching. Within this transformation, journalism and communication education are evolving to integrate digital transformation, multimedia literacy, and interdisciplinary skills. The commenytary highlights the need to balance innovation with core professional values by maintaining coursework in ideology, ethics, and media law, ensuring that future journalists combine technological adaptability with integrity and social responsibility in a rapidly changing media environment. This commentary of Vietnam's journalism education underscores integrity, social responsibility, and justice as cornerstones of

professional practice. It affirms that constructive media, anchored in fairness, inclusion, transparency, and engagement, is essential for sustaining ethical journalism, informed citizenship, and positive social change in an increasingly complex global media environment.

Understanding media constructs helps reveal how narratives influence perception, while adopting constructive media practices enables journalism to support healing, cooperation, and informed action. Content creation guided by an inclusive vision of hope that prioritises solutions and empowers positive action brings about desired social change. In a fragmented digital ecosystem, the challenge for journalists and educators is to integrate these frameworks and create media that not only reports the world as it is but also inspires the world as it could be.

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