

# Ali Zain

🏠 a-zain.github.io    ✉ azain@email.sc.edu  
☎ +1 857 204 9325    📄 Google Scholar/Lq5X5LcAAAAJ

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

---

My research interests are **online misinformation, information processing, digital discourse in politics, public relations, and science and health communications**. I use traditional qualitative and quantitative methods as well as more sophisticated *computational* and *psycho-physiological methods*. Moreover, I am interested in conducting **inter-disciplinary research** in collaboration with domain experts from computer science, public health, and marketing.

## EDUCATION

---

	University of South Carolina, Columbia (UofSC)	
2020 – Present	ABD (Expected Graduation: May 2023)	PH.D. IN MASS COMMUNICATION
	My doctoral dissertation uses self-report questionnaires and psychophysiological measures to assess the role of social media labels used by mainstream platforms (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) in countering the online spread of misinformation. Building on the Heuristic Systematic Model, this research examines how these labels facilitate heuristic or/and systematic information processing. During viewing, I map the paths of neural processing mechanisms (e.g., gaze fixation, gaze map, arousal, and brainwave activity) as well as the variables associated with persuasion (e.g., message and source credibility, sharing and verification intents, and subsequent social media engagement behaviors). The findings are expected to provide recommendations for improvement and personalization of platforms' user-interfaces to make them more efficient in countering misinformation.	
	<i>Dissertation Committee:</i>	
	<i>Drs. Sei-Hill Kim (Chair), Jungmi Jun, Taylor Wen, and Amir Karami (Business School)</i>	
2018 – 2020	Hacettepe University, Ankara (HU)	M.A. IN COMMUNICATION SCIENCES
2011 – 2015	University of the Punjab, Lahore (PU)	B.S. IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES

## PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

---

PUS '22	Chen, Y., Long, J., Jun, J., Kim, S., Zain, A., and Piacentine, C. (In Press). Anti-intellectualism amid the covid-19 pandemic: the dynamics of anti-Fauci discourse on Twitter. <i>Public Understanding of Science</i> .	
AJHB '22	Jun, J., Fitzpatrick, MA., Zain, A., and Zhang, N. (2022). Have e-cigarette risk perception and cessation intent of young adult users changed during the Pandemic? <i>American Journal of Health Behaviors</i> , 46 (3), 304-314(11). <a href="https://doi.org/10.5993/AJHB.46.3.9">https://doi.org/10.5993/AJHB.46.3.9</a>	
VACCINES '22	Jun, J., Zain, A., Chen, Y., and Kim, S. H. (2022). Adverse mentions, negative sentiment, and emotions in covid-19 vaccine tweets and their association with vaccination uptake: global comparison of 192 countries. <i>Vaccines</i> , 10(5), 735. <a href="https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines10050735">https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines10050735</a>	
ETKİLEŞİM '22	Dino Gidreta, A., Binark, M., Ozsu, G. and Zain, A. (2022). Trusts and doubts in Africa over Belt and Road Initiative: a thematic content analysis of opinions in Ethiopian twittersphere. <i>Etkileşim</i> 5(9), 12-35. DOI: 10.32739/etkilesim.2022.5.9.153	
SU&M '22	Jun, J., Zhang, N., Zain, A. and Mohammadi, E. (2022). Social media discussions on the FDA's modified risk tobacco product authorization of IQOS. <i>Substance Use and Misuse</i> 57(3), 472-480. DOI: 10.1080/10826084.2021.2019777	
JAS '21	Zain, A. (2021). (Re)Production of hindutva-driven populism in India: an analysis of Bharatiya Janata Party's political messaging in twittersphere. <i>The Journal of Asian Studies</i> 5(2), 179-194. DOI: 10.34189/asyam.5.2.005	

- JAS '20 Zain, A., Ozsu, G., Binark, M. and Dino Gidreta, A. (2020). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and technicians of opinion in Pakistani twittersphere: a thematic content analysis. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 4(1),9-28. DOI: 10.34189/asyam.4.1.002
- MOMENT '19 Zain, A. (2019). Rise of Modi's tech-populism in India. *Moment Journal* 6(1),199-208. DOI: 10.17572/mj2019.1.199208

## PEER REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

---

- AEJMC '22 Zain, A. (2022, August). Moralization in polarized debate on COVID-19 vaccination: human-AI collaborative analysis of tweets. 105th Annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference, Detroit, MI.  
**First Place Moeller Student Paper Award**
- AEJMC '22 Zain, A. and Long, J. (2022, August). Countering online misinformation: testing impact of state sponsorship labels on message credibility, verification intention and behavior. 105th Annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference, Detroit, MI.
- AEJMC '22 Zain, A. (2022, August). Spiral of silence 50 years later: conceptual and empirical new directions. 105th Annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference, Detroit, MI.
- ICA '22 Ittefaq, M., Zain, A., and Bokhari, H. (2022, May). Opioids as comedy: exploring topics, sentiments, and engagement in Last Week Tonight with John Oliver on YouTube. 72nd Annual International Communication Association Conference. Paris, France.
- ICA '22 Chen, Y., Long, J., Jun, J., Kim, S., Zain, A., and Piacentine, C. (2022, May). Anti-intellectualism amid the covid-19 pandemic: the dynamics of anti-Fauci discourse on Twitter. 72nd Annual International Communication Association Conference. Paris, France.
- AEJMCSEC '22 Zain, A. (2022, March). Online endorsed misinformation and climate change: using heuristic cues to assess perceived credibility of messages and sharing intentions. 47th Annual AEJMC Southeast Colloquium, Memphis, TN.  
**Top Student Paper Award**
- BDHS '22 Jun, J. and Zain, A. (2022, February). Global comparison of covid-19 vaccination sentiments and emotions on Twitter: findings from 192 countries. 3rd National Big Data Health Sciences Conference. Columbia, SC
- AEJMC '21 Zain, A. (2021, August). Using theory of planned behavior, and operationalization of political partisanship and belief in misinformation to predict individuals' intentions to quit social media. 104th Annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference, New Orleans, LA.
- AEJMC '21 Jun, J., Fitzpatrick, MA., Zhang, N., and Zain, A. (2021, August). Has covid-19 impacted the risk perceptions and cessation intent of youth vapers? 104th Annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference, New Orleans, LA.
- AEJMC '21 Zain, A. (2021, August). Celebrity capital and social movements: a textual analysis of Bollywood celebrities' tweets on 2020-21 Indian farmers' protest. 104th Annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference, New Orleans, LA.
- AEJMC '21 Kim, S., Zain, A., and Heo, Y. (2021, August). Idealized science vs. scientific skepticism in South Korea: micro-level evidence for the two-cultures thesis. 104th Annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference, New Orleans, LA.
- UBSK '21 Zain, A. (2021, February). Doctrine of hindutva and political discourse of India's Bharatiya Janata Party: an analysis of 2019 election campaign. 1st International Social Sciences Conference, Ankara, Turkey.

CIM '20	Ozsu, G., <u>Zain, A.</u> , Binark, M. and Dino Gidreta, A. (2020, November). <i>Technicians of opinion in Ethiopia, Pakistan, and Turkey and their tweets about Chinese vision of alternative globalization: a comparative content analysis</i> . 17th International Symposium: Communication in the Millennium, Istanbul, Turkey. ISBN: 978-605-83703-9-5
SENEX '19	<u>Zain, A.</u> (2019, November). <i>Aging-friendly smartphones: analysis of smartphones user-interface to assess their usability among elderly citizens</i> . Senex: 3rd Congress of Aging Studies for Graduate Students, Antalya, Turkey.
ETCSS '16	<u>Zain, A.</u> and Soomro, A (2016, November). <i>Cultural continuity and mass media: an analysis of leading online newspapers of Pakistan</i> . 1st National Conference Emerging Trends and Challenges in Social Sciences, Multan, Pakistan.

## BOOKS & BOOK CHAPTERS

---

2020	<u>Zain, A.</u> (2020). Contact and sanction: cricket as a diplomatic tool in India and Pakistan. In M. Binark (Ed.), <i>Popular culture and media in Asia</i> (pp. 411–440). um:ag Publications. ISBN: 978-605-7882-42-4
2020	<u>Zain, A.</u> (2020). Aging friendly smartphones. In Y. Dede and M. Figan (Ed.), <i>Aging in digital culture and afterwards</i> (pp. 297–314). Alternatif Bilisim Derneği. ISBN: 978-605-80007-2-8
2016	<u>Zain, A.</u> and Khan, N. T. (2016). <i>Muasharti Jamhooriyat</i> . Kettering Foundation. An Urdu translation of The Ecology of Democracy by David Mathews

## UNDER REVIEW PUBLICATIONS

---

2022	<u>Zain, A.</u> , Li, Z., and Liang, C. (Under Review). <i>Diffusion of polarized information on Twitter and vaccination behaviors: Understanding intertwined role of emotions and moralization</i>
2022	Bhala, N., <u>Zain, A.</u> , and O'Boyle, J. (Under Review). <i>Twitter Conversations about Causes, Solutions and Effects of Delhi Air Pollution: Agenda-Building Content Analysis</i>
2022	Kim, S., Oh, S., Heo, Y., and <u>Zain, A.</u> (Under Review). <i>Journalists' Perceptions of Professional Norms and Ethics in South Korea: Personal, Organizational, and Environmental Level Predictors</i>
2022	Kim, S., Oh, S., <u>Zain, A.</u> , Heo, Y., and Jun, J. (Under Review: R&R). <i>Idealized Science vs. Culture of Skepticism in South Korea: Micro-Level Evidence for the Two-Culture Model of Public Understanding of Science</i>
2022	<u>Zain, A.</u> and Long, J. (Under Review). <i>Countering State-Sponsored Misinformation: Testing the Effect of Social Media Labels on Message Credibility and Verification</i> .
2022	Jun, J., Wickersham, K., <u>Zain, A.</u> , Ford, R., Zhang, N., Ciccarelli, C., Kim, S., and Liang, C. (Under Review: R&R). <i>Cancer and COVID-19 Vaccines on Twitter: The Voice and Vaccine Attitude of Cancer Community</i> .
2022	Ittefaq, M., <u>Zain, A.</u> , and Bokhari, H. (Under Review: R&R). <i>Opioids as comedy: exploring topics, sentiments, and engagement in Last Week Tonight with John Oliver on YouTube</i> .
2022	<u>Zain, A.</u> and Ciccarelli, C. (Under Review: R&R). <i>Political partisanship and belief in misinformation: operationalizing theory of planned behavior to predict intentions to quit social media</i> .
2021	<u>Zain, A.</u> (Under Review: R&R). <i>Celebrity capital and social movements: a textual analysis of Bollywood celebrities' tweets on 2020-21 Indian farmers' protest</i> .

## IN-PROGRESS PROJECTS

---

2022-2023	<b>Countering online misinformation: a mixed methods approach to assess efficacy of social media labels.</b> Led by: Ali Zain Current Stage: Data Collection
2021-2022	<b>Biometric responses and health outcomes of youth exposure to modified exposure claims for novel tobacco products with FDA authorization cues.</b> Led by: Dr. Jungmi Jun Current Stage: Manuscript Writing
2022	<b>This ad speaks to me: an investigation of mechanisms underlying social identity relevant advertising.</b> Led by: Dr. Taylor Wen Current Stage: Data Analysis
2022	<b>Anti-social disinformation on social media: the effects of information sources and message Framing.</b> Led by: Dr. Sei-Hill Kim Current Stage: Pre-test
2022	<b>Young adults' responses to the tobacco industry's corporate social responsibility communication.</b> Led by: Dr. Jungmi Jun Current Stage: Manuscript Writing
2022	<b>Exploring the role of emotions and moralization in diffusion of polarized information on Twitter and beyond.</b> Led by: Ali Zain Current Stage: Manuscript Writing

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

---

2020 – Present	University of South Carolina (UofSC)	GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT/INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD
2016 – 2017	Al-Khidmat Foundation Pakistan (AKFP)	DIGITAL MEDIA STRATEGIST
2014 – 2016	Daily Pakistan (DP)	CONTENT EDITOR

## TEACHING INTERESTS

---

- Communication Theory
- Communication Research Methods
- Digital Media & Big Data Analysis
- Health Communication
- Strategic Communication
- Public Opinion & Political Communication
- Social Media Analytics & Research
- Communication & Persuasion

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

---

Fall '21, Spring 22	JOUR 220 – Account Planning: Mining Insights	INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD
Fall '22	JOUR 705 – Strategic Communication Principles	TEACHING ASSISTANT
Fall '22	JOUR 536 – Crisis Communication	TEACHING ASSISTANT
Spring '21, Fall '22	JOUR 332 – Mass Communications Research	TEACHING ASSISTANT

Fall '21, Spring '22 JOUR 533 – Public Relations Management  
 Fall '20, Fall '21 JOUR 507 – Communicating Science, Health and the Environment

TEACHING ASSISTANT  
 TEACHING ASSISTANT

## AWARDS & HONORS

---

**2023 Breakthrough Graduate Scholars Award:** For demonstrating phenomenal commitment to research and scholarly activity in doctoral studies (award ceremony to be held in January 2023)

**First Place Moeller Student Paper Award:** For presenting "Moralization in Polarized Debate on COVID-19 Vaccination: Human-AI Collaborative Analysis of Tweets" at 105th annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) conference (including 250 USD cash prize and waiver of conference registration fee worth 200 USD)

**2022 Top Student Paper Award:** For presenting "Online endorsed misinformation and climate change: using heuristic cues to assess perceived credibility of messages and sharing intentions" at 47th annual conference of AEJMC Southeast Colloquium

**2022 University Gold Medal:** For securing highest CGPA in BS Communication Studies in the class of 2015

**2016**

## GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS

---

**2020 – 2023 Mary Caldwell Graduate Scholarship:** Graduate scholarship worth 9,000 USD for the doctoral program at University of South Carolina

**2022 – 2023 Junior Scholar Award:** Training and research support worth 4,500 USD awarded by South Carolina SmartState Center of Health Quality (CHQ)

**2022 Mass Communication and Society Travel Grant:** To attend 105th annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Conference in Detroit, MI (1,000 USD)

**2022 ICA 2022 Michael Haley Travel Grant:** To attend 72nd International Communication Association Conference in Paris, France (400 USD)

**2022 ICA 2022 Political Communication Division Travel Grant:** To attend 72nd International Communication Association Conference in Paris, France (400 USD)

**2019-2020 Research Grant by Hacettepe University:** For the transnational study of China's Belt and Road Initiative (3,200 USD)

**2017-2020 Turkiye Graduate Scholarship:** Fully funded scholarship for MA in Communication Sciences at Hacettepe University

**2012-2015 PU Merit Scholarship:** Awarded to 5 top-ranked students at University of the Punjab

## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING & CERTIFICATIONS

---

**2022 – 2023 CHQ Junior Scholar Program:** Extensive research traineeship offered by the SC SmartState Center for Health Quality to apply computational methods for research at the interaction of public health and social media

**2022 – 2023 Publication Process & Peer Review Training:** Certificate program offered by the Journal of Mass Communication Quarterly (JMCQ) focused on formal manuscript review process training

**2022 Intercultural Inclusion and Diversity Learning Series:** A series of training workshops, lectures, and activities focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility

**2022 SHARPGrads Certificate:** The Skills, Habits, and Research Program for Graduate Students offered by the UofSC Digital Research Services and Research Computing Institute focused on training workshops on computing, textual analysis, programming, and visualization tools

**2021 Programming for Everybody:** online Coursera program offered by University of Michigan focused on python programming

2021	<b>Citi Certificate on Human Research:</b> Training demonstration program for social and behavioral researchers offered by Citi Program
2021	<b>HubSpot Social Media Maarketing:</b> Certificate program offered by the HubSpot Academy focused on social media monitoring, content strategy, social engagement, creating social media policies, and demonstrating social ROI
2021	<b>Google Analytics:</b> Certificate program offered by the Google Analytics Academy focused on training demonstrations and activities to test online analytical skills

## RESEARCH SKILLS

---

- |            |              |                  |                    |
|------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|
| • R/RStats | • BrandWatch | • NodeXL         | • Jupyter Notebook |
| • Python   | • NVivo      | • Advanced Excel | • SAS              |
| • iMotions | • Qualtrics  | • SEO            | • Gephi            |

## TALKS/GUEST LECTURES/MEDIA

---

2022	Countries with lower-than-expected vaccination rates show unusually negative attitudes to vaccines on Twitter shorturl.at/cHMY5	THE CONVERSATION
2021	Use of new media technologies by populist right-wing political parties in India	HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
2019	Ageing-friendly smartphones to overcome digital divide in aging societies	AKDENIZ UNIVERSITY
2017	Journalistic prospects of new media technologies	UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB

## SERVICE TO THE FIELD

---

2022-2023	Research & Scholarship Advisory Council (UofSC CIC)	MEMBER
2022	Health Communication Division, International Communication Association (ICA)	PEER REVIEWER
2022	Journalism Studies Division, International Communication Association (ICA)	PEER REVIEWER
2022	Communication and Technology Division, International Communication Association (ICA)	PEER REVIEWER
2022	New Media & Society (NM+S)	PEER REVIEWER
2022	Social Media & Society (SM+S)	PEER REVIEWER
2022	JMIR Medical Informatics (JMI)	PEER REVIEWER
2022	Journal of Social Sciences (JSS)	PEER REVIEWER
2022	JMIR Formative Research (JFR)	PEER REVIEWER
2022	Political Communication Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)	PEER REVIEWER
2022	Graduate Student Interest Group, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)	PEER REVIEWER
2021	Computational Communication Division, International Communication Association (ICA)	PEER REVIEWER

## REFERENCES

---

**Sei-Hill Kim**

KIM96@MAILBOX.SC.EDU

Eleanor M. & R. Frank Mundy Professor  
School of Journalism and Mass Communication  
University of South Carolina  
803-777-7037

**Jungmi Jun**

JUNJ@MAILBOX.SC.EDU

Associate Professor  
School of Journalism and Mass Communication  
University of South Carolina  
803-576-5982

**Mary Anne Fitzpatrick**

FITZPATM@MAILBOX.SC.EDU

Educational Foundation Distinguished Professor  
School of Journalism and Mass Communication  
University of South Carolina  
803-777-4614

**Taylor Jing Wen**

JWEN2@MAILBOX.SC.EDU

Associate Professor  
School of Journalism and Mass Communication  
University of South Carolina  
803-777-3312