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The Conceptual Model of Water Communication; The Potentialities of Communication to Manage Water Crisis in Iran

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Extended Abstract

It is well known that environmental problems, including water crisis, nowadays are much important to natural science as to social science. This research is to study the theoretical relationship between communication and water and the potentialities of water communication as an interdisciplinary area to manage water crisis in Iran. Herve-Bazin' water communication model as a suitable pattern for depicting the theoretical approaches explaining water communication issues, considers this discipline as an intersection of environment communication, development communication, risk communication, health communication, science communication, public communication, political communication, law and responsible communication. Explaining the various aspects of water issues in Iran, this paper proposes a promoted model containing different theoretical areas on water communication. At the end, it concludes that Iranian environmental journalists and media activists can change the constructivist approaches to water crisis and catch more attention to social and cultural aspects of water crisis by focusing on the strategic communications in designing messages related to water crisis in media outlets.

Keywords: strategic communication, environmental communication, gealth communication, science communication, development communication

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INTRODUCTION

Human beings depend on the environment for their survival, but unlike animals, they have usually tried to dominate it in order to make the natural environment more secure and predictable (Sutton, 2014, 27). Advocates of environmentalism claim that in the past 250 years, industrial culture has changed the environment in a way that is comparable to the entire written history of mankind (Sutton, 2014, 106). In a thematic view, the environmental crisis is, in fact, the crisis of Enlightenment modernity in which humans have a duty to change the nature for their purposes (Sutton, 2014, 120).

Today, the state of environment is in a situation that from social science experts' viewpoints the environmental issues are as much a matter of the natural sciences as of the social sciences (Newby 2001 Quoted by Salehi, 2013, 1). For this reason, the environment has received much more attention from social scientists. According to many experts, water crisis is the most important environmental issue of Iranian society which has many social, political and economic consequences for the country.

PURPOSE

The social sciences, including communication sciences in the field of water, can play an important role (as an important components of environmental issues) in the field; But "the social dimensions of water management are not well understood" (Bandyopadhyay, 1396, 61). It can be said that despite the many challenges and issues about water management, few researches have been done on how to cover water issues in the media. One of the duties and services of the media is to publicize the information on a large scale. Accordingly, the media have the potential to influence public awareness, recognition and perception environmental issues in general, and water issues in particular (Mayed & Boyd & Paveglio & Flint 2019, 1). Picturing the relationship between communication sciences and water can lead to better implementation of programs and decisions to optimize water cycle issues to enhance human well-being and global development and to improve the environment (Herve-Bazin, 2014, 1). The atmosphere of Iran Academy of Communication Sciences is almost unfamiliar with this subject, and few researchers busy themselves with this subject. According to what was said, the main question of the research is what the theoretical relationship is between water and communication sciences. And what the potential of water communication is as a new theoretical approach in the area of communication science to help solve the water crisis in Iran.

METHODOLOGY

In this paper, a descriptive-analytical method is used.

RESULT

Although, at the first place, it may seem that water communication is one of the subjects in the subcategory of environmental communication, but has been brought up, in the last few years, as a new ultra-field communication science and its theoretical and conceptual foundations are blurring and developing. Therefore, in this paper we have dealt with water communication as an interdisciplinary domain. In a model presented by Sorbonne University researcher Herve-Bazin (2014), water communication has been introduced in confluence of health communication, risk communication, science communication, development communication, environmental communication, public communication and risk communication. In this paper, the water communication model of Herve-Bazin is the basis and based on his approach, water communication and its issues in Iran have been discussed.

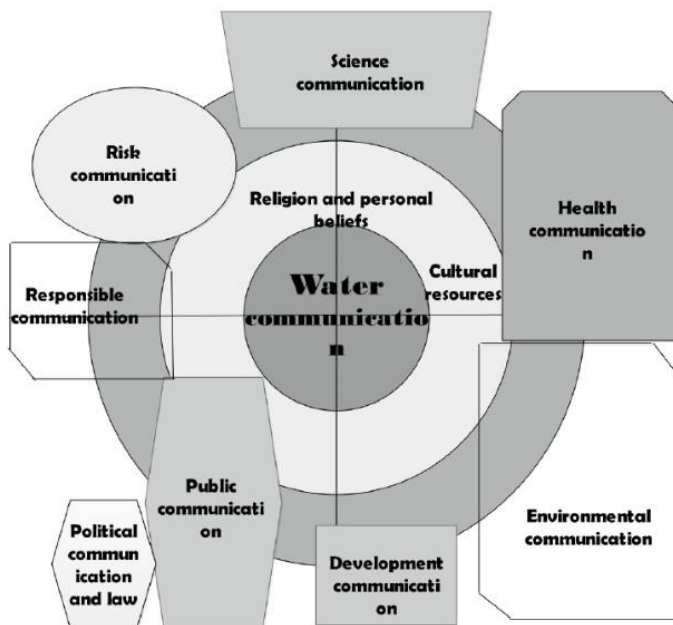


Figure 1. Water Communication Model Quoted

Source: Herve-Bazin, 32, 2014

DISCUSSION

The most important thing about the mentioned model is that it ignores "strategic communication" as the general basis in which functional communication (Or better yet, extra communications, such as health communications, science communications, environmental communications, etc.) is introduced. Strategic communication in the simplest definition means the planned use of communication capacities to achieve specific goals (Smith, 2011, 17). Therefore, the concept of framing media messages is at the heart of strategic communication and does not need to be placed separately into the model. However, strategic communication is one of the most important areas that include water communication and, of course, the areas of extra communication or functional communication. It should be noted, however, that functional or extra communication (like health communications, environmental communications, science communications, etc.) should not be confined to strategic communications. Rather, the authors acknowledge that these are areas of study that cannot be confined to strategic communication; But in the area of water communications, all the areas they share with can be applied in the context of strategic communication. Accordingly, the following model, which is derived from the overall model of the Herve-Bazin model, is proposed for the area of water communication:



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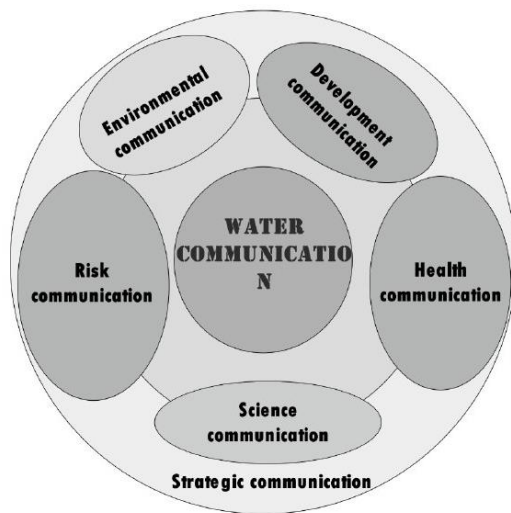


Figure 2. Proposed model for Water Communication

Source: Authors

CONCLUSION

One of the areas that can play an important role in water crisis management in Iran is area of social communication science; because at the macro level the media can correct wrong policy-making in this area by claiming it properly. At the micro level, the medias can be one of the sources for changing the pattern of water consumption and Audience understanding of the issues and consequences of the water crisis.

NOVELTY

The innovative aspect of this paper is that it has theorized the relation of water and communication. Therefore, it enables researchers in the field of communication science to involve in water issues in Iran from different angles and do research. In addition, it provides opportunities for journalists and media activists to producing media content in a Specialized and from multiple discipline angles to satisfy audiences.



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