



Current and future studies on participatory communication in Thailand



Roongkan Musakophas, Weerapong Polnigongit*

School of Information Technology, Suranaree University of Technology, Nakhon Ratchasima 30000, Thailand

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 21 July 2015

Received in revised form 3 January 2016

Accepted 5 January 2016

Available online 8 February 2017

Keywords:

development communication

new media

participatory communication

ABSTRACT

Participatory communication is the core communication of the third paradigm (the multiplicity paradigm) of development. This paradigm focuses on people-centeredness in response to problem solving and the needs of people in different societies. Participatory communication has seen widespread usage over more than three decades. However, there is no standard rule nor are there specific media for implementation. This study intended to find out usage and the less studied issues on participatory communication in existing research in Thailand from 1993 to 2012 for future research. It was found that most research emphasized the areas of communication strategies, types and degrees of participation, and factors affecting people participation. The results also showed that participatory communication has rarely been found in the study of new media. Therefore, understanding how using participatory communication with new media remains a challenge in Thai research.

© 2017 Kasetsart University. Publishing services by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Introduction

Participatory communication plays a very important role within the field of development. It is widely recognized after the failure of the modernization and the dependency paradigm. These paradigms consider development as knowledge transmission. Mass media are the main tool to convey messages from the center to the periphery in one-way communication. These have led to a few changes of development. For this reason, the new notion based on the people-centeredness paradigm of development was presented and participatory communication is the core concept of this paradigm.

A World Bank paper by Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009, p. 17) explained that “participatory communication is an approach based on dialog, which allows the sharing of

information, perceptions and opinions among the various stakeholders and thereby facilitates their empowerment, especially for those who are most vulnerable and marginalized.”

A UNICEF paper by Singhal (2001, p. 12) defined participatory communication as “a dynamic, interactional, and transformative process of dialog between people, groups, and institutions that enables people, both individually and collectively, to realize their full potential and be engaged in their own welfare.”

Therefore, participatory communication refers to two-way communication based on dialog between people, groups, and organizations, which empowers various stakeholders to equitably share and exchange information, knowledge, and experience.

However, participatory communication is flexible in its utilization. Van de Fliert (2010) pointed out that participatory communication is not a specific pattern. It can be applied and created to harmonize with context. Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) suggested that strategic design for

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: weerap@sut.ac.th (W. Polnigongit).

Peer review under responsibility of Kasetsart University.

participatory communication should consider the evolution of media types, media levels, media nature, media institution, and the economic logic of media.

In Thailand, many scholars have used participatory communication as the framework for their studies. This study surveyed the ways to use participatory communication and media types in existing research in Thailand. In addition, this study focused on beneficial suggestions for future research in Thailand.

Background of Participatory Communication

Participatory communication is a part of development communication that is related to three eras of development: the modernization, dependency, and multiplicity paradigms. The developers of the modernization paradigm assumed that the cause of the underdevelopment originated from internal factors in each country that could be solved with the help of developed society (Servaes & Malikhaio, 2008). On the other hand, the developers of the dependency paradigm believed that underdevelopment in countries in the Third World was a consequence of the developed society (Servaes, 1996). However, development communication in both paradigms occurs in the same way. Messages of the development program were via one-way communication from the center (Servaes, 1989, cited in Kaewthep, Louiyapong, Supasa, & Polnigongit, 2000).

In the multiplicity paradigm, another form of development appeared after the criticism of the two previous paradigms (Servaes, 2008). The main idea of this paradigm is based on people participation. Multiplicity's communication tool is the participatory model or bottom-up communication, while top-down communication or the diffusion model is the tool used in the modernization and dependency paradigms. Servaes (2008) concluded that the diffusion model uses persuasion patterns in one-way communication in order to change people's attitude and their behavior, while people under the participatory model are under the control of the developer.

Main Participatory Communication Principles

There are two main principles of participatory communication. One is the dialogical pedagogy of Paulo Freire, and the other is ideas about access, participation, and self-management of the UNESCO debates in the 1970s (Servaes, 1996).

Dialogical Pedagogy of Paulo Freire

There are five characteristics of Freire's dialog, which were explained by Cadiz (2005, pp. 147–149). **(1) Communication between equals.** This refers to the equality among all stakeholders. They can interchange the roles of the sender and receiver in two-way interaction. **(2) Problem-posing.** This refers to the developer, expert, or facilitator acting as a mediator to facilitate the members to discuss together, not a solution provider. **(3) Praxis, a cycle of action and reflection.** This refers to the translation of information into communication practice in development. **(4) Conscientizing.** This refers to the growing of all stakeholders in understanding human, social, and development

processes. **(5) Five values.** This refers to love, humility, hope, faith in development partners' capability, and critical thinking. Freire indicated that "true" dialog happens in a context of these values.

Ideas of UNESCO Debates in 1970s

The result of the UNESCO Debates on access, participation, and self-management was expressed by Jouet (1997, pp. 3–5). **(1) Access.** This refers to the opportunities available to people to become closer to communication systems as the chooser and feedback transmitter. **(2) Participation.** This refers to people participation in communication systems at the production, decision-making, and planning levels. **(3) Self-management.** This refers to the most advanced form of participation.

Methodology

This study used qualitative research involving a documentary analysis of the existing research in Thailand. In all, 60 research studies between 1993 and 2012 as shown in Table 1 were reviewed and analyzed for participatory communication usage and media types. These studies were classified by the purpose of participatory communication using: (1) studies focusing on participatory communication as the framework for participatory media, (2) studies focusing on participatory communication as the framework for communication strategies for people participation building, and (3) studies focusing on participatory communication as the framework for people participation in solving problems.

Findings

Current Studies on Participatory Communication in Thailand

The findings from the previous research in Thailand on participatory communication between 1993 and 2012 are discussed based on the different frameworks.

Studies Focusing on Participatory Communication as Framework for Participatory Media

Community Radio

Eight studies focused on community radio. Mainly, the studies examined the three roles of public participation: receiver, producer, and policy maker. The findings revealed that most people participated in radio programs as listeners, and informed problems, news and information within their community with radio producers, while a few people participated as producers and policy makers. People participated as producers in the form of radio presenters, participants in a show, and program planners. At the policy maker level, people were participants in meetings. Participation in determining policy on community radio management was decided by the staff of Radio Thailand because people in communities lacked personal skills in policy management.

Four studies also found that the level of public participation depended on elements of communication: sender, receiver, channel, and message. The reasons for people's

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6844108>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6844108>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)