

Gender Role and Communicative Strategy Driving for Water Resource Management of Community in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand

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Abstract

This research aimed to study the gender role of stakeholders with the communicative strategy driving for water resource management of community in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand. The study was used qualitative research method and data was collected by in-depth interviews, focus group and participatory observation. The study indicated that there were 5 communicative strategies driving for water resource management of community in Chiang Rai Province as follows: 1) Organizing community forum to convey knowledge of the local intellects 2) The strategy called “Phor Sorn Look Poo Sorn Larn” (Father Teaches Children Grandfather Teaches Grandchildren) 3) The use of religious beliefs and rituals 4) The use of social measures or community regulations and 5) Preparation of the local curriculum. In conclusion, it was found that the role of male and female in driving the strategy for water resource management and conservation of community was domesticated by strategies. If the strategies focused on the leadership to provide knowledge and understanding of the principles, techniques and solutions, they would be driven by male. While the role of creating alignments and creative activities to stimulate or regulatory measures to community strictly, it would be the role of women in the community.

Keywords: Gender Role, Communication Strategy, Water Resource Management

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Introduction

Water resources are the main factors of human and various creatures. When the creatures lack of water, they cannot live. For society, Thailand water resources are particularly important in the production of the agricultural sector which is the main occupation of the local community. If the community have water problem, it may result in the economic and social problems and change the lifestyle of people in the community.

In the process of solving the problems that occur with the water sources, in the past, Thai government agencies considering water resources management would be in charge of problem solving. However, having successful process of water management, the key is people's participation of all ages in the area. The people who found the problem and participation in making decision to their own needs will encourage people's knowledge and understanding of the importance and are aware of the problem. The community requires the communicative strategy to realize the value of water resources for the livelihood of the community and create awareness to engage with the community to solve problems.

“Mae Hang Basin” was the main water resources community in Wiang Chai District. Chiang Rai. The length of the river is approximately 8 kilometers, flows through 2 Sub-Districts of the community; Wiang Chai and Muang Chum Sub-Districts. The water sources had the problems about home invasion into the river, letting wastewater and sewage waste into the river; this resulted in shallow water and water pollution. In the flood season, there was flood problem and in the dry season, it faced with the water shortage and water pollution. In addition, there was the conflict between water users because of the lack of government responsibility, the lack of water resources management. Thus the environment and ecological system was destroyed, biological diversity of plants and animals were decreased. (Chaiyong Nasomsong, 2007:45)

From the problem of Mae Hang Basin, it caused by the lack of understanding in the management efficiency. Therefore, all sectors including school, community and local government realized such problems and solved the problem with the participatory plan began in 1995. The operation was successful and efficient at a good level. The river quality has been better, and there were water resources activities together continuously until the present.

With the success of Mae Hang Basin management, the researcher paid attention in considering of the stakeholders' cooperation of both male and female in driving the communicative strategy participating in water resources management to succeed. The results of this study would be helpful to the human capital development in driving solutions for managing water resources and other natural resources further.

The purposes of the research

To study the gender role of stakeholders with the communicative strategy driving for water resource management of community in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand

Literature Review

In this research, the concepts were used to explain the gender role of stakeholders with the communicative strategy driving for water resource management of community in Chiang Rai composed of concept of communicative strategy and concept of water resource management. Each concept can be explained in the following.

Concept of Communicative Strategy

Communication strategy is the scheme of planning how to share information. Communication strategy is referred to the choice of the most useful objectives of communication, and recognition of a particular brand and its strategy in terms of attitude. (Farooq, 2015) Types of Communication Strategies can be verbal, nonverbal, or visual. Integrating all the strategies together will allow you to see the most success. This allows a business to meet employee needs and increase workplace knowledge. (Johns, 2018)

Verbal communication strategies can be broken down into the two categories of written and oral communication. Written strategies consist of avenues such as e-mail, text, and chat. Examples that fall into the oral category are phone calls, video chats, and face-to-face conversation.

Nonverbal communication strategies consist of mostly visual cues, such as body language, facial expressions, physical distance between communicators, or the tone of your voice. These cues are typically not intended. However, it is important to realize the message you are sending. Otherwise, you may be saying one thing, yet the receiver is hearing another.

Visual communication strategies can be seen through signs, webpages, and illustrations. These strategies are used in the workplace to draw attention and provide documentation. Human resources is required to post certain visuals throughout the workplace to comply with safety laws.

Concept of Water Resource Management

Water resource management is the activity of planning, developing, distributing and managing the optimum use of water resources. It is a sub-set of water cycle management. Water is very essential for our survival. The field of water resources management will have to continue to adapt to the current and future issues facing the allocation of water. With the growing uncertainties of global climate change and the long term impacts of management actions, the decision-making will be even more difficult. It is likely that ongoing climate change will lead to situations that have not been encountered. As a result, alternative management strategies are sought for in order to avoid setbacks in the allocation of water resources.

In Thailand, “Mae Hang Basin” was the main water resources community in Wiang Chai District, Chiang Rai. The water sources had the problems about letting wastewater and sewage waste into the river; this resulted in shallow water and water pollution. In the flood season, there was flood problem and in the dry season, it faced with the water shortage and water pollution. In addition, there was the conflict between water users because of the lack of government responsibility, the lack of water resources management. Thus the environment and ecological system was destroyed, biological diversity of plants and animals were decreased. (Chaiyong Nasomsong, 2007:45)

Research Methodology

This research was the qualitative research using participatory action research, depth-interview and focus group. The key informants were: 1) community leaders group: monks, community leaders, academics, members of the local administrative officers and community networks leaders 2) local scholars: seniors, intellectual leaders who are accustomed to Mae Hang Basin 3) representatives from the network of community groups such as fishermen, farmers group, housewife group, etc., and 4) people living in Mae Hang Basin area.

For the participatory observation, the formal and informal activities related with the main objective to water resource management would be observed such as the community forum, the ceremony of river's life prolonging, local customs, etc.

The instrument used in the research included the questions for the in-depth interview, questions and focus group recording and observations recording constructed with the messages covering the communicative strategy to engage the participation and the factors effecting the communication. Such tools have been tested the content validity by three experts in the field of Communication Arts and Environmental Science

Data collection and data analysis: from all data collection, the result would be compiled, analyzed and discussed by descriptive presentation.

Conclusion and Discussion

The study entitled “Gender Role and Communicative Strategy Driving for Water Resource Management of Community in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand” was found using the following strategies:

1. Organizing community forum to convey knowledge of the local intellects

The local intellects were the people accepted by community members that they had the knowledge and experiences of local communities in the matters related to it or with the local wisdom in order to manage Mae Hang River.

Most intellects in the community were male and would be invited to attend the activity to convey information about their lifestyle, the relationship between the community and the river. The local wisdoms which the community depended on water resources such as water diversion into the field, water storage, monitoring water quality, conservation and restoration of water resources, etc., to leader groups, young people and get to know the story of the river, lifestyle, relationships and traditional conservation as the elderly's practice in the past.

The effect of such communicative strategy, it stimulated people's imagination on a matter of the abundance of water sources in the past and made them feel cherished and wanted the return of fertility. Therefore, the villagers took part in the management and conservation and restoration of water resources whereas the female had a role in organizing activities as assigned.

2. “Phor Sorn Look Poo Sorn Larn” strategy (Father Teaches Children Grandfather Teaches Grandchildren)

It was the strategy, which emphasized the role of the male in the family because the society in Chiang Rai province has still lived together as a big family together for all relatives. The residents in Mae Hang Basin area, they were often associated with the dependence on water resources either directly or indirectly. Therefore, water has tied up with the life and teachings by the male members of the family for both grandfather or father such as the use of water in households, the use of water for farming and fish farming and observation of the flora and fauna, and the use of water as a source of food, etc., These were conveyed to the generations and members in the community as a member of senior or experienced people. This contributed to knowledge transfer and people's engagement with nature, which affected the community participation in the management of water sources further.

It was observed that such strategy was unique in the context of Thai society. It was the common response between family and or kinship without formal rules. The intimacy that produced trust and value on seniority still hold together as local strategy had important role in pushing for the water management of the starting from the community members from each household.

Family members who were female considered to have a role in teaching social members in this issue less because the issues were taught in earning for a living and agricultural activity with heavy labor, etc., so this strategy was driven by the male members with seniority in the family.

This strategy was a process in teaching community members according to Socialization Concept. It was a top-down communication style; transferring data and experiences from the elders of the community and family to the children as well as members of the community in the households. This communicative strategy was appropriate to the Thai context which still had faith value on their seniors.

3. The use of religious beliefs and rituals

This strategy was to apply the religious traditions, beliefs and rituals to conserve water sources as a stratagem to have the community cooperation for the example, using

rituals, such as "raising the ghost of dam or the ghost of water". It was believed that the water resources had ghosts or angel of water to inspire happiness, tranquility, and the abundance of crops as well as preventative care to people in the community, the safety from natural disasters and diseases. It was the belief that ancestors handed down from many generations.

In this activity, the male would play an important role because they were the leaders of the sacrifice ceremony. It must have male, as the head of the ceremony in worship the spirits. They would inform news and shared the duties of each party to jointly prepare the ceremony. Male in this ceremony represented religious and folk rituals, beliefs, and faith. While females had a role in communication and coordinated activities with the various groups to collaborate and make things happen, especially women in the community development group to coordinate with the elderly, young people and different groups of people to join the work and activities on the day of the ceremony.

4. The use of social measures or community regulations

Creating social measures or regulations communities in water management, created a sense of ownership, which was the result of opening the community forum to allow people to express their opinions, to debate, and to discuss common measures and rules of communities in water management and conservation of water resources and force it to use in the community. Besides, the legal requirements and examples of other community measures as a guide were used in determining social measures. The social measures aimed to manage Mae Hang River to determine the community together to train the process for water management by the community and for people to participate in the conservation and restoration of water.

Females were very active in this strategy. It was found that they controlled various measures, such as measures in determining the animal sanctuary, disposal of solid waste and sewage into water resources, the activity for awareness in the community and publicity and dissemination of information. Male would have a role in the repair such as repairing the dam and posted the announcement of measures in community areas, etc.

5. Preparation of the local curriculum

The authorities in the community by Ban Muang Chum School have constructed the local curriculum entitled “Mae Hang Khong Lao Chao Muang Chum” and arranged teaching and learning activities to students. The curriculum has defined the content on waste management, the problem of polluting the water source, water quality monitoring and waste water treatment.

In the process of brainstorming to develop curriculum, it was from the involvement of all sectors in the community, in which both the male and the female who were from a group leaders. They would help brainstorming, including knowledge transfer as a speaker. The male community leaders would take action in conveying knowledge, the principles of problems and the guideline of water solution. While the female community leaders played a role in supplementary campaign such as learning camp activities, including the major role in helping to produce the media to alert the consciousness (brochures, posters, banners). It was observed that female had much time participating in the activity than men, including the ability to create networks of women and youth in collaborating extra-curricular activities effectively.

In summary, it was found that the role of male and female in driving the strategy for water resource management and conservation of community was domesticated by strategies. If the strategies focused on the leadership to give knowledge and understanding of the principles, techniques and solutions, they would be driven by male. While the role of creating alignments and creative activities to stimulate or regulatory measures to community strictly, it would be the role of women in the community.

Recommendations from the research for further study

1. From the findings, it revealed obviously that the successful communication for solving environmental problems combined both the communication within the family and other units in the community such as school, temple, and local intellects, etc. Therefore, to apply the principles to it needed considering of these factors together with the specific context of the area.

2. There should have the study on the comparison of the role of gender in social development activities such as a leader, a participant driven volunteer activity, a representative from the public and private sectors, etc., from all sectors of the community.

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