



## **Presenting a Model for Explaining the Role of Virtual Media in Promoting Sustainable Intercultural Communication Management in the Tourism Industry (Case Study: Iran & Oman)**

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### **Abstract**

This paper proposes a model for managing sustainable intercultural communication in the tourism industry of Iran and Oman, with a focus on the role of media. The study employed the grounded theory method and paradigm model, using in-depth literature review, background analysis, and interviews with relevant experts to answer research questions. The coding process involved open, central, and selective coding techniques. The model identifies the need for a combination of Bourdieu's capitals to achieve sustainable management of intercultural communication through the media, and emphasizes the importance of accepting globalization as a platform for positive changes in tourism. The model also highlights the need for institutionalizing the role of the media in sustainable intercultural communication, and developing the concept of tourism as hot and cool media. Other key factors include the development of regulations in proportion to contemporary world requirements, training of managers and citizens, and the need for stable intercultural relations. The model proposes action strategies such as extensively using media to develop regular intercultural ties, and the application of technology as a tool for sustainable development of tourism and social media. The proposed model explains the role of virtual media in improving sustainable intercultural communication management in the tourism industry, and could aid in optimal employment of virtual media in this field.

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## Introduction

The advancement of technology, especially in recent years, has significantly improved the quality of human life in many aspects (Roy & Samaddar, 2016). The introduction of the Internet in the 1990s facilitated the global spread of culture and business, while also accelerating technological advancements and the development of new tools. Thanks to the Internet, people have been able to write blogs, share videos through multiple services, and connect with others through increasingly popular social media platforms. The development of social media, built on the development of the Internet, has extensively contributed to globalization (Yigit & Tarman, 2013). The World Tourism Organization finds the Internet a significant player in tourism since it links tourists from all over the world and provides more effective and easier access to the target audience than any other traditional media (Bhin, 2020). Social media is widely recognized as a product of computer-mediated technological advancements that enable the easy creation and sharing of information and various forms of communication in virtual spaces. Essentially, social media platforms foster online social networks by connecting user profiles with other individuals (Iifgeneia & Dimitrios, 2018). It is argued that there is a positive correlation between globalization and media. Burton (2010) holds that globalization will bring about new forms of autonomy worldwide and signify a decrease in the dominance of the West over other regions. From this perspective, globalization in the modern era can be viewed as a means to foster diverse cultures globally through the utilization of new media platforms, including interactive media and social networks. In fact, there are similarities between globalization and social media in terms of facilitating borderless interaction and participation among individuals, organizations, and other entities by breaking borders through the Internet and social media (Effiong, 2018).

Instagram and TikTok have become popular platforms for both amateur and professional tourists, as well as tourist guides, to share films and short videos showcasing various destinations. These platforms allow users to describe attractions and cultural heritage, highlighting their significance in shaping the overall image of a destination. They also have the potential to influence tourist behavior and act as mediators for unique tourism experiences (Chiao, Chen & Huang, 2018; Du et al., 2020). The impact of technology on tourism has been significant, primarily driven by the adoption of virtual tourism, virtual reality, and the emergence of social media platforms that promote tourism (Llić & Nikolić, 2018; Sigala, 2018; Stankov & Gretzel, 2020).

There is much evidence about the positive impact of using movies on tourism and the number of visitors to the destination after the movie's release. Displaying the destination through film or video could create and improve the viewers' perception of local scenery and culture by creating knowledge about the destination (Li, Liu, 2020). Several studies on film tourism have explored the effects of film

tourism on the host society and its development (Kim, Kim & Heo, 2015; O'Connor, 2011; Pan & Ryan, 2013), the individual motivation of tourists in film tourism destinations (Buchmann, Moore & Fisher, 2010; Macionis & Sparks, 2009; Reijnders, 2016), and as a reinforcement of the destination image of prominent places and the future intention of tourists (Hudson, Wang & Gil, 2011; Kim, Kim & King 2018; Yen & Croy, 2016) in addition to a wide range of similar themes, indicating the significance of using film and video in tourism (Kim, Kim & King, 2018).

Looking at the trend of media activities in the field of tourism and the results in Iran, it is clear that the use of virtual media in the policies of tourism development in Iran does not have the necessary popularity, and policymakers are reluctant to use this vital tool. Many people are oblivious, and there is a need to correct the view in this field. It seems that the change in the approach toward the use of media and content produced in the field of tourism is one of the most significant things that could create substantial changes in this field. In fact, the lack of attention to the importance of the media, especially the powerful social media, among those involved in the field of tourism could be due to the fact that the role of the media, especially the popular social media such as Instagram and film content It has not been adequately explained and investigated.

This paper examines the influence of media on tourism as a sustainable, purposeful, and conscious industry that should encompass all aspects of this new phenomenon. Intercultural communication has been a significant challenge in the field of tourism, as these cross-cultural encounters are fundamental to the essence of tourism, even within domestic settings that involve diverse local communities. However, in the context of global tourism, these cross-cultural encounters become more delicate, necessitating special attention to the management of intercultural communication amidst the evolving dynamics of the tourism industry, with a focus on sustainability.

Managing sustainable intercultural communication in the tourism industry is a crucial concern that has a significant impact on the overall success of the tourism sector. The ability to establish and maintain stable intercultural communication is considered a noteworthy accomplishment within the tourism industry. In today's globalized world, effective management of intercultural communication has become imperative. Moreover, the tourism industry has the potential to contribute to the sustainability of intercultural communication management. However, it is important to note that this paper specifically focuses on studying the management of intercultural communication between Iran and Oman, treating it as a broader issue within the context of these two countries.

The reason for choosing Oman is that both Iran and Oman have the potential to significantly influence the future of the Persian Gulf region, given their historical relationship. Unlike its other neighbors in the Persian Gulf region, Iran differs in terms of race and language. Therefore, it is important to carefully seek common ground with a country where Iran's capabilities are more prominent, in order

to establish strategic convergence. Oman, being Iran's closest southern neighbor, shares similar cultural and religious roots. In the context of modern virtual tourism, media can play a crucial role in promoting sustainable management of intercultural communication between Iran and Oman. This paper proposes a model to analyze the contributions of virtual media in this regard.

The findings of this research will help decision-makers have a proper picture of virtual media to achieve stable intercultural communication and provide the necessary conditions. To that end, the grounded theory and a paradigm model involving causal conditions, background, intervention, central phenomenon, strategy of action, and potential consequences were used in addition to a paradigm model to explain the role of the media.

## **Literature review**

### **Managing sustainable intercultural communication**

In response to the diversity of society with different social and cultural backgrounds, it is necessary to establish a mechanism to recognize the differences and cultural diversity in the community in order to create a context for respecting different ethnicities, cultures, and languages. This creates a positive mentality towards various cultural differences and leads the society toward free thinking and a sense of tolerance. This mechanism is considered essential in mutual understanding and sustainable intercultural relations between communities and multicultural societies. To tackle challenging issues—the possibility of high tension in intercultural relations—recognizing the point of cultural sensitivity is paramount.

An essential element in achieving sustainable management of intercultural and multicultural relations is promoting a sense of mutual acceptance by creating a situation for intercultural experiences, mutual trust, mutual respect, understanding, and mutual responsibility (Huda, Mustafa & Mohamed, 2021). Mutual acceptance is created in the shadow of recognition, education, and awareness. In the past decades, international tourism has emerged as an intercultural field proposed as a global way of communication between people. The globalization of tourism is an objective and irreversible process in the formation of a single social-cultural space and the mutual connection between people and cultures (Stezhko et al., 2020). This is why it is crucial to plan for the development of sustainable intercultural communication through tourism, leveraging advanced technologies. This approach is essential for promoting world peace, fostering mutual understanding, and addressing the challenges of ongoing conflicts and inequalities in our current era.

Cultural literacy is widely recognized as a crucial factor in fostering stable intercultural relationships. The European Science Foundation defines cultural literacy as the ability to recognize, analyze, utilize, and adapt to the cultural interactions portrayed in the media, which significantly influence the prevailing culture (Shliakhovchuk, 2021). Also, cultural literacy centers around cognitive

dimensions (thinking, ideology, and beliefs), behavioral dimensions (including actions), and emotional dimensions (feelings and emotions) for cosmopolitan orientation. Cultural literacy gives insight into the manifestations of culture shock and the problems caused by it, especially when the tourist encounters the destination (Johnson, 2013).

### **Technological advancement, digital revolution, and virtual media**

At the global level, the use of modern information and communication technology has changed the way of business in tourism and communication between people (Llić & Nikolić, 2018). The advancement of technology has significantly impacted various aspects of human life, particularly in terms of social and cultural relations. It has greatly reduced geographical barriers and fostered global social connections. Additionally, technology has played a role in minimizing face-to-face interactions and shifting socialization towards online platforms and social networks on the Internet (Roy & Samaddar, 2016). Media technological advancements have led to the emergence of interactive media, interactive social networks, and interactive art, with substantial potential in forming and facilitating communications.

Since the early 1990s, the world has experienced a digital revolution. Rapid progress in digital information and communication technologies has wholly transformed social and business life through the increasing access and use of mobile communication technology and smartphones (Qurashi & Sharpley, 2018). Innovative media are user-oriented and mainly focus on user satisfaction, combining media and artificial intelligence to foster a user-centered content service market (Gao & Huang, 2019). In addition, the advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the widespread use of social media have presented a valuable opportunity for developing countries to gain insights into and align with current global trends. This enables them to adopt more efficient strategies to engage with individuals from diverse corners of the world. The exponential growth of the World Wide Web has further facilitated interactions between tourists and local communities, thereby fostering the development of tourism and promoting cross-cultural exchanges (Llić & Nikolić, 2018). Also, virtual reality is moving toward newer innovations and has found new applications in tourism (Kardong-Edgren et al., 2019).

Although the utilization of innovative media technologies comes with its drawbacks, it has undeniably brought numerous benefits across various sectors, particularly in the tourism industry. Benkendorf et al. (2014) examined the impact of smart media technology on tourism, revealing its ability to facilitate easier access to services, expand service offerings, and enhance the overall tourist experience. As a result, tourists, tourism destinations, and tourism service providers have embraced this intelligent revolution within the media realm, ultimately delivering a superior experience. The advancement of intelligent media has facilitated seamless interaction between users, service and

information providers, as well as fellow users and tourists on a global scale. This has proven to be highly advantageous for the tourism industry (Qurashi & Sharpley, 2018). In the realm of virtual tourism, it can be argued that virtual travel holds the potential to serve as a supplementary or even alternative experience to physical travel. By offering valuable information to tourists prior to their trips and acting as a substitute for visiting various destinations, virtual travel proves to be both accessible and supportive of the preservation of sensitive and endangered tourism areas. This aspect significantly contributes to the sustainable development of the tourism industry (Manghisi et al., 2018; Seifan, Dada & Berenjian, 2019; Loureiro et al., 2018).

There is a positive relationship between globalization and media. Idolor (2007) also considered globalization to be simply the integration of people's activities around the world regardless of distance and geographical boundaries and through the expansion and penetration of information, communication, and technological tools and networks, especially social media (Effiong, 2018). Interactive media and interactive art have emerged as prominent forms of communication, primarily driven by the rapid advancements in technology witnessed in recent years (Kang & Chen, 2019; Salehuddin & Baharuddin, 2018). McLuhan holds that the media is along with the human being and that today we know that interaction is a feature of the Internet. Tom Valcanis believes that if technology is a means of cultural development, the interaction and user-centered nature of this technology will create an "integrated" collaborative culture, thus forming and promoting a collaborative culture (Kang & Chen, 2019).

It is believed that media literacy should not be defined only concerning traditional media (Schreurs & Vandenbosch, 2020). Media literacy skills have been categorized by many: Potter (2010) considers media skills to include the skills of analysis, evaluation, grouping, inference, synthesis, deduction and abstraction, and inference. Hobbs & Moore (2013) hold that media literacy skills include access, analysis, construction, reflection, and action. Other researchers (Silver, 2009; Schmidt, 2013; Silverblatt et al., 2014; Sahin, 2014) consider these skills to include access, analysis, evaluation, and communication (Eristi & Erdem, 2017; Tamplin, McLean & Paxton, 2018).

Based on recent perspectives, tourism can be viewed as a form of media due to its comprehensive, widespread, frequent, and accessible nature. Similar to traditional media, tourism plays a crucial role in communicating and disseminating messages, particularly through the portrayal of individuals, destinations, and events. Moreover, the media's primary function of providing leisure and entertainment aligns with the essence of tourism. Therefore, tourism can be regarded as a unique form of media that encompasses various cultural, social, economic, and political dimensions within the realm of human interactions, while also conveying messages, meanings, images, and places. In addition, the leisure and entertainment aspect of tourism is widely recognized. Moreover, in many cases, tourism serves as a primary means of leisure, recreation, and entertainment. It can be likened to a medium, with tourists



acting as the mobile and dynamic components that contribute to the overall experience (Tazim & Robinson, 2014:158-159).

### **Content produced by users on social networks**

In today's era, user-generated content is considered a vital way to express views and opinions and communicate (Mohammad et al., 2020). Tourists have been shown to increasingly trust the opinions of other tourists who have visited the destination. Filieri, Algezau & McLeay (2015) state that 80% of online users plan their trips online and spend an average of more than two hours on social networks looking for user-generated travel information and suggestions (Lam, Ismail, Lee, 2020). Also, user-produced content affects the awareness of the destination and the image of the destination (Gurung, Goswami, 2017). Scofield asserts that the initial perception of a destination is often shaped within the mind of a tourist prior to their actual visit. This preconceived notion is often influenced by various media platforms, such as films and shows, which inadvertently promote the destination to potential visitors (Domínguez-Azcue, et al., 2021). In this context, the film is effective in renovating or changing the image of the tourism brand of the destination creating a new visual identity for the destination, and influencing changing the brand of the destination. The film can also increase the awareness of the brand and present the brand in a stronger way (O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert, 2010).

Watching a movie is a multifaceted experience for individuals, as it allows for the transfer of new skills and knowledge. In a similar vein, Ott, Tan & Slater (2021) propose that when individuals recall impactful movies, they elicit a range of positive responses. Given the progress of technology and its role in enhancing human connections, the utilization of film-based social networks and the creation of films by tourists hold significant value in fostering creative tourism. In creative tourism, the tourist is encouraged to interact more educationally, emotionally, and socially, as well as to participate in the place, culture, life, and people. In fact, in this type of tourism, the tourist behaves like a citizen of the destination (UNESCO, 2006: 2). The components of creative tourism include active and participatory experience that is creativity-oriented and includes life experience and communication with local people and the culture of the destination people (Richards, 2011; Tan et al., 2013). The use of advanced social media has also contributed to the emergence of creative tourism. Creative tourism is centered around providing unique and immersive experiences to travelers. These experiences have the potential to bring about a transformation in the consumer's knowledge and thinking (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

## **Theoretical background**

### **McLuhan's hot and cool media theory**

In this framework, McLuhan's focus on technology led him to distinguish between hot and cool media in the common language of the 1960s (Williams, 2003: 67). McLuhan holds that a warm medium is a medium that expands a single concept in "high definition" Unlike warm media, cool media have a low definition of information and require a high level of participation to fill the gaps through low-level imagination (Zhu et al., 2022). McLuhan introduces all-sensory media as cool and single-sensory media as warm; in other words, warm media is considered to include tools that could complete the desired concept with the help of the audience's mind and imagination, unlike cool media (Bobbitt, 2011).

Regarding the relationship between mass media and education, McLuhan asserts that cultural and intellectual societies have high expectations from the press, radio, and cinema. These societies seek to analyze social and political contradictions through mass communication, support progressive schools and ideas, and represent public opinion. However, McLuhan argues that if these mediums solely focus on using such versions, they will not only fail to achieve their goals but also hinder the success of books. On the contrary, the pursuit of commercial purposes, entertainment, and leisure time ensures that each means of communication has maximum speed and impact on the psychological and social aspects of life. McLuhan contends that education and entertainment are not separate entities and it would be misleading to perceive them as such. He believes that what provides satisfaction can effectively educate individuals. Furthermore, up until now, the potential of communication tools to educate and bring about change, regardless of their content and programming, has been largely overlooked (McLuhan, 1994).

### **Pierre Bourdieu's field theory**

In Bourdieu's theoretical system and sociology, the reality of the social world is not based on individuals and groups but on the relationship between them. These connections become invisible constructions and relate the appearances and the world of social objects to each other, creating different and diverse relatively autonomous fields, such as cultural, economic, artistic, and political, in the social space. People with distinct characters or habits enter these fields and compete over the available funds. This theory eliminates the conflict between the individual and society or the conflict between objectivity and subjectivity. Bourdieu tries to consider human factors while clinging to structuralism; he stresses the dialectical relationship between objective structures and mental phenomena (Seidman, 2016: 197).

"Field" is the key concept that Bourdieu uses to process his thoughts. He argues that squares are spaces of social life that are formed on the axis of social relations. People work in different social fields, such as economy, politics, art, media, and sports, and display their abilities and talents. As a result of



the process of division of labor and separation of affairs, the open and macro-social world has been divided into many small and closed fields, including the artistic, political, and religious. These small fields are part of the social world that act autonomously to leave the field from a purely abstract or concrete concept, Bourdieu tries to experience the field and describes the framework of a field as a market. Every market consists of three main elements: The supply side or producers, symbolic goods or the products, and the demand side or consumers of goods or symbolic goods. Squares are markets for special capitals in which social actors invest in various capitals based on their special talents and enter into competition and action. Another concept is "capital." Capital refers to any type of ability, skill, and ability that a person could maintain, control, increase, or even monopolize in different fields and use in his relationships to advance his position. According to Bourdieu, capital could have economic, social, cultural, and symbolic types (Grenfell, 2009).

Character is a concept that encompasses a person's internalized abilities, which are developed over time through their engagement in various social fields to acquire and increase capital. Within this framework, individuals apply their own tastes based on their social position, and different social classes strive to differentiate themselves from one another. Another important concept is symbolic violence, which refers to the domination of one class over others through the imposition of its cultural values across society. Lastly, Bourdieu's sociological thought and theory aim to address both the unconscious determinism that influences our mental images and highlight the potential for human creativity and innovation (Bonnewitz, 2005: 80).

### **Post-postmodernism**

Post-postmodernism seeks to set aside the parameters of postmodern thinking and rule out its dependence on concepts such as regarding material content as important. If post-postmodernism shows deconstruction due to its paradoxical structure, then post-postmodernism shows the paradox of reconstruction. In tourism, understating the direction of tourists' consumption behavior and its interpretation, especially the authenticity of tourism, and evaluating it in the postmodern and post-postmodern periods is paramount. The concept of authenticity in the post-postmodern perspective has been very effective in understanding the behavior of contemporary tourists and their interpretation of authenticity. Types of objective and subjective originality not only coexist with each other but are significantly related to each other. Although the concept of authenticity in the era of modernity, postmodernism, and post-postmodernism have many differences, there is an intrinsic connection between them. Modernity has helped foster a general conceptualization and understanding of authenticity as a multifaceted, incomplete, and progressive concept and has provided the basic framework for the evolution of its concept. post-postmodernism provides more subtle alternative tools

to achieve authenticity in tourism. In fact, in the eyes of some authors, post-postmodernism is a suitable alternative to the post-modern tourist's deconstructive situation, the result of which can be seen in the behavior of tourists today (Canavan & McCamley, 2021). In other words, originality in post-postmodernism refers to a repetitive functional process that combines intrinsic and extrinsic symptoms. Furthermore, from a post-postmodern view, authenticity in tourism is to change reality by emphasizing alternative realities to achieve integrity and ease in life (Canavan & McCamley, 2021).

### **Study of Iran and Oman**

The historical relationship between Iran and Oman spans several thousand years, encompassing both political and commercial ties. Throughout different eras, this relationship has experienced both positive and negative developments. In recent years, Oman has emerged as a key participant in numerous negotiations aimed at resolving the conflicts between Iran and the Western world. Due to its strategic proximity to Iran and its significant contribution to fostering peaceful international relations, Oman is highly valued as a strong partner by Iran. A closer examination of the historical background of both countries reveals that the residents and governments of Oman and Iran have engaged in diverse forms of communication and interactions throughout different historical periods. These interactions have encompassed cultural, racial, and civil relations, as well as political, security, and commercial ties. The Sultanate of Oman recognizes the shared ancestry between the people of Oman and Iran and highlights that the current inhabitants of Shihuh in northern Oman are descendants of the original inhabitants of this region. It is worth noting that the Shihuh people have a darker complexion compared to other Arab tribes (Cultural Consultation of Iran in Oman, 2018).

Also, various tourism agreements have been signed between Iran and Oman. According to the statistics obtained from Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism, the largest number of tourists from Oman to Iran are health tourists and a significant number of tourists from Iran to Oman are business tourists. All these cases show the importance of relations between Iran and Oman, especially given the cultural superiority of the two countries and their closeness<sup>1</sup>.

### **Methodology**

This research is qualitative. The grounded theory method and paradigm model were used in the research design. The required data were gathered using semi-structured interviews with experts and specialists in culture, art, media, and tourism. Their opinions were given higher priority. Additionally, documentary and library methods were employed. The semi-structured interview approach was adopted to allow for any necessary changes during the interview, aiming to enhance the authenticity of the results. The

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1. <https://donya-e-eqtasad.com>

participants were initially selected with the assistance of mentors who were well-known figures in the relevant fields. Subsequently, the snowball method was utilized to select suitable experts for the interviews. The interviewees consisted of 26 experts, including 9 tourism experts, 7 media experts, and 10 culture experts. Grounded theory is a well-known method for generating theories that explain a phenomenon by identifying its key elements and classifying the relationships between them within the context and process of the phenomenon. This method is inductive and exploratory, allowing for the development of theories on various subjects without relying on existing theories. In grounded theory, data collection, analysis, and theory development are closely intertwined. The researcher does not start with preconceived theories but allows the theory to emerge from the data. This method enhances our understanding of research dimensions. The results of this study could potentially identify important points and contribute to the development of new theories or the integration of existing ones (Shirafken Lemso, Mohammad zadeh, & Behbodhi, 2018).

Considering that the researcher's goal is to present the model using the qualitative method, the researcher has used the grounded theory. In this method, not only are the meanings used in different situations paid attention to, but this approach has been used to build a new idea for the subject under study. On this basis, the researcher has identified this method as the appropriate method to achieve the model, because all aspects of The issue to be investigated are the paradigm model. Dexter states that the qualitative method uses the semi-structured method to interact more with the interviewee and find more facts. The questions are designed in advance based on the research literature or the series of previous interviews or based on the audience's behavior. Still, during the interview, whenever the interviewer feels a new question to be asked based on the interviewee's words during the interview, and at the end of the interview, they obtain two types of information; one kind of information is based on pre-designed questions based on the mentioned sources. The second type is the information raised from the interview questions (Dexter, 1970). On this basis, a semi-structured interview method has been used in this research. The interviews were conducted both online and in person according to the interviewees' wishes, and all selected Iranian experts participated. Interviews with experts, managers, and elites continued until we reached repetitive information and saturation. Before conducting the interview, the researcher provided them with a summary of these theories to ensure that the experts had sufficient knowledge of the approaches used in this research. In the interview, the researcher first raised the research questions (i.e., contextual, intervening, causal, central phenomenon, consequence in the context of the role of virtual media in sustainable intercultural communication in tourism) and then during the interview and with attention to the interview process and the answers of the interviewees, they raised other questions to get more precise answers related to the topic.

### **Data coding**

Open coding is "an analytical process through which specified concepts, and their characteristics and dimensions are discovered from within the data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 101). Open coding is part of the analysis in which the data related to the phenomenon under study are named and categorized by careful examination (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 101).

### **Axial coding**

It is the second stage of data coding, in which categories are connected in a network, and the data that were previously divided into concepts and categories in open coding are joined together in new ways to establish links between a category and its subcategories. Thus, axial coding is a process that expands its main and subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 99).

These links are established using a paradigm (exemplary model) that includes conditions, content (background), action-interaction strategies, and consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 97). Establishing the link between a category and its subcategories requires the use of a paradigm model. A paradigm model includes causal conditions, phenomenon, background, intervening conditions, action/interaction strategies, and consequences

The category is equivalent to the phenomenon and that is the issue, subject, matter, or event that we have accepted is important for our respondents (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 146).

### **Selective coding**

According to Strauss & Corbin (1990), the main categories are formed in this situation. According to the paradigm model, the subcategories that were introduced in the axial coding section; are related to the main categories. At this stage, the researcher expresses the descriptive relations of the investigated phenomenon, which is called the narrative of the story (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 147).

In this research, the researcher utilized the paradigm model for coding. After conducting interviews, the researcher collaborated with the interviewee to correct or modify certain points if necessary. Following the implementation and approval of the interview, the researcher categorized the interview statements. With the assistance of a research colleague, the initial classification of the codes was achieved. Subsequently, the researcher and the colleague re-evaluated the codes, performing central and selective coding processes, respectively. It is important to note that throughout each coding stage, the researcher sought consensus with two research colleagues. During the open coding phase, the researcher identified the main categories and themes related to the phenomenon. In the core coding phase, categories were systematically identified and linked to subcategories. Finally, through selective coding, the research paradigm model was presented.

## Results

The analysis obtained 290 codes in the open coding section, 37 codes in the first-level category section of axial coding, 27 codes in the second-level category section of axial coding, and 30 codes in the selective coding section. Also, the total codes received in different stages of coding were extracted in causal conditions 87 codes, intervening conditions 26 codes, background conditions 59 codes, central phenomenon 61 codes, action strategies 29 codes, and consequences 122 codes. it would see the results obtained in the table below. It should be noted that due to the large volume of open codes, these items were removed, and only the central and selective coding is mentioned in the tables:

**Table1. Causal conditions in the model explaining the role of media in the management of sustainable intercultural communication in the tourism industry**

Axial coding Sub code		Selective coding Original code
First level categories	Second level categories	
Symbolic capital	The necessity of all types of capital	The need for a combination of Bourdieu's capitals to achieve sustainable intercultural communication through the media
Economic capital		
Social capital		
Cultural capital		
Globalization	Globalization and tourism	Accepting the process of globalization as a platform for positive changes in tourism and sustainable intercultural communication through having a cultural identity card
Promotion of tourism awareness	Tourism literacy	The need to develop tourism literacy
virtual tourism	The need to develop social networks and virtual tourism	Development of film-based virtual tourism on the platform of social networks
Virtual tourism through short films		
Development of film-oriented and audience-oriented social networks		
Characteristics of life in the post-postmodern	The need to accept the features of the post-postmodern	Awareness of the post-postmodern and its acceptance and creation of cultural interactions

**Table 2: Background conditions in the model for explaining the role of media in the management of sustainable intercultural communication in the tourism industry**

Axial coding Sub code		Selective coding Original code
First level categories	Second level categories	
Social networks market	Social networks as a field	Development of social networks as Bourdieu square

Media literacy Cultural literacy Literacy of virtual media	The importance of different literacies	Improving the level of literacy is necessary for the development of sustainable intercultural relations
Advanced technology	The advancement of technology means the development of tourism and awareness	Access of the general public to advanced technologies in the world
Cultural and tourism ties between Iran and Oman	The importance of tourism in Iran and Oman	Deepening Iran-Oman relations by looking at the history of relations between the two countries and common interests
Entertainment	Entertainment capacity of tourism and social networks	Using the entertaining functions and capacities of the media to achieve the development of sustainable intercultural relations

**Table 3: Intervening conditions in the model for explaining the role of the media in the management of sustainable intercultural communication in the tourism industry**

Axial coding		Selective coding Original code
First level categories	Second level categories	
Problems with the rules	Incompatibility of rules and regulations with the post-postmodern	Elaboration of regulations appropriate to the conditions of the current world
Management problems	Managers' lack of knowledge	Trained managers
Failure to educate citizens in accordance with the needs of the post-postmodern	The importance of education	Education of citizens



**Table 4: The central phenomenon of the proposed model for explaining the role of the media in the management of sustainable intercultural communication within the tourism industry**

Axial coding Sub code		Selective coding Original code
First level categories	Second level categories	
Tourism as media	The logic of the tourism industry as hot/cool media	Institutionalizing the role of media in sustainable intercultural communication
Tourism as hot or cool media depending on the tourist	The logic of the tourism industry as hot/cool media	Conceptual development of tourism as media
Media tourism, the development of sustainable intercultural communication	The logic of the tourism industry as hot/cool media	Expanding the capacity to tolerate another culture from a new angle
Social media as a tool for developing sustainable intercultural communication	The logic of social media as a means of developing sustainable intercultural communication	The colorfulness of certain cultures is one of the strengths of communication development

**Table 5: Action strategy in the model for explaining the role of media in the management of sustainable intercultural communication in the tourism industry**

Axial coding Sub code		Selective coding Original code
First level categories	Second level categories	
Creating awareness among tourists and the general public	Changing tourist behavior	
Change and amendment of rules and regulations	Creating national determination for media development	Turning towards the widespread use of media in order to develop sustainable intercultural relations
Changing the view and behavior of executives and legislators	The necessity of training managers and legislators according to technological changes	
Promotion and development of film-oriented social networks	Promotion and development of Iranian culture through film-oriented social networks	Smart use of film-oriented social networks

**Table 6: Consequences in the model for explaining the role of media in the management of sustainable intercultural communication in the tourism industry**

Axial coding Sub code		Selective coding Original code
First level category	Second level category	
The advancement of technology equals the development and deepening of awareness in tourism		
Sustainability education through short films and entertainment	Technology as a tool for the sustainable development of tourism	Sustainable development of tourism using new technologies
Integration of virtual and real tourism to achieve sustainable development		
A social network that improves human relationships	Reduction of symbolic violence by social networks	Development of the social media field
New tourism, post-postmodern tourism	Achieving a new definition of tourism authenticity in the post-postmodern	
Achieving objective and subjective originality in post-postmodern in a smart way	Achieving authentic tourism through interactive media	Tourism authenticity using more subtle alternative means
Genuine media and tourism		
Tourism is a tool to see the world in an integrated way	Tourism is a means of change and deepening and integration of man and development of his relations with the surrounding environment	Development of sustainable intercultural relations
The positive effects of film-based social networks on audiences	Film-centric social networks for Achieving sustainable intercultural communication	Tourism developments through film-based social networks

Finally, the extracted paradigm model was obtained as follows:

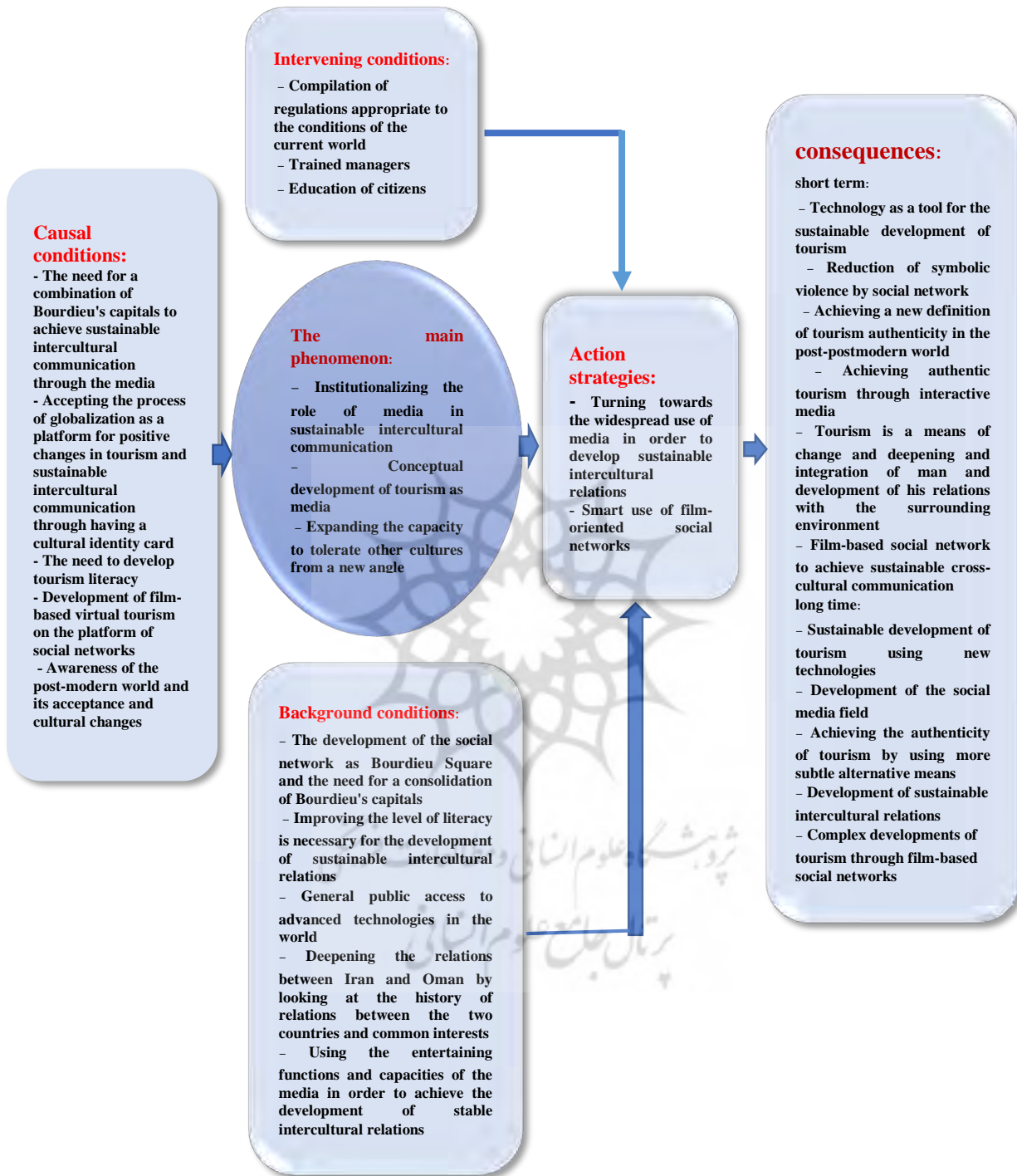


Figure 1. Paradigm model for the role of virtual media in the direction of sustainable intercultural communication management (case study: Iran and Oman)

## Discussion

In today's world, where people are constantly exposed to a multitude of media and information, it is important to recognize the positive impact of media on the development of sustainable intercultural relations, particularly in industries like tourism. Therefore, this research aims to address this issue. By reviewing relevant literature and background information, the grounded theory method (paradigm model) was employed to address the research questions. In total, in the analysis, 290 codes were obtained in the open coding section, 37 codes in the first-level category section of axial coding, 27 codes in the second-level category section of axial coding, and 30 codes were obtained in the selective coding section.

The findings revealed that to institutionalize the role of the media in sustainable intercultural communication, the conceptual development of tourism as a hot and cool media, expanding the capacity to tolerate other cultures with a new perspective as a central phenomenon in the presented paradigmatic model requires a series of consider the conditions as the leading causes, which include the development of tourism literacy as an essential matter in the direction of promoting sustainable intercultural communication, the development of film-based virtual tourism based on social networks and its promotion based on social media literacy, creating awareness about the conditions of the world. Current and cultural differences and similarities and raising the level of the culture of mutual acceptance, accepting the process of globalization and using it to create meaningful and stable relations between cultures and ethnicities and combining Bourdieu's capitals (economic, cultural, social, and symbolic) in line with the development of stable intercultural relations through the media. Also, in order to study media institutionalizing as a tool for sustainable intercultural communication in the tourism industry, the development of social networks should be examined as a powerful medium that corresponds to the field in Bourdieu's theory. In this regard, improving the level of related literacy, such as media literacy, social media literacy, cultural literacy, and tourism literacy, is one of the main pillars of sustainable intercultural relations. Regarding Iran and Oman, providing the possibility of more relations and deepening relations based on common interests is an important foundation. The findings indicate that to achieve stable intercultural relations, it is necessary to have a combination of Bourdieu's capitals as an imperative primary condition. Our findings correspond to Bourdieu's theory, on the concept of sustainable intercultural communication management.

The development of sustainable intercultural relations also requires the access of the general public to advanced technologies. This improved access can be observed in the tourism industry through the improvement of the penetration rate of the Internet and the development of social networks through the media. In this regard, the entertainment capacities of the media, especially social media, are among the important primary factors for attracting people in positive, informative, and attractive ways to ensure

the participation of people and tourists and build sustainable intercultural communication. The optimal use of the media to achieve stable intercultural relations requires formulating suitable regulations that are in line with the current global conditions, i.e. the world of post-modernism, for training managers and citizens. Finally, in order to achieve the institutionalization of the media as a tool of sustainable intercultural communication in tourism, action strategies are required. These action strategies include the promotion and extensive use of media and the smart use of film-oriented social networks to ensure that people from different cultures exchange cultural components and gain more knowledge about other societies. Intelligent and conscious use of film-oriented social networks due to their high penetration rate and proof of the audience's interest in video content instead of textual content can currently be a practical strategy for the development of sustainable intercultural communication.

Finally, the consequences include short-term and long-term consequences. The use of film-based media portrays a more realistic and tangible image of the destination and reduces symbolic violence, which is one of the important components of Bourdieu's theory. The development of the media creates more, closer, and more real connections between the people within society, tourists, and hosts, raises awareness, reduces the incorrect judgments of the two sides of each other, and eliminates misjudgments. More connections mean more stable peace and less symbolic violence. Using the media to promote and develop stable intercultural relations will be a tool for the sustainable development of tourism. In this way, many destinations that are close to each other are removed from the family travel basket due to the similarity of culture and geography; a person or a family who has visited, for example, one of the Southeast Asian countries – by watching movies on social media realizes the similarities of these countries and thus avoids visiting a destination with a repetitive theme. In turn, this reduces travel by plane and helps tourism move toward a green industry and the development of more sustainable facilitates. Also, getting to know the cultures and ethnic groups through these media the awareness of the tourists and the host community and will bring them closer to sustainable cultural development. Developing a new definition of tourism authenticity is one of the consequences that in the post-postmodern world, authenticity has found a personal concept for every tourist, and this is the tourist who, according to his personal goal and perspective towards the world and the surrounding environment and discovering other cultures and ethnicities and Destinations create a new vision about the authenticity of tourism through virtual space. Tourism deepens the individual's relationship with themselves, society, and the world, especially by getting to know other ethnic groups and cultures through interactive media where people interact without intermediaries and conventional borders lose their significance and differences become normal and acceptable for normal people. This will ultimately bring peace to the individual and the world. Accordingly, film-based social networks will result in sustainable intercultural communication and increase knowledge, awareness, and peace. The long-term use of the media

promotes world peace and long-term sustainable global development and, transforms the tourism industry and the complexity of the tourism environment, all of which will be realized more under the shadow of institutionalizing the media in line with sustainable intercultural communication.

Based on the theory of Bourdieu's fields, it can also be said that politics is the main field and plays the role of a basis for other fields. The flawless function of other fields depends on the proper functioning of politics. The good political relations between Iran and Oman, indicate the good functioning of politics, which promotes the growth of other fields and cross-field communication. For example, among all the nationalities that can travel to Iran, only the citizens of Oman and China could travel to Iran without a visa, which indicates the importance of politics in facilitating cross-field communication. Economy and trade relations rank second in this chain of significance. As mentioned earlier, facilitating politics in tandem with the economy has promoted tourism, especially commercial tourism. With the advancement of technology and availability of smart social networks such as Instagram as well as the good political and tourism relations between Iran and Oman, the interaction between media and tourism – as two important fields – is also important. According to Bourdieu's theory, the main field is the sociocultural field in which other fields (first politics) have grown, which opens the space for other fields economic relations, tourism, and media. Practically, it has been true in the field of our study.

### **Conclusions and suggestions**

In today's world, we have left the age of communication and information and are moving towards the age of integration with exceptional speed, suggesting that larger bodies of information and faster communication technologies (the Internet, although enjoying an unprecedented penetration rate) may no longer suffice. This normality can be turned into an opportunity by integrating new skills into communication and information. In this research, we tried to examine this integration in the tourism industry.

Globalization is a kind of interdependence between nations. The media is also an important platform and an inseparable part of this issue, that allows for cultural interactions between people, tribes, and real and virtual tourists. Different ethnicities and nations from different cultures all have cultural identity cards, and the media could be a platform for getting to know these cultures and people with different tendencies. This could result in global peace and sustainable cultural development. All of the above are imperative and inseparable and cause the causal conditions for the media to help manage sustainable intercultural communication.

It should also be noted that globalization is growing at an increasing speed and seems unstoppable. However, intercultural communication; encompasses purposeful and intelligent choices made by nations and governments in the course of globalization that make the process of globalization meaningful: if



intercultural communication in the international field is not addressed and the choices are not made intelligently; globalization will only have a small benefit. In other words, globalization has created an opportunity for global competition, which requires the actors of the globalization stage to plan and educate people with a post-postmodern production approach; otherwise, it will only be consumers who should watch the interactions of globalization, or try to erase the face of the problem by filtering the virtual space. Internationalization is a response to globalization and intercultural communication is a response to globalization. Sustainable intercultural communication is a purposeful and intelligent response to globalization. The speed of changes in the post-postmodern world is higher after the past experiences become ineffective and the need to combine with new experiences also requires a high speed, which can be followed in agile management with awareness and vigilance. Also, the nature of the post-postmodern world is not of the problems of the past, so to solve the problems of today and the future, we must improve the education of today's people as much as the complexity of the world of the post-modern world. Based on the post-postmodern theory and the findings of the current research; to achieve sustainable intercultural communication management, we must start with individual development. In the post-postmodern world, unlike the traditional world, people do not die because of lack of information, but unfortunately in the post-postmodern world, people die because of the explosion of information that changes daily and affects their lives, but they cannot change the information. Interpret or align themselves with new changes; unfortunately, they die. Metacognition in the post-postmodern world means knowing and managing these changes before new events and phenomena occur. The virtual world and the real world are interconnected on a daily basis. In this research, we have concluded that this interconnection between the virtual and real worlds serves as a reminder that in the field of tourism, we need to expand our perspective. While the virtual world in tourism assists us in making preparations such as booking tickets and hotels, there are also pre- and post-purchase processes that should be integrated into virtual tourism and ultimately merged with real tourism. It is important to acknowledge this as a new phenomenon and analyze it as a new reality. Just as tourism destinations are evolving, the development of the tourism industry in conjunction with the integration of media and tourism is also evolving and requires careful planning, restructuring, proper organization, and the creation of a world of opportunities and realities. This will enable us to effectively navigate the post-postmodern world and meet the demands of being involved in this field under agile management, ultimately leading to a promising future through the integration of media and tourism. A new framework is necessary to align the tourism industry with the advancements in the media landscape.

One of the significant conclusions derived from Marshall McLuhan's hot and cool media theory is the application of the concept of tourism as a hot or cool medium. Tourism can be viewed as a potent medium, wherein the roles of sender and receiver are constantly interchanged, creating a continuous

cycle of communication. The recipient becomes the sender, while the original sender of the message becomes the recipient.

It has been shown that tourism as a powerful media has all the properties of persuasion in the media, and it is basically a media that is produced and consumed in the place, and due to its high influence on the guest and the host, it causes a change in perception, attitude, beliefs and finally changes in the behavior of the individual and tourism itself is a medium that is shown and represented in another medium, short film, and Instagram. And this media cycle somehow leads to the reproduction of culture. Based on the findings, warm tourism is individualistic and pluralistic, and cool tourism is unitary. In cool tourism, the concentration is low, and on the contrary, in warm tourism, the concentration is high, and each traveler can have his impressions of the trip, which is closer to tourism in the post-modern world. In warm tourism, because one sense is involved, it is not inclusive. But cool tourism is inclusive. As we move from organized tourism to unorganized tourism, we move from cool tourism to warm tourism. Expanding the tolerance capacity of other cultures, from a new angle, is the next thing, and in fact, the development of the media can be at the center of attention to this issue.

In summary, the present research aims to present a model for explaining the role of the media in managing sustainable intercultural communication in the tourism industry (case study: Iran and Oman). To that end, the causal conditions, central phenomenon, intervening conditions, background conditions, action strategies, and consequences were identified to develop the research model.

Decision-makers could gain valuable insights from this research regarding the role of media in managing intercultural communication in the tourism industry. The findings highlight the importance of virtual media in today's global society and suggest optimal conditions for leveraging its benefits. Furthermore, these research outcomes can serve as a foundation for future studies on virtual media and intercultural communication within the tourism sector.

### **Further research suggestions**

Future research could focus on analyzing the range of tourists and types of tourism based on hot and cool tourism. Additionally, given the emphasis of post-postmodernism discourse on reconstruction and the title suggested by the World Tourism Organization for 2022, which is "Rethinking Tourism," further post-postmodernist research should pay special attention to sustainable intercultural communication in tourism. This research could be studied through case studies conducted in countries other than Oman and Iran. Furthermore, the compilation of facilitating post-modernist laws and regulations in line with the development of media, especially social networks can be another area of research. Ultimately, there is a research gap in virtual tourism and its integration with real tourism, in which there is the potential for developing new theoretical and practical concepts to achieve sustainable tourism.

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