

Theoretical Framework

The Sabido methodology is an approach to development of mass-media serial dramas.

THE SABIDO METHODOLOGY

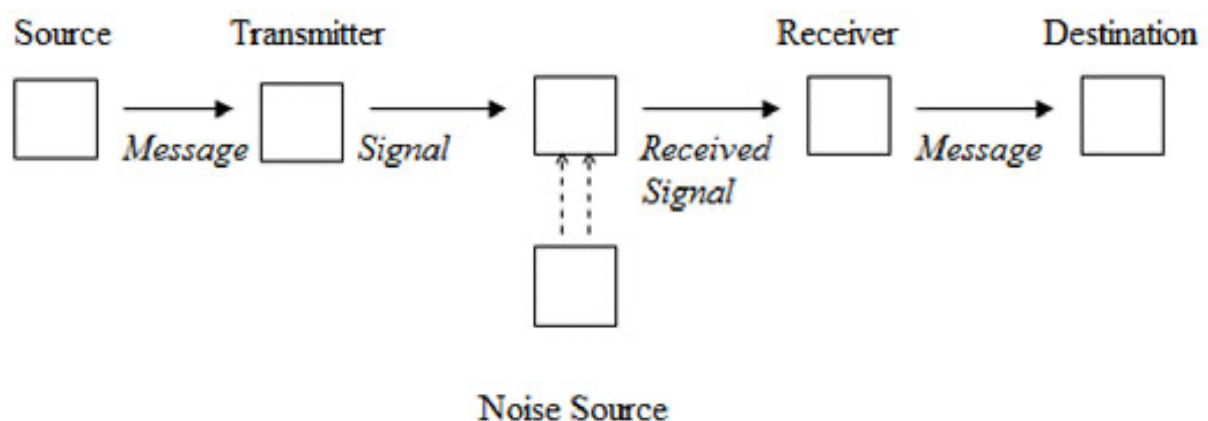
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The methodology draws from five theories of communication and behavior change: (a) a circular adaptation of Shannon and Weaver's Communication Model,^[1] (b) Bentley's Dramatic Theory,^[2] (c) Jung's Theory of Archetypes and Stereotypes and the Collective Unconscious,^[3] (d) the Social Learning Theory of Albert Bandura,^[4] and (e) MacLean's Concept of the Triune Brain,^[5] supplemented by Sabido's own Theory of the Tone.^[6]

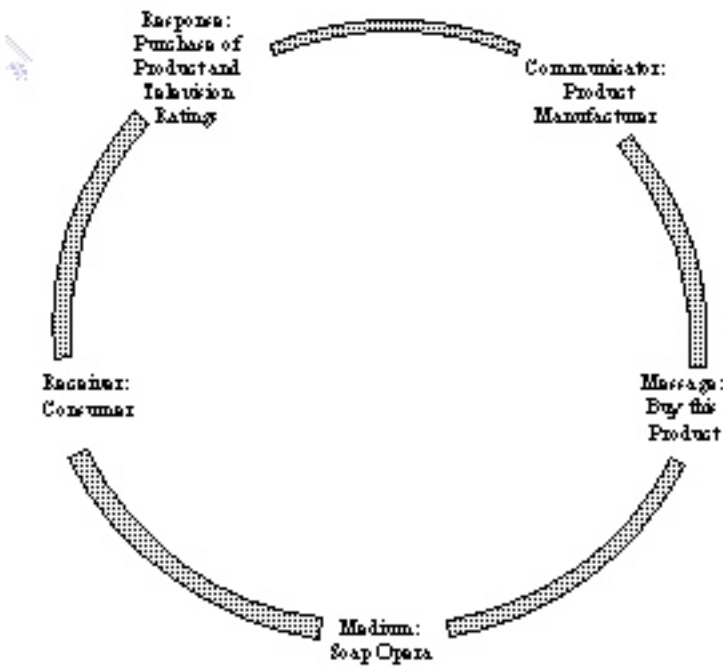
COMMUNICATION MODEL: SHANNON AND WEAVER, 1949

Shannon and Weaver's Communication Model has five basic factors, arranged in a linear format.^[7] The components in this model are:

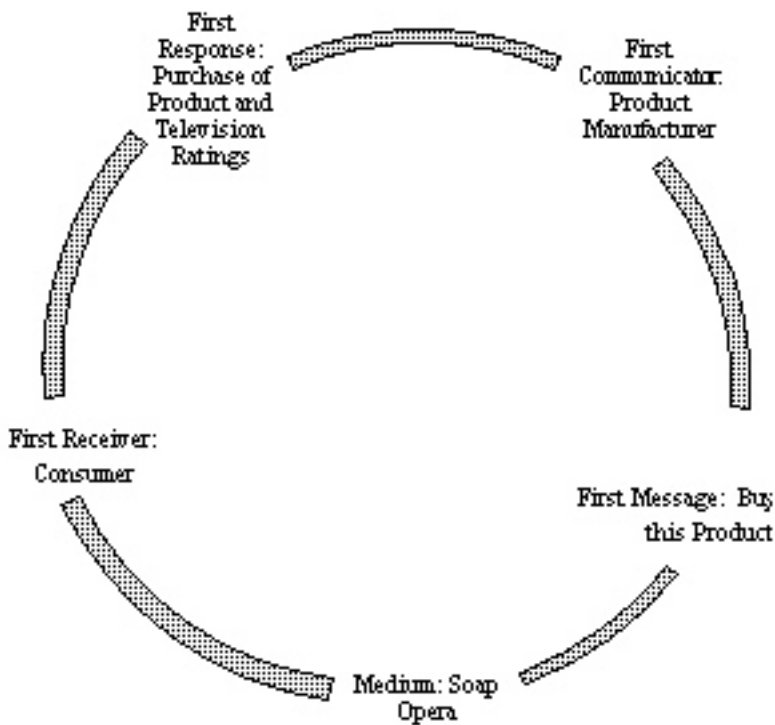
1. The information source selects a desired message out of a set of possible messages.
2. The transmitter changes the message into a signal that is sent over the communication channel to the receiver.
3. The receiver is a sort of inverse transmitter, changing the transmitted signal back into a message, and interpreting this message.
4. This message is then sent to the destination. The destination may be another receiver (i.e., the message is passed on to someone else), or the message may rest with the initial receiver, and the transmission is achieved.
5. In the process of transmitting a message, certain information that was not intended by the information source is unavoidably added to the signal (or message). This "noise" can be internal (i.e., coming from the receiver's own knowledge, attitudes, or beliefs) or external (i.e., coming from other sources). Such internal or external "noise" can either strengthen the intended effect of a message (if the information confirms the message), or weaken the intended effect (if the information in the "noise" contradicts the original message).



Sabido adapted Shannon and Weaver's linear diagram to form a communication circuit that depicted the circular nature of the communication process. He then applied this circuit to a serial drama. In the case of a commercial soap opera on television, the communicator is the manufacturer of a product, the message is "buy this product," the medium is the soap opera, the receiver is the consumer, and the response is the purchase of the product and television ratings.

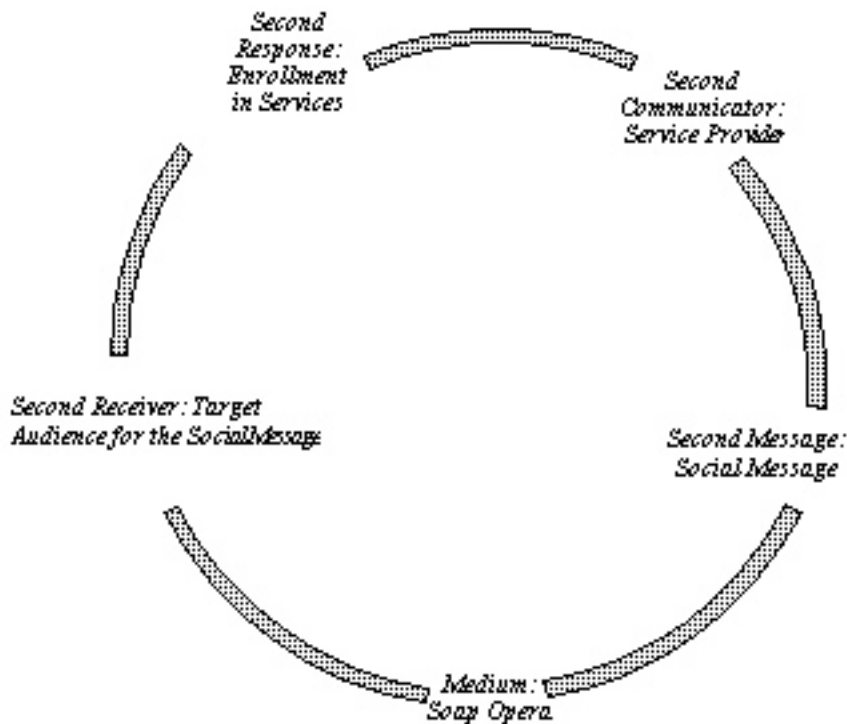


Sabido took this circular model one step further to represent two-step communication interactions. For this, he introduced the two-step flow theory of communication described by the sociologist Paul F. Lazarsfeld,^[8] which states that messages in mass media have the most impact upon a minority of receivers. These people will then communicate the message to others, hence a two-step flow. Audience members often conduct discussions regarding important social issues with their peers that are similar to those of the characters' "on the air." This is because the characters provide a model on how to discuss issues that are sensitive, or even taboo, and discussions between characters indicate a certain social acceptance of these issues.



Findings from a study of a Sabido-style radio serial drama in Ethiopia show that new family planning acceptors use this two-step model to confirm their intention to seek family planning services before they actually visit the clinic. Almost 60 percent of new adopters surveyed at selected family planning clinics throughout the country said they had talked with their spouse (17.4 percent) or friends/neighbors (42.2 percent) about their decision before finally coming to the clinic for services, mimicking the course followed by characters in the radio program.^[9]

**DRAMATIC THEORY:
BENTLEY, 1967**



Dramatic Theory describes the structure and effects of five genres of theatre (tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, farce, and melodrama). Among these genres, melodrama presents reality in a slightly exaggerated sense in which the moral universes of good and evil are in discord. Sabido employed Bentley's structure of the melodrama genre as a basis from which to design characters and plots. "Good" characters in Sabido-style serial dramas accept the proposed social behavior, and "evil" characters reject it. Plots are then constructed around the relationships between

good and evil characters as they move closer to or farther away from the proposed social behavior. Their actions encourage the audience to either champion or reject these characters accordingly.

The tension between the good and evil characters evoked by the melodrama places the audience between the forces of good and evil. But, in a twist of the typical audience role in melodrama, where audience members simply watch or listen to the battle between good and evil, Sabido inserted the audience into the heart of the action – by representing audience members through a third group, one that is uncertain about the social behavior in question. These "uncertain" characters are intended to be those with which the target audience most closely identifies. As we will see later, it is also these "transitional" characters who will guide the audience members through their own evolution toward adoption of desired behavior changes.

ARCHETYPES AND STEREOTYPES – THEORY OF THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS: JUNG, 1970

Jung's theory states that there are certain scripts or stories with familiar patterns and characters that people play out throughout history. These universal scripts or stories appear in myths, legends and folktales around the world. Jung posited that these universal scripts or stories are the "archetypes of a collective unconscious" and share common characters such as "Prince Charming," "the mother," and "the warrior." Jung further suggests that these archetypes are expressions of a primordial, collective unconscious shared by diverse cultures.^[10] Sabido used the archetypes described in Jung's theory as a basis for developing characters that embody universal psychological and physiological characteristics to address themes within the serial drama. Through these characters, the viewer finds an archetypal essence of him or herself that interacts with the social message. Sabido portrayed these archetypes as positive or negative stereotypes, representing the societal norms of the target audience.

Sabido-style serial dramas rely on extensive formative research to identify the culture- or country-specific versions of these archetypes and to identify local archetypes that represent the prosocial values (or the antithesis of these values) that will be addressed in the serial drama. If the formative research upon which the serial drama is based is done properly, the scriptwriters will be able to develop archetypal characters with which audience members will be able to identify. The

formative research is used to develop a grid of positive and negative social “values” which these positive and negative characters will embody.

SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY: BANDURA, 1977 & SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY: BANDURA, 1986

Social Learning Theory, as articulated by the Stanford University psychologist Professor Albert Bandura, explains how people learn new behaviors from vicariously experiencing the actions of others. A key to the use of Social Learning Theory in Sabido-style serial dramas is use of appropriate models that are visibly rewarded (or punished) in front of the audience, in order to convert the values that are being promoted by the serial drama into behavior. Social Learning Theory postulates that positive rewards have a vicarious effect upon the observer (in this case, the audience) and can motivate audience members to practice similar behavior(s). Punishing a role model for practicing a socially undesirable behavior likewise provides a vicarious experience for the observer and can inhibit his or her practice of the same behavior. This adoption is called modeling because it is based on the role model’s conduct. Through modeling it is possible to acquire new forms of behavior and to strengthen or weaken certain behaviors. In Sabido-style serial dramas, characters “teach” audience members via modeling so that they are able to make a recommended response.

Sabido determined that three types of characters are fundamental to successful modeling by audience members. The first two types of characters are positive and negative role models. They embody positive and negative behaviors concerning the social issues addressed in the serial drama (and are based on Jung’s theory of archetypes and stereotypes, described above). These characters will not change during the course of the serial drama, but are repeatedly rewarded or punished for their behaviors. The consequences of these positive or negative behaviors must be directly linked to the behavior in question: for example, a truck driver character that is practicing at-risk sexual behavior should suffer from a sexually transmitted infection or even contract HIV, but should not be the victim of a traffic accident.

The third type of character is the “transitional character.” These characters are neither positive nor negative but somewhere in the middle. These transitional characters play the pivotal role in a Sabido-style serial drama, and are designed to represent members of the target audience. The transitional characters’ evolution toward the desired behavior is that which the audience members will use to model their own behavior change.

TRIUNE BRAIN THEORY: MACLEAN, 1973 AND THEORY OF THE TONE: SABIDO, 2002

Miguel Sabido began his career as a theater director. In his work in the theater, Sabido discovered that actors can have different effects on their audiences by channeling their energy through three different body zones. If actors focus their energy behind their eyes, the tone of the production would be conceptual. If the actor focused energy in the base of the neck, the tone of the production would be emotive. If the actor focused energy in the pubic area, the tone of the production would be primal.^[11] Sabido instinctively understood that in order to motivate or persuade, it is necessary to provide a complete message that speaks to these three levels of perception. However, he lacked a theoretical explanation for what he was observing. He eventually discovered Paul MacLean’s Concept of the Triune Brain, which presents a model of human brain structure with three levels of perception – cognitive, affective, and predispositional.^[12]

Sabido was particularly taken by MacLean’s division of the brain into three zones. In his book, *A Triune Concept of the Brain and Behavior*, MacLean defines these three zones:

- The first zone is the reptilian zone of the brain, and is common to all animal life – its purpose is self-preservation.
- The second zone of the brain is the paleo-mammalian brain. This zone is common to all mammals and is the source of most of memory, and is the seat of emotions. As such, it is the primary residence of human values.
- The third zone of the brain is the neo-mammalian brain. MacLean posits that this zone is exclusive to the human race, and is the center of human cognition.^[13]

MacLean's theory gave Sabido the scientific basis he needed for focusing on the emotional (second zone) and human instinctive/impulse (first zone) as the basis for his serial dramas, with the third (cognitive zone) used primarily to reinforce the first and second zones messages in the drama.^[14]

In summary, the Sabido methodology for development of mass media entertainment-education serial dramas is unique in that it is designed according to elements of communication and behavioral theories. These confirm specific values, attitudes, and behaviors that viewers can use in their own personal advancement.

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- [4] Bandura A. Social learning theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall; 1977.
- [5] MacLean PD. A triune concept of the brain and behavior, including psychology of memory, sleep and dreaming. In: Kral VA et al. (Eds.). Proceedings of the Ontario Mental Health Foundation Meeting at Queen's University. Toronto: University of Toronto Press; 1973.
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- [8] Lazarfeld PF, Berelson B, Gaudet H. The People's Choice. New York: Columbia University Press; 1944.
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- [12] MacLean PD. A triune concept of the brain and behavior, including psychology of memory, sleep and dreaming. In: Kral VA et al. (Eds.). Proceedings of the Ontario Mental Health Foundation Meeting at Queen's University. Toronto: University of Toronto Press; 1973.
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