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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Persuasive Techniques in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh: With an Emphasis on the Position of Piran Weise in the Turanian World

Meisam Yousefi Sorkhani ¹  | Seyed Mohsen Banihashemi ²   | Yousef Khojir ³  |
Fatemeh Azizabadi Farahi ⁴ 

1. Ph.D. Candidate in Media Management, Department of Cultural and Media Management, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. Email: meisam.yousefisorkhani@iau.ir
2. Corresponding author, Associate Professor, Department of Culture and communication, Faculty of Culture and communication, University of Soore, Tehran, Iran. E-mail: mohsen.bani@soore.ac.ir
3. Associate Professor, Department of Culture and communication, Faculty of Culture and communication, University of Soore, Tehran, Iran. E-mail: khojir@soore.ac.ir
4. Associate Professor, Department of Cultural Management and Media, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. Email: f.afarahani@iau.ir

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction:

The 'Shahnameh', Ferdowsi's immortal masterpiece, is undeniably one of the foundational pillars of Iranian national and cultural identity. To assert that without the Shahnameh, the distinctive Iranian identity would have faced a serious challenge - though perhaps appearing biased - is not far from the truth. Numerous nations that existed long before us have either collapsed or undergone such profound transformations that their language, culture, and customs have been altered beyond recognition, precisely due to the absence of a solid pillar such as the *Shahnameh*. It must be acknowledged that, despite the considerable body of valuable research conducted on

this monumental work across various disciplines - including literature and related fields - the Shahnameh remains a source that has yet to be systematically explored within the domain of media studies. Its rich potential for understanding numerous media mechanisms - such as media operations, cognitive warfare, persuasion, and narrative warfare - has remained largely untapped. The Shahnameh has not been examined as a resource for elucidating audience persuasion techniques, nor has it been studied to delineate strategic roadmaps for persuasion. Indeed, it is possible to draw upon the diverse persuasive strategies embedded in the Shahnameh and adapt them to contemporary media contexts, thereby generating novel methods of audience influence. When approached as a successful model of media production and message transmission, the Shahnameh reveals a wealth of persuasive mechanisms that merit identification and application. Undoubtedly, Ferdowsi's Shahnameh stands as a successful exemplar in producing and transmitting messages across time - from the past to the present. It is a successful case of audience persuasion, one that not only has retained its audience's engagement but has also conveyed its messages from generation to generation and from heart to heart.

Method:

This study was conducted using a descriptive-analytical method. The relevant materials were first collected and categorized through library and documentary research. Following organization and review, the content was analyzed employing the cognitive dissonance model approach, one of the most widely applied persuasion frameworks. This model was selected in order to address the central research question: what persuasive methods did Piran Vise employ to influence Afrasiab, the greatest and most complex Turanian prince on earth?

Piran Vise plays a significant role in three critical junctures within the Shahnameh:

1. Piran as a mediator in Siavash's life
2. Piran as a mediator in Keykhosro's life
3. Piran as a mediator in Bijan's life

This article analyzes and examines his persuasive techniques across these three critical periods.

Findings:

The findings indicate that in the first and second sections, Piran Vise, utilizing the cognitive dissonance model and employing techniques such as highlighting, rival creation, repeated citation, testifying, and attesting, seeks to generate new beliefs in Afrasiab and subsequently alter his attitude toward Siavash and Keykhosro. Furthermore, in the third section - Piran's role as a mediator in Bijan's life - he operates in accordance with the six-stage model of McGuire and Papageorgis (also known as inoculation theory). By employing techniques such as fear induction, invocation of prior histories, utilization of appropriate tools, and demonstration of benevolent intentions, Piran disrupts Afrasiab's established beliefs and induces a shift in his attitude.

Conclusion:

The text of the Shahnameh demonstrates that the persuasive methods employed within it are remarkably precise and contextually appropriate. In examining the approaches of the elders of Weise - represented as the wisest and greatest warriors of Turan - it becomes evident that their persuasive techniques proved effective across all three sections under investigation, and persuasion was indeed achieved. Moreover, techniques such as rival creation, negotiation, strategic positioning, and several other novel findings identified in this article can be incorporated into the broader category of persuasive techniques.

Data Availability Statement

Data available on request from the authors.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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