

BROADCAST MANAGEMENT STRATEGY OF MALAYSIAN PUBLIC TELEVISION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract: *This research will focus on the broadcast management strategy in Malaysian public television station named as Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) as a way for its business sustainability in the digital age. The digital revolution has modified the way television consumed. Audio-visual content can still be enjoyed watch live shows via television sets but recently the audience can also watch it by using their other screen devices such as mobile phones, personal computers, tablets, or other gadgets. Broadcast managers, executives, and the production team have an important role in the success of a program through responsibility for pre-production, production, and post-production activities. It is not an easy thing for the production team to maintain the aired programs with high demand and ratings. The theory used in this research is the Theory of Broadcast Media Management Strategy by Terry (2012), covering four broadcast management functions as planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC). The research employing a qualitative case study that will be using online personal interviews as the main source of data collection.*

Keywords: *Public service television, Radio Televisyen Malaysia, Creative content, Broadcast management, Digital age.*

Introduction

Public service broadcasting (PSB) stations around the world play an important role in the main pillars of its national media. The vast development of the digital age today has challenged the existence of public broadcasting companies are in a complicated and difficult situation. Maximum effort and commitment are required so that the production of a television show involves technological innovation, changes in the working system of broadcasters, as well as other support services.

PSB also plays a big role in the community through the distribution of programs in the form of information, education, and entertainment. Various forms of programming, editorial freedom in the news section, accurate, transparent funding, PSB's responsibility can increase as well as support democratic activities in the media. Before the great digital growth, television stations broadcasters had a confined audience. Television audiences were restricted to the limited television channels they had accessible. Higher programme ratings meant bigger advertisement revenues, and distribution advantages gave the broadcaster greater power to monetize. Nowadays, those improvements have all, but vanished consumers have occasional gain access to many television channels and are continuously a click away from brand new program (UNESCO, 2005).

To face the globally challenging in the era of digital technology development challenges, the creative media industries' perspective needs to be creative and innovative to television content production in planning, actuating, organizing, and actuating procedures among the production team. The major television content creation, remarkably concerning



the central part such as a making-of fresh television shows (Bleyen et al., 2014). Due to handling the challenge in the era of digital technology, broadcasters need to understand the audience better to ensure they can appropriately schedule the best television content to reach the most valuable audiences. On the other hand, advertisers need to analyse the television audience and to communicate with their existing and future consumers.

The Research Problem

Billions of people around the globe got an enormous, benefited effect on the appearance of television as a communication medium. The reputation of television from a great invention has generated a special setting as home education and entertainment. Its intimacy towards many audiences has made television as the truly valuable resource of informational, educational and entertainment resource material.

Studies on broadcast management on Malaysia Broadcast Stations involving their planning, actuating, organizing, and controlling procedures perspectives have not been yet explored widely since the latest study on neighbouring country's researcher Briandana & Ifran (2019), which conducted a qualitative single case study on Metro TV, Indonesia to sustain in the era of the digital age. So, the problem statement of this study is to sustain in the broadcasting industry, Malaysian public television station needs an innovative broadcast management strategy involving planning, actuating, organizing, and controlling procedures on its production team. Currently, the rise of the digital revolution in has made conventional broadcasting stations around the world have declined on their revenue, quality of content, and found difficulties to survive and sustain in the broadcasting industry. In addition, many television stations start complaining due to the change of digital age (Sudibyo & Patria, 2013). Without an effective broadcast management strategy, it is difficult to assist Malaysian public television stations to achieve its goals.

The United Kingdom's (UK) television viewing habits also changing due to the continued rise of online services such as YouTube Channel and Netflix. The 1% decreased recorded in 2018 compared to the year before was the substantial rate of decline involving young adults and children. Hence, declining viewing habits not also involving a younger group of people in the UK broadcast industry. In the worrying situation when linear broadcasters continue to produce high-quality on-demand broadcast content with proper planning, actuating, organizing, and controlling procedures securing the fund will slowly increasing their viewership rate in the decade's future (Ofcom, 2019).

The creative industry needs a platform and channel for the best talent investment in recruiting and preserving the continuity of the originality of this complex art form. Therefore, the development of creative and innovative content is an important opportunity and a lucrative investment for the future of the broadcasting industry. It requires strong cooperation to mobilize television production energy in providing the best products to the audience. If there is work that is meaningful, unique, and important, then it will ensure job opportunities in this industry will maintain and sustain in the broadcast business setting (Knaebel, 2020).

From the Malaysian perspective, reports from Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission or MCMC by sector, telecommunications contributed RM35.86 billion or 70% to the total revenue of the domestic communications and multimedia industry in 2018, a rise of 3.7% from the previous year. The increase in rates is due to the growth in total consumer demand for data and Internet services. In terms of the broadcasting industry, the revenue of this sector slightly decreased by 0.3% to RM6.4 billion in 2018 compared to RM6.42 billion recorded in 2017. The decline in total revenue

was influenced by the decrease in advertising revenue and Pay TV Subscriptions (MCMC, 2019).

Radio Televisyen Malaysia or RTM is owned by the government as a national television station. National television is a free-to-air (FTA) television broadcasting station owned and maintained by the community by the government for programs in the form of information, education, and culture. Therefore, RTM plays the role of national television by highlighting television programs that contain a positive and high moral message to the formation of a glorious society. Television revenue from advertising decreased to RM14.7 million in 2019 compared to 2018 revenue of RM42.5 million and RM 45.7 million in 2017. One of the main reasons for the decrease in advertising revenue after the acquisition by RTM Marketing and Promotion Division from external consultants, namely Zenith Consulting Sdn. Bhd. (MCMC Annual Report, 2019).

Meanwhile, low-value content from conventional television scheduled slowly will continue to lose its audiences with an increasingly nonlinear digital platform if they do not have a suitable broadcast management strategy to face this tremendous challenge in the era of digital technology. Therefore, this research aims to explore the broadcast management initiatives of the Malaysian public broadcasting station, which is Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) in implementing its programming plans to survive in the digital age.

Literature Review

Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM)

The history of radio in Malaysia began in 1921 when Al Birch, an electrical engineer from the Johor Government brought the first radio set to the country. He later set up a similar association in Penang and the Malaysian Wireless Association in Kuala Lumpur. In 1930, Sir Earl of the Port Authority of Singapore launched shortwave broadcasts every two weeks either on Sundays or Wednesdays. The effort was then continued by the Malaysian Wireless Association, which launched its broadcast from Bukit Petaling, Kuala Lumpur via a 325-meter wave. This was followed by the efforts of Sir Shenton Thomas who opened the British Broadcasting Corporation Studio using its transmitter in Caldecott Hill, Singapore on 11 March 1937. Subsequently, the British Malaya Broadcasting Corporation was taken over by the Straits Settlements and became part of the British Ministry of Information better known as the Corporation. Malayan Broadcasting (RTM, 2020).

In 1960, for the first-time commercials were broadcast on radio and it became a new source of government revenue. When Malaysia was formed on 16 September 1963, the announcer on duty using „Inilah Radio Malaysia“ or This is Radio Malaysia was used as an introduction by the announcer on duty when. The broadcasting field opened another page with Angkasapuri starting its broadcast on 6 October 1969. Radio and television later merged under the Ministry of Information. The growth of the first channel, Network One, encouraged the formation of a second channel on 17 November 1969. At the Angkasapuri Complex, swift development took place in the field of broadcasting either radio or television. The national radio network starts 24 hours to serve all listeners, especially those who work nights. The development of new media has a huge impact on the dissemination of information to the public. Realizing this fact, RTM took a step forward by introducing web streaming TV and Radio as early as 1996. Starting in 2012 the service was expanded with the use of mobile streaming. As of 2013, RTM has three (3) TV stations (TV1, TV2, TVi and Galaksi Muzik) and 34 Radio stations that can be watched and listened to via web and mobile streaming (RTM Mobile). Currently, RTM is taking a step forward in line with current technological developments by featuring five (5) TV stations (TV1, TV2, TV Okey,



Berita RTM, and RTM Sports) and 34 Radio stations that can be watched and listened via the web (rtmklik.rtm.gov.my) and RTM Mobile Application (Ibid, 2020).

Broadcast Management

The ability to manage change is one of the skills and means of life of broadcast station managers as well as competing against any drastic changes in the current style of viewing and dealing with innovations in the field of communication and multimedia technology. The recent transformation in the digital technology age has added pressure for broadcast station managers to remain competitive and sustain in the broadcasting industry business activities.

The field of broadcast management is growing rapidly by involving diversity, specialization, technology concentration, and internationalization aspects that dramatically change the business structure of a broadcast media. Media users will change if they are exposed to the effects of technological change on their lifestyle. Thus, the main challenge for executives and broadcast managers in the evolving environment driven by the Internet is the ability to balance their business achievements between creative and technological initiatives driven in the era of the digital media revolution (Mahoney, 2020).

The famous Bill Gates in 1996 wrote an essay entitled „Content Is King“ in which he predicted a successful mass media leader if he wisely used the Internet as a market for ideas, experiences, and product and content markets. In addition, the technology available on the internet can allow broadcast executives and managers to be free to charge in the production of media products, namely television programs with the assumption and hope to attract the attention of many viewers (Evan, 2017).

Terry (2012) describes four basic functions of management, namely, planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. In completing this study, the researcher will apply the four broadcasting management functions adapted from one of the leading researchers in the field of management known to the acronym of POAC in achieving the research goals based on the description of each function studied:

a) Planning is a very important phase for a broadcast station in achieving its objectives. The initial planning process to produce a planned television show will determine whether the organization's goals and objectives will be achieved successfully. It is a series of activities related to efforts to formulate programs that are useful to the target group and everything to be done, defining objectives and policies, directions to be taken, and procedures and methods to follow to achieve the goal. Careful planning needs to be carried out in the management of the broadcast media involving the pre-production process including determining the idea or concept of filling the television program to be produced, the sources, and budget estimates.

b) Organizing is a process by which broadcast stations organize and distribute their work among members of the organization and, the goals of the organization will be achieved if implemented efficiently and smoothly. Organizational functions in broadcast media management can be realized through the distribution of their production tasks. In the process of television production, each employee carries out the duties assigned to them such as producers, production assistants, graphic and set creative teams, event directors, camera operator, lighting, audio man, makeup, and wardrobe, editors, and other supporting teams.

c) Actuating is the least important function in which broadcast production activities continue to be the implementation phase in achieving the goals of broadcast stations. In broadcast media management, this function can be established during the production

process. At the time of this production, the producer worked with the program director to create the program as planned. At the same time, television producers will be conducting live program recordings for both the broadcast and the delayed telecast through the package that will be provided later.

d) Controlling is an activity that acts as a way of comparing plans to what happens. According to Koontz (1972) as quoted in Janakiram (2010), control is the act of measuring and correcting appearance with the aim of ensuring that the goals and plans that have been decided to have been successfully implemented as previously planned. Therefore, controlling has involving the steps of the establishment of standard performance, measurement of actual performance, comparison of actual performance with the standards and finding out deviation if any, and the corrective action. In the process of producing a television program, the controlling function can be realized in the post-production process. During this stage, the editing team will edit the program material; therefore, the content will be more appealing. The production team will include creative and innovative aspect which involving images or videos, graphics, visual and sound effects, and other aspects that will make the program material give more impactful to the audience.

Creative Content

It is not easy to be a creative person in the broadcast industry. It viewed as one of the most complicated in human mental activity. The element of one's creativity normally closely related to extensive from educational background, social experience, human development, which contribute to variety of skills applied (Runco & Sakamoto, 1999). Real creativity is a strange and difficult concept to describe beyond imagination, and therefore difficult to define the term creativity due to uncertainty about the true meaning of the concept that no definition is generally acceptable by previous researchers. (Andriopoulos & Lowe, 2000).

Two dimensions of creativity have been brought together, with the first dimension is the originality of ideas, which is a phenomenon that occurs in daily life that results in one can act creatively as an important aspect of his contribution to the working environment and requires many parties involved in creative work. Meanwhile, the second dimension of creativity involves the meaning of use refers to the material or method to evaluate a new idea that is practically used (Shalley et al., 2004). Additionally, the creative industry such as broadcasting requires the production of innovative original works for each television producer who produces a lively show in the form of news as well as current affairs, entertainment, drama, magazines, sports, and so on. Creative television content is the basis of acceptance by the target audience who watch it for their own despair. To be a creative television producer usually is not coming from inborn time however can be taught to accelerate mind action if they eager to change.

Several government organizations and scholars have provided their own definitions of the concept of innovation (Lijster, 2018). New and up-to-date concepts and ideas require careful planning by television producers in producing quality programs that are acceptable to the audience. Innovation also requires a creative touch in the making of a television show to have a profound effect on the formation of the mind, social society coincides with the function of communication as an audience who can form their thoughts and to shape the thinking style of the people.

Innovation involves the process of developing new ideas or applying new ideas to practical activities that can produce applications that benefit the whole community. The application of new concepts in the process of innovation in the production of a better



method that will produce something useful. Every change that happens demands that one must think out of the ordinary. The advantages possessed by the brain that has given to us need to be treated more wisely and very disappointingly if it fails to act as much as possible (Chapain et al., 2010). A television show producer needs to use the entire history of life experiences, and the little things that happen in the environment in the production of creative and quality television content through the healthy competition of the broadcasting industry.

The Research Methods

This research used a qualitative single case study a research method. This method will provide a space and opportunity to explore deeper understanding into the process of producing television programs in Malaysia based on inductive practical ideas in evaluating actions taken by broadcast managers and executives in planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling television programs process to stay relevant toward their audiences.

The primary data in the research would be conducted through in-depth online interviewing the informants. There were totally 5 (five) informants from Radio Television Malaysia. The interviewing approach is the upmost extensively source for data collection activity in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). The technological changes in the evolution of Internet penetration over the last few decades ago have switched to online interviewing experience in qualitative research, fortunately, solved the problems related closed contact to face-to-face interviews that normally applied before this (Hooley et al., 2012). Currently, due to the social distancing on COVID-19 Pandemic, these new norms of interviewing activity have been applied will assist the researcher to continue and accomplish their research result positively.

The reason behind the researcher choosing the semi-structured online interview rather than a structured interview is that it is offering adequate flexibilities approach with different informants while still covering the same angle in the data collection activity. Through the online interview, the researcher is suggesting using Google Meet (GM) or other video conferencing platform suitable with a recorded session to secure the audio-visual conversation and to ensure the recorded meeting safely keep for future usage if needed.

Results and Discussions

Based on the data results from an online in-depth interview with 5 (five) informants from different department of Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM), the production team applied 4 (four) functions of broadcast management strategies as designed by Terry (2012) as planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling.

a) Planning

The first research objective is to identify the planning process of Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) to sustain their business in the digital age have drawn the questions involving the method used by RTM to evaluate the effectiveness of its broadcast operations. Based on Informant 1 reported that the broadcast station wants to evaluate a program based on the rating. Besides that, Informant 2 also gave the same reason towards this matter by stressing the important of having the rating aspects as the evaluative tools. Whatever the producer wants to make a program, if there is no rating involve, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of their broadcast operations. Informant 3 added that the rating process in RTM was using two consultant companies which are AC Nielsen for television audiences, and GfK Radio Audience Measurement (RAM) to measure radio audiences.

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Informant 4 also stated the importance to have ratings because the broadcast production team needs to know who the audience and listeners are on RTM. In addition, another Informant 5 stated that data obtained from audience ratings can be used for program future development. This informant added when the production team gets the data, it is easy for them to slot in a suitable program accordingly.

The second question under this phase is dealing with the division's program production planning in improving RTM's strategic objectives over time. All informants stated that the RTM's mission is to win the hearts of the people through radio, television and digital platforms that building an informed Malaysian society. Informant 1 stated that the importance of RTM's mission and vision as the basic guidelines towards all divisions in RTM, namely as Documentaries, Entertainment, Drama, Sports and involving News & Current Affairs Divisions. Informant 2 stated that all divisions in RTM asked to produce a work that can be lifted to the maximum result to the target audiences. Informant 3 stated that usually, in the preparation of the work, the production team will discuss in a team and not follow our own interest but, they must survey all the different market requirements according to the era of 70s, 80s till now. Furthermore, the television production team must be looked back to meet the needs of viewers who crave a refreshing program at the same time there is an element of oldies. Informant 4 stated that to produce a creative television work that is solid and excellent, at least will reach 70% to 80% is good enough already and the informant believes that there is nobody can reach 100% perfect in television production. Informant 5 stated that in earning a television production work, brainstorming activity is the most important. First, the production team must do research because without having proper planning they will not get an interesting and better-quality program.

b) Organizing

The second research objectives are to determine the organizing process of Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) to sustain their business in the digital age have drawn the questions involving the division of work that can help towards areas of specialization in the various activities of concern. All informants agreed that there is no need to worry about the division of work in RTM because it under the art and talent scheme, and before they are entering to join most of them in the qualification of mass communication and media studies field of studies including broadcasting and another program. Informant 1 stated that in RTM there is a unique situation whereby there are certain job position is not based on the higher academic grade that depends on talent and experience specialties. Informant 3 stated that they know where the limits are and the staff's relationship with superiors and what work needs to be done. Informant 5 stated that the tasks for any job descriptions are often being divided accordingly to production and over-the-top (OTT) platform before they want to start any project.

The second question under this objective is whether RTM officer understands their working function of the use of power clearly. All informants agreed that the new RTM staff are required to successfully complete their Basic Production Course for 3 (three) months before they will be assigned to the production divisions. In addition, Informants stated that the field of television production in RTM requires the element of creativity and innovation besides giving high working commitment. Informant 1 stated that mostly RTM was very lucky because their staff are very fast learners and good because most of them are information technology savvy. In terms of division of tasks, all informants agreed that there is no problem except for the new staff with 1 to 2 years of working experience in television production.



c) Actuating

This broadcast management function can be achieved during television production development. As a leader, they must have a leadership style to ensure whatever their order will be delivered to the subordinate accordingly to the organization's objectives designed before. Based on Informant 1 the democratic leadership style is needed if a manager or leader wants to deliver their message. The manager must call for everyone to give their opinion when needed. All informants agreed that television production teams were in the creative field, this is not the idea from a manager however may coming from other production team members in various position because creative things are very subjective. Like a democratic leader who can give an opinion and can argue together as well as make the staff around and subordinates can feel have team spirits in that project, but then again not just the passenger.

The full commitment given in the job is very important to the successful process in actuating process in television production teams. There is a need for staff to provide their full support to deliver their assigned work. Informant 1 stated that if you are a leader, it is very important for you to contribute the ideas first and present the line-up to all staff and then brainstorm ideas together. In addition, the other informants stated that as a leader they must not demean their subordinate staff and should respect them because sometimes the ideas given are good together with unique points of view.

d) Controlling

The controlling function in broadcast management involving the post-production activity from broadcast managers and the television production team's point of view. All the informants stated that if the production team wants to monitor the program that is produced is good or not, must first produce a quality program and the second aspect is by program promotion. Besides having a television and radio platform RTM has another platform which over 80 channels through social media that contributed more than 3 (three) millions of followers. Informant 1 stated that there is a need to build up a good rapport with everyone involved in the program promoting the program through the cooperation with other external agencies that are collaborating the television program by using their services as well. In addition, based on informants stated that after the new broadcast program has been aired, they will look after the responses from the audience through AC Nielsen rating data and social media platform. Informant 1 stated that the production team will see at least the data after 4 (four) times the broadcast program being broadcasted, then from there, they will see the lack of programs for any improvement made.

Conclusion

In concluding this research paper, Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) is proposed to have a new broadcast management strategy dealing with functions in management which is planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling to maintain its business in the digital age. RTM must move forward in their planning activities by introducing their new television programs. By practicing the program's mix and match approach by adapting from others television production programs in all aspects locally and internationally. Historically, since Malaysian Independence Day, RTM is a superior broadcast station and everyone focused on them and currently, RTM is moving ahead towards the usage of rating as measurement tools to evaluate their broadcast programming. The Strategic Division will collect data and audience research. For example, after airing 13 episodes of the program, the production team can obtain audience survey data for reference, and they will use it to make

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improvements for the program that will be continued or new ones. As for a record, the production team only make a program and they do not know if the program is good or not, whether the audience likes or not their television program because they must understand that RTM is not the only television station but has to compete with other terrestrial private television stations and satellite pay-television station in Malaysia.

Furthermore, the human aspect also involves managing people in broadcast management. As respectable broadcast managers, they will always be looking after any of the consequences before making their decision. If someone wants to be a great leader, they must be firm and do not be like "empty cans that make more noise" and applying the "walk the talk" idea. In facing the challenges of global digital technology, Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) need to remain competitive and still healthy in producing the best television content. The local television production team needs a clear broadcast management strategy on its planning, actuating, organizing, and actuating procedures to ensure that the television content produced has a place in the hearts of its target audience. The production crew has an important role in creating the success of a program through the pre-production, production, and post-production process to ensure they will be relevant in the broadcasting business.

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