

# **The Strategic Management and the Adjustment of ASEAN Radio Broadcasting Organizations**

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## **Abstract**

The research objective of The Strategic Management and the Adjustment of the Radio Broadcasting Organizations in ASEAN was to study 1) the management of the radio broadcast media organizations in ASEAN, and 2) the adjustment of the radio in the ASEAN countries. The qualitative study of three countries in ASEAN, including Lao People's Democratic Republic, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and the Republic of Indonesia. The methods of data collecting were interviewing staff and stake holder of the radio stations.

The study found that the radio station in Southeast Asia, the Laos P.D.R., Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and the Republic of Indonesia established in the aftermath of the ideology conflict between the countries and the colonialism during World War II, including the countries of the bipolar: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA). For the structure of the broadcasting system of the three countries, determined the different of radio management in each country. Laos P.D.R. and Myanmar radio station were under control of the authorities of the state, while Indonesia was free from dictatorship. For the management of radio stations in all three countries have managed the organization by a duty-based principle. The executives always have done well to organize each department, put a man to the right job, coordinating, leading, and conducting an evaluation in by means of management.

The main factors impact on the radio stations and staff to implement and adapt all tasks were the changing of global society emerged by communication technology. So it should be great if ASEAN radio stations intend to create and exchange the radio programs or any professional development programs as well, along with the ASEAN Community's goal.

**Keywords:** Mass Media Management, Radio Broadcasting Organizations, ASEAN

## **Introduction**

Each type of mass media from each society is consisted of different characteristics and qualifications. In addition, it also has different promptness or ability level to perform its duties under different scopes. Similarly, political differences also affect to different operation of each mass media.

Although the operation of mass media in each country is different, most of them emphasize on the term, "Rights and Freedom of Mass Media". This is considered as the legitimacy that is often used by the mass media as the standard of their practice without the intervention of international organizations. Based on some information from "Freedom House" that is an international organization creating the Index on Freedom of Mass Media 2010 covering 196 countries throughout the world. It was found that the overall picture on freedom of world media had been worse continuously for 8 years. When comparing with 10

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ASEAN countries, Thailand was ranked last place after Philippines and Indonesia because Thailand's freedom of the media have only partially.

The Ninth ASEAN Summit held during October 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003, in Bali, Republic of Indonesia, ASEAN leaders mutually signed in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II or Bali Concord II to approve establishment of “ASEAN Community” in 2020 consisted of 3 pillars including ASEAN Security Community (ASC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). Accordingly, the researcher considered on the importance of understanding on mass media organizations of AEEAN countries in order to study on guidelines and methodology for operating businesses of mass media organizations, the roles of mass media towards society, and problems solution or adjustment of mass media organizations for responding to the future world.

As a result, this research project on “The Strategic Management and the Adjustment of the Radio Broadcasting Organizations in ASEAN” aims to collect data on management of radio broadcasting organizations in ASEAN as well as the adjustment of the radio in the ASEAN countries. This research was conducted as the comparative research for obtaining information that may be useful for creating database and connection in seeking for cooperation to create some activities or programs on mass media in the future among ASEAN countries.

### **Objectives**

1. To study on the management of the radio broadcast media organizations in ASEAN.
2. To study on the adjustment of the radio in the ASEAN countries.

### **Research Methodology**

The researcher uses the qualitative methodology for studying through 20 key informants, i.e., some representatives of some private and public radio broadcasting organizations in 3 countries including Lao People's Democratic Republic, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and Republic of Indonesia. Data were collected by conducting in-depth interview via tape recorder, transcription, comprehension, interpretation, meaning checking, classification, and content analysis.

### **Results**

The result of the study conducted through in-depth interview with some persons related to radio broadcasting organizations (including administrators of public radio stations, entrepreneurs of private radio broadcasting businesses, DJs of public and private broadcasting organizations, audiences, and scholars) in those three countries showed that:

#### **1. Management and Adjustment of Radio Broadcast Media Organizations in Lao People's Democratic Republic**

“Laos National Radio” is the mainstream media of this country with history on battle against overseas countries who were trying to rule this country under their colony. This media has been used by many generations of its leaders to arouse their people to fight with foreigners until they have been successful in expelling foreign enemies from their country. Subsequently, Laos National Radio hen become the major organization in broadcasting and publicizing news of public sector under supervision of Ministry of Cultural and Tourism Advertisement and News that is the organization emphasizing on controlling news of public sector. However, with special characteristics of radio media that can access to people

extensively with cheap cost when comparing with another electronic media like television, income earned from business advertisements are inserted in management because income is returned to be the budget for developing media and society further.

Since some parts of Laos' radio stations are under Ministry of National Defense and Police for controlling national security, its management is operated upon the policies of public sector mainly. Its employees have to be patient highly because its reward is low. However, working for government is considered as such a stable job although they may be required to seek for additional income upon abilities, experiences, and popularity of people.

For developing or adjusting management of radio stations in the future, government specified and created development plan of these radio stations periodically upon its duties. The direction of this development is under economic situations including updating radio stations, sending personnel to be trained and continue their study in other countries or network organizations providing support on updating with current stream of the world. Since economic status of Lao People's Democratic Republic is quite poor, it is necessary for its public sector to ask for cooperation and support from its association countries and national network by emphasizing on asking for cooperation from association countries with similar administrative system such as China, Vietnam, etc.

For private organizations participating in radio broadcasting business, they obtain concession from public sector to purchase or charter period or subcontracting. Such private organizations must be able to accept the conditions on broadcasting that mainly depend on news of public sector. This subcontracting of private sector shall be operated at the site of the radios possessed by government. Moreover, devices and tools of public sector must be used for communicating with audiences. For other programs that are not related to public security (e.g., entertainment with main income from advertisements).

To survive the program, besides creating content to catch audiences' interest, characters of DJ or host are also important. They have to be active and always seek for knowledge with style and language abilities for attracting and building relationship with audiences because culture and society of Laos is looking after and getting together like real relatives as well as having radios as their friends. According to this kind of society, it affects to new generation DJs in making understanding on social conditions along with self-development to be modernized for gaining acceptance and being able to survive in radio broadcasting field as same as their senior DJs. Moreover, Laos's society is also simple and under the control of the rulers, therefore, movements in this country lack of power causing everyone perceive that they have to accept government's conditions to live safely and peacefully.

Radio broadcasting occupation in Lao People's Democratic Republic is honored because radio media was started by national leaders who were members of the royal family. They used radio media as a tool for freeing their country from invasion of colonial countries successfully. This success has been originated with establishment of radio establishment of this country. Most Laotians feel similar with contents or policies motivating them to cooperate in freeing their country.

## **2. Management and Adjustment of Radio Broadcast Media Organizations in Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

There were some limitations on contacting for interviewing with representatives of radio broadcasting media of public sector in this research because it was conducted while the government was announcing the president election. Consequently, the researcher was able to access some data sources that were not owned by public sector from 8 informants and they all had the same opinions on freedom of media that must present the truth without being the tool of the government. Previously, radio broadcasting of Republic of the Union of Myanmar was under the control of the military government solely while private radio broadcasting media was inspected and arrested if they had any idea that was inconsistent with the operation of military government. Accordingly, all of scholars, journalists, and DJs had explicit opinions towards news driving by specifying that the government should present extensive and true news as well as billing some laws on media properly and accept the operation of mass media groups equally.

While conducting this research, although Myanmar government relieved strictness on supervising media, mass media still requested the government to accept changing of the world. However, protestors were arrested and country was still closed continuously. Nevertheless, protestors and media had never been surrender and they have strived to lead Myanmar to democracy. Giving knowledge or opportunity allowing people to give their opinions and understanding towards administrative system appeared in the forms of “illegal radio stations” or “radio station broadcasting from other countries” broadcasting true news that were opposite with that presented by the government. Moreover, broadcasting news from radio station located in other countries became specific characteristic of Myanmar radio media using frequency to broadcast their voice to all people in their country. Their goal was giving all people in Myanmar some opportunities to perceive the truth thoroughly and equally.

Accordingly, adjustment of radio broadcast media organizations in Republic of the Union of Myanmar emphasized on presenting true news and accept the truth and they believed that media was able to lead democracy to Myanmar society. Event experts have been trying to conduct some researches to find the results for the ultimate benefit through reflecting the problems on management of public sector on authorizing power to people. In addition, they have also hoped that this action would lead to changing that was truly consistent with people’s demands. Simultaneously, private media were trying to find some channels to develop their own media to meet with proper stream as supported by foreign countries.

## **3. Management and Adjustment of Radio Broadcast Media Organizations in Republic of Indonesia**

Republic of Indonesia has representative democracy as its administrative system leading to openness of provision on radio broadcasting business. In addition, we could see that radio stations of public sector were trying to control other radio stations in Indonesia.

Although public sector has been trying to control mass media to be under regulations according to broadcasting laws by suing licenses their tools, such control is impossible because its landscape as an island. Accordingly, private sector has used the gap of government’s control to operate broadcasting business since the period before national revolution period by claiming on benefits of remote communities who had no opportunity to

perceive news of government. However, the objectives of these radio stations' establishment were not contrary to the government, for example, educational radio for religion, etc. Accordingly, Indonesian radio stations were established and spread extensively.

Simultaneously, after establishment of several radio stations, especially private radio stations and community radio stations, some of them were unsuccessful due to higher expenses compared to income obtained from advertisements hindering its operation from being populated among audiences. As a result, when the government was unable to supervise these radio stations, the network of radio broadcasting business was established in order to mutually operate radio broadcasting business and develop personnel and tools to broadcasting news and information extensively in national and international levels, for example, KBR Radio Station, etc.

Each radio station in Indonesia had been established for benefits of Indonesian people mainly because most Indonesian people were poor. As a result, providing knowledge and emphasis on participation of people was the objective of radio broadcasting. Private sector has been trying to create radio programs and radio broadcasting innovations for attracting people and sponsors continuously, for example, KBR Radio Station or Smart FM, etc. Consequently, they have received several international and national prizes finally.

Innovation on building reliability among people was creating radio programs through talk shows or discussion as well as editorial in order to provide people knowledge and understanding helping to strengthen human resources. These programs were admirable and beneficial for society and adjustment of daily life of people.

Adjustment of radio broadcast media organizations of Indonesian government emphasizes on enabling radio broadcasting to access more amount of people on investment as well as distributing the scope of radio broadcasting. Simultaneously, private sector was trying to use coverage of its business network to expand its scope and cover all kinds of media in the form of the large community. On the other hand, small media must adjust itself on creating radio programs to be consistent with its audiences living on islands in order to gain sufficient income for surviving.

## **Discussion**

After data collecting and analyzing, the researcher found that management and adjustment of radio broadcasting stations in 3 countries including Lao People's Democratic Republic, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and Republic of Indonesia could be analyzed as follows:

### **Background of Radio Broadcasting Station**

The third world countries are the targets of psychological war for controlling people between Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) or Soviet Union and western libertarianism, whereas, Soviet utilized the period when developing countries were freeing from colonization of United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA) to resist Hegemony while western libertarianism targeted to control these developing countries for huge economic benefits. As a result, psychological war via radio wave was continuing fiercely in third world countries. Radio was used a tool for broadcasting news and information to people because radio was suitable with audiences lacking of literacy.

Until 1960s, the ideology of libertarianism was broadly distributed with the influence of modern media; socialism had to surrender to capitalism.

Radio broadcasting stations in these three countries were the result of battle for controlling people for the benefits of colony as well as arousing people to agree with two administrative systems of the great power in the World War II, i.e., socialism and democracy.

Lao People's Democratic Republic utilized radio broadcasting as a tool for publishing and motivating its politic guidelines of the Liberation Party in the Colonial Resistance Movement making their people to rise up to free themselves from U.S.A. in 1960 and save their country until they gain complete victory and destroy US democracy completely. They have been free from being the colony of all foreign countries permanently. Subsequently, Lao People's Democratic Republic was established on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1975 or after four decades of being the colony.

While Republic of the Union of Myanmar was receiving freedom from UK in 1948, the government of such period established a radio station to broadcasting news and information to people by using the guidelines for managing radio broadcasting of BBC that is the public service media of British including office system programming, modern tools and equipment, etc. In 1962, when coup d'état was made by the military, this country stopped using mass media in democracy system.

Radio broadcasting in Indonesia was started in 1940 when the first radio station was established in the mid of colonial resistance movement against Japan. After surrender of Japan against the Allies on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1945, the fighters of Indonesian radio broadcasting grasped this opportunity to announce their freedom. On September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1945, Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) was formally established for revisiting colonization of Holland.

In conclusion, these three countries started to utilize the influence of radio media for political benefits in similar period, i.e., from 1940 and henceforth. This was consistent with the occurrence of the world's radio media, i.e., the situation when publications were hard to be reached and paper was lack and while the ideology of two leading countries with different administrative systems was seizing people upon their doctrine. In addition, those two countries also had the policy to colonize the third world countries, especially southeastern countries with plentiful natural resources.

### **Structure of Radio Broadcasting System**

According to presentation of Vipha Utamachant (2003) specified that different social factors determines different situation on media management of each country or region. In this research, it was found that management of radio broadcasting stations of Lao People's Democratic Republic, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and Republic of Indonesia had both similar and different characteristics as follows.

Management and control of radio broadcasting stations in Laos and Myanmar was under dictatorship operated by the government under politic and economic systems of socialism, i.e., Laos National Radio was the spokesperson of government party and the stage for expressing opinions of people. This radio station was broadcasted into 2 systems, i.e., central frequency with 10 kilowatts broadcasting power for broadcasting into 2 languages at the same time including Laos and foreign language. It played the role in advertising and

publishing the policies of the government party. For Republic of the Union of Myanmar, although it was classified as the media controlled by the government as same as Laos, Myanmar media similarly said that Myanmar seemed to have the significant sign of developing to be the democratic media due to an effort of its government to develop and restore its country to be consistent with changing of the world's society. Supattra Pumiprapas, the senior mass media and coordinator of Media Inside Out Project who has followed-up changing of Myanmar closely, said about media situation in Myanmar on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012, that there was a new historical page, i.e., Information Department declared to terminate censorship law allowing media not to send the original tape to the Information Department for considering. In addition, if former laws were terminated and Myanmar government opened their country increasingly, its media freedom would be improved. As a result, this was considered as the important changing point of Myanmar media on adjustment because it challenged capability of media broadcasting from other countries to come back to their country, for example, Toe ZawLatt that was the mass media that was able to establish its branch office in Myanmar, etc. We had to keep an eye on proving whether the mass media that always resisted against Myanmar military government would played any role and developed themselves as the professional media further. They would play a new role in cooperating with the government for compromising or chose to cooperate with domestic media for strengthening media institutions as well as how they would be able to negotiate with capital sources for develop themselves to be professional media.

For Republic of Indonesia, under the democracy system, radio broadcasting was commenced by the government with the effort to establish the policy on assigning all media to present RRI news. However, with the weaknesses of broadcasting and distributing news via government media that was unable to reach 200 million people on 17,000 islands with 583 languages, the government had to relive its strictness in controlling broadcasting media according to "Act no. 24" by emphasizing on benefits of communities and businesses mainly.

The concept of media management under democracy system in the perspective of Kanchana Kaewtep (2013) was that radio broadcasting media in Indonesia was classified under Libertarian Theory and it was established for resisting Authoritarian Theory. This was similar with the period when publication was popular because the mission of newspaper was seeking for facts, controlling and inspecting the government, informing news, and entertaining. Consequently, media could be controlled by 2 methods including self-censorship of media and legal control. The result of this libertarianism concept was freedom of the media leading to ownership of business. Many major businessmen purchased business of the small media entrepreneurs until there were only a few large media left in this business. Indonesia was facing with this problem as mentioned by RRI officer that there were only five major private entrepreneurs operating businesses covering all fields of media. In addition, Tosca Santoso also confirmed that the small media groups in local communities in Indonesia were facing with difficulty on lacking of capital for surviving their businesses.

Since it was important for Indonesian government to give more freedom to radio broadcasting media, there were several private radio stations broadcasting directly to communities in remote areas. In addition, there were also some concerning dangers, i.e., people may prefer programs of private sector and foreign companies that were more entertained with better production. Consequently, it was impossible for the government's radio stations to ignore this changing. On the other hand, it was important for them to accelerate development and adjustment in order to compete with private sector and expand their reliability to regional level increasingly.

It could be seen that politics played an important role in structuring broadcasting system in three countries studied in this research from the beginning to every changing commencing from management upon structure and administrative system of each country to proposal of guidelines or basic format of media management from colonial countries such as UK except for Lao People's Democratic Republic that was colonized by France and U.S.A. but they denied support from those two countries due to antipathy against colonial countries. On the other hand, Lao People's Democratic Republic chose to ask for support from countries with socialism such as China or Vietnam. For Republic of Indonesia, it had Netherland helping to programing radio broadcasting station system from the beginning. As a result, it could not be denied that different histories, backgrounds, culture, internal environment, and policies of leaders of three countries affected to adjustment and self-changing in different directions. Consequently, mass media and society is considered as the mirror reflecting each other.

### **Adjustment and Development of Radio Broadcasting Media Roles**

According to managerial structure and system of radio broadcasting stations of those three countries as mentioned above, it was a factor influencing on development of mass media's roles in each country, i.e., adjustment and development of radio broadcasting media in Lao People's Democratic Republic and Republic of the Union of Myanmar had the structure of media management in the forms of socialism or authoritarianism under communist party and military government making personnel of radio broadcasting stations to perform their duties under the policies of the government mainly. Consequently, it was hard to create or develop programs beyond those planned programs. Employees who were government officials often performed their duties daily because they earned low income therefore they had smaller creative roles. Even private DJs with concession or subcontracting with the government, they also had similar characteristics with low level of creativity or adjustment. Most of them emphasized on satisfying audiences mainly as mentioned by a DJ in Mandalay that if he had an opportunity, they would develop news programs to be more lively because there was only news from the government mainly.

Around 1970s, radio broadcasting media in Republic of the Union of Myanmar used to resist the ownership structure that was monopolized by Hegemony and requested for independent operation. However, they were arrested and deported from the country causing Myanmar media to adjust and become the illegal radio stations forcing them to broadcast from the stations outside their country. This kind of stations was collectively called "Pirate Station". From the beginning to broadcast from sea location or outside the country under secret and open operation by using small signal transmitter with low power, moderate technical standards, and low expenses, these illegal stations played the important roles in motivating audiences who were left by the mainstream media.

According to the survey on opinions of Burmese people and working in foreign countries of Aye Chan Naing and Mrs. Kam-ing, it showed the response on consuming news from radio stations located in other countries and evidence confirming that utilization of pirate stations by a group of Myanmar media for presenting different issues from the government gave positive effects reflecting that Burmese audiences demanded public space for different news and opinions, especially on political movement.

For adjustment and development of the roles of radio broadcasting media in Republic of Indonesia with the structure of media management in the form of democracy, it was found that there were larger amount of private radio stations than those two countries with high competition for building reliability among audiences and sponsors because advertisements were the main income for driving and surviving the operation of mass media. According to information of the President of Smart FM Company and KBR Company, it could confirm that building reliability of radio stations that were considered as the large business in Indonesia was important because it was not only helping to build stability of the business, it was also able to be the supporting factor to assemble as the network of media business in other fields. As a result, both private radio stations tried to create programs with different formats but emphasize on participation of people that was consistent with the government's policy on assigning private radio stations to build satisfaction and benefits to people continuously.

### Recommendation

1. Since this research on radio broadcasting media in ASEAN received good cooperation in providing information from related persons, in-depth information was obtained covering the issues on management of radio broadcasting organizations in three countries. However, there are more interesting perspectives and details therefore it is considered as a good tendency to conduct further researches continuously for benefits of development of knowledge on mass media in ASEAN countries.

2. There should be some further researches for developing and connecting researches in ASEAN continuously for benefits in developing knowledge on each type of mass media in ASEAN countries giving the good benefit on connecting media network for developing and helping one another.

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