

## **Building Image of Government through Radio Taiwan International for Indonesian Female Listeners**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research is conducted to find out how radio broadcasts as media communication abroad can be managed for excellent performance excellence and can build the image of Indonesia and Taiwan as local governments. The focus is to discover how communication used by Radio Taiwan International (RTI) for Indonesian citizen can build a good image for governments. The result of this study shows: First, image building through radio broadcasting for governments can be done through the role of radio as a medium of communication between the government and local communities. Second, the method of delivering the message for female radio listeners is a two-way communication in which the broadcaster has to prepare direct conversation with the listeners or provide time to speak directly as a friend in the real world. Third, radio programmes that are ethnically coloured are an effective form of radio programme for citizens abroad that supports image building. The conclusion of this study is that image building through radio can be done for female Indonesian citizens in Taiwan because radio as a medium of socialisation works as two-way communication and it can be ethnically coloured.

*Keywords:* Image building, Indonesian, Radio Taiwan International

### **INTRODUCTION**

Radio shows have their own way of creating a sense of closeness with listeners through the way radio hosts greet listeners as if they were greeting close friends. Through its broadcasts, radios also have the ability to create a familiar atmosphere and a sense of closeness between listeners and

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broadcasters. This atmosphere and sense of closeness created by radio broadcasts conveyed are well received by female Indonesian citizens (TKW) who desire a connection with their homeland. The messages sent through Indonesian language radio broadcasts abroad can help to build a good image for the unitary state of Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Such radio broadcasts can be seen as government public relations activities, to recall that there is a lot of interaction between listeners and radio hosts; thus, Indonesian citizens staying in foreign countries can feel a “warmth” that links them to their homeland, and this leads to the creation of a good image. Radio, according to its history, contributed in influencing listeners to listen to political messages. Its power as a form of mass media has been found to exceed other media of communication in terms of establishing a nation’s ideological values.

Radio broadcasts heard by listeners give the impression of actuality and immediacy, allowing listeners to feel less distant from their homeland. It is without question that Radio Taiwan International (RTI) broadcasts receive great response from Indonesian citizens, especially women (Thamsir, 2012). Meanwhile, the number of Indonesian women in Taiwan is gradually increasing and many of them are marrying Taiwanese citizens (Antaraneews.com, 2012).

The total of Indonesian citizens in Taiwan was 190,000 in 2012, with 27,000 women being married to Taiwan men. In 2012 alone, an additional number of 10,155 Indonesians were married to

Taiwanese citizens, with Indonesian women forming the majority (Okezone.com, 2012). Given the growing number of citizens in Taiwan, RRI (Radio Republik Indonesia), FORMMIT (Indonesian Muslim Students Forum in Taiwan), PKPU (Pos Justice Caring Ummah) and IETO-Taipei (Indonesian Economic and Trade Office in Taipei) held a workshop with RTI (Radio Taiwan International) on October 21, 2012. RTI was chosen by RRI as they air daily in 13 different languages, including Indonesian. The programmes presented include news, politics, economics, culture, education, entertainment and community service posts. Indonesian language shows in RTI are ‘Indonesia di Hari Ini & Kotak Pos’ (Indonesia Today & Mailbox), ‘Ada Apa dengan Tony’ (What’s Up with Tony), ‘Yuk Ngrumpi’ (Let’s Chitchat) and ‘Plaza Wanita & Mari Menyanyi’ (Women’s Plaza & Let’s Sing) (Thamsir, 2012).

Meanwhile, the current social situation in Taiwan allows more Indonesian women to marry Taiwanese men. The high cost of living and gender equality have caused Taiwanese women to choose making a career over starting a family. As a result, the birth rate in Taiwan has declined, making Taiwan a country with the lowest birth rate in the world (Okezone.com, 2012). High cost of living and gender equality caused Taiwanese men to marry foreigners. In 2006, more Indonesian women became brides in Taiwan; the number is approximately 10.67% out of 95,177 foreigners from other countries who wed Taiwanese (Antaraneews.com, 2012). Mix marriages that happened

between Indonesian women and local Taiwanese men have the potential to fade nationalism towards their homeland, Indonesia, and research into this matter should be conducted. There is a necessity to find out whether Indonesian radio programmes abroad have the potential to be a public relations (PR) programme that the government can use to instil a good image of the home country.

Governments need to have concern for citizens who live abroad. A sense of caring can be shown by an official body as a representative of the State in a foreign country or through local media, in this case the radio. In a radio broadcast, supervision needs to be done in order to control information. According to Anderson and Egglestone, "The second aim of the BBC's online news provision is to provide a means of helping maintain and increase the quality of the same key aspects of BBC news output at the stages of reporting and editorial decision-making within ongoing stories" (Anderson & Egglestone, 2012). They discuss the role of media in revealing social problems. Although this research study showed that the media do not have direct authority, the agenda of the media can change the focus of the public towards a certain thing and establish a positive assumption as media agenda (Conway et al., 2012).

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the British government's official public communications portal, should be alert to commercial dominance that has given its views more power than the voice

of the government. The BBC's role as the state media gives it less power of influence compared to its commercial strength (Thomas & Hindman, 2011). Conway and Thomas presented two differing ideas about the BBC's roles as the state media. At first, when a medium is dominant in presenting existing realities to society, all information generated by it becomes important. Secondly is the fact that the government's strength is eroded by hegemony of the advertiser. Direction of the media is determined by the rulers of commercials. Ma (2010) discussed the modernity that is engulfing Hong Kong. "The market in this country become capitalist, the life of the world to have classes, consumerism becomes a lifestyles of upper middle class community. This phenomenon is reflected in local magazines. Modernity rapidly developed as promoted by television dramas" (Ma, 2010).

It is seen, then, that mass media have the power to affect the chosen lifestyle of whole societies. In this context, it becomes interesting to consider how immigrant communities residing in these countries cope and develop. Do local media in countries like Hong Kong have a great influence on immigrant communities? What is the role of government (e.g. in the case of Indonesia) in maintaining positive information for citizens in countries that are already modern? Nurdiaman (2009) wrote that mental and spiritual debriefing are needed to counteract the effects of foreign culture upon an immigrant community to prevent it from conforming to the norm (Nurdiaman, 2009). This does not mean

that modernity as a mistake but that the government's role in instilling a positive image of the nation continues to be required also for citizens living abroad. When it comes to security, communication is the key, and information should be properly disseminated to all the parties involved, ensuring that everyone has a clear and common understanding of security needs facilitating their implementation and operation (Ranganathan et al., 2012). Ranganathan et al. went on to explain in their article that communication is the key to security. In this case, security can be translated as mental security and the perception of citizens.

Messages conveyed through the mass media are expected to refresh the audience so there is no cognitive dissonance to the recipients of the message. It is important to be considered, especially if the audience is located far away from their country. Furthermore, Whitaker et al. (2011)'s social influence theory states that members of a social group string reality to their interests, and have the power to reject media intrusions. The media themselves often review topics related to public interest with the aim of serving the public (Whitaker et al., 2011).

This study will explore first, how communication through radio abroad builds up the image of both the governments of Indonesia and Taiwan; second, the delivery method that is effective in national governmental image building among female radio listeners; and third, the kind of radio programmes for the citizens abroad that

support image building. The focus of this study is on the excellent communication model used by Radio Taiwan International (RTI) can be used among Indonesian citizens to build a good image for both the governments of Indonesia and Taiwan.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The qualitative paradigm was used in the study. The qualitative paradigm was used in order to access data from the informants such as Radio Taiwan International (RTI) broadcasters and RTI's listeners. All the informants lived in Taiwan. The data described how the radio broadcast management impacted Indonesian citizens as a family and indirectly built a good image of both the governments of Indonesia and Taiwan. Data were collected through direct observation of Indonesian women workers in Taiwan through interviews. The radio station in Taiwan was observed and interviews were conducted with the management and two radio announcers. The broadcasters were a man and a woman, both Indonesian broadcasters who had long settled in Taiwan. The data were also compared through quantitative research. The interviews were done in Taiwan two years ago and followed up with the quantitative research collected through a questionnaire. However, for this article the methodology focussed on qualitative data supported by literature review and previous research.

To examine the image that the Indonesian women workers (IWW) had of the two governments, Indonesian and Taiwanese, the women were interviewed in places they

gathered regularly as a community on days off. They usually gathered at the Taipei Main Station (TMS). The train station has a field with a closed roof and the building is air conditioned. This field acts as a clean floor, and the workers can sit comfortably on the paved floor, in relaxed and joyful mood. One of their favourite activities here is to listen to songs broadcast by RTI, especially the Indonesian broadcasts, plugging in with their mobile phones.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The importance of establishing communication from the government to its citizens residing abroad lies in the fact that it is also a provision for citizens to trust their country. What is good government? According to the Chinese philosopher, Confucius, "good government is government that can feed the people, provide adequate weapons for defense of the state and which has the trust" (quoted in Reddi, 2010, p.156). In discussing the importance of trust of citizens for their government in fostering a strong sense of belonging for the sake of the future of the nation, Confucius added, "A people that has lost faith in the government is a people without a future" (Reddi, 2010; Nah & Chung, 2012, p.97). A study by Nah and Chung (2012) entitled 'When citizens meet both professional and citizen journalists: Social trust, media credibility, and perceived journalistic roles among online community news readers', which involved 238 respondents in 2014, concluded that what will be trusted by the public will depend on the packaging

provided by journalists in conveying the message to the audience.

The Indonesian community residing abroad cannot be ignored. They should be given access to home news in order to remain proud of being Indonesian. Awareness of national values needs to be inculcated in them as their rightful inheritance from the founding fathers of Indonesia. In fact, according to Srijanti (2008), Indonesia needs a "civilization change monument" to ensure the nation continues to exist (Srijanti et al., 2008, p.88).

In this study, it is argued that Indonesia must exist in the citizen's point of view, especially that of women residing abroad. They need to feel safe and sound and find it easy to communicate with the government of the Republic of Indonesia; this can be done effectively through local radio programmes.

### Radio Taiwan International

Based on interviews with the informants, Radio Taiwan International (RTI) was founded in 2002. It began as The Central Broadcasting System (CBS) founded in 1928 as the voice of the Kuomintang (KMT) government quartered in Nanking in mainland China. In addition, via domestic AM radio and shortwave, CBS also broadcast three different 'networks' in Chinese (mainly Mandarin) to the mainland. Next, it broadcast to mainland China and the rest of the world under the call sign Radio Taipei International and the Voice of Asia. Radio Taipei International essentially replaced the international radio services

of the Broadcasting Corporation of China (BCC), known as the Voice of Free China. Radio Taipei International broadcast to China and to an international audience; by contrast, the Voice of Asia was broadcast to the Asia-Pacific region only and offered a lighter format than that used by RTI. In 2002, the Voice of Asia call sign was dropped, leaving Radio Taipei International as the sole broadcasting name of the service. This, in turn, was changed to Radio Taiwan International to avoid confusion on the part of listeners, who had trouble associating Taipei with Taiwan.

### **Indonesian Female Workers in Taiwan**

All the informants who were listeners were female and official citizens of Indonesia. The marital status of the informants' included single, married without children, married with children and widow. The women who were married were married either to Taiwanese or Indonesian men. One listener was married to neither Indonesian nor Taiwanese man. The informants' age varied from below 21 years old to 31-40 years old and above 41 years old. The majority were in the 31-40 years of age group while few were in the above 41 years of age group. The income/earnings of the informants was: less than IDR 5,000,000, between IDR 5,000,000 and 10,000,000 and more than IDR 20,000,000. The majority were in the second group while very few were in the last group, earning more than IDR 20,000,000.

In Taiwan, these women fill the gap made by young Taiwanese who have difficulty taking care of their elderly. The

three main professions that Indonesian women workers enter into in Taiwan are care-giver, nurse and housemaid. Indonesian citizens working in Taiwan has reached the number of 157,403 people; this is equal to 82% of the total of all Indonesian citizens. In Taiwan, Indonesian women workers retain their religious practices, duties and responsibilities by taking part in religious events in mosques that are open to Indonesians as well as Taiwanese nationals. Community programmes organised by these mosques are designed to raise awareness of gender equality, increase welfare and encourage justice.

A deal that between the Agency for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Citizens (BNP2TKI) and the Indonesian Commerce and Economy Body (KDEI) in Taiwan on December 14, 2012 stated the salary rate for Indonesian citizens as being NTD 18.870 (IDR 6.291.300); this was an increase from IDR 5.148.000, an increment of 18.56%. The new rate applied officially on February 1, 2013. This increment also applied to former Indonesian citizens in Taiwan who had extended their work permits after completing the first segment of their contract of three years. The total number of Indonesian citizens working in Taiwan is around 200,000 people. About 85% of them are in the domestic sector while the other 15% are in construction and other infrastructural sectors. Placement of Indonesian citizens in Taiwan can be viewed as the most massive in Southeast Asia. In Taiwan, these workers take opportunity of Saturdays and to meet and catch up. Places

like Taichung Park, Pyramid at Taichung and Main Station are their favourites meeting points. Although it may be their day off, they may bring along the elderly for whom they care.

### **Communication Tools to Support the Management**

Indonesian women workers use sophisticated communication tools such as high-end devices like the iPhone. They use these expensive gadgets openly and freely to communicate with their friends/relatives as well as to listen to radio programmes. One of the popular radio programmes in Taiwan is 'Wanita di Rantau' (Women in Foreign Countries), which offers listeners interviews and stories of female Indonesian citizens during their stay in Taiwan. It also offers 'Surat Pembaca' featuring on-air reading of mail by the radio hosts and song requests. In addition to this type of entertainment, the channel also provides news about Indonesia to update listeners on happenings in their homeland. The relationship between the women workers who listen to these Indonesian language radio broadcasts in Taiwan and the broadcasters is extremely close, like that of a close friendship. When listening to these radio programmes, the women feel like they are accompanied by their friends; in this case, the friends are the radio hosts.

These broadcasts provide information that is immediate and relevant as the broadcasters do more than just inform listeners of happenings. Radio becomes desirable then because of actuality, body

style and locality. Radio can invite listeners to participate in giving a response. Compared to TV, radio is more imaginative. Successful news radio is able to arouse the emotions of its listeners. According to Masduki (2001), radio has four functions, namely: to present information, to provide mobility of public opinion in influencing policy, to bring two different opinions and to act as a medium to bring togetherness.

In public relations, the radio can help in the formation of an image; it can make "something" become more visible in the public eye. With these functions, radio is able to bring listeners and of course potential advertisers together. Radio has been effectively proved to be the best way to attract public attention in public-relations activities (Field, 2009). So, there is a cross between public relations and radio broadcasting. They can complement one another in a campaign programme or one geared to plant a positive image.

According to Mowitt (2001), in certain situations, radio can be the nation's "mouthpiece" (p.76). A study on the radio is able to describe its social and cultural history with a critical perspective. Radio can have philosophical meanings related to political communication and it can also be used as a medium of provocation that contains certain political thinking (Mowitt, 2001).

Radio, then, can be a political force capable of manipulating the mind of the public. Government in relation to citizens needs to encourage them to maintain an attitude of pride in the country that

is reflected by the following indicators: the attitude of pride in the nation and the state; the spirit of national unity; sense of belonging in using Indonesian products; using Bahasa Indonesia as the primary language in formal communication as well as in everyday conversation (Nurdiaman, 2009).

### **Image Building Through Radio Broadcasting for Governments**

Using radio to build trust in the government of the Republic of Indonesia was reported to have been done in the following ways: the informants heard good things about the government through statements made on the radio, making them place even more confidence in the government of Indonesia. This indicates that the radio is not maximised in imparting credibility of the government among its citizens. The discussion of social issues on the radio was seen in the statement, "If I got a problem in Taiwan, I will contact the radio to be a mouthpiece for the government of Indonesia," and the statement that the radio was able to uncover social problems with regards to Indonesian citizens who lived in Taiwan. Therefore, radio was less revealing on matters related to issues about citizens living in Taiwan.

Radio also functioned as motivator/media in the model of communication between Indonesian government and its citizens. As female Indonesian citizens who stayed abroad, they reflected a very good image of Indonesian women. The informants prided themselves on being Indonesians staying in Taiwan. They were

also heroes in terms of foreign exchange; they were all proud to be working women earning a living in Taiwan. Regarding concern for them from the government of the Republic of Indonesia, they responded that they felt their fate and the needs were important to their government although they were far away in Taiwan. These data indicated that Indonesian citizens in Taiwan had a positive image of their government.

The results showed that the informants had acquired a good image of the Indonesian government from the radio broadcasters. They knew that Radio Taiwan International was a collaboration between the governments of Indonesia and Taiwan. As we know, radio functions as a provider of media information and plays a role in collecting, gathering, processing news and disseminating it to the public, both among the public or from the government to the public or vice versa. The role of radio is to provide communication between people, manage information required by society, and in its role as a provider of communication between the government and local communities, it acts as a medium of socialisation programmes initiated by the government. This socialisation includes disseminating rules and providing empowerment, entrepreneurship, health counselling, education and other information that society needs. For proper functioning, a state needs the media as a communication tool. As a social medium, radio has a very important role in building the image of a community as it, together with other mass media, is able to establish certain

conditions in society. Radio, like all other mass media, can disrupt an event or act as a unifier through patriotic songs or other programmes.

### **The Method of Delivering the Message to Female Radio Listeners**

In this study, the informants said that there was a correlation between government communications by radio and the positive image it conveyed among Indonesian workers in Taiwan. The more effective the communication was, the more positive was the image of the government of Indonesia that was built. Thus, for the cultivation of a positive image of the government among Indonesian workers, the government should design messages for dissemination through local radio for use in countries where Indonesian citizens are living.

Each radio station must have a strategy to overcome competition in the industry in order to capture the attention of the targetted listener group. Good planning of broadcast programmes is one of the important actions to attract listeners. When it comes to an audience of women listeners, radio should focus on the needs of women ranging from development of personality, how to nurture inner beauty, building a career, fashion and domestic issues, among others. The programmes offered on radio must be different. Radio must be able to deliver innovation in building the image of a government.

The government of Indonesia, despite the location of their citizens, should show concern for the fate and needs of all

Indonesian citizens, such as women workers in Taiwan. A good image would be built if Indonesians working abroad are able to have their needs met by the government even if only through the medium of radio. While the issue of ethnicity was not an issue for the informants that affected their feelings towards the Indonesian government, the government of Indonesia can consider promoting any ethnic-themed radio programmes that can relate to all Indonesian citizens regardless of their ethnicity, whether, for example, Sundanese, Javanese or Lampung. Thus the communication model of radio communication should be based on interpersonal relations.

Radio broadcasts have advantage for listener groups such as Indonesian female listeners. Delivery of message by radio broadcast is done using spoken language and non-verbal signals such as beeps counting down the time for the start of a news programmes are kept to a minimum. People can enjoy a radio broadcast while eating, lying down, working or driving. Therefore, radio broadcasts are a suitable form of entertainment and connection with the homeland for women workers living abroad whose work does not leave them much time for socialising or to read newspapers.

Women by nature prefer listening for information and look forward to receiving information in interesting ways such as through story. Delivery in presenting information is important because the public are selective. Since there are many choices of radio channel and medium of communication, people have a wide variety

of media to pick from and will select the one that best fits their needs. Music plays an important role as most people are attracted to it.

The complicated nature of women listeners in general makes it a challenge for a radio channel to provide the right mix of what would appeal to this segment of the audience. However, it is necessary to understand their needs and try to cater for them as audience segmentation helps marketers to detect and cut out competitors. The competitors are not solely broadcast media that offer the same programmes, but also those that are able to provide a suitable alternative that would be attractive to the targetted audience. To address this, radio channels should work out a method of delivery that would appeal to female listeners so that image building among this target group will be effective.

Radio is a source of complex information ranging from providing news and information to encouraging economic development, boosting popularity of the government and promoting political propaganda and ideology. For listeners, radio is a friend, a means of communication, a channel for exercising the imagination and for giving information. One of the weaknesses of radio is that it is a one-way communication channel that provides communication only from the communicator to the communicant. Communicators do not know the response of the communicant. This weakness, coupled with its ability to offer only 'bits of hearing' through brief messages means listeners are not able to acquire more

information or deeper understanding of a message as immediate feedback is not possible. Listeners who do not understand or who would like further explanation cannot ask the broadcaster to repeat something that has been said. This weakness has led to much study focussed on improving communication through radio. This being the case, radio broadcasters must deliver messages intended for women listeners through relevant talk and by speaking directly to them as a friend in the real world.

### **Radio Programmes for Citizens Abroad that Support Image Building**

As a mass medium, radio has the power to appeal to the imagination and to individuals directly as when broadcasters greet each listener individually. Listeners tune in to their radio in the car, at home and even in bed. Radio can stimulate the imagination in a powerful way. Radio listeners must participate actively by responding to suggestions in order to appreciate the information being shared; they will need to rely on their senses of sight and smell, for instance, to bring an experience to life. Listening to the broadcaster, the listener must visualise what the speaker looks like and how his or her facial expressions and body language might match what is being shared. Therefore, the words used by the broadcaster must be apt and accurate as well as correctly chosen in order to convey the message clearly and effectively. In this way, radio can help to build a credible image of the government.

Radio, then, is a friend to listeners, a means of communication, exercising the imagination and a channel of information. Radio programmes designed to build the image of a government among its citizens working abroad must provide connectivity between the government and the listeners. For Indonesians working in Taiwan, this can be done through the airing of traditional or folk songs and stories from the homeland. Also important is the language used for the programmes. Even the names of the broadcasters can provide connectivity, creating a sense of home in a foreign country for the migrant worker. Positive news content on the Indonesian government and their policies that protect them as foreigners in an alien land will also help.

In general, in Indonesia, radio as a medium is associated with local needs. Radio cannot be separated from technological innovation. The use of this medium affects many aspects of life, especially in the social and economic aspects. Radio technology advances at the same time society does. Therefore, RTI should update its technology to adapt to the needs of its listeners i.e. Indonesian workers in Taiwan. In this way, it can also build support for itself as a reliable, useful and much needed medium.

The advantage of radio is that it is adaptable and can be used to present live events at the same time they occur. Radio does not require lengthy film processing nor does it need a long printing process. Radio is also used as a medium for providing

education based on concepts and facts. This provides a good opportunity for the management of RTI to build a positive image of the Indonesian government speedily.

## CONCLUSION

This study found the following to be true: First, image building through radio broadcasting for governments can be done as an important role of radio is that being a medium of communication between the government and local communities, as well as a medium of socialisation through government programmes. This socialisation includes disseminating rules and providing empowerment, entrepreneurship, health counselling, education and other information that society needs. For proper functioning, a state needs the media as a communication tool. Second, the method of delivering a message to female radio listeners should be two way communication. This being the case, radio broadcasters must deliver messages intended for women listeners through relevant talk and by speaking directly to them as a friend in the real world. Third, radio programmes that are ethnically coloured ethnicity would be an effective for citizens working abroad as they support image building. This study concludes that image building through radio is an excellent means of communication for Indonesian women working in Taiwan and can help build a good image among the women workers for both the Indonesian and Taiwanese government.

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