

BENS RADIO 106.2 FM JAKARTA STRATEGY IN BUILDING RELATIONS WITH LISTENERS

Yayu Sriwartini¹, Gita Safitri²

^{1,2}Communication Studies Program, National University of Jakarta
yayu_sriwartini@yahoo.com ,gita.safitri21@gmail.com

Abstract. The purpose of this study was to describe the communication strategy of Bensr Radio 106.2 FM Jakarta in building relationships with listeners. The theory used is relationship management theory and social exchange theory. The research approach is qualitative with in-depth interview data collection techniques and literature review of digital documentation. There are 3 resource persons consisting of station managers, broadcasters and listeners. The validity of the data was tested by using triangulation of sources and methods. The results of the study illustrate that there are four strategies carried out in fostering relationships with listeners, namely creating fan clubs through social media Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, holding special events, organizing birthday events regularly and maintaining intimacy through broadcaster communication styles and methods.

Keywords: Communication Strategy, Relationships, Radio Listener

INTRODUCTION

Radio is one of the mass media that functions to have informative, educative functions, and provide entertainment to the public with a wide reach. According to Siahaan (2015), the main purpose of radio broadcasting is to disseminate all events that have occurred and are currently happening to the public. Radio as one of the conventional mass media dubbed as *The Fifth Estate* because recognized as having the power to influence society, through its ability to reach the target (audience) directly. However, with the development of time and competition with new internet-based media, radio listeners began to experience a decline. The results of the Nielsen survey in 2014 have begun to show a 3% decline in radio listeners (www.jogjapolitan.harianjogja.com), until then at the end of 2018, radio listeners, especially people aged 10 years and over, decreased by 13.31% (www.bps.go.id).

But the good news in 2019, the results of the JAKPAT survey show that there are still 59% of respondents who are radio listeners. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of listeners in 2020 has increased by 31% from 2019 (www.inews.id). It is because the Covid-19 pandemic is forcing people to work from home, so radio broadcasts have great potential to be heard by the public. However, as explained by the uses and gratifications theory put forward by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumer and Michael Gurevitch (West & Turner, 2008: 104-105) that audiences are very active in using the media according to their goals, this also means that people have freedom in choosing which radio broadcasts he likes. Of course, this condition is a challenge for radio stations, even though in this digital era people can access them via smartphones.

Competition between radio stations was inevitable. Therefore, it is very natural that each radio station has its own way of attracting the public to become loyal listeners, one of which is done by Bens Radio 106.2 FM Jakarta. Bens Radio is one of the unique radio stations, because it carries local culture, namely Betawi culture which is the hallmark of DKI Jakarta as its strength and selling point. Its mission to maintain Betawi Culture is shown by applying the use of Betawi language in daily communication. This method is used to greet the listeners so that they are attached to the hearts of loyal listeners. Bens Radio has a segmentation of listeners from the age of 25-55 years. The composition of the music played is 40% Dangdut, 40% Indonesian Pop, 15% Gambang, religious music and Indian music by 5%. The flagship programs are Betawi Coffee, Wind Sore, Pantun Ceplas-Ceplos and Bollymania.

Until 2020, Bens Radio is still included in the top five with the highest number of listeners in the Greater Jakarta area based on the results of the AC Nielsen survey institute

(Nirwana & Purnamasari, 2020). This is enough to prove that Bens Radio 106.2 FM Jakarta is one of the radio stations considered by the public among other competing radios. Therefore in order to maintain the existence and listeners, Bens Radio must maintain and maintain good relations with listeners, because listeners are one of the external publics who become assets for radio. The pressure point of building relationships is communication as explained by the relationship management theory proposed by Ledingham et al (Kriyantono, 2014:276-278). According to him, communication is used to stimulate the public in creating shared meaning and emphasizes building relationships with all publics. Communication is viewed as a tool for building relationships, and programs are evaluated based on their impact on the relationship between the organization and the public. In building a relationship with listeners, of course the radio manager must have a good communication strategy that is two-way and interactive.

According to Cangara (2013: 61), Communication strategy is the best combination of all communication elements from communicator, message, channel (media), receiver to influence (effect) designed to achieve goals.. Therefore, researchers are interested in describing the strategy communication Bens Radio 106.2 FM Jakarta in building relationships with listeners.

RESEARCH METHODS

Method study which used is Studies Case (*Case Study*). Studies case or 'case study', is part from method qualitative which want to explore something case certain by more deep with involve gathering various source information. According to Creswell (2014) studies case as something exploration from system which determined (bound *system*) or case. The subject of this research is Bens Radio 106.2 FM Jakarta, while the object is about communication strategies in building relationships with listeners at Bens Radio 106.2 FM Jakarta. Data collection techniques were carried out by in-depth interviews and literature searches and documentation. The resource persons consisted of key informants (Nindi Alfi Saleha as station manager), informant 1 (Puspa Baresi as senior broadcaster of Bens Radio), and Informant 2 (Dioba Ari Saputra as listener). The data validity test was carried out by directly interviewing sources and tracing digital documents. To prove the validity of the data, the researcher triangulated sources and triangulated methods. The data were analyzed in several stages, namely the stage of presenting information, the comparative stage and the stage of presenting the research results.

RESEARCH RESULTS & DISCUSSION

For a radio station, building relationships with listeners is very important, because without listeners, radio stations will not exist. This was realized by Bens Radio. Therefore, the radio management always tries to maintain a relationship with the listeners through the following communication strategies:

Create a fan club

fan club is a form of means to build strong engagement between Bens Radio and its listeners. Fan Club Bens radio was created to keep loyal listeners from switching to another radio. Therefore, in order to maintain the relationship, Bens Radio created a fan club called "Bens Radio Fans Club as a forum for interaction with listeners which is accommodated in several social media, including Facebook under the name Bens Radio Fans Club Official, on Instagram with the name @BFC Bens. Radio and on Youtube under the name Bens Radio Fans Club. Some of the activities presented in each of these social media are as follows:

1. Facebook

The Bens Radio Fans Club Official facebook account currently has 4,500 followers from Jakarta, Bogor, Tangerang, Depok and Bekasi (Jabodetabek). Previously, radio was known as an audio-only mass media, but through this social media the activities of radio broadcasters can be seen. This is evidenced by Bens Radio by frequently conducting live broadcast activities. This is an effective strategy to introduce broadcasters closely to listeners who can clearly recognize the faces of their favorite announcers. Moreover, every post of the live broadcast program is always opened in the comments column. In this way the listeners and followers of each Bens Radio can provide their live comments. As proof that this facebook account is a joint forum between radio managers and listeners or followers, then anyone may post their activities, as long as they do not violate the rules and regulations that have been determined, such as (1) not posting things that contain elements of politics, sara, controversy and pornography; (2) do not post sale goods; (3) do not post things that smell like provocation; (4) do not post hate speech and hoaxes.

This facebook account is used by Bens Radio Fans Club (BRFC) to post activities together with other members, greet each other, give impressions, suggestions, and constructive criticism for each Bens Radio program. In addition, it is also allowed to convey greetings and requests for songs to sad news.

2. Instagram

Bens Radio Fans Club is also accommodated by the social media Instagram Bens Radio, which is named @BFC Bens Radio. Unlike Facebook, which reaches 4500 people, Bens Radio Fans Club's Instagram followers are only followed by 360 people. So far, they have posted 121 photos of the togetherness of fan club members in various recreational, religious and socio-cultural activity programs. However, unlike on Facebook, on Instagram there are no video posts when broadcasting live.

3. Youtube

Bens Radio Fans Club also has youtube social media, but it doesn't seem to be active. There is only one (1) video that was posted on November 20, 2020, and contains snippets of photos of the members together at several events. Just like Instagram, it seems that YouTube is not managed by Bens Radio, but by individual fan club members who have their own initiative.

Organize birthday events regularly

Bens Radio's birthday is usually held on March 5th 2021 which is broadcast live through various digital media such as JOOX : Bens Radio, Streaming : www.bensradio.com, Playstore: Bens Radio and live on: Facebook: [@bensradio1062fm](https://www.facebook.com/bensradio1062fm) and Instagram: [@bensradio1062fm](https://www.instagram.com/bensradio1062fm). starting from 06.00 to 24.00 WIB. This event is a meeting place for radio parties with their loyal listeners. Usually filled with several activities, such as a pilgrimage to the grave of the late Babe Benjamin, a successful Betawi artist and founder of Bens Radio, then holding music events by inviting guest stars from artists, as well as various quizzes on Bens Radio's Instagram.

Special events (special events)

Special events are part of the company's activities to create a closer relationship with the public. This is also done by Bens Radio. One of the special events held to foster a relationship with the listeners was the event "26 Years of Benjamin in Memories" which was held on September 8, 2021. This event was devoted to the memory of the late Benjamin Suaeb as the founder of Bens Radio. The series of events are not much different from the events commemorating the birthday of Bens radio, namely prayer together, pilgrimage, Bens Sharing and various quizzes. This activity was made so that active listeners and fans of the Bens Radio 106.2 FM Jakarta club can continue to have good relations, not break the relationship and stay together in any event.

Use of Betawi language style

The clear use of Betawi language and the use of the greeting words “*elu, me, aye, brother, non, ncing, ngang, succulent, babeh*”, have become a means of automatically creating personal distance between broadcasters and listeners. The listeners feel that there are no barriers and formal boundaries that distinguish them. The listeners acknowledged that this style of speech made it easier for them to get to know the announcer.

DISCUSSION

For organizations or companies, managing relations with the public is very important and must be done. Referring to the Relationship Management Theory proposed by Ledingham, Botan and Hazelton (Kriyantono, 2014), there are several basic principles in managing relationships, including (1) successful relationships are based on efforts to gain profit for the organization and the public; (2) The quality of the relationship depends on the perception of the degree to which expectations can be met; (3) the success of the relationship is measured by the quality of the relationship, not the production and dissemination of messages; (4) Communication becomes a tool for managing relationships accompanied by organizational behavior; (5) The relationship is influenced by the history of the relationship, the nature of the interaction, the frequency of exchange and reciprocity.

The establishment of Bens Radio Fans Club through social media Facebook, Instagram and YouTube is an adaptive breakthrough in the digital era. This step is quite effective in building closeness with the listeners, especially communication activities on the official Facebook Fan Club. The publication of live streaming videos of all broadcast activities every day has changed the nature of radio from being merely auditive to audio-visual. Facebook has become the second “studio”. Facebook has become a new “studio” for Bens Radio that is so easy to access and view. Previously, listeners could only hear the voice of the announcer, but with live streaming video, listeners or followers can see directly the faces of their idol broadcasters. The means of communication for listeners are very complete. Besides being able to interact directly via telephone connection, listeners can also take advantage of the “like” and “comment” features in each live streaming video post to provide responses, appreciation, suggestions or criticisms. The interaction is reciprocal. In addition, for Bens radio, this social media, especially FB, can be used as a monitoring medium to monitor the number of followers

or listeners, as well as observe the communication behavior of fans, so that they can map out the next policy.

Then from the perspective of message production theory, the use and style of broadcaster's language which is very strong in Betawi is considered successful in embracing the target audience. As a communicator, broadcasters have the task of providing services to the community by conveying the required information. A broadcaster must be an expert in communicating effectively and efficiently. Therefore, communication style sometimes determines the success of achieving goals. The communicator style according to Robert Norton (Littlejohn, Foss & Oetzel: 2017) is not just providing information, but also presenting information in a certain form that leads others to respond and respond. Using the daily Betawi dialect makes the broadcaster's speaking style seem straightforward and straightforward. But always looks cheerful.

The use of the greeting words "abang non, I'm elu, nchang-ncing, savor babeh" represents Bens Radio's target range for all ages, except children. Psychologically, the greeting language is quite evocative and makes the relationship between broadcasters who represent the company and listeners as external publics very fluid and intimate. Not only that, this FB, Instagram and YouTube Fans Club social media has integrated Bens Radio fans from various circles. They can communicate with each other intensely and there is reciprocal communication between Bens Radio through its broadcasters and their listeners. It is very clear here that communication is a tool for establishing relationships.

Then the next relationship building strategy is holding a special event commemorating the death of the founder of Bens Radio, namely Benjamin Syua`eb and the birthday event of Bens Radio which is routinely held every year as if it were a grand meeting which is expected to increase closeness, harmony, cohesiveness and cohesiveness among listeners. and between listeners and radio. Of course, this relationship is mutually beneficial. In the context of the social exchange theory put forward by John Thibaut and Harold Kelley, the efforts of Bens Radio to involve themselves in the social media of the Bens Radio Fans Club, holding an annual event that indulges fans with various programs is a form of sacrifice as well as an appreciation to loyal listeners. This is done to keep his listeners loyal and engaged. Appreciation for listeners is also shown from how the radio responds to greetings, song requests or listener comments either delivered directly by telephone, WhatsApp chat, email or through the comments column on the official Facebook social media. This represents the assumption of social exchange theory which says that in essence humans are always looking for rewards (Griffin, 2011: 118).

The cohesive attitude shown by Bens Radio listeners is because they feel that their social and psychological motives are fulfilled by Bens Radio. According to Heckhausen's social motive is an impulse that shows that the goals to be achieved are related to their interactions with other individuals. This social motive includes affiliation and integration motives (Ahmadi, 2009: 178). Meanwhile, according to Alex Sobur, psychological motives or needs can be defined as a need that aims to develop personality in a person, including the motive for getting a sense of security, getting love, getting appreciation and self-actualization (2011: 273-279). The fulfillment of this need in social exchange theory is considered as the standard by which humans evaluate their subsequent relationships. If Bens Radio listeners feel that they get a lot of benefits by joining the Fans Club through various social media and participating in other programs, then they will increasingly attach themselves to Bens Radio. Likewise, Bens Radio will continue to build relationships through various programs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion from the perspective of relationship management theory and social exchange theory, it can be concluded that Bens Radio's strategy in building relationships with listeners is in the form of making fan club media, providing various annual routine events, special events or gatherings with listeners. (fans) it is enough to be a binder (engagement).

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