

# Motivation, Interest and Para Social Interaction of Today's Radio Young Listeners

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Abstract. Digitalization has changing the concept of human life. It can bringing changes to one's lifestyle, especially in listening to radio broadcasts. Now there are many ways to enjoy radio broadcasts, from traditional radio listening, MP3 and podcasting systems, internet radio and satellite radio. Therefore, many national scale broadcasting radio stations are now starting to organize themselves, renew their operational service systems and of course, improve their business systems. Because, competition in the radio industry is now very strict where the players do not only come from the radio industry but also come from the music industry. This research wants to explore more about the position of radio in front of the current millennial generation, as consumers and radio listeners whom are being its target. The research questions are: Why do millennials still like to listen to radio broadcasts? What aspects that could attract and influence the millennials most so that they want to listen to the radio? This research conducted by using mix methods approach. This study explains the interest of the millennials generation in enjoying radio broadcasts, in terms of three aspects: impact of motivation, interpersonal attraction and para social interaction. The data collection method is conducting questionnaires to 227 young people in Jakarta and Denpasar aged 14 to 28 years who like to listen to the radio. They filled the Google form between August and October 2019. In addition, interviews were also conducted with the managers of young people's radio stations in Jakarta and Denpasar, Bali. As a result, it is known that the factor of the broadcaster's communication style is the most aspect that could attract the millennials to listen to the radio, just because the announcer is considered as their personification. The more appropriate and interesting

the topic of conversation and delivered attractively by favorite broadcasters, the higher the millennial desire to listen to the radio.

Keywords: Digitalization; Interpersonal Attraction; Motivation; Para Social Interaction; Radio

## 1 Introduction

The fall of President Soeharto in 1998, as well as the opening of the democratic tap, freed radio from all government demands. Reform has given freedom to the media, including radio. Creative content is born. Private radio is no longer required to relay and is freed from propaganda-related news. Despite its potential, the challenges facing radio are increasingly diverse in the reform era. The high internet penetration is a challenge for the radio industry. People began to leave the radio and turn to online news portals to obtain information.

According to the Nielsen Radio Audience Measurement's survey that conducted in 2016, the reach of radio listeners were low nowadays. In the third quarter of 2016, it said that the penetration of television (96%); outdoor media (52%); the internet (40%) and radio (38%). This penetrations showed that radio still being listened to around 20 million people in Indonesia. In 11 cities that had surveyed by Nielsen, it explained that the radio listeners spent at least around 139 minutes per day on listen to the radio (Nielsen, 2016).

Based on the Nielsen surveyed, the most number is dominated by X Generation in the age range of 35 until 49 years who had spent more than 18 hours per week of radio listening. Then the Baby Boomers who are in the age range of 50 until 65 years, usually spent 17 hours 20 minutes. Another group of the Silent Generation, from 65 years and over, had spent about 16 hours 22 minutes. The Millennials from age 15 until 34 years, had listened to the radio for 15 hours 37 minutes. Last, the Z Generation from age 10 until 14 years who spends more than 13 hours listening to the radio every week. Interestingly, there are many assumptions in society that radio is only listened to by older generations. It turns out that this is contrary to the findings of Nielsen's survey on <sup>5</sup> the third quarter of 2016. This Nielsen Survey result shows that precisely 57 percent of radio listeners are future consumers who are at a relatively young age. According to (Rubin, A., & Step, 2010), there are three aspects on which young people still listen to the radio. These three aspects are motivation, interpersonal attraction and para social interaction. This is because radio broadcasting <sup>9</sup> offers its listeners an opportunity to discuss and participate interpersonal. This participation usually involves <sup>9</sup> motivation to listen, interpersonal interest in the announcer and para social interactions with the announcer. The higher the level of participation, as evidence of the involvement of motivation, attraction and para social interaction, will be able to give effect to radio broadcast listeners.

The presence of broadcasters is also one of the key determinants of radio success in reaching listeners, especially from young people. It because of one of the characteristics offered by the radio is that it can be listened to while doing other work.

This makes the listener entrusts the radio as a reliable source of information while they do other work such as driving a car, washing dishes, etc (Saraswati, 2017).

Radio has long been a friend of mankind to entertain its listeners, based on his or her needs and wants. This research is trying to clearly demonstrate these needs and wants by using Uses

and Gratifications theory. According to Rubin (2002), this theory can be interpreted as part of psychological paradigm of communication <sup>6</sup> which focuses on the use of mass media and other communication tools, such as interpersonal communication, by individuals to meet the needs and desires (Savage & Spence, 2014).

This theory explains the reasons for individuals to choose the preferred media over other individuals. According to McQuail Blumler and Brown (1972) in (Savage & Spence, 2014),

some of the activities included in Gratification are personal relationships, diversion, surveillance and personal identity. Sometimes, listeners are listening to the radio just for fun,

They just to find out what is happening around them or to maintain relationships or attachments with others.

Other opinions, <sup>6</sup> there are two specific aspects of Gratifications, namely content and process (Kayahara and Wellman, 2007) in (Savage & Spence, 2014). Process of Gratifications is how someone's interaction with the media, for example in social media update. Content of gratifications can be classified by reading a friends' social media timeline and gathering information from various news outlets. They will look for the type of information source that is considered the best in order to meet their needs.

There are three aspects that plays an important role in the purchasing decision process by consumers namely motivation, interpersonal interests and para social interaction. <sup>8</sup> There are two types of motivation that can influence consumer purchasing decisions, namely rational motivation which based on objectivity in valuing products and emotional motivation which based on subjectivity in valuing products (Gunawan, 2015).

There are interpersonal perceptions that can influence radio programs. This interpersonal interest and motivation is considered as the most prominent thing that can influence consumer behavior related to the strengthening of attitudes and similarity in attitude <sup>9</sup> (McCroskey & McCain, 1974; R. B. Rubin & McHugh, 1987) in (Rubin, A., & Step, 2010). This can be interpreted that interpersonal interests are things that are related to interests with similar attitudes and thoughts between the radio and the personality of the listener. Responsive attitude is the most important thing in building interpersonal attraction (Davis & Perkowitz, 1979), but also accepting is a form of positive reinforcement in a relationship (Wheless, Frymier, & Thompson, 1992) in (Rubin, A., & Step, 2010)

Para social interactions are interactions between mass media users and someone's representatives who appear in media or media figures such as presenters, actors and celebrities who are able to form para social relationships, which are part of social relationships (Giles, 2009).

## 2 Method

The type of research methodology is classified by the research philosophy which the researcher's needs. This decision will come up to the research objective and the research instruments. These are have been developed and used as the solution to the problem (Khaldi, 2017). In this research, the author use mix method by distributing the questionnaires through Google form to 227 respondents young people aged 14-28 years in Jakarta and Denpasar to get descriptive data. This survey conducts during August until Oktober 2019. According to Khaldi (2017), surveys are used to represent the outlook of a large group of people at a certain point in time. So, there is no effort to build a cause and effect relationship on this research.

As a qualitative method, there were two people get interviewed by the author as a sources for this research. Those are <sup>7</sup> Vitali Ridho Imansyah as Account Manager of MRA Broadcast Media Division. It is a media company group, owned several radio

stations namely Trax FM and Hard Rock FM in Jakarta and Dedan Ronggo Astono, a Radio Station Manager of Phoenix Radio Bali in Denpasar, Bali.

### 3 Result and Discussion

Based on the questionnaires, there are some findings that should be underlined especially related about three aspects that become the variables in this research.

Those are:

#### a) Motivation

1. Radio gives dependable information (47% or 79 people).
2. Radio is very entertaining (46,7% or 77 people).
3. There are about 47,9% or 79 people who's trying to get actual information from radio.
4. Radio is not the only media to get information (43.6% or 72 people).

#### b) Interpersonal Attraction



1. Present and theme are not the issues that favorable for listeners. For present, there are around 37,6% or 62 people who answer 'doubt'. For theme, there are about 30,9% or 51 people who answer 'disagree'.

2. Radio program is very depending on the announcer who become the messenger. There are around 41,8% or 69 people who 'agree' of this statement.

#### c) Para Social Interaction

1. About 37% or 61 people who 'agree' that they will like a radio program only if they already known the background of the announcer.

2. Around 49,7% or 82 people who 'very agree' that they like a music program from the radio no matter of the announcer are.

3. About 50,9% or 84 people are giving full attention to the communication style of the broadcaster.

From the results of the distribution of questionnaires that have been done, it can be seen that young people are very dependent on information from the radio, especially for information that is real time. At the same time, many young people use radio as a trusted media to get actual information. The problem is, they don't make this radio as the only media to get information.

From this aspect it can be seen that radio is one of the choices of young people, because they want an actual and reliable information. According to the theory of Uses

and Gratifications, this is what is called an individual choosing the media that is felt to best meet their needs and desires. Dependence on information presented via radio is also a form of rational motivation (based on objectivity in valuing products) where the form is the rationality of thinking to get the most actual information from the radio. This reason is also evidence that motivation plays an important role as one of the aspects that young people like to listen to radio broadcasts.

This is the same as what happened in Australia, where the results of GFK Radio's research show that around 53 percent of respondents considered radio as the main source of information compared to television and magazines or newspapers. Interestingly, around 51 percent of respondents consider online news to be full of untrustworthy fake news (Magazine, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Joan Warner, CEO of industry body Commercial Radio Australia, said that the output of Australian research <sup>4</sup> were similar to the European Broadcast Union's recent Trust in Media

2017. The study that held across 33 countries was found that radio was the most trusted medium, followed by TV. Nowadays, people are getting sceptical and more selective in filtering the information. Radio has become associated with being personal, authentic and accessible.

It seems that the radio station manager understood this. They understand well that the need for actual and reliable information is highly expected by the listening community, especially young people. In response, both radio stations provide services in the form of up-to-date information that is entertaining, for example music programs.

Based on the source from Jakarta's radio station, they realized that radio is still considered as source of information because they understand that public need reliable media. This is

similar with a very based motivation that <sup>10</sup> composed of three components, namely 1) effort

expended to achieve a goal; 2) desire to learn; and 3) attitude toward the task

(Tremblay and

Gardner, 1995) in (Liu, 2015).

In other findings, it is known that millennials are not too fond of giving gifts and themes chosen in a radio program. Apparently, they were not as enthusiastic as radio listeners in the past, who were interested in fighting over prizes. The theme of which is discussed in a radio program is not necessarily able to attract the attention of young people.

Regarding interpersonal attraction, the millennials concern a lot in the style of communication delivered by the announcer. This will determine whether they will

continue to listen to the broadcast content or turn it off. This is consistent with what was conveyed by the radio station manager that the announcer was the main character that must be considered in a radio business because the announcer is the personification of the character of the listener. If you want to get many listeners, the radio station must be able to find a broadcaster who can represent the personality of the radio brand.

Company should remember two important trends that could affect <sup>3</sup> research on the basic of personality and interpersonal perceptions. Those are: the differentiation of interpersonal perception data as outlined in the Social Relations Model (SRM; Kenny, 1994), and the description of linking process between personality and interpersonal judgments as described in the Realistic Accuracy Model (RAM; Funder, 1999) and the lens model (Brunswik, 1956). These two trends are primarily conceived of as different accuracy research approaches (e.g. Jussim, 2005) in (Mitja D. Back, 2010).

As for interpersonal attraction, radio station managers from Denpasar, Bali have developed both directly and indirectly. Directly in the form of "meet fans live shows", while indirectly via YouTube. They use social media to introduce their announcers and activities to young listeners." Social media itself can be used in expecting the development of the lack of knowledge from the citizens, especially in the political life. The theory has described the character of traditional media to be politically knowledgeable and engaged currently (McLeod et al., 1996 ; McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999) in (Boulianne, 2015).

For the para social aspect, the results of the questionnaire found that radio listeners felt it was important to know and know the background of their favorite radio

announcer. They will have more attachment, if previously they were familiar with the activities and works of publishers. This will cause a feeling of excitement when the idol is appearing in audio form. This of course will be able to make listeners understand the personification of the radio brand and they will disseminate positive information about the brand to others around them.

Based on above, it explained<sup>2</sup> that three dimensions of Para Social Interaction (cognitively-oriented, affectively-oriented, and behaviorally-oriented) be included in subsequent studies of this construct. The Para Social Interaction (PSI)<sup>2</sup> is defined as the degree to which the audiences react<sup>2</sup> interpersonally to the characters in the soap opera. Cognitively-oriented Para

Social Interaction is defined as the degree to which an audience member pays careful attention to the educational content of soap opera episodes and reflects its meaning and importance. Behaviorally-oriented PSI is defined as degree to which an audience member talks about media messages with other audience members and or to the characters themselves in a soap opera (Papa et al. 2000; Singhal et al. 2004; Sood & Rogers 2000) in (Kawamura, Ivankova, Kohler, & Perumean-Chaney, 2009).

The privilege of successful radio station is all about the "friend" element. Sometime, some people who listen to the radio just because of the friend factor and the closeness. Announcer is not only a broadcaster. Presently, radio station has its own segmentation that needs the personification of its brand. It is important that the announcer will be the radio personification that represented by person. So how many radio stations that focus on the business decision maker who works but also know how to enjoy the personification of life. It is represented by the announcer. The role of announcers are very important. At the end, the character of the radio is not strong enough. So, there must be a figure that represents the radio as part of the marketing strategy.

Based on the Theory of Uses and Gratification, presently people are the one who play important role for choices for getting information. An interesting media, is a media that is able to meet their needs and desires. In the case of radio media selection, it turns out that there are three aspects that are the reasons for millennials to listen to the radio broadcasts in the midst of the onslaught of digital media. Those are: 1) Self-motivation to listen to radio broadcasts mainly because they assume the contents of radio broadcasts can be justified; 2) Interpersonal attraction where the radio program has an interesting thing, that is the program itself and is delivered in an appropriate communication style; and 3) The Para Social Interaction, the closeness to the announcer.

#### 4 Conclusion

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As a result, it is known that the factor of the broadcaster's communication style is the most aspect that could attract the millennials to listen to the radio, just because the announcer is considered as their personification. The more appropriate and interesting the topic of conversation and delivered attractively by favorite broadcasters, the higher the millennial desire to listen to the radio.

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