Song Selection Policy on Radio MQ FM Yogya

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ABSTRACT

Each media company has a characteristic correlated to its image. How content is displayed, a media company has its own rules. Radio MQ FM is a network radio with Islamic nuances. This radio is under the auspices of MQ FM Bandung and Yogyakarta Amikom University and has a segment of Indonesian Muslim families. Amid the proliferation of popular songs in Indonesia and even abroad, MQ FM has regulations, one of which is the selection of songs that are played on the radio. It is in line with the theory of gatekeeping in mass communication which explains the limitations in media routines that cannot present many things but make choices in presenting content. The keeper carries out the gatekeeping process, and in this case, a Music Director (MD). This study used a descriptive qualitative method to discuss the selection of songs in MQ FM Yogya. The data collection was in observation, interviews, and documentation. This study found that in determining songs at MQ FM, Yogya, MD paid attention to the type of music, lyrics, singers, audio quality, and long duration.

INTRODUCTION

Yogyakarta has 43 radio stations, both FM and AM which are officially registered on the website kpid.jogjaprov.go.id (*Lembaga Penyiaran Swasta - KPID DIY*, n.d.). The percentage of radio listeners in Yogyakarta occupies the second-highest position compared to other cities in Indonesia. The first position is Bali with 29.32%, then Yogyakarta with 26.25%, followed by DKI Jakarta with 16.92% listeners (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2017).

With many radios accompanied by many listeners, Yogyakarta has stiff competition in developing the radio business. For this reason, each radio must have its characteristics to meet the needs of its audience. MQ FM is one of the radio stations in Yogyakarta with a da'wah radio base. It broadcasts on a frequency of 92.3 FM. MQ FM Yogya is a radio under the Management Qolbu Corporation based in Bandung, which positions itself as an inspirational radio for Indonesian families. MQ FM has been around since 2001 and continues to grow with various dynamics until now (*Station | MQ Radio Yogyakarta*, n.d.). With the target as an inspirational radio for families, MQ FM has the vision to become a medium for changing self, family, and society towards the noble character. That way, all activities, even the presentation of song content and the management of the radio, are adjusted to the radio's goals, vision, and mission.

Various policies are needed to make the media run more smoothly and according to their goals in managing professional media. In media management, the term mass media management is known. According to Morissan, mass media management is the process of planning, organizing, influencing, and monitoring to achieve organizational goals through coordinating the use of resources and materials (Morissan, 2018). In short, mass media management is utilizing resources through processes to achieve organizational goals. So that also applies to manage radio media, in this case, MQ FM Yogya.

This study sincerely reviewed managing MQ FM Yogya radio, especially in selecting broadcast content in the form of songs played in the program segment. The song is a variety of rhythmic sounds (in speaking, singing, reading, and so on). Songs are also interpreted as singing and sometimes accompanied by music (KBBI Kemendikbud, 2016a).

A radio is synonymous with a song. Songs and music are the most vital elements of radio. Even the program playing songs with music is the most popular radio broadcast program (Masduki, 2004). A song goes through a long process to be played on the radio. The manager of songs on the radio is a music director, better known as MD, in terms of human resources. Researchers conducted research intending to photograph how MQ FM Yogya in radio management, which is specified in choosing songs so that they can be broadcast in their broadcast programs. This research's core is the criteria for a song and how the process is carried out in each criterion.

Selecting broadcast content in the form of songs aligns with the gatekeeping theory, which focuses on studying items, information received or rejected, formed, and scheduled by a media (Vos, 2009). Although according to McQuail, gatekeeping is generally in news programs, in principle, he stated that gatekeeping is the process by which selection is made in media work. That is about whether or not a particular issue is allowed to pass through the media door before broadcasting (McQuail, 2010). This concept of media content selection was applied in the research on song selection policies on MQ FM Yogya radio.

Gatekeeping, according to Vos, is about regulating the flow of culture, with particular emphasis on influencing processes of access, creativity, and diversity (Smits, 2019). Gatekeeping is complex because it is not just a process of guarding or opening and closing the gate on the process of access, creativity, and diversity but also emphasizes how the process of organizing gatekeeping and managing it. This gatekeeping process is a series of linear decisions many individuals make (Reese, 2015).

Researchers on radio and gatekeeping studies conduct several relevant studies. The first is about the role of public relations (PR) in attracting advertisers at RRI Madya Denpasar. This research, conducted by I Dewa Ayu, emphasizes how PR as HR in RRI manages the marketing department by attracting advertisers (Putri, 2015). The author sees this research in terms of how HR, in this case, PR, runs its media management. This research with radio objects similarly investigated how HR manages the radio media.

Another relevant research is entitled 'The uniqueness of radio characteristics: The attraction for the audience to listen to the radio.' This study focuses on the audience about why there are still audiences who choose radio to get information and entertainment. In this research, Pritta Miranda and Reny Yuliati wanted to see the audience's motivation in choosing a radio. Research has found that radio has an element of surprise in selecting songs that gives a sensation of its own (Miranda & Yuliati, 2020). If this research looks at the audience's perspective in responding to song selection, the authors focus more on how song selection is carried out on radio media on MQ FM Yogya radio.

The following research is research on the production management of radio play programs. The research conducted by Puti Andam Sari took the title 'Behind the Geronimo FM Program Drama.' This research was both research on the production process of a radio program and both select radio objects in Yogyakarta. However, Puti's research focuses on the Sandiwara program conducted on Geronimo FM radio. Puti's research found that the implementation of broadcasting management which has a creative strategy and raises the phenomenon of cultural diversity, is packaged in a comedy in this program. This phenomenon is told in a radio play set in a boarding house in Yogyakarta (Sari et al., 2016). Although they both see broadcasting management on a radio, the difference between Puti's research and that of the author lies in the object. The author focuses on the management process in song selection, where song playback programs or so-called music programs are the best-selling programs on radio.

The last is research on the same subject on Radio MQ FM Yogya. However, the research entitled 'Practice of Sharia Journalism on Radio MQ FM Yogya' focused more on the practice of journalism on radio MQ FM Yogya. This research conducted by Abdul Rohman found that MQ FM Yogya radio is based on sharia values which is a new phenomenon in radio journalism. MQ FM Yogya, which is not a news radio, in its news policy activities, is based on the values of MQ Corporation, popularized by K.H Abdullah Gymnastiar (Rohman, 2007). This research was used as a reference for researchers in seeing how sharia policy in determining songs is carried out through the gatekeeping process.

METHOD

This study applied a qualitative descriptive method. Descriptive research aims to carefully describe the characteristics of a symptom or problem under study. The symptoms studied in this study were regarding the policy of playing songs on MQ FM Yogya radio. The focus of descriptive research is to answer the 'how' question by trying to get and convey facts wholly and thoroughly. So, descriptive research is not just wanting to know the what but also the how (Zellatifanny & Mudjiyanto, 2018). Likewise, the author emphasized how the program production team, especially choosing songs and implementing song selection policies in MQ FM Yogya. In short, the research investigated the gatekeeping in the song selection process at MQ FM Yogya.

This study's data was collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted with the MQ FM Yogya radio management team, which consisted of the program manager and the music director (MD), the announcer, and the MQ FM Yogya production house manager. The writing team made observations regarding the running of the broadcast at the MQ FM Yogya studio at Graha Amikom University Yogyakarta Building 1, 2nd Floor Jl. North Ringroad Condong Catur Depok, Sleman, Yogyakarta. Collecting documentation data was also included in journal articles, books, and official websites relevant to research on song policy on radio media. Finally, the data analysis technique in this study was by compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and finally drawing conclusions (Yin, 2011).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
A. Adjusting the type of music to the audience, vision, and mission.

The categorization of music in the world includes classical, jazz, blues, rock, pop, country, reggae, rap, acapella, and contemporary music (Sampurno, 2014). In addition, there is also music with specific themes, such as the theme of trance, mellowness, spirit, cheerfulness, and relaxation (Roffiq et al., 2017). According to the program manager of MQ FM Yogya, the selection of the type of music at MQ FM is adjusted to the radio audience who still prioritizes the radio's vision and mission, such as positive, soothing music, pop, and jazz.

Radio MQ FM Yogya has a tagline to inspire Indonesian families. The vision of this radio is as a medium of change for self, family, and society towards the noble character. In running the radio according to its vision, MQ FM Yogya has a target audience. Radio must have a precise audience segmentation. A clear segmentation will determine the broadcast format, which includes selecting programs and broadcast styles that follow the intended target audience (Dasih, 2021). This audience will be the paramount consideration in producing a program, including the played song.

In their listener profile, MQ FM Yogya determined that their audience is 54% female and 44% male, with the majority aged 25-35 of 70%. The educational status of the target is 49% who graduated from college. Meanwhile, their socioeconomic status is middle to the upper class. MQ FM Yogya targets students as the main listeners, with 35% followed by entrepreneurs as much as 25% (*Station | MQ Radio Yogyakarta*, n.d.).

According to the program manager of MQ FM Yogya, the song selection has also been adjusted with the audience profile as mentioned. Not all types of songs are included in the MQ FM Yogya playlist. The type of song is adjusted by looking at the socioeconomic status of the upper-middle class, AB, and minimum education status of a bachelor, and a minimum age of 25 years. So that songs with nuances or genres of jazz, pop, and soothing or relaxing music are the types of music that are played on MQ FM radio.

In addition, according to him or her, MQ FM Yogya does not include the type of dangdut. Even though it is an Islamic radio, MQ FM does not include *qasidah* songs, a piece of Islamic music, in its program.

> *"MQFM Jogja does not include the dangdut genre, "the element of cheating," which is more or can be called qasidah. This is not included in the selection of music" (Rizki N Hadi, Program Manager and Music Director of MQ FM Yogya, personal interview).*

The type of music presented by MQ FM Jogja, which is claimed to be upbeat music, is not easy to find, so we have to be selective in looking for it. There is no specific definition of upbeat music, but from sources found by the author, upbeat music refers to music with positive strains and tones and has a positive impression. In addition, upbeat music is an upbeat, meaningful song that inspires the listeners (*La Luna Hijrah Ke Musik Positif | Republika Online*, n.d.). The search for upbeat music is carried out in various ways, including joining the ANN (Nasyid National Association) community, collaborating with positive music youtube channels, contacting music labels that produce upbeat music, and searching youtube with due regard to copyright.

Meanwhile, MQ FM also allows people who want their songs to be included in the MQ FM playlist by sending song samples via email or MQ FM Yogya's social media. However, the song will be adjusted to the criteria for upbeat music run at MQ FM Yogya before it can be played there. Selecting music for radio is one of the processes carried out in radio research. A program director must conduct this type of music selection regularly, for example, a month or once a week (Morissan, 2018).

B. Motivational and inspirational lyrics

In selecting songs to be played on MQ FM Yogya, a selection process was also carried out on the song's lyrics. Lyrics that contain motivation and inspiration are his choice. Lyrics turn out to be an essential part of assessing a song. The lyrics are also a determinant of whether the song can be included in the MQ FM Yogya playlist or not. Songs with too mellow lyrics depicting sadness and despair are not played on MQ FM Yogya. In addition, according to the program manager of MQ FM, the lyrics that describe pre-marital love, which contain confusion and despair, are also not the songs

that are played on MQ FM.

> *"Songs with lyrics with the theme of love are still included but according to the context. Whether it aims for those already halal or not, we mostly show them to those already halal. We are not given too much portion for the lyrics with the nuances of love"* (Rizki N Hadi, Program Manager and Music Director of MQ FM Yogya, personal interview).

Lyrics are the most crucial part of a song because the lyrics are the song's essence. Song lyrics are a person's expression of something he has seen, heard, or experienced. In expressing their experience, the songwriter then plays word and language games to create the attraction and characteristics of the song (Hidayat, 2014). Understanding that the lyrics are something that listeners will hear and live by, then in choosing the lyrics of a song at MQ FM Yogya, it is also essential to pay attention.

Lyrics that invite changes to good things and provide encouragement become criteria in selecting song lyrics in MQ FM Yogya. In addition, avoiding lyrics that lead to despair and lyrics that make us feel down is another criterion in selecting songs at MQ FM Yogya. The choice of song lyrics at MQ FM Yogya is also heavily influenced by the founder of Qolbu Management, Abdullah Gymnastiar, or Aa Gym. According to the program manager of MQ FM, in its preaching, Aa Gym considers media that stand in the way of da'wah, such as MQ FM, must provide a soothing message. It aligns with Rohman's statement that religious radio or da'wah radio applies sharia principles in its management. This sharia-labeled radio performs a dual function, meaning not only for profit but also as a medium of da'wah. So several contents in the program are different from conventional radio (Rohman, 2007).

In addition, according to Sujatmiko, the message of da'wah that can be used in preaching is contained in the song's lyrics. Listening to songs with good lyrics, according to him, can stimulate behavior. Besides that, music with good lyrics can calm the mind, reduce humanity's burden, and improve human nature (Sujatmiko, 2015).

> *"What is tolerated is marriage and post-wedding education lyrics that are not excessive, not vulgar and (not) showing hatred (SARA) to anyone"* (Rizki N Hadi, Program Manager and Music Director of MQ FM Yogya, personal interview).

Kutipan di atas menjelaskan bahwa format siaran radio-radio religi, tidak diarahkan pada lirik lagu yang ekstrem menakutkan. Lirik lagu yang baik dan mengedukasi menjadi pilihan dalam radio dakwah ini. hal ini sejalan dengan yang disampaikan Sujatmiko bahwa pada dasarnya orang mendengarkan musik dapat memperoleh ketenangan batin dan kebahagiaan spiritual (Sujatmiko, 2015). Sehingga memang benar, dalam pemilihan lirik dan musik, benar-benar harus diperhatikan untuk memberikan dampak yang baik bagi pendengarnya.

Rafi Zaidan, an announcer for MQ FM Yogya, added that the lyrics that tell the spirit of nationalism or love for the homeland are also included in the criteria for song lyrics. The lyrics with the nuances of love for the homeland also give us a good spirit and aura to keep loving our homeland. At the beginning of the daily broadcast, Indonesia Raya plays at 4 am and noon.

According to Rafi, it is determining the lyrics that motivate and inspire us, not only MD's responsibility. An announcer also has a responsibility to find out the lyrics that match the criteria of MQ FM Yogya. The determination of the lyrics that inspire and motivate is in line with MQ FM Yogya: (1) to inspire and motivate to give meaning to life by giving the best; and (2) to provide inspiration and motivation for planting Islamic values in life. Following Noam's statement, the media industry could indeed lead to change, technological innovation, test new organizational practices and change institutions and community culture (E. L. I. M. Noam, 2019).

C. Singers Track Record

The singer's profile is one of the conditions for the entry of songs into MQ FM Yogya. Looking at the track record of the singer is done by the Music Director (MD) in the song selection process. Singers who have a good track record are within the criteria.

Indonesia has a collectivist culture. This culture has an interdependent self-image, where a person's behavior is determined by the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in a relationship (Syarizka et al., 2021). What is displayed by a person in a particular part of the group will represent that group. In conjunction with selecting a singer's track record with the radio that plays it, it will show how the radio is. Showing the excellent track record of singers to be played in MQ FM Yogya indirectly shows the good things that MQ FM Yogya displays.

In addition, MQ FM Yogya, as a religious radio who wants to give the best (*Station | MQ Radio Yogyakarta*, n.d.), will use the singer's good track record as one of the ways. It also happens in the selection of a brand ambassador for a product. Selecting good actors to represent a product can be analogous to selecting singers who have a good track record

at MQ FM Yogya.

Based on an interview with MD at MQ FM Yogya, the criteria for selecting other singers is to look at their track record in life and the legal realm. For example, by seeing whether a singer is a drug user or not, whether he has committed a crime, or even left Islamic law. If so, then most likely, the song with the singer will not be played on MQ FM Yogya.

The more specific the criteria implemented at MQ FM Yogya is in line with what Noam said that managing the media is based on creativity, feelings, and intuition. Media is seen as a sector with incentives, sensitive policies, and a traditional style (E. M. Noam, 2019). Managing the media with intuition and style is often done by the media, especially radio, with a specific reach and audience. So that this kind of thing is not something foreign to the management of a media. It has just been done in their way.

The basis for determining the track record and applicable law in Indonesia is Islamic law. However, it turns out that it is not absolute because even though it is based on the Islamic religion, non-Muslim singers can also play their songs on MQ FM. According to the manager director of MQ FM Yogya, sometimes what is seen is the conveyed lyrics, which are not standardized on a particular religion. According to him, MQ FM has never discriminated against religion in selecting singers.

> *"For example, Glen Fredly can also be included because the lyrics conveyed are very good, namely unity, social life" (Rizki N Hadi, Program Manager and Music Director of MQ FM Yogya, personal interview).*

Although the singer's track record is considered, the singer's track record is not prioritized on the singer's religion. In the issue of religion, the singer, MQ FM Yogya radio, in this case, adheres to the sixth verse of al Kafirun, which means "For you is your religion, and for me is my religion." The selection of singers focuses on the universal track record of good and evil, following eastern customs. The selection of singer track records is standardized on the standard of goodness that most Indonesians believe in compared to religious differences. As music directors, we have to update the news about singers and understand singers following the vision and mission and segmentation of listeners on the radio.

D. Good Audio Quality

Radio is an audio medium, so playing songs with good audio is an essential technical requirement. The sound quality of a radio broadcast is essential for listeners who are not loyal radio listeners or listeners who are only looking for essential songs and news. If the quality is not good, the audience will quickly switch to other radio stations (Viliny Lesmana, 2017).

Audio quality is an essential criterion for selecting songs to be played on MQ FM Yogya radio. In fact, according to the head of the production house MQ FM Yogya, not a few of the general public who have works send their works to MQ FM Yogya. It makes the quality of the audio sent really must be considered. Because according to him, when compared to music with labels, most of the works of the general public are of lower quality compared to professionally recorded songs.

The technical team is responsible for ensuring the audio quality is good. A quality control process is needed to ensure audio quality in every management. In this case, the song must always be good before broadcast. At MQ FM Yogya itself, audio technical matters are handled by the MQ FM production house while still consulting the program manager.

Audio quality is not just about the sound played from the station. The audio quality to the listener is also the responsibility of the radio, for example, in selecting the channel frequency. MQ FM Yogya uses an FM channel or frequency modulation, to be precise, at the 92.3 FM frequency. With this selection, the audio quality is also guaranteed to be good. Accordingly, Morison stated that FM Radio has better sound quality when clear and free from interference (Morissan, 2018).

The process of determining audio quality is the responsibility of the director and music director. According to the music director of MQ FM, MQ FM Yogya does not have a special team to search for music with audio quality. The search for music with good quality is given the responsibility of the production house division, which is considered to understand the ideal quality of technical sound in a radio.

> *"For sound quality, we usually coordinate with Fikri, part of PH (Production House), because Fikri understands what kind of technical sound should be included and changed in the rendering, if I am not mistaken" (Rizki N Hadi, Program Manager and Music Director of MQ FM Yogya, personal interview).*

Music included in MQ FM Yogya includes songs from the nasyid community, for example the Nusantara Nasyid Community, which consists of the Yogya Nusantara Nasyid Community, Central Java Nusantara Nasyid Community, West Java Nasyid Community, etc. In addition, there are content creators who have songs or prayers, singers, and local

PH who usually contact or be contacted by MQ FM Yogya for songs. Of all the songs that came in, not all followed MQ FM Yogya. Generally, the song sent is in the form of an MP3 file, while the incoming WAV file will be adjusted to the MP3 format.

As for MQ FM Yogya, according to the interview results, the selection of audio quality is considered, for example, from the side of the musical instrument, whether the instrument's sound is excessive or not pleasant to hear. Quality with easy listening becomes the standard that is run. The quality of the song itself ranges from 128 to 192 Kbps, with the help of the audio audition application for the process of adjusting the audio quality.

E. Short duration music

According to the KBBI, Duration is the length of time something lasts or the period (KBBI Kemendikbud, 2016b). If interpreted in a song, duration means the length of time the song plays, starting from the opening tone to the closing note. There is no ideal standard for a song to be declared good, but a song has approximately three minutes in general. It relates to the history of music recording itself, where at first, the recording industry adapted to recording LPs which each side could only record for approximately three minutes. It causes the average length of music to be approximately three minutes (Refliyandi, n.d.).

Although there are now many technologies for recording music longer than three minutes, most the three minutes of music have become popular, and people are used to three minutes. Finally, the market's appetite for three-minute music was formed. It is also because music is easier to remember, given that one's concentration on something is limited. Generally, a song is divided into several types based on duration. The first is a short two-part song, 2-3 minutes, then a medium one 4-5 minutes long, and the long one takes more than five minutes (Widhi, n.d.).

As in the theory of gatekeeping, one of which states limitations, is also the basis for selecting duration. Not all songs that match the four previous criteria (type of music, lyrics, singer, and audio quality) are included in the criteria for song playback. Duration is one thing to consider.

MQ FM, as a da'wah radio with a religious format, makes music as a supporter of a program. Music is not the main program format because the main program formats of MQ FM Yogya are talk shows, news, and entertainment. With the format of the main program, songs of more than five minutes duration will interfere with the running of the main non-music program. The duration limitation is done so that other programs run well. The music on MQ FM Yogya serves as a support for the themes of other program formats.

The song playback is also intended to change people's perception of MQ FM Yogya, which was previously considered a recitation radio, to become an Islamic lifestyle radio. After all, music is what listeners are looking for. As the findings in Miranda's research, a person's motivation in listening to the radio is listening to music in the first position, getting entertainment in the second position, and getting sources of information in the third position (Miranda & Yuliati, 2020). So it should be realized that including music is essential for a radio to be able to continue to be heard by its audience. However, it is still within the limitations following the radio policy.

CONCLUSION

Managing radio media turned out to be a complex activity that had many considerations. Even in the minor units of radio routines, it is also a fairly lengthy process. This study raises the policy of songs played on MQ FM Yogya radio. Radio MQ FM Yogya is an Islamic-based religious da'wah radio. This radio was developed under the management of the heart of KH Abdullah Gymnastiar's care. This Bandung-based radio has a policy of radio playback in its programs. Although the song is not the main program and is only a supporter of other programs, the song policy is based on neatly defined rules by looking at the type of music, lyrics, singer, audio quality, and duration

Based on the research that has been done, it is concluded that the song policy at MQ FM Yogya is found. First, the type of music played on MQ FM is upbeat music with jazz and pop genres. Second, the lyrics raised in songs on MQ FM Yogya radio are inspiring and motivating lyrics. Third, singers should have good track records, regardless of their religion. Lastly, the audio quality must be good, and the music duration being relatively short.

This research contributes to radio management, especially in radio-based religious da'wa. This research has many future implications, especially in the study of the audience of da'wa radio listeners, content other than songs in da'wa radio, or the development of da'wa radio, considering that today is the digital and new media era.

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