Management of Eastern Farmers Association Community Radio and Ban Huakrok Community Radio, Chon Buri Province

Mr. Pongsin Prompitak¹,a*

¹ School of Communication Arts (TV and Radio Broadcasting), Sripatum University Chonburi Campus, Thailand
²dj_seksan@hotmail.com

Keywords: Management of Community Radio, Eastern Farmers Association Community Radio, Ban Huakrok Community Radio

Abstract: This research aimed to study the management of Eastern Farmers Association Community Radio and Ban Huakrok Community Radio, to investigate the community’s participation in the two community radio stations, and to seek good management methods practiced by both community radio stations. The instruments used to collect data for this qualitative research included in-depth interview, document analysis, and non-participant observation. It was found that both community radio stations employed the same method in personnel management; that is, there was an appropriate proportion of the number of staff and radio programs and type of radio programs. Regarding the budget and supply management, so the management strategies had to be active all the time. Moreover, both radio stations had similar management systems in that they had careful budget plans which could be audited. Regarding audience management, both stations provided their listeners opportunities to request songs, share information, and be interviewed on air. Since both stations’ management styles were informal, the work was flexible. Regarding the community’s participation, both stations opened widely for any participation from the radio committee to the DJs. A recommended management strategy was the dynamic strategy which consisted of both proactive and reactive tactics, focusing on two-way communication.

Introduction

Press media nowadays has become “capitalist media” and “state media” of which news contents are regulated and controlled. The public is prevented from participation. This is why a community radio station was founded, based on the 1997 People’s Constitution of Thailand dated October 1, 1998. Under the principle of ‘democratic media’ and ‘participatory communication’, the public has a convenient access to news and to design a program. They can also participate in planning, co-directing and co-producing the media production process and news report. Based on this scenario, it is called ‘democratic media’; that is the radio stations are operated and owned by the public to serve the public.

Of 101 community radio stations in Chonburi, some have to be put on halt due to poor managements in the organization. However, this is not the case for the Eastern Farmers Association’s and Ban Huakrok community radio station. The Eastern Farmers Association Community Radio, located in Bo Thong, broadcasts F.M. radio signal at a frequency of 97.25 megahertz. Ban Huakrok Community Radio, located in Nong Ree, Muang Chonbutri, broadcasts F.M. radio signal at a frequency of 103.75 megahertz. Both stations have been operated since 2004 and are seen as the successful stations due to their productive management. The stations answer the needs from the local community by welcoming a wide range of public participation from community members. The researcher is intrigued to find out as to which management measures have been keeping the two radio stations well run over years.

Research purposes

1. To study the management system of the Eastern Farmers’ Association and Huakrok community radio stations.
2. To study public participation with the Eastern Farmers’ Association and Huakrok community radio stations.
3. To learn about an effective management style from the Eastern Farmers’ Association and Huakrok community radio stations.

Research methodology
This is a qualitative research that applies an in-depth interview, document analysis and non-participant observation. The research methods and samplings are as followed.

1. Two radio stations in Chonburi; the Eastern Farmers Association’ and Huakrok community radio stations, are selected as purposive samplings. Both stations demonstrate a top criteria of a community radio station; being owned by local community members, not an outside organization. They have been operated for over five years with the slogan: “Of the people, by the people, for the people”
2. Samples of analyzed document are as followed; textbooks, journals, research study related to a radio community management, the proceedings and memorandum. All these obtained document belong to the two radio stations.
3. A sampling group of people who give an interview are from the Eastern Farmers Association’s and Ban Huakrok community radio station. From each station, nine people from the board of committees are selected. Likewise, for each station, seven volunteers and seven listeners are also selected to take part in an interview session.

Research framework
To study the management style in the Eastern Farmers Association radio station, broadcasting F.M. radio signal at a frequency of 97.25 megahertz and Ban Huakrok community radio station, broadcasting F.M. radio signal at a frequency of 103.75 megahertz.

Research findings
Qualified members who are to involve in the management units must be local, available to take part, public-minded, have visions for public interests and an understanding to communicate with the public. He/she has to pass an official test related to a radio announcer or presenter.

The radio station’s managerial structure is divided into two units; Executive Board of Directors and Sub-committees. The sub-committee team produces the radio programme. Ensuring no wrongdoings or embezzlement as well as preventing the stations from being influenced by local politicians and any other organizations.

In an equipment maintenance unit, e-document is well archived in a computer folder and some other tools are kept in a filing cabinet. In a management unit, the board of managing directors comes from democratic voting. Moreover, they have to be easily approachable and open for public hearing and involvement. Both stations have a management style and mechanism that appeals and keep the audiences constantly interested in a radio program. The radio broadcasters also create their own personalities that the audiences find motivating, appealing, entertaining and interesting. These will help maintain the audiences’ interest intact. Besides, an evaluation can be done indirectly by welcoming the audiences’ text messages to share their thoughts about the quality of the program. To evaluate the interest of the community member, the stations from time to time hold a special event.

Co-participant communication The two radio stations manage to share production tasks and responsibilities among the board of committees as well as community volunteers. They communicate in a two-way communication style. There is an exchange of opinions without a monopolization in information. Another type of communication style is downward which is seen in the Thai Public Broadcasting Service owned by Public Relations Department. News and information are one-way conveyed to the public. The third style is an upward flow of communication where news, feedbacks and opinions from the public are conveyed to a news reporting agency. Lastly, a lateral/horizontal communication flow is when a station acts as a communicating channel for community members. This type of communication flow leads to a healthy relationship among the public.
The management model of a community radio station

In a human resource management unit, each staff should be assigned with the right job based on their specialty and skills. Moreover, the staff should always develop their potential and skills in work. In a budget allocation and management for radio station unit, there should be a variety of income sources that adheres to check and balance policy. Equipment should be well maintained, classified then kept based on its category for it will make it easy to look for and to measure its useful life. There are generally two methods of equipment storage; electronics and paper document folder. All documents should be classified based on its types of document. In an audience management unit. A radio programme should be constantly run to secure its audience base. The radio broadcaster should have a pleasant personality and motivating speaking style. In term of task management, a community radio should openly welcome opinions and participations from people in general, be it the audience, producer team or even a radio broadcaster, without drawing a line on sex, education and social status.

Discussion on research findings

Management in a community radio station plays an essential role on the existence of the organization. Without an effective management, it is unlikely that the organization will manage to continue. Generally, a community radio station applies the same management style and practice just like a government or private sector do. However, such management style is not suitable for a community station level. [1,2] stated in her book ‘How to operate a community radio station’ that it is crucial to have an explicit goal and policy in order to operate a successful radio station. Moreover, a clear mission statement and responsibilities should be agreed with by every party. This helps with predictions on planning for a task. It also helps with answering questions as to what resources, how many people, which equipments, which locations, etc. are needed for a particular task and whether it is worth the aim set to be achieved. Therefore, setting an explicit goal is necessary in order to achieve an effective way of allocating and arranging the tasks within the organization.

A broadcasting schedule remains the same. A good management is the main factor that helps run the stations effectively. Apart from that, the two stations are financially sponsored by supportive organizations. The Eastern Farmers Association’s radio community is sponsored by the Eastern Farmers Association while Ban Huakrok Community radio station is sponsored by the Chonburi Leading Edge Learning Centre. It is often that a community radio station is normally funded by a sub-district administrative organization.

In the two radio stations, there are people who volunteer themselves to working in a Human Management unit. This sees as a different management style when comparing to radio stations run by a government and a private sector, particularly in term of a quantity and quality issue. The Eastern Farmers Association’s and Ban Huakrok Community Radio Station assign both temporary and permanent tasks properly. Experienced staff are assigned with professional jobs that involve public speaking and ceremony mastering. Amateur staff are assigned with a job that doesn’t require professional skills. This makes it easy for the management as a whole. In a recruitment process, a person selected has to be a representative from the people in a community and put on the right job and right position. This is in concordance with what Kulnaree Reungroch (2009, p.222) concludes in her research about a management of a Pathom Sakorn community radio station as a learning center for a sustainable development. She states that a volunteer for a community radio job should involve a variety of people, social and marriage status as well as professions such as a community leader, teacher, public health authority and etc. The organization structure of the two stations consists of two sets of committees; director committees and sub- production committee teams taking charge of different tasks.

The Eastern Farmers Association’s and Ban Huakrok community radio stations apply a non-profit and transparency principle. Ones of the principles include check-and-balance system, debit-credit report, independence maintaining and income generating. Such principle is in an agreement with the study conducted by Chareonnetera Saengdwangkae [3]. She studied about the management
of community radio stations in Kwanneng, Reang sub-district and Banna community radio station in Songkla. It is said that the stations charge a low-cost broadcasting fee from local sponsors who want to have their products advertised on-air since it is not mainly after a financial profit. To organize and keep track of the budget, a person is designated to draft regulations on money withdrawal so that the record can be checked. Other source of income is earned from organizing events on many occasions. Eastern Farmers Association’s and Ban Huakrok community radio stations have seven units of equipment management. These units include broadcasting equipment, computer, CD-ROM, telephone, electronics appliance and etc. Tools and equipment are classified and well-kept which make it easy to maintain and search for when needed.

The audiences are not only listeners, but they can also take part as a volunteer. They contribute by taking part as a radio broadcaster or a presenter. Both radio stations mainly focus on local listeners including those who live within a broadcasting radiance. Each radio presenters have their personalities. They evaluate their performances by communicating with the audiences over the phone. A number of people who participate can also tell if the audiences are interested in and satisfied with the radio staff’s performances. A questionnaire survey form enables the researchers to find out more of in-depth details which will be used to help answer the needs of the audiences. This is in accordance with the research fining presented by Kulnaree Seuroch (2007, p. 287). She studied about the management system in Pathomsakorn Learning Centre for a Sustainable Development. She stated that to distribute an evaluation or a survey form is one of the important ingredients leading to a successful management.

A co-participant management is a key to running a community radio station because the stations belong to and serve the community, therefore a community interest should be put first. Three levels of participation are as followed;
1. Being a listener/ an audience  2. Taking charge as a producer  3. Taking charge as a policy maker or a manager

To help improve and develop work performance, each units are open to listen and welcome new ideas from the audience who contribute. This is in agreement with what Kanjana Kaewthep claimed [4] that there are five levels of participation in a radio station. Such includes 1) Passive audiences 2) Active audiences 3) A volunteer that takes on other tasks besides a radio speaker task 4) A volunteer that solely works as a radio speaker 5) a committee. Typically people move to a higher level over time. For example, a passive listener who do not attentively listen will become active and regularly listen to the radio program and they phone in to the station to share thoughts. An active listener will then volunteer him/herself to work with a station, such as working in a public relation unit or liaising between the station and the public. From being an active listener, the person will then probably become a radio speaker. Finally he/she can take charge as one of the committees. However, laddering up toward a higher level of participation depends on a good management within the station as well.

Suggestions from the research
1. Management in a structural level
   Structural-level problem in the Eastern Farmers Association’s and Ban Huakrok community radio stations is that the boards of directors who administers the whole organization and radio station have been the same team. This leads to an ineffectiveness and no change-hand in management. To strengthen and maintain the radio station, a board of directors should represent each community groups by fair voting.
2. Human resource management
   There is a number of people who volunteer themselves to work for the stations. When one person is not available, there is no substitute to take care of the task. It is often that one person is responsible for multitasks which reduces productivity and effectiveness in the performance. Therefore, there should be more staff/volunteer outsourcing for when one person is away or not available. They can help take on ongoing tasks thus reduce vacuum in work.
3. Budget management and allocation
The Eastern Farmers Association’s Community Radio Station have never experienced a budget issue since it is funded by the community. Unlike Ban Huakrok Community Radio Station, it has to self-fund by earning from an advertisement and selling its products. It also asks for a funding support from the government to help develop the community radio station as a leading learning center.

4. Encouraging participation among the public
   The Eastern Farmers Association’s and Ban Huakrok community radio stations launch an official survey on their audiences by using a questionnaire along with an interview to learn about the audiences’ satisfactions and suggestions. These are useful information for further improvement in the organization. Moreover, it is found that the volunteers’ participation as a program producer and a radio announcer is very rare. Therefore, volunteers should be recruited more.

Suggestions for further research
1. Study should be conducted on the audience’s needs and satisfactions to the radio stations.
2. Study a management style of other radio stations in different areas since each one has a different context.
3. Study the importance of the volunteers toward the existence of the radio stations.

References
Management of Eastern Farmers Association Community Radio and Ban Huakrok Community Radio, Chon Buri Province

Mr. Pongsin Prompitak  
School of Communication Arts (TV and Radio Broadcasting)  
Sripatum University Chonburi Campus, Thailand

Introduction
Press media nowadays has become “capitalist media” and “state media” of which news contents are regulated and controlled. The public is prevented from participation. This is why a community radio station was founded, based on the 1997 People’s Constitution of Thailand dated October 1, 1998. Under the principle of ‘democratic media’ and ‘participatory communication’, the public has a convenient access to news and to design a program. They can also participate in planning, co-directing and co-producing the media production process and news report. Based on this scenario, it is called ‘democratic media’; that is the radio stations are operated and owned by the public to serve the public. Of 101 community radio stations in Chonburi, some have to be put on hault due to poor managements in the organization. However, this is not the case for the Eastern Farmers Association’s and Ban Huakrok community radio station. The Eastern Farmers Association Community Radio, located in Bo Thong, broadcasts F.M. radio signal at a frequency of 97.25 megahertz. Ban Huakrok Community Radio, located in Nong Ree, Muang Chonbutri, broadcasts F.M. radio signal at a frequency of 103.75 megahertz. Both stations have been operated since 2004 and are seen as the successful stations due to their productive management. The stations answer the needs from the local community by welcoming a wide range of public participation from community members. The researcher is intrigued to find out as to which management measures have been keeping the two radio stations well run over years.

Research purposes
1. To study the management system of the Eastern Farmers’ Association and Huakrok community radio stations.
2. To study public participation with the Eastern Farmers’ Association and Huakrok community radio stations.
3. To learn about an effective management style from the Eastern Farmers’ Association and Huakrok community radio stations.

Research methodology
This is a qualitative research that applies an in-depth interview, document analysis and non-participant observation

Research framework
To study the management style in the Eastern Farmers Association radio station, broadcasting F.M. radio signal at a frequency of 97.25 megahertz and Ban Huakrok community radio station, broadcasting F.M. radio signal at a frequency of 103.75 megahertz.

Research findings
Qualified members who are to involve in the management units must be local, available to take part, public-minded, have visions for public interests and an understanding to communicate with the public. He/she has to pass an official test related to a radio announcer or presenter.

The radio station’s managerial structure is divided into two units; Executive Board of Directors and Sub-committees. The sub-committee team produces the radio programme. Ensuring no wrongdoings or embezzlement as well as preventing the stations from being influenced by local politicians and any other organizations. In an equipment maintenance unit, e-document is well archived in a computer folder and some other tools are kept in a filing cabinet. In a management unit, the board of managing directors comes from democratic voting. Moreover, they have to be easily
approachable and open for public hearing and involvement. Both stations have a management style and mechanism that appeals and keep the audiences constantly interested in a radio program. The radio broadcasters also create their own personalities that the audiences find motivating, appealing, entertaining and interesting. These will help maintain the audiences’ interest intact. Besides, an evaluation can be done indirectly by welcoming the audiences’ text messages to share their thoughts about the quality of the program. To evaluate the interest of the community member, the stations from time to time hold a special event.

**Co-participant communication** The two radio stations manage to share production tasks and responsibilities among the board of committees as well as community volunteers. They communicate in a two-way communication style. There is an exchange of opinions without a monopolization in information. Another type of communication style is downward which is seen in the Thai Public Broadcasting Service owned by Public Relations Department. News and information are one-way conveyed to the public. The third style is an upward flow of communication where news, feedbacks and opinions from the public are conveyed to a news reporting agency. Lastly, a lateral/horizontal communication flow is when a station acts as a communicating channel for community members. This type of communication flow leads to a healthy relationship among the public.

**The management model of a community radio station**

In a human resource management unit, each staff should be assigned with the right job based on their specialty and skills. Moreover, the staff should always develop their potential and skills in work. In a budget allocation and management for radio station unit, there should be a variety of income sources that adheres to check and balance policy. Equipment should be well maintained, classified then kept based on its category for it will make it easy to look for and to measure its useful life. There are generally two methods of equipment storage; electronics and paper document folder. All documents should be classified based on its types of document.

In an audience management unit. A radio programme should be constantly run to secure its audience base. The radio broadcaster should have a pleasant personality and motivating speaking style. In term of task management, a community radio should openly welcome opinions and participations from people in general, be it the audience, producer team or even a radio broadcaster, without drawing a line on sex, education and social status.