

Communication of The Indonesian Government To The Television Broadcasting Industry Regarding The Policy On Digitization

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Abstract

The Indonesian government has informed television broadcasting industry since 2007 regarding the policy of migration from analog to digital technology by inviting television associations in joint meetings and discussion forums. However, the efforts that have been made by the government have not been able to make the television broadcasting industry have the same construction on the policy of television digitization to jointly realize it. This study aims to analyze and reveal the reality of the Indonesian government's communication to the television broadcasting industry regarding the policy on terrestrial television digitization. The method used is qualitative with the type of case study and constructivist paradigm. This study reveals that there is uncertainty with the reality of the Indonesian government's communication to the television broadcasting industry regarding terrestrial television digitization policies in 2007-2018, and there is no maximum time to explain issues about television digitization which are very technical. In addition, participatory communication is not fully carried out by the government to invite the television broadcasting industry to participate in the success of accelerating the terrestrial television digitization in Indonesia.

Keywords: Television Digitization; Government Communications; Broadcasting Industry

Introduction

Indonesia is a member of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), an international organization that regulates radio and telecommunications. In their 2006 *Regional Radiocommunication Conference*, members of the ITU agreed on analogue technology migration to digital technology for terrestrial television. The deadline for the *Analogue Switch Off* (ASO) was 2015 for the 119 ITU countries in Region-1 embracing Europe, Africa, Middle East, and Middle Asia. ASEAN countries which are also the members of ITU agreed that ASO would due in 2020.

Director of Broadcasting Directorate General of the Implementation of Post and Informatics, Ministry of Communication and Informatics (Kemenkominfo), Geryantika Kurnia, in a seminar on July 18, 2020 about “The Future of the Indonesian Digital Broadcasting” stated that digital broadcasting in Indonesian is important because the society deserves to enjoy high quality of broadcasting services. Digital broadcasting is an attempt of the broadcasting industry to encounter its competitive internet streaming which may create ease of the frequency arrangement to help advance digital economy and industry 4.0, as well as avoid conflicts with neighboring countries due to frequency spectrum interference in the border regions.

Although Indonesia has begun the migration process from the analog television broadcasting system to the digital system since 2007, no regulations on the obligation to complete the ASO in Indonesia have been established since 2018. Considering an immediate implementation of the ASO, the migration of the analogue television broadcasting to the digital system was included in the Omnibus Law on The Job Creation Bill and was approved by The House of Representatives on 5 October 2020.

The Ministry of Communication and Information has informed the television broadcasting industry regarding the migration policy from analog to digital technology since 2007 by inviting television associations in joint meetings and discussion forums. However, this has not led television broadcasting industry to have a similar perception of the policy of digital terrestrial television. The television broadcasting industry was not yet prepared; therefore, different parties filed a judicial review against the 2011 ministerial regulation on The Implementation of Free-To-Air Digital Terrestrial Television, which was then annulled by the Supreme Court (MA).

How is the reality of communication between the government and the television broadcasting industry in constructing meaning related to terrestrial television digitization policies? The specific purpose of this research is to analyze and reveal the reality of the Indonesian government's communication to the television broadcasting industry regarding the policy of terrestrial television digitization. Academically, this research is expected to produce new findings about government communication in communicating a policy.

This research is important because it contains novelty considering that no one has conducted a study on the reality of government communication regarding the policy on terrestrial television digitization in Indonesia.

Material and Method

There have been extensive studies on terrestrial television digitization. However, no study carried out concerning the failure of the Indonesian government's communication regarding the policy on terrestrial television digitization in the period of 2007-2018.

Previous studies on digital terrestrial television as conducted by (Rozgonyi, 2019) and (Tate, 2015) have focused on the implementation of the digital terrestrial television policy in several countries. Deploying a critical paradigm, the two authors criticized the digital television policies that are politically and economically driven in Nigeria, European countries, Australia and Lesotho.

Rozgonyi conducted a study entitled '*The Governance of Digital Switchover of Terrestrial Television in The European Union: The Role of Policy Framing*'. Rozgonyi's study was published in 2019 in *Journal of Digital Media & Policy*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pages 67–87. Her study investigated the management of the transition of the digital terrestrial television from analogue to digital in European Union. Rozgonyi's research aimed to explore policies on the process of the transition of analogue television to digital one in European Union (EU). The study focused on the analysis of digital policy framework in the period 2005-2015, during the digital transition (DSO) of the terrestrial broadcasting. The study also examined whether there was evidence of policy related communication done by *The European Commission* (EC) to create a balance of various interests, or literally target one's personal benefits alone in the Digital Single Market. For the last decade, the digital terrestrial television broadcasting has brought some major changes particularly in the media market, followed by significant transformations from policies and media regulations, as well as electronic communications in EU.

Tate studied about '*The introduction of Australian digital television: Politics, policy and power*' and his work was published in 2015 in *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 50, No. 2, pages 297–314. Tate's research explored politics, policy and power in the introduction of the digital television in Australia through the analysis of the competition of interests and power conflict that emerges during the digitalization process. The specific objective of Tate's study was to explain the digitalization driven by interests and power. The method deployed in this study was a critical qualitative approach. Tate found that the solution to the digitalization ran counter to pro market reformation, deregulation, and was competition oriented that arose during Howard's leadership. Digital solution was introduced in 2001 and fully determined what to be watched by Australians on their televisions in the first decade of 21st century.

Rahayu's (2016) research entitled '*Indonesia's Digital Television Migration: Controlling Multiplexing, Tackling Competition*' was published in

International Journal of Digital Television, Vol. 7, No. 2, pages 233–252, 2016. The author's research examined the management of competition and multiplexing control in the migration process of digital television in Indonesia. Rahayu's study aimed to analyze the digital television policy in Indonesia. Rahayu found that the policy on the management of *multiplexing* is one of the foremost challenges in the transition from the analogue to the digital system. The old actors in the television broadcasting have been provided with adequate opportunities to win 'a beauty context' to be a *multiplex* operator. Private *multiplex* operators have delayed the rent of their digital TV channels and set overpriced rent, a strategy to overcome competitions in the digital broadcasting era. TVRI, as the only non-private *multiplex* operator, encounters political and bureaucratic problems and appears to be unprepared for the *multiplexing* services (Rahayu, 2016).

a. Social Construction as Reality

Social construction theory discusses a process in which individuals construct their understandings about the world. This theory assumes that meanings constructed through coordination with others separated from individuals or objects. Social interactions are a tool for the development of the social structure.

The term social construction was first introduced by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman in their book *The Social Construction of Reality*. In Communication, the two most relevant elements according to this theory are that people understand experiences through developing the models of social world and how they work. Language is the most vital system because through language, reality can be constructed. Conversations contain significant functions in maintaining reality (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

One of the implications of the social construction theory is that social reality needs human interactions. Construction is social meaning which requires collaborative efforts instead of individual ones. Whatever happens in the social world is a result of words and/or actions of speakers' collective speeches and interactions. The core of the social world is a verb that is to construct, meaning to construct something, make something, or realize something that has not existed. Social construction theory views that everything constructed in the social life is an individual's subjective definition through social interaction.

b. Participatory Communication Theory

Brecht's theory contains two core visions, in which technology has the potential to improve the lives of many people by giving them a voice and laying down the educational principles inherent in participatory communication models (Tufte & Mefalopoulos, 2009).

Participation is a principle in development with the support of various parties such as stakeholders, the private sector, and civil society. The two main approaches to participatory communication are the social movement perspective

and the project-based or institutional perspective. This perspective has the same understanding of participation as the involvement of ordinary people in a development process that leads to change. The result of participatory strategies can be psycho-social outcomes that can increase feelings of ownership of a problem and commitment to do something about the problem.

Some of the principles in participatory communication theory are dialogue, voice or opinion, assistance from other people both internally and externally in facilitating dialogue, and action. An important element of participatory communication is a community empowerment process that is based on reflection on problems and the integration of collective action on the problems identified. The main result of participatory communication is an increase in public awareness and commitment to take action. Participatory communication patterns can increase community involvement so that the chances of sustainability of a program will be greater (Zulfiningrum, Sumardjo, Saleh, & Agusta, 2019).

c. Method

This study deployed constructivism paradigm where the reality of the communication regulation operated by Kemenkominfo in 2007-2018 about the digital television is a social reality which can change through human interactions. The method deployed in this study was constructivism paradigm using a qualitative case study approach. Case study research examines a unique case to understand a phenomenon through the meaning of the people involved in it and prioritizes the argument of a phenomenon (Hadi, 2020).

Case studies are empirical methods that investigate contemporary phenomena ('cases') in depth and in real-world contexts, where the boundary between phenomenon and context is not clearly visible (Yin, 2018). The case in this study case is limited to time and activities in the period from 2007-2018. We collected detailed information through several procedures in a continuous period (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The case studied in this study is specific about the reality of government communication with the television broadcasting industry regarding the policy on terrestrial television digitization which is limited only from 2007 to 2018, where the event has been completed without being implemented.

In this study, researchers selected individuals who were used as informants according to the research objectives with purposive sampling technique. The general criteria used as informants are individuals who have been part of the television digitization process in Indonesia in 2007-2018, from central and regional government elements, from independent institutions that regulate broadcasting at the center and regions, stakeholders consisting of television associations and television practitioners.

Data collection techniques were carried out primary and secondary. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews by telephone. The interview focused on finding out information on government communications about the policy on terrestrial television digitization. Observations were made by

observing directly the process of implementing communications by the government regarding television digitization. Meanwhile, secondary data collection techniques were obtained from documentation in the form of previous research results, news clippings and mass media articles, Kemenkominfo annual reports (Ministry of Communication and Informatics), blueprints from Indonesian Broadcasting Commission, and books on television digitization.

The subjects in this study are informants who have been selected by researchers, and who were involved in the process of terrestrial television digitization between 2007 and 2018. Furthermore, the object of research is the reality of government communications about terrestrial television digitization in 2007-2018.

Data analysis in this study was carried out at all stages of the study. The analysis process is not only carried out when the data has been collected, but since the early stages of the research. The stages of data analysis in this study consisted of: 1) the stage of collecting data in the form of data from in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation data obtained from the mass media, previous journals, and annual reports; 2) the data reduction stage which is the process of selecting, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the rough data obtained from the results of data collection; 3) the data presentation stage which is the presentation of information in the form of report writing; 4) the stage of drawing conclusions and verification of the data that has been analyzed.

At the data reduction stage, data were selected by making summaries and brief descriptions as well as classifying and tracing themes by taking into account the credibility of the subject by testing answers related to research problems. In addition to selecting credible data with problems, data that has the authenticity of the experience of the interviewed informants is also selected, and the findings and analysis are then framed in a specific cultural, time, and historical context.

The data validity technique in this study was carried out by triangulating data sources by testing data from different sources with the same technique, as well as technical triangulation by testing different data collection techniques from the same source.

Result and Discussion

Kemenkominfo has designed an infrastructure roadmap of the digital television since 2009. This was marked by the launching of a trial run for the digital television broadcasting by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in Jakarta SCTV Studio suggesting a collaboration of the government with the Indonesian digital television consortium (KTDI). In the same year, Minister Regulation No.39/2009 on Basic Framework of the Implementation of the Free-To-Air Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting was issued. This regulation functions as an initial framework of how to implement the digital television broadcasting.

The government's expected achievement target was stated in the 2010-2014 Medium-Term National Development Plan (RPJMN) including the

penetration of the digital television broadcasting towards population was approximately 35% in 2014. Besides, the *analogue switch off* was accomplished in stages starting from the areas already served by digital television continued with *analogue switch off* at a national level in the early 2018 (Gultom, 2018)

In 2013 the government intended to shut down the analogue television broadcasting in large cities and other regional areas as uttered in the digital television *roadmap* created by Kemkominfo. However, this did not work out. Several parties from television media industry connected in a number of television associations argued that the regulation on the digital television was not effectively communicated.

Gilang Iskandar, the General Secretary of the Indonesian private television association (ATVSI) said that there have been unfinished communications by the government to the television industry. The government has failed to communicate the protection of the senior broadcasters in relation to the transition from the analogue to the digital system.

“No comprehensive plans. There have been a lot of question marks raised by the stakeholders especially the industry players which have been unanswered by the government regarding the regulations they have made. For example, the digital migration will impact on the changes of the analogue television business patterns. If we change it, we will die, won't we? What are the protections for us who've been in the business for many years? What are the benefits for us if we have to migrate?” (Interview with Gilang Iskandar, 6 May 2020).

Bambang Santoso, the General Chair of the Indonesian local television broadcasting association (ATVLI) and the Director of Cahaya TV (CTV) claimed that the government is not transparent in informing the local television and inconsistent with their regulations. The local televisions felt that they are often not involved.

“The government is not consistent with their communication. They don't have a clear blueprint. Our broadcasting in Indonesia especially the digital one is still influenced by, firstly, politics; secondly, one party's interests or some particular parties' interests; thirdly, government's unclear blueprints. Not everything has been explained clearly, not transparent” (Interview with Bambang Santoso, 6 May 2020).

Similarly, Eris Munandar, the General Chair of the Indonesian Digital Terrestrial Television (ATSDI) holds that the government has not provided the industry with adequate information and education, especially the local television. This has caused enormous stakeholders to be unprepared to migrate to the digital television.

“If we talk about the deadlock of information and communication, the problem should actually relate to the goodwill of the government. The role of communication, from the government to industry, from the government

to community, this is all we need. Now the problems of communication are felt by the industry, not the community." (Interview with Eris Munandar, 11 April 2020)

Syahrudin, the Head of the Television Services of the Kemenkominfo in the period 2012-2017 and the Head of Broadcasting Business and Technological Eligibility of the Kemenkominfo in the period 2017-2019 maintained that the government in this case Kemkominfo has built good communications with television media industry.

"Actually, when we planned this, from the beginning we have involved all stakeholders, operators including national and local TV operators. When the ministerial regulation was made, we also involved all stakeholders like ATVSI, ATVLI, ATVJI, we coordinated with them all. Actually, our communication, we have actually done our best." (Interview with Syahrudin, 12 April 2020).

The failure of the government's communication with television broadcasting industry in the 2007-2018 period has in turn affected the failure of the ASO implementation. In 2020, Minister of Communication and Information, Jhonny G. Plate, announced an acceleration of the digital terrestrial television in Indonesia as regulated in The Job Creation Bill. The obligation of broadcasters to execute the ASO is regulated in article 60A of the Job Creation Bill. Broadcasters are required to *transit* from analogue to digital *broadcasting at least two years from 2 November 2020 when the law took effect. By 2 November 2022, ASO will have been completely carried out in Indonesia accordingly.*

In the past, stakeholders encountered different construction of meanings from the one developed by the government due to the absence of laws on the digital television. After the Job Creation Bill has been released and implementation instructions have been written respectively, the broadcasters must immediately carry out the ASO. The communication of the digital terrestrial television with the 2007-2018 *stakeholders* has failed because the constructed meanings are not well developed through coordination and social interactions. Social construction theory views that meanings are developed through coordination with others and social interactions which can be a connector in building up social structure. Language is the most significant element as it can construct reality (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

Effective communication between Kemenkominfo with television broadcasting industry is one of the keys to the processes of meaning constructions on the regulation of digital terrestrial television. The government and its stakeholders as the regulation executors should collaboratively construct breakthroughs so that the regulation of the digital terrestrial television can be acted upon with minimal issues. The uncertainty as indicated by the ATVSI and ATVLI officials in the period from 2007-2018 has contributed to the failure of the government in communicating the regulation of the digitization of television. The

numerous technical issues of digitization of television have made it uneasy to explain in a short period of time.

One of the implications of the social construction theory is a social reality that requires human interactions. Social construction demands collaborative efforts because something that occurs in a social world is because of the words and/or actions of the people who speak and interact collectively to realize something. Kemenkominfo's communication about the obligatory of Indonesia to keep up with the development of the global broadcasting technology cannot be well received by television broadcasting stakeholders. Shared meanings and interpretations should be jointly constructed by both Kemenkominfo and television broadcasting industry. Additionally, apart from the need for improved Kemenkominfo's communication, having shared assumptions to construct shared understandings is crucial for a successful implementation of ASO.

Conclusion

There is uncertainty with the reality of the Indonesian government's communication to the television broadcasting industry regarding the policy on terrestrial television digitization in 2007-2018, and insufficient time to explain issues about television digitization which were very technical in nature. Furthermore, participatory communication is not fully carried out by the government to invite the television broadcasting industry to participate in the success of accelerating the terrestrial television digitization in Indonesia.

Suggestions for further research are to examine the evaluation of the results of participatory communication that has been carried out by the government regarding the policy on terrestrial television digitization in Indonesia.

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