

## **THE POSITION OF *DA'WAH* MESSAGES AND ETHICS IN MALAYSIAN AND INDONESIAN TELEVISION PROGRAMS**

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### **Abstract**

Rapid changes in the whole aspects of our lives as a result of the global development need to be addressed by spreading *da'wah* messages through television channels. To be an effective *da'wah* media, television should have a strong editorial policy. The policy forwarded could prove the dynamic representation of the country. This study aims to explore the editorial policy of TV Malaysia and Indonesia in presenting *da'wah* programs, and secondly, to understand the position of ethics in the *da'wah* messages broadcast on Malaysian and Indonesian TVs. By using qualitative methods, the data have been derived from direct observations and interviews with three television stations in Malaysia (two government-owned and one private-owned TVs) and TVRI and RCTI in Indonesia. Data are also enriched by relevant information from watching Malaysian and Indonesian TV channels. The results showed similarities and differences between the TV editorial policies of the two countries. Respondent from both countries showed that they tried to attract viewers through providing various kinds of religious broadcasts and carefully considered what they should show on prime time. The different thing is the determination of the *da'i* and program duration. On Malaysian television, determination of the religious speakers is very strict, whereas in Indonesia determination television speakers tend to be rather easy. In terms of duration, the whole *da'wah* broadcasts per day on Malaysian television are longer and are more frequent than that on the Indonesian's. In Malaysia, the programs are decided to be on schedule for prime time while in Indonesia the *da'wah* programs are mostly not in the prime time.

**Keywords:** *Da'wah, messages, ethics, programs, television.*

MESEJ DAN ETIKA DAKWAH DALAM PROGRAM TELEVISEN DI  
MALAYSIA DAN INDONESIA

**Abstrak**

Perubahan aspek kehidupan yang pantas hasil dari perubahan global memerlukan penyampaian mesej dakwah melalui saluran televisen. Untuk menjadi saluran media dakwah yang efektif, televisen harus mempunyai polisi editorial yang kukuh yang mampu melambangkan kedinamikan negara tersebut. Pertama, kajian ini cuba melihat polisi editorial televisen Malaysia dan Indonesia dalam menghasilkan program dakwah dan keduanya, kajian ini cuba memahami kedudukan etika dalam menyiarkan mesej dakwah yang disiarkan di televisen Malaysia dan Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan kaedah kualitatif, data kajian diperolehi dari pemerhatian dan temubual di tiga stesen televisen di Malaysia (dua stesen televisen kerajaan dan satu stesen swasta) dan dua stesen televisen dari Indonesia (satu stesen kerajaan, TVRI, dan satu stesen swasta, RCTI). Data di perkayakan dengan maklumat relevan melalui tontonan dari stesen televisen kedua-dua negara. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan persamaan juga perbezaan polisi editorial antara kedua-dua negara. Responden dari kedua-dua negara cuba menarik ramai penonton dengan menayangkan beberapa jenis tayangan agama dan sentiasa peka dengan tayangan waktu perdana. Yang beza hanya penentuan da'i dan jangka durasi program. Di televisen Malaysia, penentuan harian dalam pemilihan penceramah agama adalah ketat sementara pemilihan di Indonesia ada sedikit kelonggaran. Dari segi durasi, penyiaran da'wah di Malaysia adalah lebih lama dan lebih kerap berbanding di Indonesia. Program di Malaysia sentiasa tepat siarannya dalam waktu perdana sementara di Indonesia siaran da'wahnya tidak dalam waktu perdana.

**Kata kunci:** *Dakwah, mesej, etika, program, televisen*

## INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology, the television, in particular, has touched every aspect of human life. It makes possible for people to see things from the very personal perspectives of one's life to the social phenomena that occur in a community, either local, national, regional or at global level. Televisions hold a powerful place in the society so that time and attention are no longer completely our own as they dominate human space as Gittlin (1979) warned years ago, 'television has the power to colonize people's consciousness and unconsciousness. It is said that the television is the window through which we see the world. However, the world that we see on television is the one that is shaped by those behind the screen. What we see on television, what is important and useful for the people, how those things should be framed are screened through television editorial policies.

In his book, *The Second Media Age*, Mark Poster (1990) introduced an idea about a new period in which interactive technologies and communications networks can change society. This goes with the idea of the second media era that has been developed since the 1980s. The two mark an important change in media theory (Littlejohn, 2009). Janet Murray in Syaibani (2011) gives some ideas on the term new media. She defines new media as a representation of new information medium in a digital form. Television is an example of the new medium that have more advantages than other traditional media such as radio and newspaper. Behind all these media, editorial roles are crucial in determining the direction of news and the ideology underlying it.

When determining to broadcast news, editors use their own views. The views that shape the editorial policy can be influenced by a variety of aspects, such as ideology, culture, religion, interests, and economic factors. The editorial policy is a provision agreed upon by the editors of the mass media about the criteria or texts that can or cannot be published or broadcasted. The policy is made according to the vision and the mission of the media so that even a word, a term or a phrase is allowed to be broadcasted on television after a very tight process is based on the editorial decision. Dewanto (2010) makes clear that the editorial

policy is the regulation that determines the coverage of an issue, the angle of the coverage, the sources or the informant for the news, the journalists that do interviews and the writing format of the news. In other words, we can say that the direction of television broadcast is dependent upon the television editorial policy. As an example on the news about politics, there may be differences in terms of the amount of news given to a party as compared to other parties in certain television station.

Cross-national comparative research on editorial policy has been done quite extensively according to Deuze (2002). However, the number of studies that explore the editorial policy for *da'wah* programs of Indonesia and Malaysia is scarce or none at all. *Da'wah* means a 'call' or 'invitation' or to convey good messages about Islam, which means to invite non-Muslims to revert to Islam as well as the Muslims to the true understanding and practice of Islam, but many a times, in context, it refers to the invitation of Islam extended to those who are yet to believe in or accept Islam. In an Islamic context, it refers to efforts to improve Muslims or to correct them or guide them to the correct path according to the teachings of Islam. And these *da'wah* is normally done through verbal preaching, through visuals, one's practice and actions and through emulations and role models. Many of direct *da'wah* calls aired on television are verbal preaching through talk programs

From the observation of the researchers, one of the differences between Malaysian and Indonesian televisions on *religious* program is the call of *da'wah*. In this context, the call is intended not only with regards to religious programs per se, it is an invitation to do good and to avoid evil from the perspective of Islam. Even if the program is not focusing on religion, Malaysian television would as much as possible insert *da'wah* messages in their religious programs. The main reason is to educate the people about good deeds and good morals. In contrast with Indonesian television, only some aspects of broadcasting bring a message of *da'wah*, and this is still considered limited. These limitations in the broadcasting of religious programs in Indonesian televisions are feared to contribute to the decadence of character and morality in the society especially among the young generation.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Rapid moral decadence that occurs in every aspect of life is a challenge to the religious authorities to educate society based on religious knowledge and moral values. Disseminating *da'wah* messages through television channels is seen as an important effort to promote religious knowledge and to reach out to the mass population, to share knowledge, to educate and to inform. As the globe goes into a borderless world, good and bad information reach out to the mass simultaneously. It is a matter of intellectual intentions to choose and the choice depends on individuals. Good moral intentions to teach people, especially youth who can be easily influenced, to the right path is much encouraged. Traditional media such as television and radio, technological innovations, such as the media and the Internet, expose young people to potentially unwelcome information. As such the editorial board of television channels should agree with the endeavor to educate the mass through *da'wah* messages via the television. As such, this study shall focus on Malaysian and Indonesian television editorial policy on broadcasting *da'wah* messages and to observe and to compare how ethical issues are positioned to spread *da'wah* messages through television programs in Malaysia and in Indonesia.

## **TELEVISION AS *DA'WAH* MEDIA**

Television is one of the most popular ways of conveying a mass message. It offers numerous advantages, such as offering a powerful impact to reach a wide audience. It is a convenient and flexible viewing medium, owing to its widespread popularity and the ease with which a message can reach millions of viewers internationally and nationally. Television programs use audio and visual effects to create a lasting impact on viewers and with the interaction of color, sound, sight, drama and motion to ensure that their message is strong and persuasive. Additional tactics and props, such as attractive models, elaborative sets, enchanting graphics and audio-visual effects further enhance impact.

Compared to other mass media, televisions possess the characteristics that are both dynamic and mobile. There is a mixing of images and audio media which

can be informative, entertaining and educative at the same time. In this study on television broadcasting, the medium of communication network works in one direction. Its communicators are institutionalized which means that its broadcasting will be decided and produced by the involvement of a group of people before the message is sent to public to reach the target at the same time where its communicants are heterogeneous. Television is an alloy in terms of audio broadcasting and visual in terms of moving images.

Viewers are able to watch television because of the transmission of radio waves, and to look at the pictures that move live because there are elements of the film that people can visualize. Televisions are a combination of audio and video. The term television consists of the word "*tele*" meaning far and "*vision*". This assumes that the pictures which are far away transmitted with the principles of the camera so that it becomes an image, either in the form of living or moving images or still images. Television creates a certain atmosphere that viewers can see while sitting to watch. The delivery of the messages occurs as if both the communicators and the communicants are in the same room. It will be easy to understand the information delivered through television because it is clearly audible and visible. The potential use of television should be explored for the sake of the wider community.

With the above characteristics, television is potentially a good tool as a medium of *da'wah*. It is expected that the utilization of this technology can help achieve optimal targets both in terms of quality and quantity. As television is a sub-system within the state and government systems, the nature of the information, education, and entertainment that are showed by the television to the public will depend on the regulations that is adopted by the state and the government. The three main functions of television should be examined properly, especially by Muslim television journalists who work in television stations. They need to package the event of *da'wah* to be attractive and communicative to influence people towards Islamic values without sacrificing the adherence to the government regulation.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study is a comparative and socio-philosophical one. This means that in this study the researchers intend to conduct a comparison of different conditions that exist in one place, whether the conditions in the place is the same or there is a difference, and if there is a difference, which conditions are better. Socio-philosophical approach intends to look at a problem from the angle of philosophy and seeks to address and resolve the problem by using a speculative analysis.

Comparative philosophy brings together philosophical traditions that have developed in relative isolation from one another and that are defined quite broadly along local cultural and regional lines. According to David Wong (2014) the issue of metaphysical and epistemological commensurability involves the comparison of traditions on their conceptions of the real and their modes of inquiry and justification. Ethical commensurability involves the comparison of these traditions on the matters of how people ought to live their lives, whether both traditions have moralities and if so how similar or dissimilar are they.

In this particular study, comparisons will be made between the editorial policy of Malaysia and Indonesia on television's *da'wah* broadcast and ethical concepts presented in their programs. As this is a qualitative research, the comparative data obtained are presented in narrative form, rather than in the form of numbers, to provide a clear picture of the research object.

This study selected two countries, Malaysia and Indonesia as a basis of comparison on the editorial policies of *da'wah* television programs. Two television stations were selected from each country, namely Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia (RCTI), the pioneer and oldest private television. The other television station is Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI) a state-owned, public broadcasting television network based in Senayan, Central Jakarta and the oldest television station in Indonesia, which monopolized television broadcasting in Indonesia until 1989, when the first private television station RCTI went on air.

Three television stations selected from Malaysia are RTM or TV1, TV Al Hijrah and Astro Oasis. RTM/TV1 is a state-owned free-to-air television network in Malaysia, which is owned and operated by Radio Televisyen Malaysia, a government agency. TV Al-Hijrah, a free-to-air television network in Malaysia, which is owned and operated by Al Hijrah Media Corporation, a government

owned company. It broadcasts from its headquarters in Islamic Centre, Kuala Lumpur. But this station will soon move to its new location in Cyberjaya. It was officially launched as it started broadcasting on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011 as TV AlHijrah is known as the first free-to-air Islamic and HD television station in Malaysia. Astro Oasis is a Malaysian television station owned and operated by Astro. The channel broadcasts 90% Islamic-related programs. Its highest rated program is *Imam Muda* (Young Imam)

Informants of the study are the editorial board members TV1, TV Al Hijrah and Astro Oasis of Kuala Lumpur, and TVRI and RCTI of Jakarta, totaling to seven informants. This study was conducted for six months and the researchers from Indonesia were here in Malaysia three times to collect data while one researcher from Malaysia went to Indonesia once for the same purpose. Aside from the editorial personnel to get rich data, the researchers also obtained data from relevant personnel from related institutions, from books and journals, television websites, and from the results of other similar related research.

The researchers also observed live broadcasts of religious programs on the five television stations and witnessed the activities of the editorial staff. The object of the study include analyzing the content of television editorial policy associated with religious messages and ethics in serving programs which include several aspects such as religious broadcast content, speakers for broadcasting propaganda, broadcast schedules, and broadcasting ethics.

The data were collected through observations, interviews, document analysis and tape recordings, and are processed first before they are ready for use (through registration, typing, editing, or over-write). The researchers tried to adapt the qualitative data analysis expressed by Bradley et al (2006) which comprised of three phases; first, read all the transcripts to gain a thorough understanding, second, make a sign to the data, complete and execute the code structure, and third, the analysis of the code that has been structured. This method was chosen because the researchers have had the categorization of the data prior to the analysis.



## RESEARCH RESULT

### TELEVISION EDITORIAL POLICY IN MALAYSIA

Two television stations in Malaysia specifically focused on Islamic broadcasting; TV Al Hijrah and Astro Oasis and Radio Televisyen Malaysia or RTM/TV1, a state-owned television which provides religious and general useful information as guideline to the entire population of Malaysia. Although this television is owned by the Malaysian government, respondent from TV1 highlighted that the broadcast as a whole does not necessarily reflect the views of the government. Instead, TV1 provide information in accordance with current issues and the interests and concerns of the people. As the majority of Malaysians are Muslims, then TV1 would allocate the best time to broadcast Islamic religious programs so that almost everyone is able to watch. Malaysian television prime time or peak time starts with the main news from 20:00 to 20:30 (now 20:00 to 21:00) and ends either at 23:00 or 0:30.

The Islamic religious programs on TV1 are designed into two main forms, namely the religious lectures and other kinds of broadcasts based on the religion of Islam. Islamic lecture slot is normally hosted by an Islamic expert (an *ustadz* or an *ulama*) whose invitation has been determined according to the guidance of Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM). One of the famous religious discourse program which is still aired within the prime time of 9:05 to 10:05 on Thursday nights is *Forum Perdana Ehwat Islam*. This is a dialogue/debate program with a host and a panel of 3 invited/Ustadz/ Ustazah discussing and deliberating about Islamic teachings to educate people, to inform them and to create awareness among them. Other forms of religious programs are dramas that attach Islamic themes such as Qur'an recitation programs performed interactively with the audience. There are also religious programs that do not contain religious lectures nor sermons but shown in the form of edutainment (education-intertainment) that deliver social and educational messages pertaining to Islam.

Two television stations in Malaysia specifically focused on Islamic broadcasting. TV Al Hijrah and Astro Oasis are specific stations specifically catered for Islamic programs. TV Al Hijrah station is directly under the Prime Minister's Department while TV1 is under the Malaysian Ministry of Communications and Multi Media. Thus both TV1 and Al Hijrah are founded and owned by the government. While Astro Oasis is a television station under ASTRO owned by a private organization.

TV Al Hijrah television and Astro Oasis television focus only in the field of Islamic issues. From morning until midnight, all broadcasts of the television are related to the propagation of Islam. TV Al Hijrah and Astro Oasis focus on Muslims as the main target audience. The whole broadcasts of the two are proselytizing activities, from early morning to midnight. These include religious lectures, interactive talk shows on Islam, Islamic nuanced entertainment and soap operas. On other televisions, most of the soap opera may be for entertainment only, however, in these televisions, the soap operas are made to be in accordance with the Qur'an and the Hadith.

The editors of the two television work as the gatekeepers for the programs shown on television. The editors will see even for things that maybe considered as not necessary or may go unnoticed by others. For example, although the actress in the opera maybe an old woman and acting in a house, she still has to wear a head scarf with Muslim attire not to reveal the *aurat*. The scenes and acts/actions of television dramas featuring male/ female actors/actress must abide to the Islamic code of conduct.

JAKIM plays an important role in the decision that the TV1 editors have to make in selecting speakers/Ustadz for religious programs. JAKIM regulates the theme and the schedule of programs. TV1 and Al Hijrah is under different government agencies. TV1 is under the Ministry of Communications and Multi Media while JAKIM is under the Prime Minister's Department that works to bring virtue to Islam. Therefore, TV1 and JAKIM cooperate in Islamic religious broadcast for TV1. JAKIM will forward or recommend names of ulama or ustadz suitable to host a program or to be invited guest and will also screen through the

content of the programs. If JAKIM sees that the religious lectures and programs comply with the guidance of Islam, they will approve the programs to be aired.

Resources for religious broadcasting are determined by TV Al Hijrah with the supervision of Jabatan Perdana Menteri (Prime Minister's Department). Similar to the task of JAKIM, editors of Al Hijrah will select preachers from those who have competence in the field of religion. The editors determine the themes of the religious broadcasting based on editorial meetings. The editors themselves are mostly individuals who are knowledgeable in Islamic content. Although Al Hijrah determine their own speakers for their religious programs, they still need to refer to JAKIM for guidelines.

Astro Oasis is a Malaysian television station owned and operated by Astro situated in Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur. It is currently available for free-to-view on Astro and NJOI in Malaysia on Channel 106. The channel broadcasts Islamic-related programmes. Its highest rated program is the reality TV series, *Imam Muda* (Young Imam). Young Imam was a Malaysian television series that commenced broadcasting in 2010. The show featured young men competing for a post as an imam at a mosque in Kuala Lumpur, a Haj pilgrimage to Mecca and a full scholarship to the Madinah International University in Saudi Arabia. Contestants on Young Imam recite passages from the Koran, and try to reach the society through their tasks given weekly. Some of their tasks include preparing proper handling and burying a dead body, teaching Islam to young street racers caught by police, visiting orphanage, and Old Folks Home. Each contestants has to deliver a sermon in a mosque every Friday. This program adhere to the guidelines given by JAKIM to ensure religious sensitivities are not breached. A popular drama produced by Asro Oasis is *Tanah Kubur* (Gravesite), a series about the life that you adopt while you are living, and your good or bad deeds will be reflected through the appearance of your dead body.

Astro Oasis enjoys the privilege to determine their own religious speakers since the station is owned by private parties and is oriented to have financial benefits. The religious speakers of Astro Oasis programs varied from Islamic clerics recommended by JAKIM to individuals who are popular and possess deep and extensive knowledge on Islam. Astro Oasis chooses its religious personnels

by considering several aspects; those who somehow have a strong ambience to attract audience and are knowledgeable in religious issues. However, in determining the sources, the editors are still guided by JAKIM guidelines. Astro Oasis ensures that their resources do not contradict the basic religion of Islam, the Qur'an and Hadith. They are being very careful and take a middle path as not to cross any lines or offend anyone.

Television editorial policy in Malaysia has very strong support for Islamic *da'wah* programs. The three television stations studied pay significant attention on the *da'wah* programs. It can be seen from the decision on the timing, duration and broadcast frequency.

TV1 chooses that the religious programs should be presented at important times that are able to attract audiences (prime time). Three times a day in the morning, the afternoon and the evening, there are certain times where people will mostly sit in front of the television. TV1 broadcasts religious programs on daily basis. Three Islamic programs which are recitation of the Quran, *Forum Perdana Ehwat Islam* and *Hadith 40* go on air every day. In the morning, the reading of the verses of the Quran is made at 5:55 am after singing the national anthem *Negaraku* (My Country), the duration of approximately three minutes. After that comes *Forum Perdana*, which is aired every morning for 1 hour from 6:00 am until 7:00 am. Then the *Hadith 40* show aired at 06.30 pm for thirty minutes.

There are also certain days for broadcasting special religious events. On Thursday nights at 09:00 pm, TV1 broadcasts an Islamic religious talk, *Forum Perdana*, broadcast live from selected location in Malaysia. This program is replayed in the morning for those who may not be able to watch it the night before. TV1 also broadcasts programs that are not directly labeled with religion. For example, there are several programs which are intended for educational purposes.

For *da'wah* programs aired on all three Malaysian television stations, it was found that ethical consideration is among the main references for deciding which religious programs to be selected. The application of ethical consideration varies from one television to another. On TV1, speakers in the *da'wah* programs are fully guided by JAKIM. A certificate is required to ensure that religious

speakers invited is a person or a model who can really be trusted and who carries a mission to disseminate Islamic knowledge and values.

Unlike TV1, Al Hijrah gives a much stringent list to select their religious speakers. The station itself will review and select who they wish to invite to their station. Speakers of Al Hijrah television should not only religious knowledge, but should also be able to attract viewers. Nevertheless, the speakers must take responsibility for the content or the lecture material. No strict rules are given about the lecture material, but the speakers are expected to realise that Malaysia is an Islamic state. Therefore, the materials presented must not conflict with any Islamic teachings or become offensive to the manners and morals of the people of this country. Thus the station will select the topics that will have to be presented and discussed on television. This is to ensure that topics selected are illuminating, relevant and current with local issues.

The Astro Oasis television is owned by Astro television. It is a paid-television channel which means one has to subscribe to be able to watch its programs. The concept and the application of the *da'wah* messages broadcasted on Astro Oasis is similar to the other two stations. Astro Oasis has the liberty on whom to invite as their religious speakers. Similar to that of Al Hijrah television, the speakers should be knowledgeable in Islam and have the ability to attract viewers. The emphasis is to keep all the materials presented in the lecture based on the concept of Islam, namely the Qur'an and Sunnah.

In addition to the findings mentioned above, this study also found that when a television station in Malaysia is to serve the Islamic religious outreach programs, they have to pay attention to the basic rule that they are responsible to maintain; the dignity of Islam as the state religion. To screen programs originating from outside of Malaysia, JAKIM will be called in for advice. This is important in order to avoid the overlapping of understanding of religion in the society. Things that are not in the same breath with the teachings of Islam are not allowed to appear in religious programs.

## **TELEVISION EDITORIAL POLICY IN INDONESIA**

In Indonesia, there is only one television station which is controlled by the government, namely Television Republic of Indonesia or TVRI. The central office for the television is based in Senayan, Central Jakarta. TVRI has branches in every province, including in South Sulawesi, namely TVRI Stasiun Makassar (The Makassar Station of TVRI). All of their stations are regulated by the TVRI Centre, which has the authority in terms of management, supervision, finance and coordination.

The entire television branches in the provinces have to relay the whole broadcast aired from the TVRI center. They are given the authority to display the local broadcasts for only four hours. In South Sulawesi TVRI, the local broadcasts start at 4 pm until 8 pm. Most of the content of the local programs in the South Sulawesi TVRI cover aspects or events in South Sulawesi such as hot news, local culture, education, sports, and religious broadcasts.

Religious programs on the South Sulawesi station are channeled from Jakarta station of TVRI. In carrying out the *da'wah* broadcasts, the editors of South Sulawesi TVRI adhere to its central editorial policy. And one of them is the Islamic missionary programs should be aired along with other religious programs; Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity. The whole programs are under the control of the Head of TV Program. This is because the South Sulawesi TVRI does not have a special institution to deal with the Islamic television programs. Therefore it comes under the same section as the other religious broadcasts due to limitations both in terms of funds and human resources to manage.

TVRI South Sulawesi broadcasts two *da'wah* programs namely *Fokus Islami* (Islamic Focus) aired on Fridays at 16:00 to 16:30 pm for thirty minutes and *Tabir Ilahi* (the Veil of the Divine) aired on Tuesdays at 17:30 to 18:00 pm for thirty minutes. *Fokus Islami* discusses actual issues in Islam and *Tabir Ilahi*, a program collboarated with Muhammadiyah University Makassar that discusses the interpretation of the Qur'an. Another event that contain the broadcast for Islamic religion from the South Sulawesi TVRI the *adzan* (call for prayers) call for the early evening pray.. The central *da'wah* programs are lectures aired every morning and the broadcast of Islamic pulpit every Thursday night. Limited funds seem to be the key issues for inadequate Islamic broadcast production.

Islamic religious programs broadcast on South Sulawesi TVRI is aired in the form of lectures where speakers, moderators and groups of invited audience come to the production studio of TVRI Sulawesi Selatan, (Sulsel). The speakers of the Islamic discourses are not chosen by TVRI but by other parties who have collaboration with TVRI of South Sulawesi. Currently, there are two main agencies that collaborate with South Sulawesi TVRI in Islamic *da'wah* programs. One is the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Makassar, where all decisions and approvals to broadcast should go through them. The other agencies are private parties, such as the *Hajj* and *Umrah* travel companies. Invited speakers or Ustad/Ulama' for Islamic programs will be sponsored by related companies who will have the decision on whom to invite as speakers. There are times when programs broadcasted are pure production from South Sulawesi TVRI, then the station has the right on whom to invite as guest speakers.

The criteria for a speaker to appear on television to give *da'wah* messages is to have an extensive knowledge in the field. Being speakers of religious matters, the speakers are those recognized as scholars or authorities in the related religion and are expert with vast knowledge on Islam. Speakers invited to give lectures are normally recommended through word of mouth or are already popular in the field. Religious officers from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, clerics from religious travel companies or member of the Islamic NGO can be speakers for religious television programs. To get a speaker to come in and give lecture is not difficult which does not need to receive a recommendation from the government and other Islamic religious organizations unlike in Malaysia that needs to get a clearance certificate from JAKIM.

Most sponsors for religious programs are Hajj and Umrah Travel Company in Indonesia. These companies provide funds to South Sulawesi TVRI for operational costs for producing religious programs. However, these costs are only for the programs produced with the company. Other religious broadcast received funding from the operational cost available from the government.

The South Sulawesi TVRI broadcast period is limited to four hours only. The rest are broadcasts relayed from Jakarta central station. The portion for the *da'wah* programs is very limited too. Thirty minutes are allocated for each of the

two religious broadcast programs. Again these limitations are due to limited fund and time allocated and limited human resources to produce religious broadcastings. Another little slot allocated for da'wah program is the call for prayer in the early evening (maghrib), *Adzan*. The duration for the adzan is about 3 minutes. So that in a week, the total duration of the call to prayer is 21 minutes. The *da'wah* broadcasts are also presented with Islamic religious tune. The religious tune aired are not live broadcast. The prime time for TVRI South Sulawesi is night time.

Research data obtained revealed that the broadcast of Islamic *da'wah* in South Sulawesi TVRI is implemented in accordance with the mechanisms and regulations applicable in Indonesia. Basically, the invited speakers of the *da'wah* programs should never violate any ethical issues and should adhere always to the existing norms. Television station always try their best to pay attention to ethical issues in broadcastings. There was an event where the Islamic religious broadcast on the Central TVRI was considered less ethical. For example, in one program which was aired at dawn, the artist who performed at the event wore a long blouse that had a prominent symbol of another religion which received criticism from the public. Subsequently, TVRI stepped forward to clarify and made a public apology to the Muslim society.

Religious content broadcasted on South Sulawesi TVRI are contemporary issues that are relevant to local and current events. For example, if it is around *Idul Adha*, the discussion is related to issues and problems of Hajj or Qurban (of slaughtering cows or sheep for sacrificial purposes). There were discussions in the past as to whether sacrificial animals slaughtered in Indonesia, allowed to be sent to refugees in various countries of the world that need it. Sometimes, the South Sulawesi TVRI incorporates themes of Islamic preaching to other events. For example, in the Paraikatte program, the events discuss themes that are hot among the public and they are often matters relating to the propagation of Islam.

Ethical aspects in the editorial policy of the national TVRI can be seen in terms of determining the themes and the speakers for *da'wah* broadcast. The speakers' are those who are recommended by Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), an organization of Islamic scholars that was founded by the government. The



selected scholars' names or *Ustadz* or *Imam* will be carefully scrutinised by MUI. MUI will look at the resume and the track record to see the eligibility of the scholars to conduct religious discourses on TVRI. The screening is vital to ensure that those speakers will be someone who are mostly accepted by the public and that their speaking materials will not ignite controversies or disharmony in the society. Observing on the criteria recommended by MUI, TVRI is seen to be effective in preventing controversial issues that should not arise related to the *da'wah* programs. This, as the TVRI informant says, can be seen by zero complaint towards the program from the public. The speakers can also determine what theme they want to talk about and discuss it with the editors.

## CONCLUSION

Television editorial policies in one country can be influenced by the political system adopted by the country. Malaysia as an Islamic state has policies that favor the preaching of Islam through the medium of television. Though the Malaysian government encourages the production of religious and *da'wah* programs, there are certain rules and regulations that have to be adhered to. For example, for an *Ustadz* to give a lecture on Islamic teachings and values, the Department of Islamic Religious Affairs, Prime Minister's Department will identify a topic for the *Ustadz* to conduct the discourse over television. The speakers are not allowed to talk upon any topic whatsoever. Topics of discussion are determined by the authorities. This is so, to avoid misunderstanding over sensitive issues considering that Malaysia is a multi-racial and multi-religious country. While Indonesia that embraces a democratic state, gives freedom to the editors of television programs whether to produce or broadcast Islamic religious programs. This is to say that the Indonesian government do not interfere much into the production of religious and *da'wah* programs on television.

The background of the editorial staff of a television station contributes to the *da'wah* program performance. On Malaysian television, editorial staff is a position held by people who well understand and practice the teachings of Islam, so they treat the creation of the program as part of their contribution in the propagation of Islam. In Malaysia, Islamic *da'wah* broadcast audiences are

increasing and this increases financial income from advertising. Even though profit is important, the television owners seem never to intervene in the editorial process.

In broadcasting *da'wah*, the television editors in both Malaysia and Indonesia adhere to the principle that public peace should not be disturbed. Television stations should be a medium of peace for religious speakers to disseminate their knowledge and to spread good messages and positive ideologies to the mass audience. This is in accordance with the basis of the two countries, Malaysia with the basic of courtesy and decency based from the country's national principle *Rukunegara*, and Indonesia with the Indonesian national doctrine of *Pancasila*.

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