

RESEARCH ON THE IDEAL TRAITS OF BROADCAST TELEVISION HOSTS IN THE ERA OF NEW MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF HAINAN PROVINCE

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Abstract

This study examined the desirable qualities of radio and television hosts in the new media era, focusing on Hainan Province, China. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining qualitative in-depth interviews with nine hosts and a quantitative survey of 400 audience members in Hainan Province. The research identified eight key dimensions of desirable host qualities: clear and audience-appropriate communication skills, personality and credibility that build trust, effective use of digital technologies and online platforms, engaging and high-quality content creation ability, general knowledge and awareness of current events, audience engagement skills, professional ethics and social responsibility, and adaptability and future-oriented perspectives. Quantitative results indicated that audiences rated all dimensions highly, with greatest emphasis on ethics and social responsibility, followed by audience engagement and content creation expertise. The findings suggested that hosts in the new media era must integrate traditional professional skills with digital competence, creative content production, and social responsibility while building close relationships with audiences and maintaining a loyal following.

Keywords: *Desirable Attributes; Radio and Television Host; New Media; Hainan Province*

Introduction

Amid digital globalization, new media has become the primary channel for information dissemination. In China, rapid internet expansion and digital platforms have transformed how people consume information and reshaped the traditional media industry (Durmaj, 2022). Consequently, radio and television are transitioning from one-way communication to multidimensional integration. Over the past decade, platforms such as Douyin, Kuaishou, WeChat, Weibo, and Bilibili Live have become central to daily life (Wu, 2022). Yet this interactivity and immediacy have eroded the competitive edge of traditional broadcasting, especially in advertising markets (Cai & Xie, 2020). Radio and television hosts now face strong competition from new-generation online creators (Zhang et al., 2023). In the new media era, authenticity and relatability are key to sustaining audience connection (He & Han, 2021).

As China's only tropical island province, Hainan presents a distinct media context—marked by geographic and economic constraints but also by global visibility as a tourism hub (Varela Monterroso,

2021). Its hosts must balance local cultural identity with international communication needs. This study therefore examined the desirable qualities of radio and television hosts in the new media era through a case study of Hainan Province, analyzing both host and audience perspectives to propose strategies for professional development and audience alignment.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the desirable qualities of radio and television hosts in the new media era from a professional perspective.
2. To explore the desirable qualities of radio and television hosts in the new media era according to audience expectations.

Literature Review

The literature review establishes the context by first defining New Media Concepts. New media refers to digitally delivered communication such as online articles, podcasts, social media, and streaming services. Its defining traits—interactivity, real-time engagement, and user-generated content—contrast with the one-way nature of traditional media (Burnett & Marshall, 2003; Xu, 2022; Yuchen, 2025). The integration of AI and big data further personalizes content and reshapes media consumption (Wu, 2022). It is characterized by digital form, hypertextuality, global networks, and reduced producer control (Thompson, 2018; Wertime & Fenwick, 2008).

Radio and television remain essential mass media. Radio conveys information through sound, stimulating imagination (Ramadhani et al., 2022; Haryanto, 2023), while television combines visuals and audio to deliver realistic, immediate content (Puspa et al., 2019; Tynan, 2011; Goian & Goian, 2023).

Effective media hosts require verbal, non-verbal, and personal competencies, including confidence, clear pronunciation, and problem-solving skills (Yodnen, 2021). Hard-talk hosts additionally need preparation, wit, and foreign language ability (Thaweechote, 2023). In the digital sphere, successful live-stream hosts display trustworthiness, expertise, and interactivity, fostering audience loyalty (Liu et al., 2023).

Media convergence unites traditional and digital media, transforming production, distribution, and audience engagement through technological and cultural integration (Jenkins, 2004, 2020; Meikle & Young, 2012; Li, 2022).

Research Methodology

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative designs. The qualitative phase utilized in-depth interviews with nine key informants, divided equally into three groups: provincial-level, city-level, and independent hosts. A semi-structured guide was used to cover seven main areas, including communication skills, ethics, and content creation. The quantitative phase consisted of a survey of 400 audience members in Hainan Province. The sample size was determined

using Taro Yamane's formula (95% confidence level) based on the 2020 census population. Participants were selected via purposive sampling, targeting those who follow hosts on new media platforms. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, distributed online via Wenjuanxing, was used to assess opinions on seven dimensions of desirable host characteristics.

Research Results

The qualitative phase, utilizing in-depth interviews, revealed eight key dimensions that define desirable host qualities. It was found that Multidimensional Communication Skills are foundational, as all hosts emphasized the need for clear communication, adapting their style to the specific medium and audience. This was closely linked to a Credible and Friendly Personality; while credibility was universally valued, new media audiences demonstrated a clear preference for authenticity over strict formality. Technology and New Media Skills were recognized as essential by all participants, though the required proficiency varied significantly, from provincial hosts learning new platforms like Douyin to independent hosts needing comprehensive technical skills in editing and analytics.

Furthermore, Content Creation Expertise proved to be context-dependent, with provincial hosts focusing on balancing quality and accuracy, while independent hosts, facing intense competition, emphasized creativity and trend-following. The focus of General Knowledge and Currency also varied, ranging from national affairs for provincial hosts to local issues and online digital culture for city and independent hosts, respectively. A significant shift was observed in Audience Interaction Ability, marking a transition from traditional one-way broadcasting to prioritizing two-way engagement and real-time responses. Critically, Professional Ethics and Responsibility remained a non-negotiable foundation for all groups, essential for preserving long-term credibility. Finally, the interviews highlighted distinct Challenges and Future Perspectives, as hosts across groups grappled with balancing traditional standards, intense online competition, and the volatility of algorithms.

The quantitative research phase provided a clear hierarchy of these qualities based on audience perceptions. A survey of 400 respondents, who were predominantly female (54%) and clustered in the 20-29 age group (41%), revealed that Ethics and Responsibility was the highest-rated dimension ($M = 4.38$). Within this, audiences placed strongest emphasis on presenting information carefully and accurately ($M = 4.45$). This was followed closely by Audience Interaction ($M = 4.30$), underscoring the audience's desire for two-way communication, particularly hosts who listen to opinions and build relationships ($M = 4.37, 4.35$). Content Creation Expertise ranked third ($M = 4.27$), with audiences prioritizing creativity in content design ($M = 4.37$) and strong storytelling ability ($M = 4.35$). The middle-ranked dimensions included Multidimensional Communication Skills ($M = 4.25$), General Knowledge ($M = 4.21$), and Credible and Friendly Personality ($M = 4.20$). Interestingly, Technology and New Media Skills emerged as the lowest-rated dimension overall ($M = 4.13$).

The convergence of these qualitative and quantitative findings, achieved through methodological triangulation, provided strong validation for the results. Both research methods emphasized the paramount

importance of professional ethics, audience interaction, and content creation expertise. The high value placed on ethics aligns with Social Responsibility Theory, suggesting that trustworthiness is a vital asset in an era of widespread misinformation. Similarly, the importance of interaction reflects Jenkins' (2009) concept of a Participatory Culture, where audiences reject passive consumption and demand engagement. The demand for strong content aligns with Attention Economy theory, where creativity is essential to capture and maintain audience focus.

The relatively low rating for technology skills was also a key finding. It suggests audiences view technology merely as a supporting tool rather than a core host quality, which aligns with Norman's (1988) concept of "Invisible Technology". These findings indicate that successful hosts must integrate traditional professional skills with digital competence, creative content production, and social responsibility, all while maintaining close, interactive audience relationships.

Conclusion

These mixed methods study successfully identified a comprehensive set of desirable qualities for radio and television hosts operating in the new media landscape of Hainan Province. The research established eight integrated dimensions essential for contemporary success: communication skills, personality and credibility, digital literacy, content creation ability, general knowledge, audience engagement, professional ethics, and adaptability. The quantitative data revealed that audiences prioritized Ethics and Responsibility as the highest-rated dimension ($M = 4.38$), followed closely by Audience Interaction ($M = 4.30$) and Content Creation ($M = 4.27$). These ranking challenges the assumption that technical skills dominate audience expectations in the digital age, demonstrating instead that fundamental professional values and social responsibility remain paramount. These findings significantly contribute to understanding the media profession's transformation within regional contexts, particularly in Hainan Province, where hosts must skillfully balance local cultural representation with growing demands of international tourism communication.

The study offers clear practical implications for media stakeholders. For practitioners and organizations, it is recommended that comprehensive training programs be developed that establish professional ethics and social responsibility as foundational elements, while simultaneously complementing them with multidimensional communication skills, personality development, and creative content production. Furthermore, hosts should be encouraged to leverage local cultural uniqueness, including traditions, dialects, and tourist attractions—as a strategic content differentiator to enhance regional media identity and appeal to both local and international audiences. Finally, the research suggests avenues for future investigation, recommending that studies be expanded to examine varying needs of specific audience segments (e.g., teenagers, working adults, elderly) to tailor host qualities effectively. Future research should also explore structural transformations within the hosting profession brought about by emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and virtual influences replacing human hosts on some digital platforms.

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