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## **Harmony Across Time: Analyzing the Existence of Nostalgic Song Programs in the Digital Radio Landscape**

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### **Abstract**

This research specifically explores the challenges faced by a radio station experiencing a decline in listenership, aiming to unveil the significance of nostalgic songs as the primary asset in sustaining the programming of Radio Duta Nusantara 92.1 FM Ponorogo. The qualitative method was employed, incorporating observation and interviews. Six YouTube live streaming contents served as the initial step in data collection. The researcher also engaged in direct interaction with listeners through phone calls while participating in live studio sessions. The findings underscore that the radio station maintains its relevance primarily through its longstanding flagship program featuring nostalgic songs. This study offers comprehensive insights into survival strategies for radio stations in the digital era, emphasizing the continuing relevance of traditional elements like nostalgia. Furthermore, it highlights the critical role of responsiveness to technology and direct engagement with listeners as pivotal factors for ensuring the sustained existence of mass media in the future.

**Keywords:** *Digital Radio, Existence; Nostalgic Songs*

## **A. Introduction**

The information technology in mass media during the current era of digitalization is experiencing significant growth. Radio, television, social media, and other mass media outlets stand as tangible evidence of this progress. This phenomenon has fueled competition among media platforms to broadcast compelling programs, aiming to capture the attention of news consumers.

The radio serves as one of the mass media, functioning as a medium for news broadcasting (Yara Ardiningtyas & Yudi Hartono 2015). This is evident with the establishment of Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) on September 11, 1945, which played a role in voicing the interests of the state. This role also functions as a stabilizer and an instrument that binds the nation inseparably from power (Winda Kustiawan et al. 2022).

One type of radio media is private radio, owned by individuals and operating on a commercial basis. This is distinct from public radio, which is fully owned by the government (M. Ade Zainury 2018). Private radio operates under broadcasting regulations governed by government licenses, with the radio broadcast permit number 01169172-000SU/19972010 and the Broadcasting Organization License 15/RF.02.03/2018.32.12.2018.

Amidst its existence, radio has undergone a significant decline. Indeed, radio still maintains approximately 13% of listeners, marking a significant decline from 2003 when it reached 50.29%. According to the survey conducted by the Social and Cultural Indicator of the Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik), the percentage of the population (aged 10 and above) tuning in to the radio weekly only amounted to 13.31% in 2018 (Viva Budi Kusnandar 2019). The impact of Internet technology is a contributing factor to the diminished interest among radio audiences.

The primary source of income for the operation of private radio comes entirely from advertisements. This applies to Radio Duta Nusantara as well, serving as a platform for the people of Ponorogo and surrounding areas as an entertainment medium, a channel for interests and talents, and an information source in various fields.

It is noteworthy that Ponorogo only has two radio stations, indicating that radio media was very limited at that time. The establishment of this radio was supported by a culturally rich and

cooperative community. Given the limitations of information dissemination media at that time, the radio was driven to develop itself as an entertainment medium offering various broadcasting programs that appealed to listeners.

Moreover, radios faced challenges in adapting to new technological developments, which were supposed to provide ease of media selection according to needs. Nevertheless, radios had to continually renew their programs to remain attractive, especially in the era of the Internet, where access is increasingly easy and influences the interest in listening to analog radios, subsequently transitioning to other online media (Teologi and Kristiani 2022).

Meanwhile, media continues to evolve and improve its quality according to needs. Wilbur Schram argues that the primary role of mass media in development is to assist in introducing social changes (Corry Novrica 2017). Modernization is introduced as a program conveyed to society. In other words, the role of mass media is as an agent of change. Regulations in the broadcasting field bring various changes that pose new challenges for broadcast media managers.

Radio Duta Nusantara 92.1 FM is a private radio station that has joined the National Association of Indonesian Private Broadcasting (Persatuan Radio Siaran Swasta Nasional Indonesia). This radio station features various broadcasting programs that highlight the local culture of Ponorogo City. These programs include Jendela Nusantara, Dangdut Ponoragan, Ritme Indonesia, Santapan Rohani, and Duta Nostalgia.

Among all the programs on Duta Nusantara, the Duta Nostalgia program stands out as the flagship program of the radio, prompting the researcher's keen interest in examining the current status of the Duta Nostalgia program. Duta Nostalgia is a program that presents several classic songs from the 80s. In the current global era, there are few radios that still prioritize classic song programs, making it particularly interesting for older listeners to reminisce about the past. Therefore, the existence of this nostalgia program must be maintained.

Relevant research, including studies on the creativity and innovation of radio, has been conducted as part of the challenges and assets for convincing advertisers to include their products in radio broadcasts. This helps sustain the radio's viability (Nurhasanah Nasution 2017). Moreover, radios that endure must keep pace with the times and leverage digitalization. The digitization of broadcasting has many

advantages, including efficient frequency use, high-quality audio suitable for music broadcasts, and easy accessibility compared to analog systems (Dwi Maharani 2021).

The radio's existence must continue to be developed through flagship programs, utilizing technological advancements to create new broadcast programs. This approach has been adopted by Radio Duta Nusantara 92.1 FM by adding a streaming feature on YouTube, accessible to anyone, anywhere. This existence also provides an opportunity for listeners to communicate, create, and channel their talents through broadcast programs, including maintaining the existence of the Duta Nostalgia program through classic songs.

Similar research has been conducted by Refka Audhy, titled "The Existence of the Morning Zone Program Host on Trax FM Palembang." The results indicated that the radio's existence remains strong with programs featuring music, discussions, interactions, evaluations, and listener responses (Refka Audy dan Rahma Santhi 2022). Furthermore, Wira Samita conducted research titled "The Existence of the Morning News Program on Radio Kuansing 100.9 Mhz in Fulfilling Information Needs Regarding Kuantan Bay (Wira Sasmita 2020). This research highlights the importance of information conveyed through radio news programs, which continue to be a necessity for the community, especially regarding regional development.

This study emphasizes the importance of information provided through radio news programs, which continue to be a necessity for the community, especially regarding regional development. Although the existence of this information has proven strong and sustainable, contemporary challenges, especially in maintaining the continuity of the Nostalgia Song Program on Radio Duta Nusantara 92.1 FM Ponorogo, are the focus of attention.

Through this research, it is demonstrated that in the era of digitalization, it is essential to understand how Radio Duta Nusantara can maintain its existence with Nostalgic song programs. Despite facing a decline in listenership, this study affirms that preserving the existence of such programs is not only relevant but also plays a crucial role in maintaining nostalgic values and the cultural heritage of classical music amidst changes and the ease of access through digital platforms.

## **B. Method**

This research employs a qualitative method, collecting data through interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with Detty, the host of the Duta Nostalgia program. Data were gathered from various sources, both plural and singular, using observational methods to observe how the host interacts with listeners through phone calls (Cut Medika and Bambang Mudjiyanto 2018). The study follows the analytical technique of Miles and Huberman, involving stages such as collecting data by observing six live streaming YouTube contents. The researcher also comprehends interactions with listeners through phone calls by listening 'live' in the studio (Nur Mauliddah and Dimyati 2022). Consequently, the data are analyzed and validated with feedback from the host and listeners aged <20 to >50 years. This approach ensures the presentation of supportive data in this writing.

## **C. Results and Discussion**

This research reveals key findings regarding the existence of Radio Duta Nusantara 92.1 FM Ponorogo, indicating that the radio has successfully maintained its presence amidst the era of digitalization and the rapid development of mass media. This achievement is attributed to their flagship program, Duta Nostalgia, and a significant increase in listeners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*"The Duta Nostalgia program, featuring nostalgic tunes, is aired from 12:00 to 14:00. This timing strategically positions the program as a source of entertainment during listeners' break times. The aim is to continually evolve the objectives of the program, ensuring its sustained existence amidst the myriad of radio broadcasts."*(Detty, n.d.)

A piece of music or a song can provide motivation to listeners through its instrumentation. Music has the power to evoke emotions in its audience, as some pieces feature lyrics and melodies that resonate with the listener's current state (Eka Titi 2019). "Nostalgic songs", with their simple yet evocative lyrics, have the ability to depict feelings in each lyrical segment. These nostalgic songs carry a narrative of life, profound meanings, and messages, offering valuable lessons to anyone who listens.

The presence of nostalgic songs remains highly relevant with their distinctive tunes. These songs evoke a sense of longing for the 80s and 90s era. Moreover, within the realm of radio, nostalgic songs become a program that contributes to enhancing the station's presence (Tresna Yumiana dan Kartini Rosmalah 2019).

The aforementioned aligns with Ven Gross's proposition that determining the program type also signifies determining the appeal of a program. The term "appeal" in this context refers to how a program can capture the attention of its audience, thereby ensuring its continued existence.

Subsequent findings highlight the utilization of the YouTube streaming platform, which effectively enhances the reach and accessibility of the audience, irrespective of geographical constraints. Nostalgic songs from the 90s are deemed as a dominant and crucial element for listeners, providing a nostalgic experience and an opportunity for relaxation with family. Consequently, these findings demonstrate that the radio is capable of adapting to technological advancements, particularly by introducing innovations through the YouTube platform as an efficient alternative for listeners who do not have direct access to radio broadcasts.

The findings are substantiated by the active engagement of listeners through interactions via WhatsApp and telephone. Consequently, in this program, listeners demonstrate an attraction to the consumption of nostalgic or memorable musical content. In addition to utilizing communication media such as WhatsApp and telephone, the radio station has exhibited innovation to enhance its existence by leveraging the YouTube platform.

The rapid advancements in technology and information have significantly supported the sustainability of the radio. The ubiquity of YouTube, as a widely recognized platform, extends across various demographics in disseminating information. This platform not only broadens the geographical reach of listeners but also provides an efficient alternative for those who lack direct access to radio broadcasts.

Thus, these findings reflect how adaptation to modern technology, such as YouTube, can serve as a successful strategy for prolonging the existence of radio and maintaining relevance in the era of digital media development (Mutmainah Arham 2020). Becoming an alternative for management to attract listeners without radios at home is achieved through

the utilization of YouTube streaming, which serves as a more efficient option for radio industry professionals. This approach is prompted by the limited geographical coverage, confined to the regions of Kabupaten Ponorogo, Trenggalek, Madiun, Magetan, and Pacitan. The utilization of YouTube streaming addresses this limitation by providing an alternative means of access for individuals who do not possess traditional radio receivers in their households. This strategic shift not only broadens the audience reach but also enhances efficiency for radio industry workers.

Nostalgic melodies for the listeners are not only provides additional entertainment and insights but also engenders a profound emotional experience, evoking cherished memories of the past with close associates. The presence of nostalgic tunes in the program transcends being a mere supportive element; rather, it serves as a fundamental pillar that adds value to the radio listening experience, creating moments of relaxation and camaraderie with family (Estutryas Pimatarani et al. 2020). The establishment of the Duta Nostalgia program engenders a distinct satisfaction for the listeners. The interaction between the audience and the announcer is noteworthy, exemplified by the responsive handling of listener requests for nostalgic tunes, which are promptly broadcasted. Additionally, listeners convey greetings to others tuned in to the radio, establishing a positive and engaging rapport.

Further Findings Increased Listener Engagement During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Additional findings reveal a notable surge in listener numbers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This fact underscores the radio station's ongoing relevance and its ability to capture the audience's attention amid the global crisis.

*"Increased Listener Numbers Post-COVID-19 Pandemic: Statistical Overview. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a notable rise in listener numbers. Starting in 2021, the listener data ranged around 130,000 individuals, with subsequent years maintaining a consistent range of approximately 30,000 listeners. As of the current year, 2023, the listener base has further increased to around 32,000 individuals, representing a diverse demographic. These figures indicate a positive trend in audience growth, demonstrating the radio station's ability to not only recover but expand its reach in the post-pandemic period".(Ade 2023)*

The entirety of these findings affirms that Radio Duta Nusantara 92.1 FM Ponorogo has successfully maintained its existence by creating relevant programs and adapting to the advancements in media technology. Through the introduction of YouTube streaming, Radio Duta Nusantara has added a distinctive element to its broadcasting programs. This phenomenon is also linked to the applied mass communication theory (Neisya Ghassani and Armawati Arbi 2020). As elucidated, mass media will continually evolve and erode its user base through various novel methods. Consequently, this exerts a significant influence and stands as one of the strategies for preserving the program's existence

The results from interviews, observations, and documentary studies reveal that the evolution of media necessitates radio stations to provide online platforms, ensuring they remain appealing to their audience. These online platforms may include websites that offer information accessible via smartphones, supported by radio programs featuring streaming capabilities. This phenomenon has led to a decline in the popularity of conventional radio, with many stations grappling to maintain their relevance in the modern era of digitalization.

The current challenge for radio management is whether these media outlets can effectively adapt to rapidly advancing technologies. This presents a unique challenge for radio operators as they strive to package and preserve their existence in the broadcasting world.

The statement above illustrates that mass communication in radio possesses distinctive auditory characteristics (sound for listening), transmission or dissemination processes through transmitters, and the creation of mental imagery solely through the broadcast. Radio stands out as a medium that is primarily auditory and imaginative, stimulating sound and attempting to visualize it through the listener's imagination. In alignment with Riswandi's concept, radio serves as a mass communication medium conveying information in the form of sound, presented in an organized and interconnected program format (Maria B. Mawarni 2020).

In a practical sense, Shirley Biagi proposes a similar concept, wherein radio serves as the transmission of signals through free space by modulating electromagnetic waves through the air and vacuum. As radio



waves pass through an electrical conductor, they induce a current that is then transformed into an audio signal, carrying information (Ponsen Sindu dan Afdan Fachrurizal 2019). Radio can also penetrate long distances, depending on its frequency. Thus, radio broadcasts possess a unique appeal for listeners, incorporating elements of music, spoken words, or human voices. On the flip side, radio has its limitations, such as the inability for listeners to replay what they hear, unlike reading a newspaper or other media.

Efendi's concept suggests that broadcast radio has an advantage in being immediate, meaning the programs conveyed undergo minimal complexity. News, information, or messages delivered by the announcer can be received directly and instantaneously at the moment of transmission. (Yara Ardiningtyas dan Yudi Hartono 2015).

To capture attention and cultivate a positive influence on radio listeners, a radio announcer must also possess creativity that enhances their performance in delivering information. This means the announcer should provide clear articulation and voice. Additionally, the announcer must minimize pronunciation errors when conveying information.

The broadcast of the Duta Nostalgia program not only presents nostalgic tunes but also targets the segmentation of its audience by incorporating weather updates, traffic conditions, and commercial products into the broadcast. This effort is made to ensure that the radio announcers at Duta Nusantara 92.1 FM can deliver both entertaining shows and information effectively, maintaining their own existence and not being abandoned by their audience.

Beyond the mentioned aspects, this program directly engages with its audience. Another consideration is that the quality of an announcer is not solely judged based on the quality of their voice. It is also evaluated based on their closeness and familiarity with the audience during on-air sessions. As the broadcast utilizes the YouTube streaming platform, the announcer's style and presentation must carry value, appearing straightforward and intelligent. In the era of media convergence, the internet has become the prime choice for media consumption. Currently, people easily access information through various options, especially in online-based radio.

The development of radio technology, as demonstrated in this context, is capable of capturing the attention and time of its listeners (Firza Rizky 2016). Thus, in the effort to sustain the existence of this radio station, it is evident that there is a clear response to changes in social and cultural aspects of the masses, giving rise to new social values. This illustrates the continued growth of Radio Duta Nusantara 92.1 FM in Ponorogo. The digitization, which brings about numerous changes, also poses a unique challenge for radio management. The broad perspective of communication poses difficulties for radio stations that are still processing information in a traditional manner to keep pace with these advancements (Fondeska Kristanella 2022).

All these technological changes undoubtedly influence the quality of radio broadcasting formats. The media convergence in radio has also evolved through live streaming on YouTube, providing a clear view of the broadcasters.

This has implications for programs that are crucial in maintaining the relevance of nostalgic tunes in the era of digitalization. The existence through the YouTube streaming platform can enhance reach and access to a broader audience from various segments of society. The significance of the program's existence brings a unique element amid the dominance of modern programs, adding diversity and enhancing the experience for loyal listeners, reaffirming that nostalgic tunes are still present in radio broadcasts.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Duta Nusantara 92.1 FM stands as a resilient radio station, distinguished by its flagship program featuring nostalgic tunes. This program, existing for an extended period, plays a pivotal role in sustaining the radio's presence. In efforts to uphold its existence, the program extends an opportunity to listeners worldwide to request nostalgic songs through telephone and WhatsApp. The radio station embraces innovation by incorporating live broadcasts on YouTube, offering a clear view of the presenters and providing extensive access to listeners without the need for traditional radios and frequency searching.

In preserving the essence of classic Indonesian songs, the Duta Nostalgia program creates new avenues, ensuring the continued appreciation and conservation of these timeless tunes amid the diminishing allure of classical music.

However, it is crucial to note the specific limitations of this research. The primary research focus revolves around the operational aspects and programs of Duta Nusantara 92.1 FM, with a particular emphasis on the Duta Nostalgia program. The study does not delve into financial aspects, listener demographics, or the broader market context affecting the radio station.

Advisable from the findings of this research, is for the community, particularly radio enthusiasts, to exercise wisdom in understanding and maximizing the available platforms. Additionally, engaging in thoughtful communication and expressing opinions judiciously are crucial when utilizing sophisticated media in the current era of digitalization.

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