

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**THE COMMERCIALISATION OF  
NEWS AND EDITORIAL FREEDOM:  
A STUDY OF BULETIN UTAMA TV3**

**HARMI TAAZIM BIN MOHAMAD**

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study is focusing on the commercialisation of news in *Buletin Utama*, *TV3*. Researcher concerned is to investigate how to balance the news reporting based on the journalism principle in combine with the paid news content to serve public interest. Do the media practitioners concern and realise that this may cause to certain implications to the newsroom culture and news credibility. Therefore, this study is to understand several research questions as per below query: (i) To what extent has the commercialisation of news items duration in *Buletin Utama* affected the space of editorial content? (ii) Who are the advertisers that had consume the commercialisation of news duration in place of editorial content in *Buletin Utama*? (iii) Are there any restraint forces for editors of *Buletin Utama* in maintaining editorial independence from the providers of financial support? (iv) How does *Buletin Utama* manage a creative negotiation to ensure credibility of news stay intact and at the same time serve the stake holders and to ensure survival in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Firstly, the study focused on the durations of the commercialization of news items in *Buletin Utama*. By using content analysis, the researcher collected the data from the three years of *Buletin Utama*. The findings showed that there are 6,075 commercialization of news in *Buletin Utama* for the year 2007, 2008 and 2010. Data was analysed according to 'items', 'category of business' and 'sector of business' for the three years in study. The 'items' are the news items that the advertisers bought to be on aired on *Buletin Utama*. The type of the commercialisation news items are 'live-read', 'TVC', 'advertorial' and 'promo'. For the third research question the researcher referred to the in-depth interview with 15 respondents from the News and Current Affairs of TV3. The researcher had identified the themes for the 3<sup>rd</sup> research question, i) advertorial as a source of financial for TV3, ii) *Buletin Utama* credibility at stake iii) high ratings, iv) clients trust, v) content value decides, vi) angle of the news, vii) client do not dictate, viii) technical error ix) fulfilling the need of client. From these themes, the researcher had deduced the themes into two important discovery; i) revenue is not everything, credibility rules, ii) editorial independence intact. Lastly on the 4<sup>th</sup> researcher question, from the respondents, the researcher found 10 themes from the respondents to answer the 4<sup>th</sup> research question, i) KPI Target, ii) Making profit from NCA, iii) content benefits everybody, iv) suitable for *Buletin Utama*, v) product endorsement, vi) news line-up, vii) management pressure, viii) duration, ix) news value and x) hard news comes first. From the 10 themes deduced to 2 important discoveries to answer 4<sup>th</sup> research question; i) public interest served well, ii) balanced world.

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The long and winding road (Lennon-McCartney 1970).

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY**

Development of media studies stresses its increasing power over the society thus; news in media plays an important role in the process of defining issues. By selecting and highlighting certain facts while excluding other information, media can create frames that can have a powerful impact on public opinions and audience interpretations of issues and events (Sheen, 2004).

As the media is expected to project a positive image of the country and attracts investors to stimulate the economy sectors, the media also has the powerful role creating business opportunities and promoting certain events or products such as advertising. However, today paid advertising has many categories that have own impact.

According to Rotfeld (2008:63-68), little coverage is given to the broader implications of advertising as “paid” messages, a reference to advertising being media content in which the advertiser pays the vehicle for the time or space in which the message is run. Publicity is the content generated or purchased by the media vehicle without any direct payments from the marketing company, such as news, opinions, or entertainment. If the advertiser does not pay the vehicle for the sponsor’s name or message to appear, it is publicity, not advertising, which can be distinguished from sponsored journalism or paid product placements or any other business-funded messages that could influence sales.

In Malaysia media industry, the industry has witnessed a growing and troubling trend of media ownership concentration and consolidation, triggered by economic and political considerations (Mustafa K. Anuar, 2014). Although the news and advertising make up the great majority of press content, but they occupy a small proportion of broadcast airtime.

Both national and local television systems are increasingly dominated by market-driven forces they are structurally characterised by increased concentration (Fatrik, 2001a, b, c). Deregulation of ownership limits in the 1980s has left a single regulation in place: no group can reach more than 35 percent of the United States (US) population.