

The Contemporary Landscape and Challenges of Television and Radio Channel Management

Sadokat MAKHSUMOVA

PhD, Associate Professor, Uzbekistan

Received: 31 March 2025; **Accepted:** 29 April 2025; **Published:** 31 May 2025

Abstract: This article explores the recent transformations in the management of television channels, which occupy a central position within the mass media system. It emphasizes the correlation between ownership structures and management approaches, and examines the evolving demands placed on modern broadcast administration.

Keywords: Media management, mass media, television channels, creative process, journalism, media system, audience, media analysis, media research, programming, editorial team.

Introduction: Television has long held a dedicated audience, serving as both a mirror of society and, initially, a primary means of information dissemination—later evolving into a source of entertainment. However, in today's digital age, television faces a powerful competitor: the internet. This shift has compelled broadcasters to enhance and streamline both creative and production processes in order to maintain viewer engagement.

Television as a medium of mass communication performs a variety of essential functions, including the dissemination of information, observation, interpretation, connectivity, recreation, and interactivity. Nonetheless, within the national media landscape, many television channels fail to fully implement these functions. Observations indicate that the more a channel captures and retains viewer interest, the higher its ratings and revenue tend to be. Ratings are typically calculated as a percentage based on average viewership. A channel's rating is a crucial metric, as advertisers prefer to invest in high-performing programs and networks.

Therefore, continuous improvement in the organization and management of creative production processes is essential for television and radio broadcasters seeking to remain competitive and relevant in the evolving media environment.

Identifying Target Audiences to Increase Ratings and Viewer Engagement

To increase television ratings and attract greater viewer attention, it is essential to identify the target audience in advance. Currently, the primary target demographic is composed of individuals aged 20 to 40. However, analytical data indicates that a significant portion of loyal viewers are aged 40 and above. Therefore, in the planning process, it is advisable to consider the interests and preferences of this older demographic. This includes programming that is comforting, discussion-based, or socially engaging.

Regardless of the type of program—whether it be news, talk shows, or educational initiatives—there are several critical stages that must be completed prior to broadcast. These include the pre-production phase where the concept is developed, the production process itself, and the post-production and broadcast phases. The duration of each phase depends on the length and topic of the program. For instance, a news segment can be produced within a few hours.

The conceptualization stage often involves the bulk of the creative work. This phase begins with idea generation, which may come from one or several content creators. However, like any editorial department, television channels also implement their own distinctive management structures.

According to data presented by Owler.com, among the world's leading media companies, Fox News ranks first in management performance, followed by NBC News and BBC News. Despite the fact that the BBC is the

largest media organization in terms of revenue and number of employees—with 19,572 staff compared to Fox News' 1,783—it reportedly suffers from certain managerial inefficiencies. For example, management effectiveness scores show Fox News leadership rated at 80 points, while BBC leadership received 67.

In Uzbekistan, such comparative analyses are not commonly conducted. Television channel ratings are generally determined by viewership data or public opinion surveys. This illustrates that a media outlet's commercial success is not always directly tied to its organizational structure.

What is notable is that television across the globe is transitioning toward a new format—internet-based platforms. A study conducted by Campaign UK revealed that between 2018 and 2019, advertising viewership among the 16–34 age group declined by 1.5%. In contrast, online platforms offer more affordable and convenient subscription options for viewers. For instance, subscribing to Netflix or Amazon Prime costs roughly half as much as traditional television packages.

Nevertheless, according to analysts at Thinkbox, traditional television still retains a sizable audience. A majority of UK viewers aged 16 to 34 still watch three-quarters of their advertisements via television. However, other studies show that between 2010 and 2019, television viewership among people under the age of 25 in the UK dropped by nearly 50%. These trends highlight the urgent need for structural, organizational, and creative reforms in television broadcasting.

A Public Opinion Survey on Uzbekistan's Most Popular Television Channels and Viewer Preferences

In March 2020, the national movement Yuksalish conducted a public opinion survey across Uzbekistan to identify the most popular national television sources and broadcasting formats. A total of 6,467 citizens participated in the survey, representing various age groups and professional backgrounds from both urban and rural areas.

The survey aimed to assess the population's interest in socio-political and informational television programming, measure the effectiveness of news dissemination to broader audiences, and gauge public attitudes toward programming aired on both public and private television channels.

Approximately half of the respondents cited lack of time (24.7%) and a preference for using mobile phones as their main source of information (24.5%) as reasons for not watching television. Other respondents mentioned a lack of interest in TV content, misinformation, and excessive propaganda or

advertising as factors contributing to their disengagement.

As part of the study, participants were presented with a list of 18 public and private national television channels, along with options such as regional broadcasters and the response “I do not watch national television at all.” Based on the responses, a ranking of the most-watched national TV channels was compiled.

Interestingly, the top five positions in this ranking were exclusively occupied by private television channels:

1. Zo'r TV – 11.8%
2. Sevimli TV – 9.6%
3. My5 – 9.4%
4. Milliy TV – 6.9%
5. Futbol TV – 6.8%

When asked about what types of programs were lacking on national television, respondents emphasized the need for more socially relevant investigative reports, socio-political talk shows, entertainment content, and reality television formats.

What stood out in the results was the consistently lower ranking of state-run channels. To better understand the reasons behind this, an in-depth analysis was conducted focusing on the structure, operations, and management model of state broadcasters. The study specifically examined the activities of Uzbekistan National Television and Radio Company (MTRK).

The Uzbekistan channel is funded through the state budget, sponsorships, advertising revenue, and other sources not prohibited by law. The channel operates under the umbrella of the National Television and Radio Company (MTRK), and it is responsible for proposing editorial concepts and organizational structures, which must be submitted for approval to MTRK along with budgetary and technical resource requirements.

The director of the Uzbekistan channel serves as the sole executive authority and is appointed—and dismissed—by MTRK. The director oversees the creative operations of the channel and ensures the professional quality of its programming. The director also defines the responsibilities of employees, approves internal work regulations, appoints and dismisses staff, and determines salaries and disciplinary measures in accordance with established procedures.

The Uzbekistan National Television and Radio Company (MTRK) operates a comprehensive media network encompassing television channels such as “O'zbekiston,” “Oila,” “O'zbekiston Tarixi,” and the “O'zbekiston” radio station. The organizational

structure is headed by a Director and five Deputy Directors, each overseeing specific departments:

1. First Deputy Director
2. Deputy Director for Economic Affairs
3. Deputy Director for Radio
4. Directors of the “Oila” and “O‘zbekiston Tarixi” channels

According to the “Position Instruction,” the Deputy Director of the “O‘zbekiston” TV and radio company is responsible for executing specific functions assigned by the Director. In the Director's absence, the Deputy Director assumes their duties.

An independent editorial and artistic council evaluates the quality and standards of programs. Its members and procedures are approved by the Chairman of MTRK based on the Director's recommendations. The Director leads this council.

MTRK's operations are carried out by permanent staff and individuals employed under fixed-term or contract agreements, with compensation in accordance with Uzbekistan's labor laws. The number of employees and their salaries are determined by MTRK within legal frameworks.

The First Deputy Director coordinates the organizational and creative aspects of program preparation and contributes to shaping the channel's operational concept. They also participate in developing strategic plans, including calendar-themes and production-financial schedules.

Collaboration among creative and technical personnel is crucial for program quality. The creative team includes editors, directors, operators, editors, sound directors, assistant directors, and assistant operators. Administrative and technical support is provided by staff handling organizational issues and computer services.

The “Oila” channel comprises two editorial departments: “Cultural-Educational” and “Recreation,” operating in both Uzbek and Russian languages. The channel develops an annual creative concept and a program schedule, approved by the Director. Staff recruitment and termination are managed by the Director, with candidates subject to testing and recommendations.

Financially, the “Oila” and “O‘zbekiston Tarixi” channels receive 100% of their funding from the state, while the “O‘zbekiston” TV and radio company receives 50% state funding. The remaining 50% is generated through advertising, commercial programs, and sponsorships. For instance, programs like “Assalom, O‘zbekiston!” and “Oydin Hayot” are being developed

with dedicated commercial segments. Since 2020, an individualized approach system has been implemented for each advertiser, offering discounts to regular partners to strengthen collaborations and increase the number of advertisers.

The editorial structure has evolved, with the “Yangi Jamiyat” editorial office replaced by “Do‘stlik” in 2020 and “Jamoatchilik” in 2019.

Traditional television channels worldwide are transitioning to online formats. Uzbekistan's existing channels are encouraged to enhance the quality of online content. Some private channels, like “Sevimli,” have successfully monetized through platforms like YouTube. National channels must adapt to changing times; otherwise, they risk losing their position in the media landscape.

REFERENCES

- Yuksalish Nationwide Movement. (2020). Public Opinion Survey on Popular TV Formats and Sources in Uzbekistan. Tashkent: Yuksalish NGO.
- Uzbekistan National Television and Radio Company (MTRK). (2020). Organizational Charter and Operational Guidelines. Internal documentation.
- Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2019). Regulations on the Structure and Function of State Unit Enterprises. Government Decree No. 247.
- Uzbek Agency of Information and Mass Communications. (2021). Annual Report on Media Landscape in Uzbekistan.
- YouTube Analytics – Sevimli TV Channel. (Accessed 2024). <https://www.youtube.com/c/SevimliTV>
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2023). Trends in Digital Media Consumption in Central Asia. Paris: UNESCO.
- OECD Development Centre. (2022). Media Development and Digital Transition in Uzbekistan. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- BBC Media Action. (2020). Uzbekistan: Media Consumption Habits and Trust in News. London: BBC Media Action.
- Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2020). Labour Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Tashkent: Ministry of Justice.
- Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union. (2023). State Media Reforms in Central Asia: Case of Uzbekistan. Kuala Lumpur: ABU Reports.