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***Research paper***



# Perception of Urban Population on Herbal Plants Information Presentation in Television's Talk show Program

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to explore the needs of urban population on herbal plant television program and producing an ideal outline of herbal plant television program. Based on the previous research as a starting point, it is revealed that level of trust from people towards herbal plants, as one of the heritage from past, are still high. This occurs as people believe that herbal plants have been identified as a cure for some diseases in a very long period of time. This research uses a descriptive method, which applied to explain a particular event. Preliminary data shows that the trust level on herbal plants is higher, owing to the fact that herbal plants is considered to be cheaper and purely without additional chemical ingredients. Other than that, herbal plants are also believed to be able to compete, in term of quality and the health effect, with pharmaceutical-grade medicine prescribed by doctors. The result shows that the perception towards talk-show program is positive, caused by, basically, the need of information on herbal plants. It is established that the benefit of talk-show program is valued highly, which must be maintained by the use of credible experts on herbal plants in the talk-show.

***Keywords***: *Information; Herbal Plants; Television.*

## 1. Introduction

Urban society has a strong trust in herbal plants as per previous research data, which shows 84% with high level of trust, 15.14% with medium level of trust, and merely 0.86% with low level of trust (1). The high level of trust on herbal plants is caused by the belief on ancient tradition from the ancestors on the benefits of herbal plants. A cheaper price of herbal plants without industrial chemically produced ingredients added more reason for the high trust in herbal plants. It is also believed that herbal plants have the same level of efficacy compared to prescription from medical representatives.

The high level of trust in herbal plants is also related to a continuous exposure of information, especially with the rise of Internet and its social media. Our research in 2013, on the other hand, shows that television is still the main media for urban society in search of herbal plants information, with 42%; followed by using website at 31.71%; utilizing magazine with 11.43%; finding the news in newspaper with 5.71%; using leaflet as source of information with 5.14%; using other media 1.71%'with the use of radio in 1.43%; and poster with only 0.86% (1).

Watching television becomes a habit for many people as television do have an advantage of showing audio-visual material with an extensively wide coverage. However, television do have its disadvantages as information cannot be stored unlike printed or Internet media, which can be conveniently use later on when needed. Rosenblum's research shows that 83% of human knowledge is acquired through visual senses and 11% from auditory senses (2), which in turn makes television, as an audio-visual media, to be more effective in retaining the information in audiences' mind. Thus, Television is also capable of compressing distance and time, which enables audiences to witness any events from another part of the world at exactly the same time.

One of the television disadvantages is its transitory characteristic, which makes audiences unable to repeat audio-visual being watch. Other disadvantage is the one-way traffic media characteristic, which positioned audiences as passive element. While it can be argued that there is an interactive television program, but it still lacks of representation of audiences' coverage.

Television as one of the favourable media for the audiences, ideally, would be able to deliver its role to support the education of the nation, which one of them includes herbal plants' information dissemination as an alternative medication. Herbal plants has many benefits i.e.: "brotowali" which cures fever, rheumatism, and itches; "bidara upas" which cures appendicitis, typhoid, blood vomit, diabetes, cancer, leprosy, cough, stone bladder, syphilis, skin infection, blood fesses, bloody and mucus excretion; "ciplukan" which cures influenza, sore throat, bronchitis, goitre, scrotum swelling, abscess, ulcers, epilepsy, prostate swelling; "daun dewa" which cures fever, anti-carcinogen, poison cleaning, cures breast swelling, cures irregular period, cures poisonous animal bite, and stop a bleeding; "Umbi" (root) which expunge blood cloth, swelling, bleeding, anti-carcinogen; "daun sendok" which cures inflammation, stopping cough, antiseptic, Vitamin B1, C and A; and many other herbals with benefit of curing many illness.

People is yet to have a full knowledge on the benefits of herbal plants, or which herbal plants could be consumed, or which is forbidden by law. This is caused by unattractive television program's packaging that consist usually a talk-show with some speakers, rather than showing a proper and safely consumed variety of herbal plants. The talk-show focuses merely on commercial side of the herbal plants, which emphasizes on the speaker and his/her clinic rather than the information needed by audiences. This research tries to identified the needs of herbal plant users on

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herbal plants information, television program packaging, and broadcast time.

The concerning reality of herbal plants' television program is that it affects audiences into a certain degree to believe that herbal plants is part of alternative medication done by paranormal/witch doctor. It is caused by a widespread information through mass and non-mass media, inflicting a significant influence on the information of misused treatment using herbal plants, which in the end causing the low acceptance among people.

At present, television program on herbal plants are mostly broadcasted by local television. In West Java Province itself, there are 27 local televisions broadcasting this program, which spread out in several cities such as Bandung, Depok, Purwakarta, Bogor, Tasikmalaya, Cirebon, Cikarang, Bekasi, and Sukabumi.

The impact of television program on herbal plants depends on the direction and content carried by the information itself. Is it a trustworthy information? Understandable and acknowledging the purpose of herbal plants? Does this have any effect on knowledge and comfort of a user in using herbal plants? How herbal plants information can influence the level of acceptance among society?

### 1.1. Problem Formulation

Based on the background illustration above, the problem formulation for this article is on population perception on talk-show of herbal plants in television.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Research Road Map

This research on correlation between herbal plants information presentation and the level acceptance of urban population is the continuation of research in 2013 (1) with the same focus on herbal plants. Previous research has developed a mapping model with modification from David K. Berlo communication model as seen below:

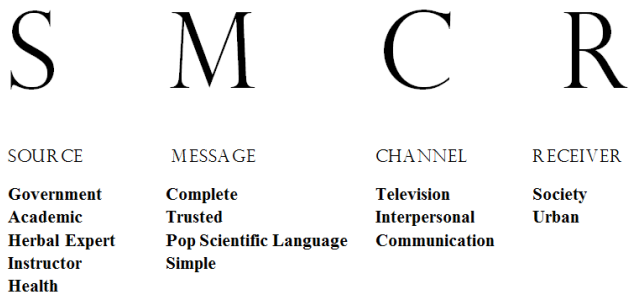


**Fig. 1:** Herbal Plants information dissemination communication modelSource: David K. Berlo with modification (1)

The above model illustrating communication process of herbal plants information dissemination, adopted from SMCR model of David K. Berlo (3). This model explains elements of communication in herbal plants information as a result from research by Dida et.al (1). It can be seen that reliable and trusted information is coming from government, in this case Health Ministry and staffs, followed by academics and herbal expert as source of information. From message element, it is discovered that people need the message to be simple, from a trusted source, using understandable popular scientific language, and it supposed to contain a complete information. The most trusted channel for herbal plants information is television, with interpersonal communication followed as second most trusted media.

This research implements uses and gratification model of herbal plants program in television. Uses and gratification model illustrates individual as an audience, which is very selective. This model explains the process in which attention is moving from message sending to message accepting. Elements of this model includes: individual factor, media using time factor, content and material factor, and information needs fulfilment factor. This research is novel in a way that not many herbal plants research coming from communication perspective.

It is hoped that this research to have an output of a television program on herbal plants, which reach the needs of herbal plants consumers. The design will be as follow:

1. The program will still be showcasing expert speakers of herbal plants
2. Using supporting tools such as video and pictures in presenting growing process of herbal plants, the utilization of herbal plants (boiled, fried, or raw), the herbal plants implementation (smeared, drank, or compressed), and also exhibit testimonial from cured patient from herbal medicine.

### 2.2. Uses and Gratification Theory

This theory is considering on how people fulfilling their needs through media. Uses and gratification theory believed that individually, human being is supra-rational and very selective. According to (4), uses and gratification exploring the beginning of psychological and social needs, which in turn creates a particular desire from mass media or any other sources, generating different media exposure patterns on fulfilling the needs.

Implementation of ideas, assumption, findings of research on uses and gratification theory is focusing on social and psychological needs, which shifting expectation on mass media or any other sources into different media exposure patterns in fulfilling needs and other consequences that mostly not in purpose.

### 2.3. Research Purpose and Benefit

Purpose of the research is to explore:

1. Audiences perception on the quality of talk-show program of herbal plants in television
2. Level of audiences' satisfaction on information developed by talk-show program of herbal plants in television.
3. Expectation of audiences on building trust towards herbal plants talk-show program in television by the factor of intensity, message's content, and correlation with media.

Benefit of the research

The benefit of information presentation of herbal plants on the level of acceptance of herbal plants in urban society can be understood through three aspects: theoretical, academicals, and practical aspects. Those three aspects can be elaborated below:

1. Theoretically this research can be used to develop mass communication theory, which actually has a big role in dissemination of health information and society education in developing their own self. This research also encourages the development of health communication as a branch of communication science, which integrated in multi disciplines caused by social changes in society.
2. Academically, this is a unique and novel approach of research. Herbal plants research perspective often coming from medicine or health, while this research uses communication perspective. It is hoped that this research would be able to give a foundation for further research on herbal plants from social science perspective.
3. Practically, herbal plants research from communication perspective would be able to provide critics for society in changing from negative life behaviour into a healthy one by using natural resources in the form of herbal plants. The use of herbal plants as primary alternative to cure some diseases is the practical benefit for society in which they would be able to choose the information on herbal plants from whichever media they want.

## 4. Research Method

This research uses descriptive method, which according to Rakhmat (4) is used to explain only a particular situation and event. This research is not used to search nor explaining a correlation, or hypothesis experiment, or even creating prediction. Descriptive in this research is exploring each variable, individually, or as unified data collection.

Descriptive method is used to (1) collecting actual information in a detail manner in illustrating the existing symptom, (2) identifying problem or examining condition and existing practices, (3) generating comparison or evaluation, (4) determining other people action on the same problem and to learn from the experience to establish a plan and decision in the future.

Other descriptive method characteristic is the focal point on observation and natural setting. Researcher acts as observer, categorizing behaviour, reviewing features, and logging in to observation book. Natural setting means that researcher coming down the field without any effort in manipulating variables as attending itself could influence reactive measure, which researcher would try to reduce.

Descriptive research occurs as it was needed. Often, a descriptive research is applied because a unique and interesting event took place without theoretical framework to explain. Descriptive research often described as insight stimulating research as Seltiz, Wrightsman, and Cook explained. Researcher took the fieldwork without any burden of theoretical framework nor experimenting a particular theory. Researcher is free in observing the object, exploring, and finding new perspectives. The research itself is going through reformulation and redirection as new information emerges. Hypothesis is acquired after the research took place.

### 3.1. Data Collection Technique

Technique in data collection in this research includes primary and secondary data. It can be explained as follow

**Primary Data Collection**

1. Interview
   Interview is a problem focused conversation in a verbal manner, with two or more people facing each other physically. One act as interviewer, the other one act as interviewee. Interview according to Gunadi (5) is done by extracting information from news source with face to face interaction in order to gain news material. The interview for this research was done with many sources including academician from Pharmacy Faculty of Universitas Padjadjaran and herbal experts.
2. Observation
   Observation is such a complex process. It comprises of biological and psychological process. Two most important process in this activity are observation and memory process (6). The observation for this research was done by travelling to some of the cities in West Java Province.

**Secondary Data Collection**

Literature study is one of the technique in collecting data for this research. Literature study is collecting data and information through associated reading material and references. Other than books and articles, secondary data collection includes magazine, newspaper, and Internet sites, in supporting as secondary data.

Population and Sample

Population is objects group of research, which surprisingly during research their behaviour would be able to be predicted through learning and observing part of the group. Part of the group is called sample (7). Population in this research are people in West Java Province owning local television.

Sample is part of the numbers and characteristics of the population. Bigger population creates an obstacle in term of funding, man power, and time; this can be eliminated by using samples out of the population (8) or as suggested by Rakhmat (7) sample is part of particular thing to be learned and observe.

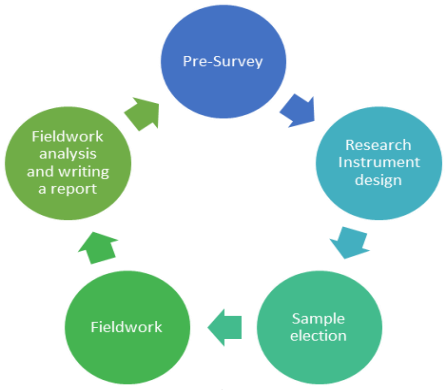


**Fig. 2:** Model of research Activity

## 4. Results and Discussion

The research of audience perception on herbal plant talks-show television program was triggered by plummeting number of health level indicator. The low number of health level indicator in Indonesia is caused by unacceptable health service infrastructure. People is confronted in a difficult situation where a good health service should be obtained with a very expensive price. Poor people would go through a long line of bureaucracy in order to receive free treatment from the government.

This phenomenon should become an opportunity for people to switch back to traditional medicine by using herbal plants. Family herbal plants could become an economically cheap with less chemical substance. In the past this program was really implemented with quite success, especially in keeping people believe in herbal plants as a good remedy for their illnesses.

**Table 1:** Respondents believes that herbal plants have a plenty of benefits

| No | Answers category | F | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Highly Agree | 114 | 32.57 |
| 2 | Agree | 203 | 58.00 |
| 3 | In doubt | 27 | 7.71 |
| 4 | Disagree | 1 | 0.29 |
| 5 | Highly disagree | 5 | 1.43 |
| Total | | 350 | 100 |

Source: Result of Research 2013 (1)

The table above shows the respondents' answers on the topic of herbal plants have a plenty of benefits, it can be seen that 58 % of respondents agree while a small number of them disagree, which indicates most people believes in herbal plants having substantial benefit.

The problem occurs when family herbal plants become an industry and losing its originality as alternative medicine for people. The industry is affecting this by composing herbal plants through some industrial processes, which increases the price. Eventually, people unable to use it as alternative medicine for their illnesses.

The consequence of family herbal plant transforming into industry are the emerging competition of herbal plants product's communication. Television has turn itself as one of the information media to obtain herbal plants information (its benefits and treatments), which transpired in Priangan region including Bogor, Bandung, and Garut where this research took place.

### 4.1. Message in Talk-Show Program

A message should use correct words, avoiding redundancy, eliminating essential details, and constructing a simple and logic sentence (9). Research interview shows that informant suggest that the message is easy to comprehend even though the medicinal terms are hard to understand, as Suparna in an interview responds: Until now, the language is still comprehendible, but sometimes some of them uses foreign and medical terms.

According to Widjaya (10) delivering messages must be relevant to the wants of communicant as the target of communication.

Health talk-show should determine the target of the program, which then would be able to apply appropriate words in order to deliver the message.
The message delivered in health talk-show also has an obstacle in the form of program duration. The short space of time in the talk-show broadcast produces, as per suggestion of Lilis as one of the informants:
Far from sufficient, as there is a possibility that the explanation delivered from television only covers the general ideas as the limited duration allowed so.
Ideally, television program ought to fulfil the needs of its audiences, which correlated to the level of television audience satisfaction towards a particular program.

### 4.2. Talk-Show Program Attraction.

Television is a media operating audio and visual at the same time, which attract audiences. Talk-show program, ideally, able to run visual, audio, and model. Based on the interview, it is known that talk-show program is already attracting audiences with its interesting and varieties exhibition in natural context. Sutisna in an interview suggests that:
It has lot varieties as it depends on focus of illness discussion. So, it is not merely one but other herbal plants as well, such as the cure for gastro using one herbal plants while curing the cancer using other herbal plants. Yeah it is varied.
Good, as the talk-show also displaying testimonial patients already treated with herbal plants. Talk-show also shows how to create a potion from the herbal plants, so the source is reliable.

### 4.3. Information Source in Talk-Show Program

Communicator is the first source who has ideas on what to be delivered as messages. Communicator is a person who has authority, whether directly or indirectly, so this particular person is trustworthy and can be a reliable source of information in delivering messages and answering questions (11). Talk-show program exhibits speakers who have the expert knowledge in herbal plants, family medicinal plants, and medical aspect. This is a requirement as standard ability and expertise of speakers in order to be trustworthy according to audiences. Based on the interviews, speakers in herbal plants television program is trustworthy as they have abilities to explain the application of herbal plants.
One of the supporting factors in order to have a speaker appears to have a knowledge on information material is by a good preparation, which in the end mastering the material details would really help the speaker in delivering their messages.
Effendy (12) suggests that preparation is absolutely necessary, while it is not merely needed for communicator but also displaying communicator's readiness. Communicator must present his/her arguments clearly for the communicant, which suggest that communicator has choose the material carefully, and also has vast experiences in herbal plants in curing the diseases or illnesses. Sutisna in an interview suggest that:
In my opinion, the source of information is quite good and completely responds to my curiosity on the usefulness and function of herbal plants. The speakers are explaining it in detail, clear, and communicative.

### 4.4. Discussion

Almost all households have television set, as now it becomes one of the main source of information for society. Even though there are many other information channels, television has its own attractive characteristic for the audiences, i.e. displaying audio-visual at the same time. Television has a dominant function as entertainment media despite the fact that television do have other function such as education and persuasion. This can be seen in many television programs such as *sinetron* (cinema electronic), music, and many others, which focusing on the entertainment side. Television ought to have more contribution towards the effort in educating the nation through the public health development.
Currently, there are various health talk-show television programs, which includes herbal talk-show or family medicinal plants. Family medicinal plants in the past has become a main alternative for curing illness and diseases. The establishment of family medicinal plants as unaffordable industry hampering the purpose of making herbal plants as alternative medicinal products. Talk-show on health television program should be observed in more details, especially in the broadcast duration elements, this is done to make the message delivered in a more detailed manner, fulfilling the needs of information of the audiences, thus enables people to find alternative solutions for their health.

**Table 2:** Matrix of research results

| No. | Research purpose | Research Results |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Audiences perception on talk-show program | • The source is trustworthy and using natural ingredients.<br>• I really am interested in herbal plants and television show could become central information on health, especially on herbal plants.<br>• It is good, as they show testimonial from patient using herbal plants. The show also exhibits the way of creating the herbal potion by a convincing source.<br>• In my opinion, the source of information is quite good and detailed, fulfilling the curiosity on the usefulness of herbal plants. The speakers communicatively explain it very clearly and in detail.<br>• It is good enough, even though the explanation sometimes not detailed enough, |
| 2. | Level of Audiences' fulfilment on the information in the talk-show program. | • It is quite good material and it is also interesting, as myself is excited in finding the information on herbal plants. Too little time, which in turn many detailed information cannot be delivered.<br>• Sometimes it is still lacking, as they rely on the program duration, which is unpredictable and the topic was not discussed in more detail.<br>• It has lot varieties as it depends on focus of illness discussion. So, it is not merely one but other herbal plants as well, such as the cure for gastro using one herbal plants while curing the cancer using other herbal plants. Yeah it is varied.<br>• A correct information delivered<br>• Varieties<br>• Not quite suffice, as the explanation in television program is really just general ideas with limited duration<br>• Until now the language used can be comprehend and understood; but sometimes some foreign and health terms. |
| 3. | Audiences expectation on intensity, message content, and media relation | • The program should go straight to the point on discussion and material with only the needed additional introduction and closure or some greetings. But for the material it is not really a pedantic.<br>• In my opinion, the television program on herbal plants is really interesting and useful as well. Everybody must be needing this information too. If I may suggest the program must not be eliminated and if needed with prolonged duration and explaining material in de- |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | tails and with some variation.<br>• Must be precise in presenting the step by step process as the information is seen by many people.<br>• Simple not complicated, because if the discussion moving further, it cannot be understood. The teleconference from the patient for medication, usually answered straight to the point, example: which herbal plants should be used. It is a rumbling one whenever the speaker told the audience calling through the phone that there are varieties of medicine in the form of pill, powder, that's it.<br>• The broadcast is still lacking, it is actually interesting, really satisfied with the content but the lack of time… such as there is this caller through the phone who wants to ask question but the time is up. While the question is probably can represent the question for the wider public.<br>• Yes, if it is possible combine information together between television and other media.<br>• The duration of the program should be more often, not once a week. The presentation should have more varieties. Once in a while invite celebrities to be a speaker and share their experiences with the audiences to make the program more interesting.<br>• In my opinion, there are still things need to be improved, as the herbal plants information program is a once a week program, which is not actually represents many things need to know or deliver because of the limited duration.<br>• More detailed in explaining and informing the benefits of herbal plants to make people more interested in using herbal plants in maintaining their health and curing the diseases or any other benefit. |

## 5. Conclusion

It can be concluded based on the research that:

1. Public perception on talk-show program is positive, as people need information regarding herbal plants, which makes the program has a high value.
2. Level of audiences' fulfilment on the needs for herbal plants information is on the medium level as many of the public stated the information delivered lack details because of the program short duration and frequency. Conversely, in general, the information delivered in interesting manner with enough variation.
3. The expectation of audiences on intensity, message content, and media related, is focusing on the duration of the program, which needs to be added, and more variation in content by inviting celebrities.

It is suggested that this talk-show program on herbal plants should be maintained with more herbal experts with credibility. The talk-show program should be added in term of duration, which enabled the information to be delivered in more detail.

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