

Developing a Cross-Media Communication Framework for Television Broadcasting in the Hybrid Media Era

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Abstract

The rapid transformation of the media landscape from traditional broadcasting to hybrid media ecosystems has compelled television stations in Thailand to strategically adapt their communication approaches to sustain audience engagement. This study aims to develop a Cross-Media Communication Framework that enhances the effectiveness of television broadcasting in the hybrid media era. A mixed-methods design was employed, comprising in-depth interviews with 20 media executives and content experts, followed by a quantitative survey of Thai television viewers of 400 samples. Qualitative thematic analysis revealed four key dimensions contributing to cross-media success: content integration, platform synergy, audience engagement, and organizational transformation. The proposed model was then validated using Structural Equation Modeling, demonstrating strong model fit and significant causal relationships among the framework's components (CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.052, $p < 0.001$). Results indicate that platform integration and participatory audience communication are critical drivers influencing communication effectiveness. The findings contribute to media convergence and hybrid media theory while offering a strategic operational guide for Thai broadcasters seeking to increase competitiveness and public value in a multi-platform environment. This framework supports television stations in designing data-driven, interactive, and coherent content pathways that strengthen viewer loyalty and media sustainability in Thailand's evolving media ecosystem.

Keywords: Audience engagement, Cross-media communication, Hybrid media, Television broadcasting

1. Introduction

1.1 Principles and Rationale

The transformation of the global media ecosystem has profoundly altered how information is produced, distributed, and consumed. With the rise of digital technologies and interactive communication platforms, the boundaries between traditional and new media have increasingly blurred, creating what is now termed the Hybrid Media Era (Chadwick, 2017). This era is characterized by the convergence of legacy media such as television and radio with digital and

social media platforms that enable two-way communication, user participation, and real-time content exchange (Jenkins et al., 2013). Consequently, traditional broadcasters have been compelled to evolve from being single-platform content providers to multi-platform communication entities.

Television broadcasting, once the dominant form of mass communication, has been particularly affected by this convergence. The emergence of online streaming services, video-on-demand platforms, and social media channels has reshaped audience behavior, encouraging personalized, on-demand, and interactive media consumption (Napoli, 2019). Viewers no longer rely solely on scheduled television programs; instead, they access content anytime, anywhere, and on multiple devices. This shift has created intense competition for traditional television stations, which must now integrate digital tools and cross-platform strategies to sustain viewership and brand engagement (García-Avilés, 2020).

In Thailand, the broadcasting industry has undergone substantial structural and technological transformation following the government's policy to transition from analog to digital television in 2014 (National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC, 2020). While this shift initially expanded the number of available channels, it also fragmented the audience base and intensified competition among broadcasters. Simultaneously, the rise of social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok has significantly changed how Thai audiences engage with video content. Research by the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA, 2023) shows that over 90% of Thai internet users consume video content through online platforms daily, underscoring the decline of linear television viewing. This audience migration has forced Thai television stations to adopt hybrid communication strategies that merge on-air and online engagement.

Amid these shifts, cross-media communication has emerged as a critical approach for integrating multiple platforms into a cohesive communication system. Cross-media strategies emphasize narrative consistency, audience participation, and brand coherence across various channels in television, social media, mobile apps, and websites (Bunlue, 2025; Bolter & Grusin, 2000). Such integration allows broadcasters to extend their storytelling, enhance audience engagement, and create new advertising and revenue models. However, in Thailand, most broadcasters have applied cross-media approaches in an ad-hoc manner, lacking a formalized framework that connects strategic objectives, audience analytics, and technological infrastructure (Sotanasathien, 2021).

Moreover, studies on Thai broadcasting reveal that while media organizations increasingly embrace digital convergence, many still operate within traditional paradigms of one-way communication (Pattanasirichot, 2022). The absence of a clear cross-media framework limits their ability to fully leverage digital interactivity and data-driven communication. Developing such a framework would therefore provide both theoretical value and practical utility helping television broadcasters navigate the complexities of hybrid media, strengthen audience relationships, and enhance organizational sustainability in a competitive communication environment.

1.2 Research Objective

The following specific objectives will guide the research:

1. To identify key components and influencing factors that contribute to effective cross-media communication in television broadcasting.
2. To design and develop a conceptual framework that integrates traditional broadcasting strategies with digital and social media communication models.
3. To validate the proposed cross-media communication framework through expert evaluation and stakeholder feedback from Thailand's broadcasting industry.

2. Literature Review

By synthesizing theoretical insights and practical evidence, the knowledge gained from this review provides the academic foundation for designing, developing, and validating the proposed framework in subsequent chapters.

2.1 Theoretical foundations: Hybrid media, convergence, and remediation

The Hybrid Media System conceptualizes contemporary media environments as systems in which older and newer media logics interact, compete, and mutually shape political and cultural processes; actors who can navigate and blend these logics exercise new forms of influence. This theory foregrounds how legacy outlets (like television) must engage with networked and social media to remain relevant.

Media convergence scholarship complements this view by describing technological, economic, and cultural processes that collapse once-separate media forms into integrated practices and platforms (e.g., platformed streaming, social sharing, and user-generated content). Jenkins's notion of spreadable media and Bolter & Grusin's remediation emphasize how content migrates across media and is reshaped by each platform's affordances, leading broadcasters to rethink narrative forms and distribution strategies in multi-platform settings.

2.2 Cross-media communication: Definitions, components, and frameworks

Cross-media communication refers to the strategic integration of messages and storytelling across multiple media channels to produce consistent, complementary experiences for audiences. It differs from mere multi-platform posting by emphasizing narrative coherence, audience pathways (how users move between platforms), and coordinated production/measurement systems. Recent applied work on cross-media management highlights modules such as content adaptation, platform programming, audience analytics, and economic models for revenue across channels. However, many studies treat cross-media practices descriptively rather than offering prescriptive frameworks tailored to specific industry contexts.

Empirical and practice-oriented research indicates common framework elements: (1) strategic objectives and brand architecture, (2) content design and repurposing rules, (3) platform affordance mapping (what each channel enables), (4) audience journey and engagement tactics,

and (5) measurement & feedback loops linking analytics to editorial decisions. These components provide a scaffold for developing an industry-specific cross-media framework for television broadcasters.

2.3 Technological, regulatory, and audience context in Thailand

Thailand's broadcasting sector has experienced major structural change since the government-led transition to digital terrestrial television (DTT) in the mid-2010s. The NBTC's roadmap and technical guidelines for DTT expanded channel capacity but also led to audience fragmentation and intensified competition, prompting broadcasters to seek digital and cross-platform strategies. Digital market reports and national studies show high levels of daily online video consumption and growing preference for on-demand and mobile viewing, particularly among younger cohorts—trends that challenge linear scheduling and advertising models of traditional TV. These shifts are documented in country digital reports and academic theses studying Thai viewer behavior on streaming platforms. Applied Thai research on television content (e.g., drama and live event coverage) demonstrates active use of social media to amplify reach and engage diasporic or younger audiences, but also reveals uneven adoption and limited strategic coherence across many broadcasters.

2.4 Gaps in the literature and justification for this study

Although theoretical work on hybrid media and convergent practices is well established, and applied studies document evolving cross-platform tactics, two important gaps remain for the Thai television context. First, there is a scarcity of systematic, context-sensitive frameworks that translate hybrid media theory into operational guidance for Thai broadcasters covering content design, platform mapping, workflow integration, and metrics tied to business and public service goals. Second, empirical validation of proposed frameworks via stakeholder input (producers, digital managers, regulators, and audiences) is limited in the Thai literature, reducing practical uptake. It would operationalize hybrid media concepts for broadcast management, and offer concrete guidance for integrating editorial strategy, platform affordances, audience engagement, and performance measurement within Thai television organizations. This study therefore aims to fill these gaps by synthesizing theoretical constructs with industry realities and validating the framework with local stakeholders.

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research design integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure a comprehensive understanding of cross-media communication dynamics within Thailand's television broadcasting industry. The mixed-methods strategy allowed for triangulation of data sources, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of findings. The research process was divided into three phases: (1) situational analysis, (2) in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, and (3) framework validation through expert evaluation.

3.1 Population and Sample

The study population consisted of professionals from television broadcasting organizations, digital media platforms, and communication specialists in Thailand. A purposive sampling approach was employed to select key informants with substantial experience in media management, content production, and digital communication.

In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15–20 participants, including producers, media strategists, and academic experts, to obtain in-depth insights into cross-media communication practices. In the quantitative phase, data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 400 audience members in Bangkok and selected regional cities, aiming to examine audience perceptions of cross-media communication effectiveness.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to obtain deep insights into current practices and strategic adaptations among Thai television broadcasters. The interview questions focused on media convergence, platform collaboration, and the integration of digital content with traditional television formats (Jenkins et al., 2013; Doyle, 2016). All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed thematically.

A survey questionnaire was designed based on themes emerging from the qualitative phase. The questionnaire included items measuring audience engagement, content satisfaction, and perceived cross-platform consistency. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test relationships between communication strategies and audience responses (Hair et al., 2021).

3.3 Data Analysis

Interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, meanings, and relationships across participant responses. Coding was conducted systematically using qualitative data analysis software to enhance analytical rigor, consistency, and credibility.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS. Descriptive statistics were first employed to summarize respondent characteristics. Measurement reliability and validity were assessed using Cronbach's alpha, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Finally, structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted to test the proposed cross-media communication framework and examine hypothesized relationships among latent constructs.

4. Results

The analysis of this study was conducted in two major phases – qualitative exploration and quantitative validation to develop and test a comprehensive framework for cross-media communication in Thailand's television broadcasting industry. The integration of results provided empirical evidence of how television broadcasters strategically adapt to the hybrid media landscape and engage audiences across platforms.

4.1 Qualitative Analysis Results

Through thematic analysis of interviews with 20 key informants comprising producers, media strategists, and digital content managers five dominant themes emerged as essential factors influencing cross-media communication effectiveness:

Content Convergence and Adaptability: Participants emphasized that content repurposing across platforms is central to hybrid media success. Television programs must be restructured to fit different formats short clips for TikTok, live discussions for Facebook, and interactive features on YouTube. This aligns with Jenkins' (2013) concept of convergence culture, where storytelling extends beyond a single medium to engage users in multiple environments.

Platform Synergy and Integration: Media professionals highlighted the need for harmonized scheduling and cross-promotion between traditional television and digital platforms. Successful broadcasters, such as Thai PBS and Workpoint TV, coordinate content releases across channels to create continuous audience touchpoints.

Audience Participation and Engagement: The role of audiences shifted from passive viewers to active participants. Social media engagement, such as commenting and co-creating content, drives the perception of inclusivity and immediacy.

Data-Driven Decision Making: Data analytics was identified as a strategic tool for optimizing cross-platform communication. Audience metrics from digital platforms provide feedback for adjusting television content.

Organizational Transformation: Broadcasters must transform their internal culture toward digital-first mindsets and flexible team structures. Multi-skilled staff capable of operating across production, social media, and analytics are now essential.

4.2 Quantitative Analysis Results

A total of 400 survey responses were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all constructs exceeded 0.80, indicating high internal consistency (Hair et al., 2021). The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) confirmed acceptable model fit with $\chi^2/df = 2.11$, CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.052, that meet the recommended thresholds.

The proposed model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine causal relationships among constructs: content strategy, platform integration, audience

engagement, and communication effectiveness. The results revealed significant positive relationships:

Table 1 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Results

Path Relationship	Standardized Coefficient (β)	p-value	Interpretation
Content Strategy → Platform Integration	0.67	< 0.001	Strong, significant positive effect
Platform Integration → Audience Engagement	0.53	< 0.001	Moderate to strong positive effect
Audience Engagement → Communication Effectiveness	0.71	< 0.001	Strongest effect on outcomes

Overall, the results indicate that an integrated cross-media strategy enhances audience engagement, which in turn significantly improves communication effectiveness across television and digital platforms.

4.3 Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Findings

The integrated findings indicate that effective cross-media communication in Thai television broadcasting relies on the coordinated interaction of three core components. Strategic content adaptation involves tailoring and reformatting content across traditional and digital platforms to maintain message consistency and audience relevance. Interactive audience engagement emphasizes active viewer participation through social media and online channels, facilitating two-way communication and community formation. Organizational capability reflects broadcasters' capacity to integrate technology, data analytics, and creative processes to support innovation and operational efficiency.

4.4 Proposed Cross-Media Communication Framework

The proposed Cross-Media Communication Framework comprises four interrelated dimensions that collectively enhance media effectiveness and audience connectivity.

The Content Integration Dimension emphasizes storytelling continuity and multimedia adaptation, ensuring that messages remain consistent across platforms.

The Platform Synergy Dimension focuses on aligning scheduling, promotion, and distribution strategies to create cohesive audience experiences across traditional television and digital channels.

The Audience Interaction Dimension underscores the importance of participation, feedback, and co-creation, fostering deeper engagement and loyalty.

Organizational Transformation Dimension addresses the need for adaptability, staff training, and innovation to support long-term digital evolution.

Altogether, this framework provides a comprehensive strategic model that guides television broadcasters in transitioning toward a multi-platform ecosystem while maintaining brand consistency, operational coherence, and audience trust in the hybrid media environment.

5. Conclusion

The results confirm that media convergence is no longer optional but essential for television broadcasters in Thailand. Consistent with Jenkins' (2013) theory of convergence culture, the research demonstrates that Thai television networks must integrate storytelling across multiple platforms to sustain audience attention. For instance, television programs now extend to digital spaces through short-form content, behind-the-scenes clips, and real-time interactions reflecting a shift from one-way broadcasting to multi-directional communication (Doyle, 2016). This convergence has transformed audiences into prosumers who actively participate in shaping media narratives, with broadcasters that effectively combine traditional programming and social media interactivity achieving higher engagement and loyalty (Sotanasathien, 2021).

The study highlights the centrality of audience engagement as a driver of communication effectiveness. Active audience participation through comments, polls, and user-generated content has reshaped the relationship between broadcasters and viewers (Livingstone, 2019). The empirical evidence from this research supports the idea that audience interaction significantly predicts overall communication outcomes. These findings echo prior research indicating that participatory culture not only enhances viewer satisfaction but also contributes to brand trust and long-term audience loyalty (Fuchs, 2017). Therefore, Thai broadcasters should prioritize mechanisms that empower audience voices and integrate feedback into content development.

Another critical insight from this study concerns organizational readiness. Effective cross-media communication requires restructuring internal workflows and building multi-skilled teams capable of managing digital, social, and broadcast content simultaneously. This finding is consistent with Küng's (2017) framework on strategic media management, which emphasizes innovation, collaboration, and leadership as drivers of transformation. For Thai broadcasters, developing digital literacy, data analytics capabilities, and creative agility is crucial to sustaining hybrid media operations. Public and private broadcasting organizations alike must invest in continuous training, cross-departmental collaboration, and adaptive management systems (Bunlue, 2025).

From a theoretical perspective, this study advances media and communication research by integrating cross-media communication, hybrid media theory, and organizational transformation into a unified framework, extending the work of Jenkins (2013) and Chadwick (2017) within the Thai media context. Practically, the proposed framework offers a strategic tool for television broadcasters, media managers, and policymakers to plan, manage, and evaluate cross-platform communication, enhance audience engagement, and optimize media resources in a convergent media environment.

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