

The (Re)constructing Radio Broadcaster's Professional Competence in Indonesia's Media Convergence Era

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Abstract

Purpose: The phenomenon of media convergence has reshaped the role of radio broadcasters. This study focuses on Suara Surabaya FM and Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) in Surabaya, examining how both commercial and public broadcasting institutions are adapting to digital transformation. Radio broadcasters were chosen as research subjects because they serve as frontline communicators, representing human adaptation in sustaining broadcasting relevance within a convergent media environment. The aim is to build a theoretical framework for understanding how professional competence evolves through adaptation, multitasking, and digital integration in convergent media practice.

Methods: This study used a qualitative grounded theory approach and involving 19 purposively selected informants. These comprised 13 experienced broadcasters (at least 10 years) directly adapting to media convergence, and 6 validation informants for data triangulation: a new media manager, a human resources manager, and a CEO. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and field observations and analyzed using open, axial, and selective coding.

Findings: The study reveals that broadcasters must reconstruct their competencies by mastering digital skills, fostering creativity and innovation, and maintaining professionalism. These skills are driven not solely by individual agency but shaped through interactions between personal capacity and organizational structures, ensuring radio's relevance amid technological shifts.

Originality: The originality of this study lies in its attempt to link media convergence with the reconstruction of professional competence through the concept of boundary negotiation, thereby providing a theoretical explanation of how technological and organizational changes transform the nature of broadcaster professionalism.

Keywords: Professional Competence Reconstruction, Radio Broadcasters, Media Convergence, Grounded Theory.

Introduction

Media convergence has significantly transformed the broadcasting landscape (Parkatti et al., 2022; Y. Zhang et al., 2025), reshaping work practices and business models as part of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Parkatti et al., 2022). To stay relevant, many broadcasting organizations have restructured, reallocated resources, and hired employees with expertise in digital technologies and multiplatform environments (Indrati et al., 2021; Lee & Meng, 2021). Convergence in this study is understood as the integration of communication technologies, media platforms, and content production processes that blur the boundaries between traditional and digital media, thereby creating new models of media (Lee & Meng, 2021; Rini Octavia, 2018; Widjanark & Hariyani, 2022; Y. Zhang et al., 2025). It is regarded as a symbol of technological advancement (Widjanark & Hariyani, 2022). As Tapsell notes, (as cited in Setiadarma & Rizkiansyah, 2021), digital technology in the media industry has entered a new phase characterized by

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integration, synchronization, and conglomeration. In Indonesia radio has become a neglected medium. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (*Badan Pusat Statistik*) in the Socio-Economic Survey, only about 8.6% of the population listens to the radio ([Pusparisa, 2025](#)). While radio was once a primary source of information and entertainment ([RG, 2025](#)), valued for its ability to engage listeners' imagination ([Basith et al., 2025](#)), its relevance has diminished ([RG, 2025](#)). However, radio can survive by adapting to new technologies, especially social media, which enable a broader and more interactive communication space. This perspective aligns with Robin's view that all media formats, including radio, are currently confronting the challenges of convergence ([F. Magnaye & E. Tarusan, 2023](#)).

This shift should not be seen solely as a threat to the radio industry but as an opportunity to enhance interactivity and diversity platforms. Radio has undergone hybridization through websites, social media interactions, and visual radio streams, moving far beyond its traditional audio-only orientation ([F. Magnaye & E. Tarusan, 2023](#)). For instance, data from ([PRSSNI, 2020](#)), shows a significant increase in radio listenership during the COVID-19 work-from-home period, particularly via streaming platforms in Jakarta. During social restrictions, radio re-emerged as a convenient and accessible medium for information and entertainment ([Lubis, 2024](#)). This trend reflects a broader shift from analog to digital consumption ([Parkatti et al., 2022](#)), transitioning from audio-only to audiovisual and online formats. Audience engagement patterns have similarly shifted. Media Convergence allows radio communication to move beyond its traditional one-way transmission model. Through digital technologies, listeners can now respond instantly, share ideas, or even repost news as "citizen journalism". Social media also fosters peer-to-peer interaction, strengthening radio-based communities, thus expanding radio's reach and reshaping interaction patterns ([F. Magnaye & E. Tarusan, 2023](#); [Widodo et al., 2024](#)).

In this study, two radio institutions were selected as research cases: Suara Surabaya FM and Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) in Surabaya. These organizations represent distinct institutional models as commercial and public service radio stations. Both have implemented media convergence strategies, integrating traditional radio production with digital and social media platforms. Surabaya was chosen as the research location because, according to [PRSSNI, \(2023\)](#) report, it ranks among the four cities in Indonesia with the highest number of radio listeners. Their selection provides a comparative understanding of how different institutional logics shape the reconstruction of professional competence among radio broadcasters.

At the center of these transformations is the radio broadcaster ([F. Magnaye & E. Tarusan, 2023](#)). The role of radio presenters has changed profoundly in terms of communication channels, methods, and effects, thereby raising the required standards of professionalism, because broadcasters remain the focal point of radio, bridging on-air presentation with behind-the-scenes production ([Hallett, 2021](#); [Y. Zhang et al., 2025](#)). They were chosen as the main research subject because they act as frontline communicators who embody professional competence in the converged media environment. Unlike other roles in broadcasting organizations, broadcasters are required to integrate technical, communicative, and digital skills while maintaining real-time engagement with audiences. They represent the human interface between technological

change and institutional transformation, making them ideal for exploring how professional competence is reconstructed in the context of media convergence.

In the past, possessing a pleasant voice and the ability to deliver one-way information were sufficient for on-air broadcasting. Today, however, broadcasters must master multiple skills (F. Magnaye & E. Tarusan, 2023). Beyond their traditional duties of hosting programs, managing talk shows, and preparing discussion topics, they are now expected to execute live streaming, record videos and podcasts, produce social media content, and perform as public figures within digital environment (F. Magnaye & E. Tarusan, 2023; Y. Zhang et al., 2025). Technology has shifted broadcasters' mindsets. Unlike in the analog era, when radio operated without cameras, presenters today can easily record high-quality video without specialized technical assistance (Indrati et al., 2021). Many broadcasters now use new media not only to interact with audiences but also to construct professional identity and promote their programs (Y. Zhang et al., 2025). As a result, they are compelled to continuously enhance personal competence, refresh their knowledge structures, and maintain a professional image (Reyes-de-Cózar et al., 2022). Broadcasters must also operate in multiplatform and multimedia environments while mastering digital technologies for cross-media communication (Y. Zhang et al., 2025). Given these expanding responsibilities, many broadcasters now self-identify as 'influencers,' as their roles extend beyond news delivery to shaping audience behavior and building relational intimacy (F. Magnaye & E. Tarusan, 2023). Consequently, updated competencies are required to meet the demands of the digital era (Reyes-de-Cózar et al., 2022).

In Indonesia, several studies have examined media convergence (Indrati et al., 2021; Reyes-de-Cózar et al., 2022; Setiadarma & Rizkiansyah, 2021; Widjanark & Hariyani, 2022; Widodo et al., 2024; Yoedjadi et al., 2021). The decline in television audiences, for example, has disrupted media business models. While the Broadcasting Act No. 32 of 2002 facilitated the growth of local media, many outlets lack the financial capacity, infrastructure, or human resources to adapt effectively (Rini Octavia, 2018). Notable exceptions include Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) and Suara Surabaya, both of which have navigated media convergence by expanding into digital platforms (F. Magnaye & E. Tarusan, 2023). However, convergence management differs between public and private institutions, given that state-owned broadcasters are not commercially driven (Setiadarma & Rizkiansyah, 2021).

The continuous and rapidly evolution of technological change has rendered the boundaries between technology and occupational competence increasingly fluid. As these boundaries shift, the meaning of professionalism itself becomes subject to continuous negotiation (Liu & Zhao, 2024; Peiró & Martínez-Tur, 2022; Sarwar et al., 2026). In the context of media convergence, broadcasters do not simply adapt by acquiring new technological skills; they continuously negotiate and reconstruct what it means to be competent and professional. Therefore, Cheney and Ashcraft in (Vobič, 2026; Weder et al., 2023), emphasize that the terms professionalization and professionalism remain ambiguous and multidimensional.

The phenomenon in Indonesia is reflected in the practices of RRI and Suara Surabaya, illustrating how broadcasters adjust to evolving audiences consumption behaviors. Against this backdrop, this study adopts a grounded theory approach to explore and conceptualize the evolution of professional competence amid media convergence. Through open, axial, and selective coding, the research identifies emerging patterns, classifies key themes, and develops a theoretical model of competence reconstruction.

This approach provides an inductive understanding of how broadcaster roles and competencies are reconfigured in digital contexts. Specifically, the study distinguishes between pre-convergence and post-convergence competencies, demonstrating that broadcasters must now embrace multiskilling hosting programs while simultaneously producing digital content to sustain radio's relevance in contemporary media environment (F. Magnaye & E. Tarusan, 2023; Y. Zhang et al., 2025). This study contributes to the literature in three key ways: (1) offering an empirical model of adaptive professional competence tailored to the radio industry; (2) providing insights into how traditional skills are not replaced but reconfigured within convergence practices; and (3) generating practical implications for training curricula, organizational strategies, and national certification policies to strengthen broadcasters' readiness for ongoing media transformation.

A theoretical model of professional competence reconstruction is developed in this study, positioning competence as a dynamic, institutionally embedded process shaped by technological adaptation, organizational structure, and the individual agency. The resulting framework shows how radio broadcasters reconstruct their professional competence through adaptation, multitasking, and digital integration. This study advances theoretical understanding of professional competence by extending the concept into digital broadcasting and media convergence. Practically, it yields actionable insights for developing training curricula, institutional policies, and professional certification frameworks to strengthen broadcasters' adaptability. Accordingly, Then, the central research question guiding this study is: *'How do radio broadcasters develop professional competence in the face of media convergence?'*

Methods

This research used a qualitative research design with a grounded theory approach to examine how professional competence among radio broadcasters is reconstructed amid media convergence (Busetto et al., 2020; Turner & Astin, 2021; Zahle, 2023). GT focuses on building theory from empirical data, emphasizing participants perspective rather than pre-imposing a concept a priori (Connor et al., 2024; Holt et al., 2022). Data was gathered through in-depth interviews and observations (Cypress, 2018; Zahle, 2023) at Suara Surabaya FM and Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) in Surabaya, representing a commercial and public service radio. Surabaya was chosen because the PRSSNI, (2023) report identifies it as one of the is among four cities in Indonesia that have the highest number of radio listeners, making it a strategic site to study convergence adaptation. Radio broadcasters were chosen as research subjects because they serve as frontline communicators, integrating communicative, technical, and digital skills in a convergent media environment. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted from April to August 2025, lasting 60 and 180 minutes, exploring themes of digital innovation, professional adaptation, and institutional transformation (Zahle, 2023). Data collection and analysis coincided to avoid superficial findings (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021). Open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Memo writing was used throughout the process to document reflection and theoretical insight (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021; Turner & Astin, 2021). Through this iterative process, ensuring that the resulting theory of professional competence among broadcasters remains both relevant and contemporary (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021; Makri & Neely, 2021). Confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms, and triangulation was achieved via validation interviews to ensure credibility and consistency.

Table 1. The Informants

No.	Informant	Institution	Gender	Years of Service
1.	WQ	Suara Surabaya FM	Female	10 Years
2.	RJ	Suara Surabaya FM	Male	15 Years
3.	BR	Suara Surabaya FM	Male	24 Years
4.	SW	Suara Surabaya FM	Female	24,5 Years
5.	ER	Suara Surabaya FM	Female	25 Years
6.	NA	Suara Surabaya FM	Female	25 Years
7.	HL	Suara Surabaya FM	Male	25 Years
8.	RI	Suara Surabaya FM	Female	20 Years
9.	AP	RRI	Male	13 Years
10.	DP	RRI	Female	15 Years
11.	DN	RRI	Female	15 Years
12.	YI	RRI	Female	16 Years
13.	YP	RRI	Male	22 Years

Note: This table presents the demographic and professional characteristic of the 13 informants from Suara Surabaya and RRI, including gender and years of service.

As shown in Table 1, four of seven informants were female, and three were male broadcasters from Suara Surabaya, while four of the six informants from RRI were female and two males. Although gender was not treated as a primary analytical category, both provided a broader range of professional perspectives. The informants also had between 10 and 25 years of professional experience, indicating that the participants possessed substantial practical experience broadcasting. This range of professional tenure enabled the study to capture perspectives from broadcasters who have experienced the transition from predominantly conventional radio practice toward increasingly digital and multi-platform broadcasting environments.

Results

The results of this study are based on data obtained from two radio institutions in Surabaya: Suara Surabaya (SS) and Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) in Surabaya, which were chosen because both represent distinct broadcasting models (Commercial and public) and have actively implemented media convergence practices. Their adaptations illustrate how radio broadcasting in Indonesia has evolved through digital integration, redefining the competencies required of broadcasters. At RRI Surabaya, media convergence was marked by the launch of RRI Digital in 2013 as a response to the shifting preferences of radio audiences, marking an effort to align with the digital era. Before this initiative, RRI had already pioneered visual radio in Indonesia through Radio Picture, which positioned itself as an early innovator in audio visual broadcasting. As one informant explained, *'The RRI also has what we call the RRI Digital application. In this RRI Digital app, we also do live streaming'* (Interview with Informant DN, July 29, 2025). This reflects RRI's commitment to integrating live video, audio, and online interactivity within its public service framework.

Meanwhile, Suara Surabaya FM pursued digital transformation by developing the mobile application 'Suara Surabaya Mobile'. This application was designed not only as an additional channel for radio streaming but also as an interactive space for real-time civic participation. Features such as citizen reports, live comments, and social media integration transformed passive listeners into active contributors, embodying the role of citizen journalism. Consequently, that station's reach extends to national and even global

audiences. However, this transformation also introduced challenges. Several informants noted that while visual radio brings radio closer to television, it risks diminishing radio's unique power to stimulate imagination, the so-called "Theater of the Mind. One broadcaster stated that *"There's what we call the theater of mind, which allows us to deliver information while inviting listeners to imagine. This is different from when they read information on the internet or social media, because the true strength of radio lies in the theater of the mind"* (Interview with Informant BR, July 28, 2025). As a community-based radio station, Suara Surabaya has continued to strengthen its convergence practices by expanding to online news portals, social media platforms, and mobile applications. Broadcasting has evolved into visualized content, delivered through live streaming on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. This transformation requires broadcasters to operate cameras and digital tools simultaneously while maintaining verbal clarity for traditional listeners. As the announcer described, *"We work as single operators, so we're required to be able to control and switch these cameras, this one for WhatsApp, this one for another view, and this one for our main camera. When there's video content that regular radio listeners can't see, our challenge is to describe it clearly"* (Interview with Informant RJ, July 21, 2025). Listener interaction has also intensified through WhatsApp, social media comments, and interactive phone calls, positioning the audience as an integral contribution to on-air production. Moreover, *Suara Surabaya* repackages its broadcast programs into podcast formats to attract younger generations of listeners accustomed to on-demand consumption. Through such transformation, *Suara Surabaya* operates not merely as a radio station but as a multi-platform media entity that balances traditional broadcasting with the digital expectations of an increasingly urban and networked society.

Meanwhile, the official website of Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI), accessible via rri.co.id, often referred to as rri.net, primarily functions as the national broadcaster's news portal and a streaming platform supported by an integrated newsroom. Its content covers national and regional issues and provides access to RRI's Pro 1- Pro 4 channels. RRI also utilizes TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube live streaming to reach younger audiences. However, the central characteristic of this platform is its formal and bureaucratic style, consistent with RRI's identity as a public broadcasting institution operating under state regulations. While rich in information, the website largely functions as a news repository and one-way information source. Audience interactivity remains limited and often lags behind commercial online media.

Moreover, RRI Surabaya appears to be caught in a form of generic convergence, following the trajectory of national digitalization without offering local differentiation. Innovation, therefore, tends to appear more as a formality intended to 'look modern' rather than as a distinctive strategy. As one informant, AP critically observed, *"RRI understands technology, we're not technologically illiterate. However, technology must actually be supported by competent human resources"* (Interview with Informant AP, July 22, 2025). In contrast to RRI, whose website is integrated with all regional units across Indonesia, thereby diminishing local identity. Instead of strengthening its relationship with the Surabaya community, RRI's digital applications homogenize all regional stations into a single generic format. Consequently, media convergence at RRI Surabaya reflects compliance with centralized policies rather than addressing the actual needs of local audiences. These innovations represent merely the adoption of technology rather than the optimization of its functions. Both rri.net and RRI Digital remain generic across all RRI units in Indonesia, which risks weakening the local identity and

community closeness that have historically been the strength of public radio. Rather than cultivating an interactive space rooted in Surabaya's distinct character, RRI's digital platforms continue to appear standardized, potentially eroding their relevance to regional audiences.

Suara Surabaya (SS) has taken a more progressive step by establishing an independent website, suarasurabaya.net. This platform enables SS to exercise greater editorial autonomy, tailor content to its local community, and strengthen its brand identity as a community-driven broadcaster. As one informant, NA explained, *"Eventually, the news portal suarasurabaya.net was established. Around the same time, social media platforms also began to play a big role, with Instagram, then Facebook, which grew rapidly. That's when the opportunity expanded, allowing Suara Surabaya to become more widely recognized"* (Interview with Informant NA, August 14, 2025). The portal integrates radio streaming, on-demand audio, visual radio, and a news platform, forming an independent ecosystem by opening wider spaces for interaction, both through audience comments and social media collaboration. In other words, SS utilizes media convergence to strengthen community engagement and maintain its local identity as a metropolitan community radio.

Therefore, although both Suara Surabaya (SS) and RRI have implemented media convergence within their broadcasting practices, the underlying concepts and executions differ significantly. This divergence is natural, as it reflects variations in institutional structure, governance, target audiences, and organizational culture. SS's convergence strategy is rooted in market responsiveness and community interaction, emphasizing flexibility, innovation, and audience participation as the foundation of its digital transformation. Conversely, RRI's convergence reflects a state-regulated framework focused on standardization, procedural accountability, and the fulfillment of public service mandates. These contrasting orientations demonstrate that the success of media convergence is not determined solely by technological integration but also by how institutions interpret and adapt convergence according to their organizational values and socio-cultural contexts. To provide a contextual understanding of the two research sites, [Table 2](#) compares the characteristics of Suara Surabaya (SS) and Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) across six dimensions: institutional characteristic, digital platforms, audience engagement, content, announcers' role, and strategic adaptation. This comparison is intended to illustrate how differences in organizational structures and approaches to media convergence influence the working environment and competency requirements of radio announcers.

Table 2. The Comparative Characteristic of Suara Surabaya (SS) dan RRI

Aspect	Suara Surabaya (SS)	RRI
Institution Character	Local privet radio station in Surabaya.	National scale public broadcasting institution.
Main Portal	Independent website, active social media, standalone digital app.	Centralized website, more massive social media presence, integrated digital app with headquarters.
Audiens Engagement	Highly interactive audiences.	More passive audience.

Content	Multiformat: breaking news, interactive talk shows, thematic podcast, short infotainment videos, real time traffic updates.	Radio news, educational and cultural talk shows, music programs, starting to develop podcasts and short vidios.
Announcer's Role	Announcer must be multi-skilled: audio, visual, and interaction within the newsroom.	Announcer focus on audio; digital work is supplementary, with many tasks outside the newsroom.
Strategic Adaptation	Quickly responds to trends, integrates social media and real-time news.	Follows trends with delay, limited integration of social media.

Note: This table presents a comparative overview of Suara Surabaya (SS) and Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) across five aspects: institutional character, main portal, audience engagement, content, announcer's role, and strategic adaptation.

Table 2 compares the characteristics of Suara Surabaya (SS) and Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) to illustrate how different institutional models as commercial and public broadcasting, adapt to media convergence. The comparison highlights distinctions in institutional character, audience engagement, content strategy, announcers' roles, and adaptive speed. Suara Surabaya demonstrates a more dynamic and participatory convergence model by integrating digital platforms and fostering active listener interaction, while RRI reflects a more centralized and formal adaptation aligned with state regulations. This comparison aims to show how institutional context shapes the reconstruction of professional competence among broadcasters, emphasizing that convergence practices are not uniform but are influenced by each institution's goals, management systems, and audience orientation. This observation underscores RRI's main challenge: first, the limited human resources available to effectively manage innovation; and second, the tendency of RRI's digitalization to adopt a uniform model.

From an institutional perspective, Suara Surabaya (SS) and Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) represent two distinct models of broadcasting in Indonesia. SS is a local private station based in Surabaya, operating with a dual orientation toward business and community-based public service. In contrast, RRI is a national public broadcasting institution, regulated by law and mandated to serve the broader Indonesian public. These institutional differences shape the content orientation and communication strategies of each broadcaster. SS operates an independent website (suarasurabaya.net), complemented by active social media channels and a stand-alone digital application. This independence enables SS to curate content specifically for its local audience. Conversely, RRI relies on a centralized website (rri.co.id), where content from regional stations is merged with that of the national headquarters. Audience engagement further highlights these contrasts. SS promotes interactive participation through citizen reports, live chats, and social media integration, positioning the audience as active co-producers and distributors of information. RRI's audience interaction, however, remains relatively passive, as its communication model is still largely top-down. While some forms of citizen participation are present, they are not as intensive or embedded in daily broadcasting practices. Content strategies also diverge significantly. SS delivers varied

and fast-paced programming, ranging from short news updates and interactive talk shows to real-time traffic reports, illustrating its responsiveness to the needs of digital-era audiences. RRI, by contrast, continues to emphasize traditional formats such as news bulletins, educational talk shows, cultural programs, and music broadcasts. The role of broadcasters reflects these differences as well. SS broadcasters are required to be multitaskers, mastering not only audio delivery but also visual presentation, digital interaction, and participation in newsroom activities, particularly in processing and broadcasting citizen reports in real time. In RRI, broadcasters are also expected to perform digital tasks, but these are often framed within the bureaucratic evaluation system, resulting in responsibilities that are more administrative and less directly tied to dynamic newsroom operations. These two examples demonstrate that the implementation of media convergence is not solely about the utilization of technology but also entails the reconstruction of broadcaster competencies. This transformation is supported by both internal and external training initiatives for broadcasters, often in collaboration with universities and professional organizations, aimed at enhancing their digital competencies.

The findings of this study further reveal that before the emergence of media convergence, radio broadcasters' professional competence was grounded primarily in basic communication skills. These traditional competencies, rooted in the era of pure audio broadcasting, centered on the ability to convey messages effectively through vocal expression, clarity, and audience connection. At that stage, the broadcaster's voice served as the sole medium linking information with listeners, and professionalism was measured through tone, articulation, and fluency rather than digital or visual proficiency. The first dimension of these foundational skills involves vocal mastery, such as articulation, intonation, tempo control, and breathing techniques which determine both the clarity and credibility of message delivery. As one informant, *"Intonation and articulation are things we have to maintain ourselves"* (Interview with Informant DP, July 22, 2025). Explained, maintaining consistent intonation and articulation is essential for sustaining the broadcaster's distinct identity on air.

Equally important is public speaking ability further strengthens this competence, encompassing narrative structure, improvisation, and emotional engagement. And informant YP added, *"Public speaking should actually be the top priority. Public speaking is about how we can convey ideas and opinions, not just about being able to talk. Anyone can talk, but if they have no ideas or thoughts in their mind, it will be difficult"* (Interview with Informant YP, July 29, 2025). The next dimension of basic competency encompasses broad knowledge and general awareness, which enables broadcasters to contextualize information, connect diverse issues, and provide audiences with perspectives that go beyond mere script reading. This competence not only enriches the content delivered but also enhances the broadcaster's authority and credibility in the eyes of listeners. In addition, technical and operational proficiency also formed a crucial aspect of traditional competence. Informant BR (July 28, 2025) say, *"Everyone sitting there must be able to master it (the set of monitors and the mixer). That's something taught from the very beginning"* (Interview with Informant BR, July 28, 2025) and SW (July 21, 2025) state, *"Interview techniques, writing techniques, handling phone calls, all of those have their own skills, and they've already been taught"* (Interview with Informant SW, July 21, 2025). Both highlight the importance of mastering control panels, mixers, and interview techniques as a baseline for professional performance, while NA (August 13, 2025) emphasized situational sensitivity, the ability to *"So, our ears can sense whether the person calling is being serious or just joking"* (Interview with

Informant NA, August 14, 2025). These insights demonstrate that professional competence in its early form combined vocal technique, cognitive agility, and emotional intelligence, all of which laid the groundwork for broadcasters.

Several informants emphasized that without this foundation, a broadcaster would not be able to sustain their role, as it is precisely this competence that distinguishes professional broadcasters from a mere ‘text reader’. However, in every practice, the interviews also revealed that such competencies do not stop at the basic level alone. As WQ (July 21, 2025) *“Interviewing and developing topics”* (Interview with Informant WQ, July 21, 2025), and the final is attitude and professionalism have become integral elements of a broadcaster’s credibility. Broadcasters are expected to create atmosphere, narrate information vividly, and stimulate mental visualization solely through voice. This is reflected in careful word choice, respectful demeanor, and the ability to position oneself appropriately within social and cultural contexts. Communication ethics not only reinforce public trust but also serve as a key indicator of a broadcasting institution’s credibility. These findings affirm that traditional competencies are not merely technical but also strategic in sustaining audience loyalty and institutional credibility.

The transformation of these competencies became more pronounced as the media landscape evolved and radio confronted the challenge of digitization, which fundamentally shifted audience consumption patterns from frequency-based listening toward more flexible and interactive, and visual digital platforms. This period marked a turning point broadcasters transitioned from purely audio to audio-visual formats, requiring not only strong vocal skills but also confidence, creativity, and adaptability before the camera. Enabling audiences not only to hear the broadcaster’s voice but also to see expressions, gestures, and the studio atmosphere through live-streaming channels and social media. Thus, the traditional strength of radio as a theater of the mind is retained, but now complemented by visual dimensions that expand the audience experience. Live streaming through social media platforms introduces new visual dynamics that complement radio’s long-standing strength as a theater of the mind. In this way, the auditory imagination of radio was no longer diminished but instead enriched by visual storytelling, expanding the audience experience and redefining the essence of professionalism in modern broadcasting.

As several informants emphasized, despite the integration of visuals into radio, its core identity remains anchored in audio storytelling. One broadcaster explained that *“Radio is still radio. Even when visuals or images appear, the essence of radio must remain preserved”* (Interview with Informant YP, July 29, 2025). Another added, *“When an audience starts seeing the visualization of the broadcaster, does that change anything? Not really”* (Interview with Informant BR, July 28, 2025). Yet others acknowledged that convergence inevitably influences practice, as *“Because visuals greatly affect the broadcaster’s performance, that’s one of the effects of convergence”* (Interview with Informant DN, July 29, 2025).

The phenomenon of media convergence places radio broadcasters in what can be described as an adaptation era, where the broadcasters undergo a gradual process of to adjustment to the changing demands of digital communication. At the initial stage, broadcasters modify their communication style to suit digital audiences, who tend to be faster-paced, visually oriented, and interactive. This early adaptation often relies on declarative knowledge following specific instructions or patterns, resulting in performances that may still be slow and cognitively demanding. In this context, vocal competence alone is no longer sufficient. Broadcasters are required to become digital

talents who can integrate audio, visual, and multi-platform interaction skills. This transformation is evident among Suara Surabaya broadcasters, who are now positioned not merely as radio presenters but as digital professionals maintaining visibility across various channels, including radio, news portal, and social media. As one broadcaster explained, they are now treated as ‘Digital Talents’ expecting to sustain an active presence across multiple media platforms (Interview with Informant WQ, July 21, 2025). This shift grants new legitimacy to the profession but simultaneously erodes the boundaries of traditional professionalism. Broadcasters are no longer merely communicators but they also compete with digital content creators in an ecosystem governed by algorithmic visibility, where *“We also become content creators, as well as talents”* (Interview with Informant WQ, July 21, 2025). Consequently, the journalistic standards of radio, rooted in credibility and accuracy risk being undermined by the algorithmic logic of social media, which privileges speed, engagement, and sensationalism.

The adaptation process also extends into the technical realm. Broadcasters are now expected to operate digital broadcasting equipment, conduct live streaming while maintaining vocal quality, and manage real-time audience interactions through comments and instant messages. These adjustments mark a critical shift in the broadcaster’s role from an on-air performer to a multi-skilled operator ensuring seamless cross-platform integration. In RRI Surabaya, digital convergence has been introduced additional workload, such as producing various supplementary materials, including base cuts, public service announcements (ILM), filler content, and news articles. These tasks expand the traditional role of broadcasters, positioning them closer to multi-skilled media workers who balance on-air performance with behind-the-scenes content production. As one RRI broadcaster explained, *“But our main tasks are what I mentioned earlier, ILM fillers, best cuts, and KBRN. We also provide materials for colleagues on field assignments, or sometimes serve as MCs at the institution’s events”* (Interview with Informant YI, July 22, 2025). Such additional responsibilities, as noted by several informants, are directly tied to the Employee Performance Targets assessment system, which measures performance based on continuous content production. One of the informants emphasized that these additional obligations must be aligned with audience preferences. Content must flow continuously without interruption. Theoretically, this condition can be understood through the lens of digital labor, in which broadcasters are required to remain productive beyond their on-air duties without receiving commensurate compensation. As a result, adaptation in this phase creates a paradox: broadcasters are given creative space, yet in practice they become trapped in an exhausting cycle of content production. This not only risks undermining the quality of the material they produce but also erodes the distinctiveness of professional broadcasting by subordinating journalistic standards to the imperatives of constant output and digital engagement.

At Suara Surabaya, convergence also creates a dual role for broadcasters who now function as intermediaries between audiences and public institutions. As one broadcaster explained, *“Here, we act as a bridge between the listeners, the government, and various institutions”* (Interview with Informant NA, August 14, 2025). This responsibility includes channeling community reports such as traffic incidents, emergencies, or policy-related issues to relevant authorities. Such functions reinforce Suara Surabaya’s identity as a community-based radio station, expanding the professional boundaries of broadcasters to include negotiation, coordination, and credibility management negotiation, coordination, and credibility management when dealing with both audiences and institutional stakeholders. Therefore, media convergence has also redefined the social

role of broadcasters by assigning them a dual function that reinforces radio's social legitimacy while expanding their responsibilities beyond traditional boundaries. In this sense, the broadcasters are no longer mere spokespersons for the media; they become social mediation agents, accountable for managing public expectations directly and in real time.

Furthermore, media convergence has accelerated the visualization of radio, refining the aesthetic and performative dimensions of the profession. Broadcasters have begun to acknowledge that physical appearance, body language, and on-camera presentation have become integral elements of professional identity. As some informants observed, an attractive appearance and neat presentation are now perceived as part of a new standard of professionalism, with one broadcaster noting that *"So we have to deliver it neatly and properly"* (Interview with Informant DP, July 22, 2025). This growing visual logic opens opportunities to expand audience reach through live streaming and multi-platform visibility, yet it also signifies a cultural shift within the industry. The two of Suara Surabaya informants also considered the use of makeup as part of a new standard of professionalism. The traditional strength of radio as the theatre of the mind, where imagination is driven by voice, is increasingly complemented, and sometimes overshadowed, by the commodification of the body, as broadcasters' physical presence becomes a form of symbolic capital for institutional branding and audience engagement. Consequently, broadcasters are no longer valued solely for their vocal performance and communicative competence, but also for their visual appeal within a competitive digital ecosystem.

Amidst these dynamics, professional ambiguity surrounding certification has emerged as a recurring issue. Some informants argue that practical experience and skill mastery hold greater significance than formal certificates, emphasizing that *"In the professional world, certification isn't really important. What truly matters is skill"* (Interview with Informant BR, July 28, 2025). Others acknowledged that certification serves as a necessary legal formality, with one stating that *"Yeah, you need to gain the knowledge, the certificate is just a form of legality"* (Interview with Informant RJ, July 21, 2025). Informant BR argued that practical skills are more important than formal certificates, whereas RJ viewed certification primarily as a matter of legal compliance. These perspectives highlight the tension between formal competence and practical competence. On one hand, certification is expected to uphold professional standards; on the other, field practice demonstrates that adaptive skills are more decisive in determining a broadcaster's success in the era of media convergence.

Thus, the adaptation era demonstrates that media convergence is not merely a technological transformation, but also an arena for negotiating professional identity. Broadcasters are caught in a tension between journalistic professionalism and the logic of the digital market, between content quality and production quantity, between the intimacy of voice and visual attractiveness, as well as between professional protection and digital labor exploitation. Consequently, broadcasters' communication competence is no longer static; it is fluid, adaptive, and inherently risky. This situation demands a paradigm shift, from the broadcaster as a mere 'radio voice' to a multi-role professional: communicator, performer, content creator, and interaction mediator. Adaptive competence thus becomes a decisive factor in whether broadcasters can survive and thrive in a constantly evolving media ecosystem. Radio transformation, therefore, is not only a technical change in broadcast distribution, but also a reconstruction of competence at the individual level. Broadcasters' adaptive practices demonstrate the medium's effort to maintain relevance in the convergence era while emphasizing the importance of integrating traditional skills with new digital competencies.

Building upon this transformation, the evolution of broadcasting practices in the convergence era has generated new demands that extend far beyond the scope of traditional

skills. Whereas broadcasters once relied primarily on vocal mastery, oral communication, and the ability to interpret scripts effectively, they are now required to cultivate layered, multidimensional, and digitally oriented competencies. Among these, digital competence has become particularly essential. As noted by YP, July 29, 2025, *"Upgrading skills, not only our broadcasting abilities but also the skills needed for social media"* (Interview with Informant YP, July 29, 2025). This integration demands proficiency in creating, managing, and distributing content across multiple channels, as well as understanding platform-specific dynamics to engage audiences effectively.

One of the most salient developments is the emergence of a new broadcaster's identity as a content creator and digital talent who not only deliver news but also develop personal branding for themselves and their institutions. This dual role requires mastery of branding strategies, digital communication skills, and content creation skills, signaling an epistemological transformation of the profession from a voice-based personality to a multi-platform influencer. In this context, broadcasters are no longer confined to the microphone; they are expected to engage audiences across diverse platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and podcasts, reflecting the new reality *"That's why broadcasters are involved in various KPIs, such as podcasts, going live on TikTok, and live sessions on Instagram"* (Interview with Informant ER, July 21, 2025).

Traditional competencies have undergone a functional redefinition. As one informant say, *"Like it or not, we have to have creative ideas"* (Interview with Informant DP, July 22, 2025). Broadcasters are now responsible not only for hosting programs but also for writing, editing, and generating creative ideas for online dissemination, an expansion of duties that transforms them into multi-skilled digital laborers working within the logic of the content industry. The demands of convergence also highlight the importance of interactional flexibility and platform mastery. Broadcasters must be able to engage with audiences across different age groups, managing audience engagement, managing real-time engagement through live comments, streaming sessions, and algorithm-driven interactions. This competency demands rapid adaptability and fundamentally transforms the traditional broadcaster-listener relationship into a real-time, digitally mediated community. So, informant WQ observed, *"So usually on TikTok, what we observe is that they suddenly start sharing information like that"* (Interview with Informant WQ, July 21, 2025).

This competency requires broadcasters to adapt quickly while maintaining the spontaneity and intimacy characteristic of radio. Similarly, technical and media literacy have become core dimensions of professional competence. Broadcasters are now expected to understand and operate digital tools ranging from live-streaming applications to basic video and audio editing, while also possessing broader digital literacy, including an understanding of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. Informant BR emphasizes digital literacy, including understanding emerging technologies such as AI, while informants RI underscores information and media literacy to ensure broadcasters can uphold the radio's mandate to inform, educate, and entertain. This technical competence is not merely operational skill but also forms part of professional legitimacy, distinguishing broadcasters from ordinary user-generated content creators, *"So when we talk about technology, we can understand what those technologies are like, such as how AI and all sorts of things work"* (Interview with Informant BR, July 21, 2025).

Beyond the technical dimension, the findings reveal the growing significance of paradigmatic and psychological maturity. NA emphasized that broadcasters must demonstrate wisdom and emotional stability in managing on-air performance and

addressing public issues, maintaining their distinctive ‘air personality’ while avoiding reactive judgments, *“The skill here is about becoming more mature, more refined. We can handle issues and manage our broadcasts with greater wisdom without being quick to judge”* (Interview with Informant NA, August 14, 2025). This maturity reflects a shift toward reflective professionalism that prioritizes ethical sensitivity and composure. Finally, adaptability, resilience under pressure, and a commitment to lifelong learning emerge as indispensable elements of contemporary broadcaster competence. As WQ stated, *“But the essential skills now are being adaptable, willing to learn through the process, and able to handle pressure; those are the qualities that must be present today”* (Interview with Informant WQ, July 21, 2025). This now become key competencies. This emphasizes that broadcaster competence is not merely a set of technical skills but also encompasses mental, ethical, and reflective capacities required to navigate the pressures of the digital media industry.

Thus, the new competencies of radio broadcasters in the era of media convergence can be summarized into four main domains. *First*, digital competence--technical skills, media literacy, social media skills, and editing capabilities. *Second*, creative--Productive Competence--content creation, personal and institutional branding, creative ideation, and digital talent development. *Third*, interactive competence flexibility in audience interaction, live streaming, TikTok engagement, and multi-platform communication. *Fourth*, personal-professional competence--voice personality, broad paradigmatic understanding, adaptability, and psychological resilience. These four domains indicate that media convergence has shifted the identity of radio broadcasters from merely being traditional broadcasters to becoming digital communicators and multi-platform content creators. This shift carries critical implications: broadcasters must continuously upgrade their skills to remain relevant, yet simultaneously face the risk of being caught in the logic of digital labor exploitation, which demands relentless productivity.

Discussion

Media Convergence presents significant challenges to Indonesia’s radio broadcasting profession. Broadcasters who once merely represented the station’s voice now must become versatile communicators skilled in cross-platform engagement, audience interaction, and digital content production, continuously relevant in this evolution of convergence culture, which emphasizes the integration of old and new media that are interconnected and mutually influential (Bateman, 2021). These changes had already been examined by scholars such as Singer and Dauze in the 1990s, particularly in relation to the transformation of journalism driven by technological innovation. These developments were accompanied by several major challenges to the profession, including declining audience numbers and public trust in journalism, the erosion of professional identity, and increasing market pressures (Grubenmann & Meckel, 2017), and changed journalistic skill and work processes in many ways (Kirchhoff, 2022).

According to Briggs (Pérez-Seijo & Silva-Rodríguez, 2024), innovation in journalism can be understood as an effort to explore new approaches and practices to create better journalistic experiences for audiences by leveraging digital technologies. According to (Lee & Meng, 2021), convergence demands both organizational readiness and individual adaptability. As audience habits shift, maintaining strong relationships is vital for broadcasters’ professional sustainability in media convergence (Pignard-Cheynel & Amigo, 2023). To maintain relevance, both commercial and public Indonesian radio stations have adapted in ways similar to those described by (Chan-Olmsted et al., 2020),

who noted that American radio stations use mobile platforms to reach wider audiences and to enhance interactivity and engagement. Radio has not been completely displaced by new digital platforms but has instead shifted in function and communicative value. Similarly, an article by [Sjøvaag et al., \(2024\)](#) argues that television in Norway has changed as content distribution has been outsourced to CDNs, requiring broadcasters to adjust strategies to maintain universal service, quality, and autonomy amid third-party infrastructure. Thus, broadcasters occupy a liminal position between the demands of commercialization and emerging digital skills and redefining professional competence as the broadcaster's cultural capital.

Several authors define competence as a set of knowledge, skills, and abilities used to perform a specific task. Reflecting a person's capability and proficiency ([Sobrinho et al., 2018](#)). This is aligned by [Parkatti et al., \(2022\)](#), who stresses digital competence and continuous professional skill development. Overall, broadcaster's professional competence in the era of media convergence cannot be viewed linearly.

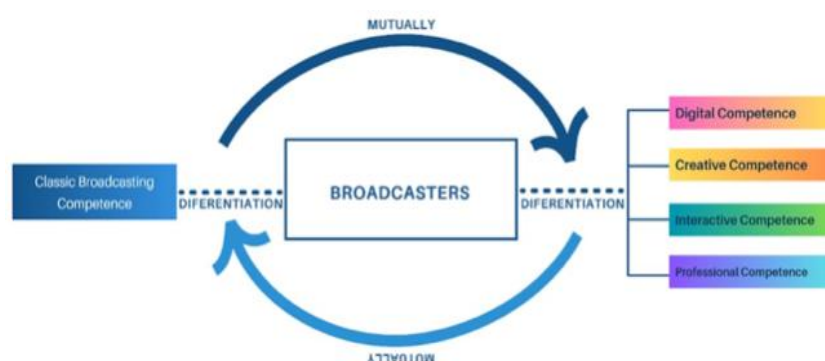


Figure 1. The concept of new competencies for radio broadcasters in the era of media convergence (source: Processed by Researchers)

The findings of this study indicate that media convergence has transformed the professional competence of radio broadcasters from a predominantly conventional broadcasting competency into a more differentiated and multidimensional set of competencies. As [Figure 1](#) illustrates the dialectic between classical broadcasting competencies and new competencies. These two clusters of competence are not separate but rather complementary and mutually reinforcing in professional practice. Classical broadcasting competencies emphasize fundamental skills such as communication, broad knowledge, public speaking, broadcasting techniques, and professional attitude, perceive the timbre of the voice, intonation, facial expressions ([Kelmaganbetova et al., 2023](#)). As [Kristoffersson et al., \(2026\)](#), Communication skills in this context refer to the ability to exchange information politely, openly, and clearly, emphasizing empathy and sensitivity so that all parties feel comfortable expressing. These competencies have long served as the foundation shaping broadcasters' identities within the conventional media ecosystem.

The study finds that broadcasters' professional competence must be fundamentally reconstructed. In the digital era, competence goes beyond on-air fluency to include multidimensional skills, particularly digital competence, mastery of technology, media literacy, and social media management for audience engagement. Although often equated with digital literacy, digital competence is broader but lacks a unified definition ([Strauss et al., 2025](#)). In [Bateman, \(2021\)](#) study, digital literacy in terms, language, production, and audience understanding. Meanwhile, [Salma et al., \(2025\)](#) describe digital competence as the ability to use digital technologies with confidence, critical awareness, and responsibility, which includes aspects such as digital literacy, collaboration, content

creation, safety, understanding of intellectual property, and critical thinking. The rise of social media, podcasts, and streaming platforms has transformed traditional workflows into multitasking convergence, often causing confusion among broadcasters used to traditional systems. Some feel their authority reduced as audiences now offer instant feedback and real-time fact-checking (Dang-Van et al., 2023), demanding greater responsiveness and adaptability. Thus, interactive competence becomes essential. While appearance can attract viewers, emotional connection remains, and an authentic on-air personality is considered important for listener engagement (Krause & Fletcher, 2025). According to (Patterson et al., 2023), a person's body language reveals a more fundamental truth about them than the words they speak. Senior broadcasters at Suara Surabaya often draw larger audiences, proving that experience, credibility, and authenticity still dominate in the convergence era. Nonverbal communication--facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, and speech tempo also shape message effectiveness (Liu & Zhao, 2024). Mastering these cues strengthens engagement, while adaptive broadcasters build personal identities and foster participatory communication through social media.

The 21st-century workforce demands individuals who can generate innovative ideas and solve problems in digital settings (Van Laar et al., 2020). So, creative-productive competence thus involves idea generation and adaptability through continuous learning (Indrati et al., 2021). Dilekçi & Karatay, (2023) stated that creative thinking refers to the aspect of fluency, flexibility, and originality. Today's broadcasters must multitask, not only managing audio broadcasts but also producing visual content, writing supporting texts, and managing social media platforms simultaneously. Multitasking is seen as a necessary consequence of efficiency in the digital era. However, some studies present different views on multitasking. Participants in (Kononova et al., 2019) argued that multitasking contradicts the principles of mindfulness, as it causes distraction, reduces focus, increases errors, and lowers work quality. A similar concern was expressed by the Head of Program 1 at RRI Surabaya, who stated that multitasking demands, where one individual must handle multiple tasks simultaneously, can decrease broadcasters' performance. And the key to this competence is professionalism, which comprises adaptive behavior and psychological resilience to remain authentic amid the pressures of media convergence. With strict professional standards, a broadcaster's quality is constantly tested by continuous changes (X. Zhang, 2021).

Therefore, broadcasters must be able to adapt and remain proactive in responding to the rapid pace of technological innovation (Wang, 2025). Broadcasters today must be more proactive in managing their careers in order to develop skills independently and remain future-oriented (Ostmeier & Strobel, 2021). Through continuous practice, individuals will continue to develop, as Littlejohn notes that the process of mastering a skill is a long journey that may take years to become fully consolidated. In this continuous learning process, professional growth becomes a dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation, where new technological proficiencies do not replace established competencies but rather expand and refine them. The modern broadcaster's relevance thus lies in the ability to preserve classical foundations while internalizing new competencies shaped by digital dynamics. This synthesis reflects not a replacement, but an evolution of competence that ensures broadcasters remain credible, adaptive, and culturally grounded communicators within the convergent media landscape.

Several constraints should be acknowledged in interpreting the findings. *First*, it focuses only on two radio stations, Suara Surabaya and RRI Surabaya, so the findings

may not be re to other present broadcasting contexts in Indonesia. *Second*, the qualitative design emphasizes depth over breadth; while it captures the nuances of the broadcaster adaptation, it does not quantitatively assess competence. *Third*, the rapid digital transformation may render some findings specific to the current period, as technological tools and platforms continue to evolve. Future research using longitudinal or mixed-method approaches is recommended to validate and build upon these insights. Ultimately, this discussion leads to a broader conclusion: the professional competence of broadcasters in the era of media convergence is not static but fluid constantly shaped by the interplay of technological advances, institutional context, and human adaptability. The results presented here show that the sustainability of radio broadcasting depends not only on technological integration but also on the ongoing reconstruction of competence, which is rooted in ethics, creativity, and resilience. In essence, media convergence challenges radio not simply to reinvent itself technologically, but to reaffirm its relevance through a renewed commitment to human-centered professionalism.

Conclusion

The reconstruction of professional competence amid media convergence is occurring through the integration of classical broadcasting skills with new digital-oriented competencies. The findings show that broadcasters at Suara Surabaya and RRI Surabaya have adapted by expanding their roles beyond traditional on-air performance toward multitasking responsibilities, including content creation, social media management, and audience interaction across digital platforms. Four core dimensions of competence were identified: digital, creative, interactive-productive, and personal-professional, which collectively shape the modern broadcaster's credibility and adaptability. Theoretically, these findings extend the concept of professional competence into the digital convergence framework, demonstrating that professional credibility is now co-constructed through both technical proficiency and participatory engagement. Practically, this study highlights the need for continuous institutional investment in digital literacy, creativity development, and competence certification to sustain professional standards. Future research should employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs to examine how competence evolves and to explore how factors such as AI integration, audience participation, and media ownership structures influence the transformation of broadcaster professionalism within Indonesia's convergent media ecosystem.

Authors' Contributions and Responsibilities

All authors contributed substantially to the conceptualization and design of the study, data collection and analysis, interpretation of the findings, and the preparation and revision of the manuscript. All authors have read, reviewed, and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest, financial, personal, or otherwise, with any individuals or organizations related to the content of this manuscript.

Generative AI Statement

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used Consensus AI as an assistive tool to identify and locate relevant international journals indexed in Scopus. The

tool was used solely for literature discovery and was not used to generate research findings, data, analysis, or interpretations. All outputs were carefully reviewed and edited by the authors, who take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and content of the final manuscript.

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