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PRESENTATION FINDINGS OF

**SELF REGULATION FRAMEWORK AND MECHANISM
IN THE MALAYSIAN MEDIA ENVIRONMENT**

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the mechanism, concept and implementation of “Self-Regulations” of Malaysian media organization and environment
2. To identify in details the issues, challenges, strength, and weaknesses of “Self-Regulations” practices in the local media content
3. To determine the efficiency of “Self-Regulations” mechanism and practices in the local media regulations environment
4. To make an appropriate recommendations, solutions and strategies improvement with regards to the Self Regulatory mechanism framework for the Malaysian media regulation practices and enforcements



SCOPE OF PRESENTATION

- ANALYSIS
 - Survey with members of Content Forum
 - Interviews with members, non-members of Content Forum, and Content Forum Management

- FINDINGS
 - Survey with members of Content Forum
 - Interviews with members, non-members of Content Forum, and Content Forum Management

- DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS



Respondent: Survey

Status	No. of Respondent	No. of Organization
Member	138	9
Non-Member	141	11

Figure 2: Distribution of Informants for Survey



Informant: Indepth Interviews

Status	Types of Organization		
	Print Media	Electronic and New Media	Telco
Member	-	9	3
Non-Member	4	7	2

Figure 1: Distribution of Informants for Indepth Interviews



Finding: Survey – Members of Content Forum

Variable	Frequency
Channel heard about Content Code	
Briefing	37
Internet	36
Meeting	29
Television	24
Seminar	24
Discussion	22
Colleagues	20
Talk	17
Radio	17
Newspaper	16
Staff assembly	8
Intranet	6
Flyers	4

Table 2: Awareness of Content Code (n=138)



Finding: Survey – Members of Content Forum

[Table 3: The Practice of Content Code in Organization](#)

Channel	Frequency
Email	75
Meeting	54
Letter/Memo	52
Forum/Workshop	39
Notice board	34
Organizational newsletter	28
Online newsletter	13
Others	13

Table 4: Channel to deliver Information about Content Code (n=138)

Finding: Survey – Members of Content Forum

Statement	Frequency
•Able to control the information/content before broadcast	31
•Preserve Malaysian culture	17
•Avoid sensitive issues, violence, unaccepted conflicts, obscenity and unnecessary content	15
•Can build creativity	11
•Comprehensive and flexible for self regulatory (Cover all aspects)	9
•Enforce media ethics	9
•Can control and guide media organization	8
•Conformity and Accountability tool	7
•Easily available and easy to understand	6
•Basic guidelines for operators and all media players to refer/ follow (Good reference for the industry)	5
•An awareness tool	4
•Promote self regulation among members	3
•Always updated	2
•Fulfilled the viewers satisfaction	2

Table 9: Strength of Content Code (n=138)



Finding: Survey – Members of Content Forum

Statement	Frequency
•Block the creativity	40
•Difficult to understand	22
•Difficult to implement	13
•Industry players as well as the public are not aware of content code	12
•Rigid	12
•Not comprehensive enough to cover all aspects in the industry	11
•Not current/outdated	6
•Have minimal knowledge on the content code	3
•Acceptance of content is subjective. A person with conservative values may be more prone to have problem in an increasingly liberal society	3
•Too much used for personal agenda	3
•Transparency and accuracy	2
•No freedom for media	2
•Lack of competitiveness	2

Table 10: Weaknesses of Content Code (n=138)



Finding: Survey – Members of Content Forum

Statement	Frequency
• Be up to date	12
• Apply it by giving workshop/forum due to lack of information on content code	4
• Awareness campaign/program that is easy to understand and merged with popular culture (music, video , film) so it is easier to understand	4
• Follow the code, enforce and to ensure equal treatment to all media player	3
• For some to be more user friendly and easy to adapt	3
• Government has to think a way. Justice is justice	3
• Should be worded that regular and normal person could understand	2
• Do more study or research to develop a strong and solid code that can be accepted by all levels	2
• Elimination of the code	2

Table 12: Suggestions for Improvement of the Content Code (n=138)



Finding: Survey – Non Members of Content Forum

Variable	Frequency
Channel heard about Content Code	
Briefing	16
Discussion	20
Staff Assembly	4
Internet	27
Meeting	14
Newspaper	19
Colleagues	9
Intranet	0
TV	14
Seminar	17
Flyers	2
Talk	3
Radio	10

Table 14: Awareness of Content Code (n=141)



Finding: Survey – Non Members of Content Forum

Table 15: The Statutes/Acts/Laws Being Practice in Work Place

Channel	Frequency
Notice board	51
Online newsletter	20
Organizational newsletter	33
Email	69
Letter/Memo	66
Meeting	80
Forum/Workshop	60
Others	1

Table 16: Channel to deliver Information about Laws/Acts/Statutes in Organization (n=141)



Finding: Survey – Non Members of Content Forum

Statement	Frequency
Can prevent subversive element from creating disharmony in the media/community/society	12
Comprehensive provision in certain aspects – wide ranging	11
Provide/act as guidelines	8
Make staff aware of individual responsibility	6
Avoid seditious content	5
Can avoid in reporting sensitive issues	5
Can avoid indecent and violent content	5
Enable the organization to monitor the activities within the organization	5
High degree of transparency	5
Ability to facilitate the industries for fair competition and efficiency	4
As control mechanism	4
Have to be more ethical in performing responsibilities	4
High level of accuracy	4
To make sure reporter/media stay on the right track	4
Act as monitoring mechanism	4
Help the media players to be more careful in producing news as to follow the journalism ethics	3
Easily understood	2
Promotes the freedom of expression and the freedom to the media	2
Adhering to good censorship	2
Ensure do not break the law	2

Table 20: Strength of Acts/Statutes (n=141)

Finding: Survey – Non Members of Content Forum

Statement	Frequency
Lack of enforcement	20
Limits the creativity	19
Limitations of expressing and no freedom of information/transparency	12
Did not apply/cover the online or new media	7
Too structured/strict/rigid	7
Not fair to all industry players because it is sometimes bias	6
Too much bureaucracy	5
It can be manipulated/misused by irresponsible individuals	4
Need high degree of self-regulation	4
Needs review to suit current situation/practice	4
Vague, unclear and confusing	4
Imbalance between existing and new provider	3
Double standard	2
Lack of awareness programs for the public	2
The government has excessive power/Too much interference	2
Less competition among the media players	2
De-motivated people	2
Journalist should be able to report fearlessly and objectively	2
Impractical for writing materials in entertainment industry	2
There are irrelevant guidelines and watched out for uncensored materials from overseas	2

Table 21: Weaknesses of Acts/Statutes (n=141)



Finding: Survey – Non Members of Content Forum

Statement	Frequency
More freedom should be given to the media industry/players	16
Not biased	16
There should be flexibility in the regulations implemented so that government stations can compete with their counter parts in the private sector so that overall viewers will be happy with the content in both government and private media	4
Instead of regulating more, should focus on leveraging on the strengths of the digital native to be creative at the same time be responsible online	4

Table 22: Expectation on Regulatory Mechanism (n=141)



Finding: In Depth Interview - Member

Key Theme 1: The Meaning and Understanding of Self-regulatory Framework

More than half of the members interpreted and understood that self-regulation basically is about the understanding of content code in setting out their own policy in accordance to the organizations' requirements as well as the national agenda.

Key Theme 2: The Mechanism Used to Implement Content Code

Majority of the members believe that they use suitable mechanism to communicate messages about Content Code to their staff through staff training including the compliance training, internal training, technical training, in-depth training and journalism training, regular briefing, content code distribution, seminar and workshops

Key Theme 3: Enforcement and Monitoring Mechanism of Content Code

The outcome of the findings concluded that two third of the members consider using guidelines and Content Code itself as the appropriate enforcement and monitoring mechanism of Content Code.



Finding: In Depth Interview - Member

Key Theme 4: Issues and Complaints on Content Forum/Content Code

More than half of the members affirm that they have issues or complaint against Content Forum/Content Code and most of the issues or complaints are related to the commercial/advertisements, religious issue, and technical term as well as inappropriate content issue.

“The biggest battle that I have in this building with my Legal Manager is actually the agencies and the clients (with) inappropriate content. (And) another common complaints that we get is about commercial”

Key Theme 5: Evaluation on Content Code

Almost all of the members had conducted the evaluation on the Content Code and concluded that the Content Code is strict and quite detail, but do not comprehensively cover every aspect of each related media fields.

“(This) Contents code if you really ask me is (too hard and heavily described). I would say it’s quite details (and) too much to follow. On top (of that), the content code (did not) cover every aspects that relates to the industry.”



Finding: In Depth Interview - Member

Key Theme 6: Advantages and Disadvantages of Content Code

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allows more creativity• Always act as a reference• Always act as a guideline• Can be used as defense mechanism when necessary• Act as a meeting point and source of information• Act as a medium to solve problems since it provides different perspectives or viewpoints from different players or party involved in the industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limit the creativity• Quite descriptive and too details• Not able to capture/cover everything• Have some elements of politics• Need to be reviewed often since the industry is evolving and changing every time• Need to be more 'visible' for the media players to see• The media players are not given much power/credibility to act on certain things



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Finding: In Depth Interview - Member

Key Theme 7: Suggestions to Improve the Content Code

For Government

- The government have to trust and give some space for the media players to regulate themselves
- There is the need to have a separation on which matters that need the government interference and which matters that do not need the government interference
- The government and related agencies must allow the media to have a little bit of space on how the media want to disseminate news
- The government and agencies involved need to put a lot of effort and get the masses to understand the language used in the codes

Finding: In Depth Interview - Member

Key Theme 7: Suggestions to Improve the Content Code

For Regulator

- MCMC should educate those involved in the Content Code creation
- Those involved in the Content Code draw up process should understand the Content Code well
- MCMC have to evaluate on how well the people in the industry adopt and adapt to the Content Code as to see the impact or results of Content Code usage
- The Content Code need to be constantly updated
- The language used in the codes need to be improved
- A lot of repetition in the codes need to be minimized
- Each code needs to interplay, intertwine and support each other, not contradict.
- The Content Code need to be less descriptive or details
- The Content Code need to have more accessibility for the industry
- Heavy promotion should be given since not all players involved in media industry know what is Content Code
- There is the need for a lot of open dialogues session with all media players and agencies that involved with the media industry

Finding: In Depth Interview – Non Member

Key Theme 1: The Understanding of Self-regulatory Framework and the Awareness of the Function of Content Code/Content Forum

More than half of the informants understood that self-regulation means the media industry has very minimum government interference where the government plays a minimum role. It also means that the industry is regulating on their own, conducting and managing as well as building their own system in producing the best services to the public.

Key Theme 2: Regulatory and Monitoring Mechanism Used in the Organization

Most of the informants stated that the regulatory and monitoring mechanism used in their organization are license, related laws and regulations, censorship board, feedback, meetings and discussion, edited content (programs, documents and articles), training, briefing and self-monitor system.



Finding: In Depth Interview – Non Member

Key Theme 3: Suitable Mechanism Used for Media Regulations (Self-regulation, Regulation and De-regulation)

Approximately, almost half of the informants believe that the practice of both Self-regulation and Regulation framework are the most suitable mechanism used to help improve media regulations in the industry

Key Theme 4: Obstacles/challenges Faced in the Organization (Media Related Issues)

More than half of the informants accounted that they have faced a certain difficulties or complaints related to the media issues in the organization.

Finding: In Depth Interview – Non Member

Key Theme 5: Suggestions to Improve the Efficiency of Media Regulations Mechanism

For Government

- Need to constantly alert and attend to all changes happened in the industry
- MCMC and Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) particularly PNMB have to constantly monitor media activities
- Need to provide more information and educate the public as well as the media practitioners
- The government and related agencies need to conduct more seminars, workshop and training for all media practitioners/players
- The government and related agencies need to provide educational training on ethics especially for media practitioners as it helps instill or strengthen ethical values
- Need to give more freedom for the press or media practitioners in producing reliable content
- There is no need of government interference or if there is, keep it at a minimum level



Finding: In Depth Interview – Non Member

Key Theme 5: Suggestions to Improve the Efficiency of Media Regulations Mechanism

For Regulators

- The regulators and related agencies need to be more creative but within the limit
- The regulators and related agencies need to continuously monitor the language and terms used in every media aspects especially printed articles or documents and broadcast programs
- There is a need to form a media council and the committees construct are from actual media practitioners/players
- Constantly conduct a discussion or meeting with related party or person's involved if there is a doubt about something particularly issues related to media regulations
- There is a need to converge the new media
- The existing regulations need to be less restricted or not too strict
- There is a need to have more specific rules and regulations for specific type of media
- There is a need to create more awareness among the media practitioners



Finding: In Depth Interview – Content Forum Management

Perspective on the Relevance of Content Code

The informants believe that self-regulation mechanism by applying Content Code would be able to elaborate and give the form of idea of the self-regulations mechanism, so that people could understand better the importance of adopting and implementing these regulations in their lives.

Problems & Obstacles Faced in handling Complaints

1. Media content. Some of the parties claimed that they published their content according to their understanding of the content classification.
2. Members of Content Forum. If they become the members of Content Forum, they have no choice if one party complains; the other party has to submit to jurisdiction.
3. Malaysian culture. It seemed that many problems exist because of lacking of controlling our society. Parents may not know much about the impact of new technology and new media; so that they won't release that their children had become a victim of the media exploitations.

Finding: In Depth Interview – Content Forum Management

Suggestions to Improve the Content Code

- The needs to improvise the lessening of the Content Code because in certain areas where the industry has moved forward.
- A suggestion to include the knowledge of Content Code practices in school curriculums
- The needs to enhance opinions from Civic Group with the Content Creator
- To strengthen the roles of Complaint Bureau
- There is the need for a lot of open dialogues session about the new media awareness with the universities students.
- To organize more In-House Training and seminars as to make the media player understand about the implementation of Content Code practices in the media environment.
- To strengthen and focuses of engaging the public towards the roles of Content Forum and make them aware about the Content Code practices.
- Need a lot of assistance from MCMC regarding Content Code management as to ensure that the Content Forum and MCMC would be able to team-up strengthening the roles of self-regulations
- To enhance educational awareness knowledge about safeguard practices using new media contents and technology, among the public.

Discussion & Recommendations

Awareness of Content Code

- The study shows that majority of respondents (based on a quantitative study) and informants (based on qualitative study) are aware of Content Code. Most of them stated that they aware of Content Code through briefing, Internet and meeting.
- Respondents and informants also understood the concept of media self-regulation in which the media industry sets their own policies in accordance with the organizational requirements and national agenda.

Mechanism used to implement the Content Code

- The evidence showed that about 70% of respondents practice the Content Code. Nearly half of them implemented the Content Code at every level of production. From the research, it is found that the suitable mechanism used to implement the Content Code is through staff training such as the compliance training, internal training, regular briefing, and others. As such, staff training should be a mandatory requirement to implement the Content Code.

Strengths & Weaknesses of Content Code

- Evidences shown that among the strengths of Content Code are the ability to control the information/content before broadcast, to preserve Malaysian culture, and to avoid the sensitivity issues.
- Whilst, in terms of weaknesses, the study shows that the Content Code may be blocking the creativity and it is difficult to understand and implement the code.

Discussion & Recommendations

Key recommendations

1. The Content Code is well-accepted across members and non-members. The awareness of the Content Code should be inculcated not only for media practitioners but also among the public through campaigns and promotions. The Content Forum is to provide a platform to encourage the public to participate in contributing ideas and critiques.
2. Since the Content Code is well-accepted by media organizations, it is recommended that the Content Forum should expand its memberships and networking.
3. The knowledge of Content Code is to be included in the curriculum for formal education.
4. There is a dire need for media practitioners to be accredited and specifically the Content Code should be included as key curriculum in staff training.
5. It is a mandatory requirement for media organizations in planning, implementing and evaluating a sound mechanism of media self-regulation in their organizations.
6. In implementing media self-regulation there should be minimum government interference in handling complaints.
7. The civic group is to act as effective check and balance forces in contributing ideas relating to media self-regulation.
8. The Content Code should be revised to keep up with current development of the media.
9. The language used in the Content Code should be simplified for easy understanding and implementation.
10. The Content Code should be made mandatory for all media whether government or private.