

APPLICATION AND EFFECTS OF PERFORMING ARTS IN RADIO PROGRAM INTERACTION

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ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 14 March 2025

Revised: 28 March 2025

Published: 8 April 2025

ABSTRACT

This article investigates the application and effects of performing arts in enhancing the interactivity of radio programs, with a primary focus on the Chinese program "992 Everyone Help" and comparative insights from publicly available data on international programs such as NPR's "This American Life" and BBC's "The Archers." Employing a mixed-method approach—including content analysis, participatory observation, and in-depth interviews with hosts and producers of "992 Everyone Help"—the study examines how performance techniques such as tonal modulation, rhythm control, and role-playing contribute to listener engagement and program dissemination across different cultural contexts. The findings reveal that performing arts play a pivotal role in transforming traditional one-way radio communication into an immersive, interactive experience. Specifically, hosts' skillful use of vocal dramatization and emotional expression significantly enhances listeners' sense of involvement and emotional resonance, leading to increased program attractiveness and audience loyalty. Empirical data from "992 Everyone Help" demonstrate a positive correlation between the application of performing arts and program effectiveness. For instance, during a public welfare blood donation campaign, the hosts' performance-driven strategies resulted in a 73.5% increase in participation rates, with 347 successful donations exceeding the initial target. Comparative analysis with international programs, based on publicly available data, highlights that while performance techniques are universally effective, their application varies based on cultural and programmatic contexts. For example, NPR's "This American Life" emphasizes narrative performance and sound design, whereas "992 Everyone Help" integrates social service functions with performance. The study concludes that the integration of performing arts into radio programming offers a viable pathway for innovation in the digital era, enabling radio programs to maintain relevance and competitiveness in an increasingly visual and interactive media landscape. These findings provide valuable insights for both academic research and practical applications in the radio industry, offering actionable guidance for enhancing program quality and audience engagement across diverse cultural settings.

Keywords: Application of Performing Arts, Radio Program Interactivity, Program Dissemination Effects

CITATION INFORMATION: Zhang, Y., & Vasinarom, M. (2025). Application and Effects of Performing Arts in Radio Program Interaction. *Procedia of Multidisciplinary Research*, 3(4), 1.

INTRODUCTION

The title of this study, "Application and Effects of Performing Arts in Radio Program Interaction," reflects its core focus: to explore how the principles and techniques of performing arts—such as vocal modulation, rhythm control, and role-playing—are applied in radio programs, and to evaluate their impact on listener engagement and program effectiveness. This research aims to bridge the gap between traditional radio broadcasting and modern audience expectations by demonstrating how performing arts can enhance interactivity and emotional resonance in radio programs (Goffman, 1959; Schechner, 2002).

Radio has long been a powerful medium for communication, but its traditional one-way format has faced challenges in maintaining audience engagement in the digital age (Wang, 2020). With the rise of visual and interactive media, radio programs must innovate to remain relevant. Performing arts, typically associated with theater and live performances, have emerged as a transformative tool for enhancing radio interactivity (Li, 2021). Historically, radio hosts have relied on vocal techniques and storytelling to connect with listeners, but the integration of performing arts offers a new dimension to this interaction (Liu, 2020). Programs like "992 Everyone Help" in China have pioneered this approach, using performance techniques to create immersive and engaging experiences for listeners, particularly in in-car environments where real-time interaction is limited (Zhang, 2015). To enhance the generalizability of the findings, this study also draws comparative insights from publicly available data on international programs such as NPR's "This American Life" and BBC's "The Archers," which have successfully employed performance techniques to foster listener engagement in different cultural contexts (Glass, 2015; Jones, 2018).

The central problem this study addresses is the limited interactivity of traditional radio programs, especially in contexts like in-car listening, where audience participation is constrained (Han, 2016). While performing arts have been widely studied in theater and television, their application in radio remains underexplored (Wang, 2016). This research seeks to fill this gap by examining how performance techniques can overcome the limitations of traditional radio formats and enhance listener engagement. Specifically, the study investigates how hosts in "992 Everyone Help" use performing arts to transform passive listening into active participation, even in environments where immediate interaction is not possible (Ren, 2019). The research also explores the broader implications of these techniques for program dissemination and social impact (Liu & Guo, 2024). Comparative analysis with international programs, based on publicly available data, provides additional insights into how performance techniques are adapted to different cultural and programmatic contexts.

In summary, this study aims to explore the application and effects of performing arts in radio program interaction, with a primary focus on the "992 Everyone Help" program and comparative insights from publicly available data on international cases. By analyzing how performance techniques such as tonal modulation, rhythm control, and role-playing are utilized across different cultural contexts, this research seeks to understand how these techniques enhance listener engagement, emotional resonance, and program dissemination (Schechner, 2002; Li, 2021). The findings of this study will provide actionable insights for radio broadcasters to optimize hosting strategies and improve program quality in the digital era. The subsequent sections of this study will delve into the specific techniques used, their impact on listener engagement, and the overall effects of these performance-based strategies in radio.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

The integration of performing arts into radio programming has garnered increasing scholarly attention as a dynamic mechanism to enhance listener engagement and emotional resonance. Existing literature highlights the theoretical underpinnings of how performance techniques—rooted in vocal modulation, emotional articulation, and narrative construction—shape auditory

experiences and foster interactive communication. This section synthesizes key studies and theoretical frameworks to provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding the role of performing arts in radio, with a particular focus on the "992 Everyone Help" program and comparative insights from international cases such as NPR's "This American Life" and BBC's "The Archers."

Social performance theory (Schechner, 2002) provides a critical lens for understanding the application of performing arts in radio. According to this theory, the host's performance is not merely a display of skills but also a form of social role-playing, combining "front-stage behavior" (e.g., emotional expression) with "back-stage behavior" (e.g., improvisational adjustments) to create an immersive experience for listeners. Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory further elaborates on this concept, emphasizing how hosts strengthen listener trust through "impression management" in radio. These theories are particularly relevant to "992 Everyone Help," where hosts navigate a dual role as problem-solvers and empathetic companions, using performance techniques to build trust and emotional resonance with their audience. Similarly, NPR's "This American Life" employs narrative performance techniques, such as suspense-building and sound montage, to create emotional engagement (Glass, 2015), while BBC's "The Archers" uses vocal performances to construct a virtual community, blurring the lines between fiction and reality (Jones, 2018). These international examples illustrate the universal applicability of performance-driven radio, while also highlighting the need for localized adaptations to suit cultural and contextual differences.

A foundational study by Han (2016) emphasizes that radio hosts' vocal techniques, such as tonal variation and rhythmic pacing, serve as critical tools for emotional transmission. Drawing from the case of "992 Everyone Help," Han argues that hosts employ theatrical methods like dramatic pauses and pitch shifts to amplify urgency or empathy, directly influencing listeners' emotional states. This aligns with Li's (2014) analysis of the program, which posits that sincerity and emotional authenticity in vocal delivery strengthen trust and connection, transforming abstract auditory signals into relatable human experiences. Wang (2014) further extends this by linking performance skills to the conveyance of socialist core values, demonstrating how vocal charisma can ethically guide public sentiment. In the context of NPR's "This American Life," Glass (2015) highlights how narrative performance techniques, such as the use of soundscapes and character voices, enhance emotional engagement, particularly in storytelling formats. These findings suggest that while the specific techniques may vary, the underlying principle of using performance to create emotional resonance is universally applicable.

The concept of auditory "role-playing" in radio has been explored by Wang (2016), who identifies it as a strategy to humanize hosts and create parasocial relationships. By adopting personas that oscillate between authoritative problem-solvers and empathetic companions, hosts of "992 Everyone Help" (as analyzed in Lin, 2015) effectively shape listener perceptions of the program's identity. Ren (2019) corroborates this, noting that such performative roles not only enhance relatability but also position the program as a "guardian of love," blending entertainment with social responsibility. Guo (2013) adds that vocal characterization—such as adopting colloquial speech or regional accents—fosters a sense of cultural intimacy, bridging the gap between media and audience. In the case of BBC's "The Archers," Jones (2018) demonstrates how role-playing and vocal performances create a sense of community among listeners, further emphasizing the importance of cultural context in shaping the effectiveness of performance techniques.

While existing studies affirm the efficacy of performing arts in radio, gaps remain in quantifying their impact on measurable outcomes like listener loyalty or social influence. For instance, Wang (2016) calls for deeper exploration of how performance techniques adapt to digital-era challenges, such as competing with visual media. The current study addresses these

gaps by integrating content analysis, listener ratings, and expert interviews—a methodological synergy absent in prior works. Collectively, the literature establishes a theoretical framework where performing arts transcend mere entertainment, becoming pivotal in shaping radio's communicative power and societal role. By incorporating insights from international programs, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how performance techniques can be adapted to different cultural and programmatic contexts.

The reviewed scholarship collectively underscores that performing arts in radio are not ancillary but central to achieving emotional resonance, character-driven narratives, and participatory engagement. By synthesizing these insights, this study positions itself to empirically validate and expand upon existing theories, particularly in the context of "992 Everyone Help," while offering fresh perspectives on performance-driven interactivity in modern broadcasting. The subsequent sections will delve into the specific techniques used, their impact on listener engagement, and the overall effects of these performance-based strategies in radio.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To investigate the application and effects of performing arts in radio program interaction, this study employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The methodology is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how performance techniques enhance program interactivity and listener engagement, with a primary focus on the "992 Everyone Help" program and comparative insights from international programs such as NPR's "This American Life" and BBC's "The Archers." The following sections outline the specific methods used in this research.

Content Analysis and Sound Sample Selection

The first phase of the research involved content analysis of audio samples from "992 Everyone Help" and comparative programs. A total of 120 audio clips were selected from "992 Everyone Help" episodes aired between June and July 2024, stratified by the intensity of performance techniques used (high, medium, low). Additionally, 60 audio clips from NPR's "This American Life" and BBC's "The Archers" were analyzed to provide a cross-cultural perspective. These clips were analyzed for specific performance elements, including tonal modulation, rhythm control, emotional expression, and role-playing. The timing, frequency, and relevance of these techniques to the program content were systematically recorded to identify patterns and correlations with listener engagement across different cultural contexts.

Participatory Observation and Script Preparation Mechanism

The second phase of the research involved participatory observation within the "992 Everyone Help" program team over a two-month period (June-July 2024). This approach allowed for an in-depth examination of the program production process, particularly the "scriptless script" preparation mechanism. The program's content primarily originates from daily hotline calls (+86 0311-96992) received between 6:00 AM and 10:00 PM, through which listeners submit requests for assistance, covering cases such as missing persons, lost items, dispute mediation, and emergency rescues. During non-broadcast hours, the team pre-screens the cases to be featured in the next day's program and contacts the help-seekers and relevant parties to verify details (e.g., contacting both sides in family disputes or consulting traffic police for accident-related cases). This process, referred to as "script preparation," involves systematic information pre-research, such as event backgrounds, stakeholder relationships, and legal provisions, to provide hosts with a "performance scaffold." For example, before mediating a labor dispute, the host needs to understand relevant provisions of the Labor Law and related regulations, while also preparing empathetic dialogue to balance the perspectives of both parties. This systematic information integration ensures that the live broadcast achieves both emotional resonance and factual accuracy.

In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with eight hosts and producers of "992 Everyone Help" to gain insights into their application of performance techniques and their perceptions of the program's interactivity. The interviews focused on three key areas: 1) the specific performance techniques used and their intended effects; 2) the challenges and opportunities of integrating performing arts into radio programming; and 3) the broader implications of performance-driven interactivity for the radio industry. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and insights.

Listening Ratings Data and Comparative Analysis

Quantitative data were collected to assess the impact of performance techniques on listener engagement. Listening ratings data for "992 Everyone Help" were obtained for the period of June-July 2024, with a focus on episodes where performance techniques were prominently featured. These ratings were compared to those of regular timeslots to determine the correlation between performance intensity and listener engagement. Additionally, data from the program's WeChat official account were analyzed to measure online interaction levels, such as comments, shares, and participation in offline events. For comparative analysis, publicly available data from NPR's "This American Life" and BBC's "The Archers" were used to explore how performance techniques influence listener engagement in different cultural contexts. This included analyzing audience ratings, social media interactions, and program reviews from reputable sources.

Comprehensive Analysis and Conclusion Formation

The final phase of the research involved a comprehensive analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected. The results from the content analysis, participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and listening ratings data were synthesized to form a holistic understanding of the role of performing arts in "992 Everyone Help" and comparative programs. This analysis aimed to identify the specific performance techniques that most effectively enhance program interactivity and to quantify their impact on listener engagement and program dissemination across different cultural contexts. The findings were then used to draw conclusions about the broader implications of performing arts for radio innovation and sustainability.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were prioritized. Informed consent was obtained from all interview participants, and the confidentiality of their responses was maintained. The use of audio clips and listening ratings data was conducted in compliance with ethical guidelines for media research, ensuring that no personal information of listeners or program participants was disclosed.

RESEARCH RESULTS

This study has yielded significant findings through an in-depth exploration of the application and effects of performing arts in the "992 Everyone Help" radio program, with comparative insights from publicly available data on international programs such as NPR's "This American Life" and BBC's "The Archers." The results are presented in four key areas: the enhancement of program interactivity, the correlation between performance techniques and listening ratings, the social impact of performance-driven public welfare activities, and the role of performing arts in brand image building. These findings collectively demonstrate how performance techniques such as tonal modulation, rhythm control, and role-playing contribute to listener engagement, emotional resonance, and program dissemination across different cultural contexts.

Enhancement of Program Interactivity

The analysis of audio samples and participatory observation revealed that performance techniques significantly enhance program interactivity. Hosts' ability to vary their vocal

delivery-ranging from dramatic pauses to rapid speech-effectively captures listeners' attention and stimulates their participation. For example, during a segment addressing a missing person case, the host's use of a warm and steady tone, combined with empathetic dialogue, successfully triggered emotional resonance among listeners, leading to the safe return of the missing individual. This case highlights how performance techniques can transform passive listening into active engagement, even in the context of in-car media where real-time interaction is limited. The findings align with Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory, which emphasizes the role of performance in creating immersive experiences. By adopting a dual role as both information conveyors and emotional performers, hosts of "992 Everyone Help" effectively bridge the gap between traditional broadcasting and modern audience expectations. Comparative analysis with NPR's "This American Life" and BBC's "The Archers" suggests that while the specific techniques may vary, the underlying principle of using performance to create emotional resonance is universally applicable.

Correlation between Performance Techniques and Listening Ratings

Techniques and Listening Ratings

Comparative analysis of listening ratings data demonstrated a positive correlation between the application of performance techniques and program effectiveness. Episodes featuring high-intensity performance techniques, such as emotional storytelling and vocal dramatization, consistently recorded higher listening ratings than those with minimal performance elements. For instance, during the public welfare blood donation campaign in July 2024, the program's WeChat official account reached peak interaction levels, with 472 participants and 690 interactions. The number of offline blood donors exceeded the target by 73.5%, with 347 successful donations totaling 138,800 milliliters. These results indicate that effective performance techniques not only enhance program appeal but also drive tangible social participation. The success of this campaign underscores the potential of performance-driven strategies to create meaningful social impact, particularly in the context of public welfare initiatives. Comparative data from NPR's "This American Life" and BBC's "The Archers" further support the notion that performance techniques are universally effective in enhancing listener engagement, though their application may vary based on cultural and programmatic contexts.

Social Impact of Performance-Driven Public Welfare Activities

The public welfare blood donation campaign provided empirical evidence of the social impact of performing arts in radio. During the two-week pre-event promotion, hosts reinforced the image of a "passionate advocate" through vocal strategies, such as using plain and down-to-earth phrases like "乡亲们搭把手" ("folks, lend a hand") and "大家帮助大家" ("everyone helps everyone"). They also adjusted their speech rate-accelerating to 180 words per minute during urgent appeals and slowing to 120 words per minute when explaining blood donation facts-to guide listener emotions. Notably, some listeners, despite being unable to donate due to health reasons, still actively attended the event to show support. This demonstrates that the "emotional community" built through the program's sound had transcended real-time interaction and transformed into offline action cohesion. The findings suggest that performing arts can play a crucial role in promoting social responsibility and cultural values through radio, echoing the program's reputation as a "guardian of love." Comparative analysis with international programs highlights that while the specific strategies may differ, the ability of performance techniques to foster social cohesion is a universal phenomenon.

Role of Performing Arts in Brand Image Building

Through the hosts' skillful performances, "992 Everyone Help" has successfully crafted a brand image that is approachable, professional, and empathetic. This image not only enhances listeners' trust and sense of belonging to the program but also elevates its social influence and

market competitiveness. For example, the program's reputation as a "guardian of love" has been reinforced through consistent use of performance techniques that emphasize emotional authenticity and social responsibility. This brand image has contributed to the program's sustained popularity and its ability to attract a loyal listener base. The findings align with Schechner's (2002) social performance theory, which posits that performance techniques can create a sense of cultural intimacy and foster parasocial relationships between hosts and listeners. Comparative insights from NPR's "This American Life" and BBC's "The Archers" suggest that the role of performance in brand image building is a universal phenomenon, though the specific techniques may vary based on cultural context.

Summary of Key Findings

In summary, the research results confirm that the application of performing arts in "992 Everyone Help" has significant effects on enhancing program interactivity, improving listening ratings, and driving social participation. The findings highlight the dual role of performance techniques in elevating both the entertainment value and social impact of radio programs. These results provide valuable insights for the innovation and development of radio programming, particularly in the context of in-car media and public welfare initiatives. The study validates and extends existing theories on the role of performing arts in media, particularly Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory and Schechner's (2002) social performance framework. The "scriptless script" preparation process observed in "992 Everyone Help" exemplifies the dual role of hosts as both information conveyors and emotional performers. This process, which involves systematic information pre-research and improvisational performance, ensures a balance between factual accuracy and emotional authenticity. Comparative analysis with international programs further underscores the universal applicability of performance techniques, while also highlighting the need for localized adaptations to suit cultural and contextual differences.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore the pivotal role of performing arts in enhancing the interactivity, appeal, and social impact of radio programs, particularly in the context of "992 Everyone Help," with comparative insights from publicly available data on international programs such as NPR's "This American Life" and BBC's "The Archers." By integrating performance techniques such as tonal modulation, rhythm control, and role-playing, the program has successfully transformed traditional one-way radio communication into an immersive and interactive experience. This transformation is not only a testament to the adaptability of performing arts in modern media but also highlights the potential for radio to remain relevant in an increasingly visual and digital landscape.

The study validates and extends existing theories on the role of performing arts in media, particularly Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory and Schechner's (2002) social performance framework. The "scriptless script" preparation process observed in "992 Everyone Help" exemplifies the dual role of hosts as both information conveyors and emotional performers. This process, which involves systematic information pre-research and improvisational performance, ensures a balance between factual accuracy and emotional authenticity. The findings suggest that the integration of performing arts into radio programming not only enhances listener engagement but also strengthens the program's ability to convey social values and foster community cohesion. This aligns with prior research (e.g., Han, 2016; Wang, 2016) that emphasizes the importance of emotional resonance in building trust and connection with audiences. Comparative analysis with international programs further supports the notion that performance techniques are universally effective, though their application may vary based on cultural and programmatic contexts.

The practical implications of this study are significant for radio broadcasters seeking to innovate and enhance their programs. The success of "992 Everyone Help" demonstrates that performance techniques can be effectively adapted to overcome the limitations of in-car listening environments, where real-time interaction is often constrained. For instance, the use of vocal dramatization and emotional storytelling can transform passive listening into delayed action, as evidenced by the high participation rates in the program's public welfare campaigns. These findings suggest that radio programs can leverage performing arts to drive both online and offline engagement, particularly in the context of social service initiatives. The program's ability to guide listener emotions through rhythmic pacing and tonal emphasis, as observed during the blood donation campaign, further underscores the potential of performance techniques to create meaningful social impact. Comparative insights from NPR's "This American Life" and BBC's "The Archers" suggest that while the specific strategies may differ, the ability of performance techniques to foster social cohesion is a universal phenomenon. The broader social impact of performance-driven radio programming is another key finding of this study. By creating an "emotional community" through sound, "992 Everyone Help" has successfully bridged the gap between media and audience, fostering a sense of trust and belonging among listeners. This emotional connection has translated into tangible social outcomes, such as increased participation in public welfare activities and enhanced community support for the program. The findings suggest that performing arts can play a crucial role in promoting social responsibility and cultural values through radio, echoing the program's reputation as a "guardian of love." This aligns with the broader trend of radio programs serving as platforms for social advocacy and community building (e.g., Glass, 2015; Jones, 2018). Comparative analysis with international programs highlights that while the specific techniques may vary, the ability of performance-driven radio to foster social cohesion is a universal phenomenon.

While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The research focused primarily on a single radio program, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could explore the application of performing arts in other radio formats and cultural contexts to validate and expand upon these results. Additionally, the study relied on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, but further research could incorporate experimental designs to more rigorously test the causal relationships between performance techniques and listener engagement. For example, future studies could examine how different performance styles (e.g., humorous vs. serious) influence audience retention and loyalty in various media environments.

In conclusion, this study affirms the transformative potential of performing arts in radio programming. By enhancing interactivity, driving social participation, and building a strong brand image, performance techniques have proven to be a powerful tool for radio innovation. The findings of this study not only contribute to the theoretical understanding of performing arts in media but also offer practical guidance for broadcasters seeking to elevate the quality and impact of their programs. As radio continues to evolve in the digital age, the integration of performing arts offers a viable pathway for maintaining relevance and fostering meaningful connections with audiences. This research serves as a foundation for future explorations into the dynamic interplay between performance, technology, and audience engagement in the ever-changing media landscape.

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Data Availability Statement: The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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