

Distribution system and promotion of Makassar films

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ABSTRACT

Background: In the film industry, producers and distributors are responsible for producing quality films and ensuring they are effectively accessible to audiences. Therefore, the right distribution strategy is crucial to a film's success in the market. Effective film distribution contributes to increased visibility of film works, revenue for producers and distributors, and awareness of film culture and stories. The same also applies to film production in Makassar. Local filmmakers often experience many obstacles in distributing films, ranging from limited budgets to the need for more screens due to a lack of audience enthusiasm. Therefore, marketing public relations is needed to reach the audience. **Purpose:** Therefore, analysing the barriers to distribution and promotion undertaken by filmmakers in Makassar is important to determine the proper distribution and promotion. **Methods:** This research uses qualitative research methods and uses a case study approach. **Results:** The research found that cinema remains the primary distribution channel for Makassar films despite limited screens and monopolistic practices. Filmmakers face challenges like unfavourable screening times and locations. **Conclusion:** Despite the rapid development of technology, cinema is still the most significant distribution and promotion dynamic. Even so, filmmakers can use alternative channels so that the right audience can consume films. In conducting the promotion, it is appropriate for Filmakker Makassar to use online media, offline media, and word of mouth. Through social media, promotion can reach a broader and faster audience; then, through offline media, such as roadshows, the filmmaker is able to attract support from various groups and local officials; the last is word of mouth. Community engagement can also attract potential audiences.

Keywords: Film; distribution system; marketing public relations; online media; word of mouth

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INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian film industry has grown rapidly and entered a new chapter in the development of the film industry. This can be seen from the emergence of more domestic films compared to Hollywood films. The high enthusiasm of the audience encourages the increase in the appearance of films in Indonesia. In 2019, the total film audience through cinemas in Indonesia alone was 51.901.745 (Fajrin, 2022), with 129 film titles in circulation, then in 2020, there were 12.626.364 viewers with 56 film titles, in 2021, there were 106 film titles in circulation, but due to Covid-19 and distance restriction rules, the number of viewers decreased to 4.483.505. In achieving success and increasing the number of viewers, it is inseparable from film distribution.

In the context of the film industry, distribution is a stage that connects film production with the final consumer, namely the audience. Distribution is an activity that acquires, manages, and arranges licences to promote, rent, and distribute films (Carroll, 2018). Film distribution not only describes how films get into the hands of the audience but is also considered as a dynamic chain of production, distribution, and consumption. At this stage, films that have been produced are then channelled to a network of organizations

that allocate to the final outlet.

At first, film distribution was not a crucial element in the film; there were no definite steps that production houses needed to take, so production houses distributed traditionally or with the help of external parties. However, in recent years, the literature on film distribution has grown and been elaborated in detail (Perren, 2013). This has been fuelled by the emergence of new media.

New media is a new means of disseminating information and communication compared to traditional media (Zheng, 2015). New media has the advantages of interactivity, immediacy, massive information, integration, and mass decentralization. The dissemination of personalized content has changed the original way of dissemination. The new media system allows the sender and receiver to exchange information simultaneously; on the other hand, the audience can communicate freely. New media not only changes the dynamics of information but also changes the film distribution system. This change has prompted various studies to further examine film and new media.

When viewed from various sides, the presence of new media is both an opportunity and a challenge for national film distribution. New media has lowered the barriers to film distribution, allowing films to be consumed by

audiences via the Internet. However, at the same time, the one-stop distribution of films, such as cinemas, will be pushed down. The information the audience needs through new media is faster and more accurate. Also, the data needed to market the next film can be recorded (Feng, 2021).

The emergence of new media has created new information dynamics in society. Today's consumers demand flexibility; entertainment must be accessible so they can freely choose the content they like. The dynamics are changing, and the film industry is ultimately forced to stay alive during the mass restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, all industries, including the national film industry, must carry out digital migration connected to internet-connected devices or applications (Patawari & Sugiyanto, 2021).

Not only is there a push to migrate applications, but other factors for effective MPR are also difficult for conventional distribution (Iswahyuningtyas & Hidayat, 2021). Starting from marketing challenges, promotional media, genres favoured by the audience, popularity (such as actor popularity), storyline, animation, setting, visuals, music and so on. Of course, conventional film distribution using cinemas has greater challenges than Subscription Video on Demand (SVoD). One of the problems

most felt by conventional film distribution in Indonesia is the difficulty of Indonesian films to occupy box office positions. This situation occurs because the success of films in gaining audiences is determined by the number of screens and cinemas and the right distribution and exhibition strategy. Each film has different characteristics and needs that require different distribution and exhibition approaches.

In film distribution in Makassar, not only factors such as genre, audience, and popularity but the obstacles most felt by Makassar filmmakers are financial limitations. Filmmakers in Makassar are generally a group of young people trying to produce their films without state support, whether through subsidized production funds, tax breaks, the same ticket-selling price as other films, and all kinds of other support. Regulation and distribution are still centralized in Jakarta, which is the centre of the national film industry. However, Makassar filmmakers are quite productive in producing films with regional themes and can penetrate conventional distribution screens such as XXI and CGV, albeit with limited screens.

Despite being able to penetrate distribution screens, Makassar filmmakers still face a cinema monopoly. This cinema monopoly can be seen by the prominence of several large players that dominate the market. One of them is Cinema XXI, which the Lippo Group owns. Cinema XXI

is the most prominent and influential player, controlling the majority of cinema screens across Indonesia. This monopolistic structure presents significant challenges for independent and regional filmmakers to gain access to broad distribution through the cinema channel.

According to the information provided, Cinema XXI has its standards and criteria to determine which films are worthy of screening in their cinemas. These standards often prioritize films with high commercial potential and production values that match XXI's preferences. As a result, smaller regional productions or films from independent producers may need help to meet these standards, thus facing difficulties in securing favourable screens and screening times. This creates an uneven playing field, where the monopoly power of large cinema chains acts as gatekeepers, potentially marginalizing diverse voices and regional storytelling. Another challenge and problem in Makassar film distribution is the difficulty production houses determine where films will be screened. This is still related to the existence of a cinema monopoly, so they can only wait for when and where the film will be shown. This certainly makes it difficult for PH to do promotion.

Currently, the existence of a cinema is a barometer of whether or not a film will sell well and is crucial if you want to see the progress of

the film industry. Film distribution in Indonesia is currently only owned by cinema networks such as Cinema 21, CGV Blitzmegaplex, Cinemaxx Lippo, Flix Cinema, Newstar Cineplex, and Movimax. Among these chains, Cinema 21 and CGV Blitzmegaplex have the largest number of screens and are spread across several cities in Indonesia.

The research shows that only 13 per cent of districts and cities across Indonesia have access to cinemas. Inequality in cinema distribution also exists, with 87 per cent of screens concentrated in Java and 35 per cent in DKI Jakarta. Not to mention the high level of competition in attracting audiences, both with films from Jakarta-based national production houses and foreign films from Hollywood, Korea, Hong Kong and India. Makassar alone currently has 30 screens covering the cities of Makassar and Palopo. The limited distribution opportunities, especially in the domestic sphere, are certainly one of the challenges to the growth of Makassar's film industry. Not only national film distribution but also the film distribution ecosystem in Makassar has been influenced by technological developments, especially in the digital and Internet fields. Modern technologies, such as digital production equipment, streaming platforms, and social media, have opened up new opportunities for local filmmakers to create, distribute, and promote their works more

effectively and efficiently (Jainiti, 2023).

Despite being a challenge for the film industry, social media, and streaming platforms, for example, allow Makassar-area films to reach a wider audience nationally and globally, bypassing traditional geographical boundaries. This also expands the accessibility of local content to audiences outside of Makassar. In addition, digital technology in film production allows local filmmakers to create works at a lower cost while maintaining quality. By understanding how technological developments affect the dynamics of the film industry in Makassar, this research is expected to provide deeper insights into the potential and challenges facing the local film industry in a changing context.

In examining film distribution in Makassar, structuration theory highlights the role of social structures in shaping production practices in Makassar's regional film industry. The theory, developed by Anthony Giddens, provides a different framework for understanding the complex interactions between agency structures in social systems. According to Ritzer, all social action requires structure; however, structure requires social action (Kolasi, 2020). Therefore, structure and agency are two crucial dimensions in shaping reality. Structure refers to the rules, norms, and resources organized in society, while agency is the capacity of individuals to

act and make choices within that social context.

In the context of film distribution in Makassar, factors such as government policies, accessibility to production resources, and relationships with the national film industry influence how local films are distributed and promoted. Meanwhile, the social construction theory of technology highlights how technological developments affect Makassar's local film industry. The use of social media for film promotion, streaming platforms for content distribution, and digital production equipment for filmmaking are increasingly influencing the activities of filmmakers in Makassar.

Based on structural dualism, structures and actors interact in the production and reproduction of social institutions and relations. In essence, actors are products of structures and mediators in forming new structures. Giddens views these structures as rules and resources. Rules can be constitutive and regulatory, providing frameworks for interpretation and norms. In contrast, resources refer to the distribution of allocative (economic) and authoritative (political) resources directly related to power dynamics. The relationship between structure and agency is a dynamic interaction that shapes social practices across time and space.

The term "dualism" emphasizes these elements' coexistence and interdependence. Structures, characterized by rules and

resources, shape the conditions under which social interactions take place. At the same time, individual actors influenced by those structures engage in practices that contribute to the reproduction or transformation of those structures. The concept of structural dualism implies a reciprocal relationship between structure and agency. While structures influence individual actions, individuals, as actors, also play an essential role in shaping and reshaping those structures. This dynamic interdependence challenges the simplistic view of social determinism, recognising that individuals actively contribute to constructing their social reality. In the context of film distribution in Makassar, factors such as government policies, accessibility to production resources, and relationships with the national film industry influence how local films are distributed and promoted.

It is not only structuralization theory used in analyzing new media; researchers also use the social construction theory of technology (SCT). This theory arises due to various innovations and offers to people worldwide, especially in the current post-modern era, which makes communication technology develop rapidly. Bijker and Pinch popularised this theory. SCoT theory itself is a theory in the field of Science and Technology that says this theory was created to adjust human needs and provide choices to

us. In SCoT, technology does not determine human actions, but humans shape technology itself (Octavianto, 2014). SCoT theory also states that humans have the power to determine the development of technology, the benefits of technology, and what kind of technology they want to make.

Within the framework of the social construction theory of technology, the development of technology is not linear. Three (3) technology studies have been described by Pinch and Bijker, namely innovation studies, history of technology, and sociology of technology. The innovation studies and history of technology approaches believe technology develops linearly through empirical studies of successful technologies. This concept highlights innovation's role in changing how films are produced, distributed, and consumed. In the context of Makassar cinema, technological innovations such as digital cameras or online distribution platforms allow local film producers to create and disseminate their work more effectively (Pinch & Bijker, 1984). The social construction theory of technology highlights how technological developments affect Makassar's local film industry. The use of social media for film promotion, streaming platforms for content distribution, and digital production equipment for filmmaking are increasingly influencing the activities of filmmakers in Makassar.

Marketing public relations (MPR) theory is used to examine the promotion carried out by film producers. Marketing public relations is a promotional tool that directly or indirectly contributes to achieving marketing and sales objectives by promoting brands and objectives in a trustworthy manner, creating media and public interest in them, preparing the public for news, creating good perceptions, and stimulating positive word-of-mouth communication (Papasolomou et al., 2014). Based on the results of pre-research observations, it was found that producers do not only rely on social media as a promotional medium but also encourage audience enthusiasm (Buzz) to create word of mouth.

By considering three theories, this research aims to see how the film distribution and promotion system in the Makassar region is affected by technological developments that allow for innovation. This shows the complexity and dynamics of the film industry in Makassar and the importance of understanding these factors to develop the local film industry. Also, through this study, the researcher hopes to provide an overview of the dynamics of regional film distribution so that it can be a reference for film distribution in regions in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research methodology in this study

uses qualitative methods. Qualitative is a method that seeks answers to questions that shed light on the way social experience emerges and the acquisition of its meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Qualitative research is well-suited for exploring social experiences and phenomena holistically, focusing on interactive processes and events. By using open-ended questions and inductive reasoning, qualitative researchers can uncover rich insights from the perspectives of participants and understand the complex interplay of factors shaping the issue under investigation.

The research on the growth of regional cinema in Makassar employs a constructivist paradigm, which aligns with the qualitative approach taken. The constructivist paradigm assumes that meanings are constructed by individuals as they engage with the world they are interpreting (Adom et al., 2016). This paradigm recognizes that humans are constantly trying to make sense of their world based on their historical and social perspectives, which are shaped by the culture around them. As such, the researcher must understand the context and background of the participants by immersing themselves in the context and collecting information firsthand. The researcher's interpretation of the findings is also shaped by their experiences and backgrounds, reflecting the constructivist view that meaning

emerges from social interactions within human communities (Dagar & Yadav, 2016). This research uses a case study approach.

Specifically, this research adopts a case study approach, which allows for a comprehensive examination of the unique context and dynamics (Creswell & Poth, 2018) surrounding the film industry in Makassar. The case study design used was unique, where the research focused on examining a particular case of the Makassar film industry without aiming for broad generalizations. This approach allowed the researcher to delve deeply into the history, cultural influences, economic impacts, and stakeholder perspectives that have shaped the growth of film in Makassar. By utilizing triangulation techniques and exploring multiple dimensions of the case, intrinsic case studies can provide rich insights and a nuanced understanding of this unique phenomenon (Priya, 2021).

Case studies allow researchers to explore real-life phenomena in their natural settings, utilizing multiple data sources such as interviews, observations, and document analysis (Crowe et al., 2011). This methodology aligns with the aim to gain an in-depth and contextualized understanding of how regional cinema in Makassar has developed and contributed to the creative economy and cultural identity.

The selection of research subjects is a

Table 1 List of Informants

No	Name	Position
1	AM	Producer
2	ZG	Producer
3	AB	Producer/Sutradara
4	SAD	Sutradara
5	WDK	Producer/ Director
6	AS	Producer/ Director
7	SS	Producer
8	QM	Producer/ Director
9	IA	Producer/ Director
10	RN	Director/Screen Writer
11	AP	Sutradara
12	AD	Producer/ Director
13	TWD	Assitant Producer

Source: Research Result, 2023

crucial aspect of this qualitative study on the growth of regional cinema in Makassar. The researchers employed a combination of snowball and purposive sampling techniques to identify key informants with in-depth knowledge and experiences relevant to the research topic. Initially, they approached individuals or groups considered to have expertise in Makassar's film industry, such as production house owners, directors, and screenwriters (Table 1). These initial informants then provided recommendations for subsequent key informants, allowing the researchers to access a wider network of relevant stakeholders (Arikunto, 2010) through the snowball sampling approach.

The researcher used data analysis techniques

from Miles and Huberman in this study. The steps researchers take are 1) Collecting data, 2) reducing data, 3) presenting data, 4) and making conclusions. The research subjects encompassed a diverse range of stakeholders, including film actors in Makassar City (producers, directors, screenwriters, investors, editors, actors, and film communities), representatives from the Makassar City Tourism Office, exhibitors and cinema entrepreneurs, members of the Film Censorship Board of the Republic of Indonesia, and officials from the Directorate of Film, Music, and New Media under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology. By involving this diverse array of subjects, the researchers aimed to capture a comprehensive understanding of the various factors influencing the growth of regional cinema in Makassar, from creative and production aspects to distribution, regulation, and cultural implications.

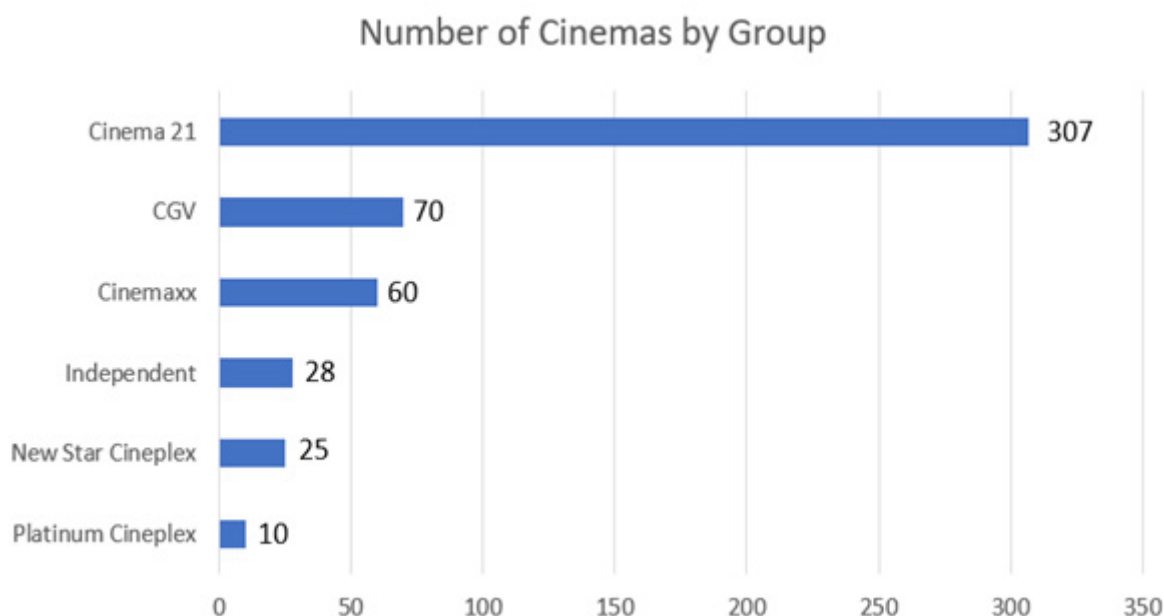
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cinema as the Main Distribution Channel for Makassar Regional Films: The Cinema channel still dominates the primary film distribution system in Makassar. However, its number and distribution in Indonesia, especially outside major cities, still need to be improved, thus limiting the reach of Makassar films to audiences in areas that do not have

access to cinemas. Makassarese films not only target audiences in Sulawesi but also Bugis Makassar living outside Sulawesi, including in major cities such as Jakarta, Jogja, and Bali, as well as in regions such as Jayapura, Balikpapan, and Samarinda. Thus, the placement of films on cinema screens is not limited to the city of Makassar but is adapted to the primary target audience of Makassar films, namely Makassar Bugis people living in Sulawesi and those living outside Sulawesi. However, the majority of cinemas in Indonesia are located in urban areas, particularly within malls, which limits access for audiences from district and rural areas. This reduces the potential for a wider audience for Makassarese films.

Despite its limited number, cinema is still the most profitable distribution channel in the film industry. Not only cinemas but nowadays, the emergence of other distribution platforms is starting to provide alternatives, although the value generated is still relatively small, so the benefits still need to be improved. Finisia Production's producer, AM, explained that networking and cooperation are essential in film distribution, and support from regional cinema owners is also strategically beneficial.

Several exhibitors are currently present in Indonesia. Data from the Indonesian Film Board (BPI) shows that the number and distribution of cinemas still need improvement. There are



Source: filmindonesia.or.id

Figure 1 Number of Indonesian Cinemas

currently 517 cinema locations with 2,145 screens spread across approximately 115 cities/districts throughout Indonesia. This number of screens does not include the number of screens initiated and developed by more than 60 film communities in Indonesia (Figure 1) (Naswan, 2023).

XXI cinemas in Makassar City are only available in five places: Makassar Town Square XXI and Nipah Mall XXI. Mall Panakkukang XXI, Mall Ratu Indah XXI, and Trans Makassar XXI; Cinepolis cinema is available at Phinisi Point Mall; and CGV Cinema is only available at CGV Panakkukang Square.

Makassar films rely on large cinemas such as CGV and XXI (including Cinemaxx) for distribution. This shows the limited choice

of cinema distribution channels available to filmmakers in Makassar. Not only limited distribution channels, the competition to get slots in cinemas is also an obstacle for Makassar films. For example, 'Ati Raja' received 30 screens, while Jakarta's 'Falcon' received 200 screens. This shows significant differences in film distribution depending on popularity, marketing, and negotiations with cinema chains. Of course, this is at the discretion of the exhibition itself.

The exhibition is the culmination of supply chain management, where audiences consume film products in various outlets such as domestic (and overseas), cinema showings, video, and television (cable and terrestrial). Although there are now a variety of channels,

the theatrical release is a significant factor in film marketing as it is from the theatrical release that the life cycle of a film is generally determined (Sasono, 2011). The importance of the existence of exhibitors encourages the film industry (including Makassar film producers) to sometimes lobby politically with exhibitors to get the desired screen slots. This suggests a complex negotiation process behind the placement of films in cinemas.

In the distribution process, films usually start with a limited number of screens (e.g., 20) and can expand if there is high audience demand. This indicates a cautious distribution strategy for cinemas, which minimizes their financial risk. Film producers may request screen placements in specific locations according to their film's target market. This shows the importance of understanding the demographics and preferences of audiences in different locations.

Cinema Monopoly: Based on interviews with AM, the challenges faced by Makassar filmmakers and film producers in the distribution of their films at the national level are diverse. The main issue lies in allocating screens that do not match their demand or needs. AM admitted to having a good understanding of where their films would be most appreciated, usually in areas with a high Bugis-Makassar population, in accordance with the film's primary target

audience. However, the reality is that exhibitors often must fulfil their requests for screen placements in specific locations. This could result from distribution policies that favour films with higher commercial potential or other factors that could be more transparent to filmmakers.

Furthermore, the distribution process illustrates some of the difficulties regional films face in accessing a broader market. Despite audience demand, exhibitors are only sometimes supportive of local filmmakers' needs and preferences.

"Regarding the market, we don't have exact data for the mapping, but from the experience of our films, Sulawesi and Kalimantan are still dominant in the viewing area, but it is also determined by the number of screens the exhibitors give. We can map our audience if we get an even number of screens. But because so far, most of the screens shown are more misplaced, and the time enough could be faster. For example, in Surabaya, we asked for an area in the North because we consider that there are many Sulawesi people there. Still, if I'm not mistaken, the screen is on the border of Surabaya and Sidoarjo, and it goes into a luxury housing complex." AM (2023, September 20) Personal Interview.

Makassar film producers are highly dependent on the policies and decisions of exhibitors when determining screen placements and film screenings. This creates a situation where exhibitors' interests may not fully align with local needs and filmmakers' desires. Screen placements outside the filmmaker's

wishes impact the film's commercial success. Unstrategic cinema screen locations that do not suit the target audience can significantly lose potential audience.

SS faced the same experience with 786 Production, which handles a lot of film distribution for Makassar films, as most Makassar films are funded and distributed by 786 Production. According to SS, there is a tendency to prioritise Hollywood films, which are often considered to have higher market appeal. This policy often causes local or regional films, including Makassar films, to get a more limited and less favourable screen allotment.

NR's statement also supports SS's statement. Limitations in getting screens for local or regional films can sometimes be overcome through political intervention or lobbying. This shows that there are external factors, such as politics and connections, that influence film screening decisions. While it is possible to get screens through intervention or extra effort, this situation illustrates the systemic challenges local film producers face in marketing their films in a national market dominated by films from big PHs and imported films.

The next challenge is that film producers often need more certainty in determining when their films will be screened. For example, a film produced in 2018 will only be shown in 2022.

The long waiting time between production completion and screening can be an obstacle for the film industry, given the rapid changes in trends and audience tastes.

Not only are there challenges with scheduling, but small production houses are also often discriminated against, such as inappropriate showtimes and some venues that only accept imported films. Local film showtimes are often on weekdays, which means they are unavailable to young people in school. Filmmaker films are also given two days; if the audience fails to meet the target, the film will no longer be shown. The existing system in cinemas requires new films to be shown on Thursday, and their performance is evaluated until Friday. If the film does not reach a certain threshold (often 50% of the audience capacity), it risks being pulled from circulation on Saturday. This creates immense pressure on film producers to ensure their films are well-received on the first screening days.

Screening new films on weekdays (Thursday and Friday) poses challenges as most potential viewers work or go to school on these days. This means that films have fewer chances of reaching the expected audience threshold, especially in the first two days of screening. To overcome this problem, some film producers buy tickets or distribute free tickets to meet audience quotas. While this may help keep

the film on screen for longer, this strategy adds to promotional costs and only sometimes guarantees the film's long-term success.

In other cases, smaller production houses often have to take a long time to apply for a screening schedule. The lengthy application process by exhibitors is because the films are so full that they have to be screened again.

"In my opinion, the problem with Indonesian films is the cinema monopoly. It's like TV has a program, and then it's rated; if the rating drops, the program is withdrawn." CK (2023, November 21) Personal Interview.

The informant's statement emphasizes that cinema owners have complete control over the screening schedule of films in their cinemas. Cinema owners can postpone a film's screening slot, causing the film to wait for its turn to be shown. If a film does not sell within a certain number of weeks or days, the cinema owner can withdraw the film from screening. This creates pressure on film producers to achieve success quickly.

Not only is time uncertain, but film producers often need more certainty about where their films will be screened, making promotional planning uncertain. For example, when they invest in promotion in a specific city, but the film is not shown, the effort and money spent will be well-spent. Information regarding the placement and number of screens is often provided quickly before the film is shown. This

leaves little time for filmmakers to organize effective promotional strategies and reach potential audiences.

This uncertainty leads to difficulties in measuring the effectiveness of promotional investments. If the film does not screen in the targeted locations or only gets a few screens, the promotion cost may not be worth the revenue or exposure gained. Reliance on distributors and cinemas for screening information limits filmmakers' control over their films' distribution and promotion process. This often results in a situation where they must adapt their strategies quickly and reactively. In this context, Makassar filmmakers and other local film producers face systemic barriers that hinder their films' full potential to reach a wider audience. Filmmakers' various challenges encourage the public relations team to work hard on their distribution and build good relationships with exhibitors. Building relationships with exhibitors is helpful in the marketing process, as they play a big role in the film promotion process (Safitri et al., 2021).

Quality Standardization by Exhibitors: Makassar film producers need help getting cinema screens, especially outside their region. To save costs, they must deal directly with film censorship agencies and handle distribution. This process demands time, resources, and extensive knowledge of the industry.

As a dominant player in the Indonesian cinema industry, Cinema XXI has its own standards in determining which films are worth showing. This includes the quality of the story, picture, and technology. Films from small producers are often deemed to need to meet these standards, making it difficult for them to get screenings.

As a strategy, Makassar filmmakers and producers sometimes rely on community support to encourage cinemas to show their films. This includes organizing demonstrations or collective requests for screenings in certain areas. XXI is recognized for its innovation and the convenience it offers. However, its focus on the elite and middle class in major cities leaves opportunities for the development of cinemas in more affordable second cities. Meanwhile, non-XXI cinemas need help getting Hollywood films, often receiving films that have already been shown at XXI. This causes operational constraints, as cinemas are numerous, but film content is limited.

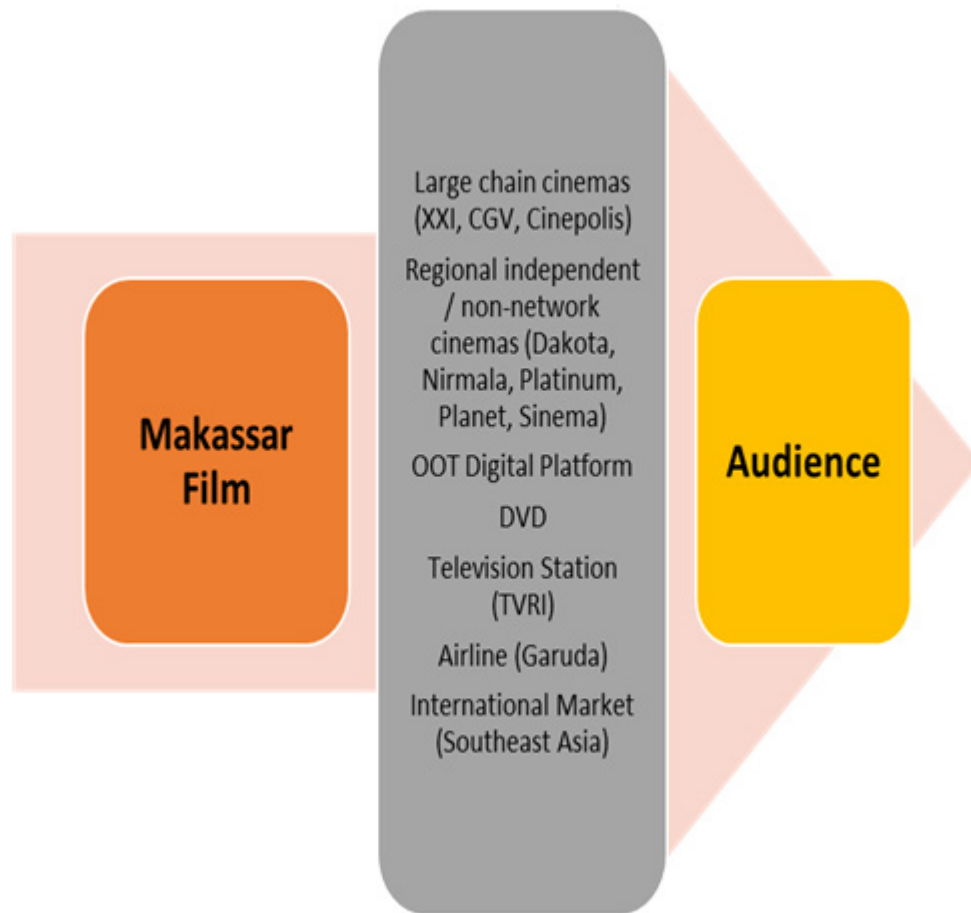
The proposal for establishing regulations that better support the local film industry highlights the need for a commission or government agency responsible for film distribution (Roziqin & Fajrina, 2021). This idea aims to ensure supervision and fairer distribution, especially for local films currently marginalized in the private-dominated distribution system.

Such an initiative is expected to provide more excellent space for local filmmakers to compete and gain equal access to the film industry.

Expansion of Makassar Regional Film Distribution Reach: With limited access to national cinema channels, Makassar film producers have begun to expand their distribution reach by using alternative platforms such as OTT (Over-The-Top). Currently, Makassar film producers have started exploring distribution channels through digital platforms such as Viu, Hooq, and Netflix. This is based on awareness of the trend of content consumption increasingly shifting towards online. In addition, other channels such as TV and DVD are also alternatives for film distribution, including through airlines (such as Garuda).

Technological developments and changes in consumer behaviour are leading the film industry to direct-to-audience distribution through streaming platforms (Laily & Purbantina, 2021). This platform allows Makassar's films to reach a wider audience globally. Now, it is a transition period when people have started to leave the cinema; the distribution is direct to the audience, such as the Netflix platform, Hooq Viu, etc.

Beyond digital platforms and cinemas, Makassar film producers also sell their films to several channels, such as television and DVD, through airlines and international distribution.



Source: Research Processed Results,

Figure 2 Makassar Film Distribution Channels

Even so, cinema is still a mainstay in the distribution of films in Makassar with a focus not only on cinemas in Makassar city but also reaching out outside the region, such as in Jayapura, Balikpapan, Samarinda, Jakarta, Jogja, and Bali, and others that have a base of Makassar Bugis people living in us. And most profitable for Makassar films. The most significant income for films in Indonesia still comes from ticket sales at the cinema, and cinema is still considered the most effective medium to reach a wider audience, especially in big cities.

Figure 2, Makassar Film Distribution Channels, provides an overview of how these distribution channels are vital in bridging film works with their audiences. Distribution channels play a crucial role in the film industry's success and connect films with audiences. In the context of Makassar films, the importance of distribution lies in the ability of the films to reach a wider audience. Distribution includes cinemas and extends to the growing digital realm and online platforms.

In the context of film distribution in Makassar, cinema remains the most profitable

distribution channel for film producers. Nonetheless, some challenges must be faced, especially regarding the limited number of cinemas in Indonesia, especially in areas outside major cities. As a result, Makassar films often find it difficult to reach audiences in areas that need access to cinemas.

Makassar Film Promotion Through Online Media: In the context of film promotion in Makassar, the technological revolution has become vital in facing new challenges in reaching a wider audience (Salim & Aravind, 2019). As part of the region's creative industry, Makassar film producers continue to strive to develop effective promotional strategies to increase the exposure of their films.

Technological developments have been used to disseminate information and content, providing new ways of digital promotion, such as social media and websites, which are becoming the primary means for producers to reach potential audiences (Jurėnė & Krikščiūnienė, 2020). Using social media, producers can interact directly with fans, provide exclusive content, and build an active community around their films (Rewindinar et al., 2020).

Online media is the primary tool in promoting Makassar films because it is considered more effective and has a broader reach. Several strategies are used, one of which is to collaborate with local online media, which

is unpaid. Promotion will be carried out again after PH has certainty of the broadcast schedule. The cinema usually informs the screening schedule 1-2 months in advance.

According to AM, the most influential media is the Internet because offline media has many shortcomings. Offline media often has a limited audience. Many production houses have used social media as a medium for film promotion because social media can provide the correct reference to the audience. (Suvattanadilok, 2021). Through online media, actors also often participate in the film promotion process.

Although social media is an appropriate medium, the use of communities is equally important (Alamu, 2021). AB promotes films in Makassar and also involves film communities. One of them is the local fanbase, KKSS (Kerukunan Keluarga Sulawesi Selatan). Communities have an important role in promoting and supporting local films as they have an attachment to and can see their art and music being represented through film. (Aktaş, 2018). A fanatical and militant audience is a valuable asset in a promotional strategy. A fanatical and militant audience is a valuable asset in a marketing public relations strategy. By tapping into KKSS's enjoyment in watching the film, the producers have positioned the community as the best promotional door in creating word of mouth.

Not only that, another MPR is the Roadshow. Roadshow is a media event oriented to entertain the audience because it shows a culture in a particular environment. A fanatical and militant audience is a valuable asset in a promotional strategy (Xu et al., 2020). Often, roadshows are an effective strategy to promote films directly to potential audiences. Visiting schools and districts that have cinemas increases awareness and enthusiasm for the film. Support from government officials such as governors and mayors gives greater legitimacy and visibility to the film. Their presence at film screenings can strengthen word-of-mouth promotion.

Radio visits are a classic but still effective promotional strategy. Having the film's cast on popular radio stations such as Gamasi and Al-Markaz increases the film's visibility and builds relationships with local media. Visiting newsrooms helps build a narrative and increase media coverage of the film. It also provides an opportunity to build closer relationships with reporters and editors, helps shape the story around the film, and expands media coverage. Thus, the strategy of radio and newsroom visits became an integral part of a holistic promotional effort to introduce and expand the impact of the film in Makassar.

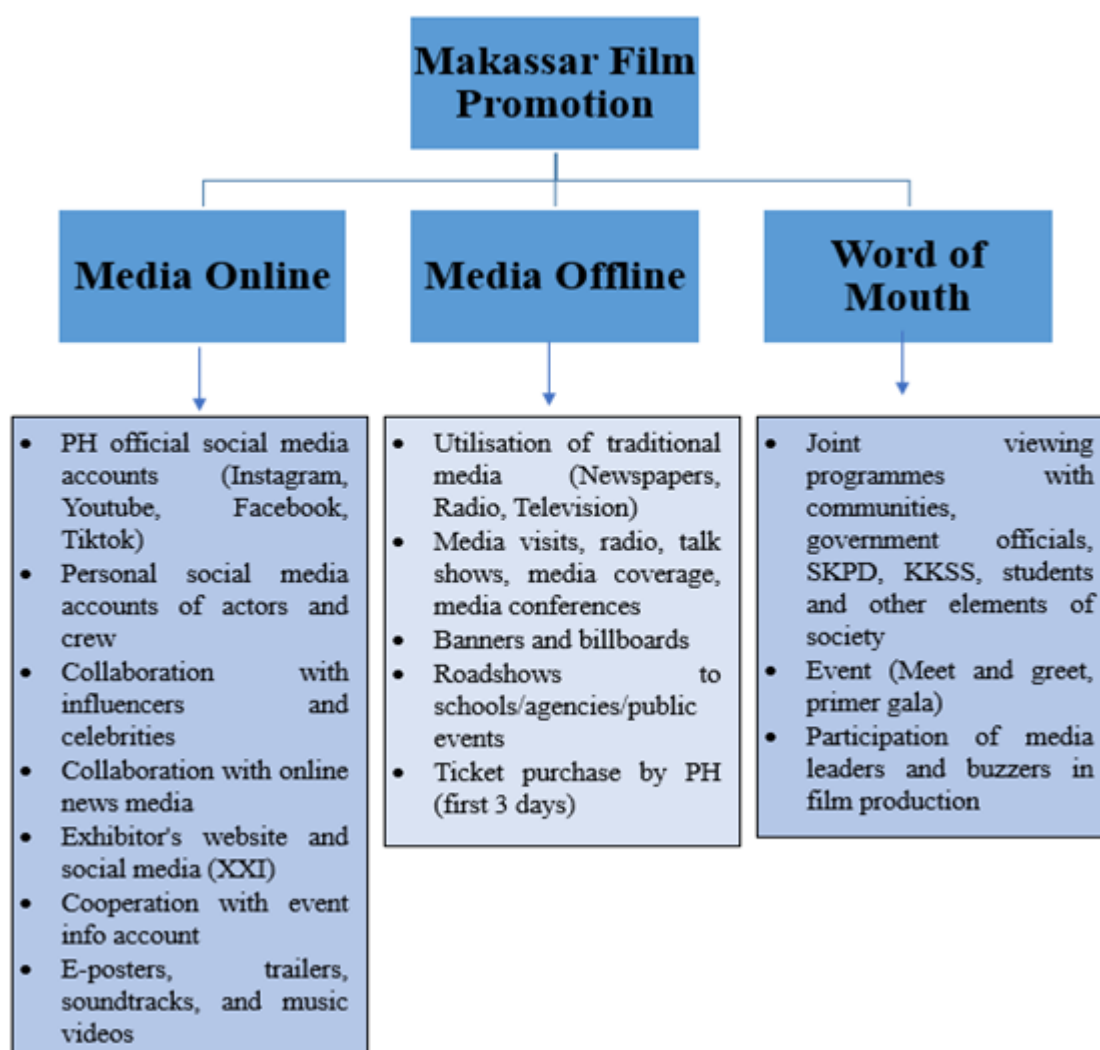
Purchasing tickets by production houses is an unorthodox yet essential strategy to ensure that films remain in theatres, especially during

the first screening days. PH explained that Thursday and Friday are critical periods, where a film's success at the box office is highly dependent on the level of audience visits. PH's ticket purchases are geared towards overcoming the potential drop in weekend audience numbers. Through the allocation of special promotional funds, PH strives to fill every show on one screen with the hope of achieving at least 50 per cent capacity.

Creating Audience Enthusiasm (Buzz)

Through Word of Mouth Strategy: The importance of word of mouth is especially evident in the early stages of a film's release, where the first viewer's experience greatly influences public perception. If first-time viewers have a positive impression of the film, they will likely share the experience with their friends, family and colleagues. In this context, first-time viewers become effective promotional agents, indirectly extending the promotional reach of the film.

Meet and greet with the talent at the cinema in person is also influential in attracting audiences, especially those who want to meet the film stars in person. Meet and greet is also an effective way to promote the film directly to the audience. The presence of talent in the cinema creates a positive buzz and increases awareness about the film's release. It can also create a positive boost in word-of-mouth, as



Source: Research Processed Results

Figure 3 Makassar Film Promotion Strategy

audience members who participate in meet-and-greets tend to share their positive experiences with others.

Using screening together as an MPR strategy focuses on galvanizing communal support. Building the campaign on the first screening day ensures the film gets a solid initial momentum. This strategy is essential because the film's chance of being shown in theatres highly depends on the number of viewers in the early days. AM emphasized the strategy

of engaging media leaders and buzzers, such as celebrities, as a strategic move to increase word-of-mouth promotion and create a sense of ownership and encouragement for them to promote the film.

To bring in audiences, PH-PH Makassar commonly uses several strategies, namely designing a bar programme which is mainly aimed at filling audience seats in the first three days.

Word-of-mouth strategy through screening

activities (better known as nobar) is an effective promotional method in the film industry, as it allows free MPR from others who voluntarily share positive experiences about the film without the need to be paid. While word-of-mouth is often used in film promotion, its success is difficult to measure. As an interactive form of promotional communication, there are many considerations in using word-of-mouth as a film promotion strategy: 1) cost constraints, 2) community support, and 3) emotional involvement in the film (Figure 3) (Monika & Jose, 2017);

CONCLUSION

The research found that distribution channels and promotional strategies for Makassar's regional film industry present many complex challenges, adaptations and opportunities. While cinemas remain the leading and most profitable distribution channel, the limited number of cinemas, especially outside of major urban centres, poses a significant obstacle to reaching target audiences beyond Bugis-Makassar, which is spread across Indonesia. The role of exhibitors has a significant influence, as seen in the frequent prioritization of mainstream and imported films, leaving regional productions grappling with limited screen allocations and unfavourable screening

times.

Navigating this complicated distribution landscape requires filmmakers' strategic maneuvering. They must tap into community support, cultivate relationships with exhibitors, and sometimes use rapport to secure better screening prospects. The cinema industry's monopolistic nature poses obstacles. However, the emergence of digital platforms such as over-the-top (OTT) services presents an alternative avenue for broader distribution, allowing Makassar films to transcend geographical boundaries and appeal to a global audience.

Promotional efforts have undergone a digital transformation, with online media and social networks becoming indispensable tools for filmmakers to engage audiences, foster communities, and disseminate exclusive content. Collaborations with local online media outlets, fan communities, and influential personalities have effectively generated buzz and fostered a sense of ownership among audiences. Traditional methods such as roadshows, radio visits and editorial engagements complement these digital efforts, ensuring a holistic promotional approach that resonates with diverse audience segments.

Notably, the power of word-of-mouth emerged as a potent force, with filmmakers using innovative strategies such as screening events and meet-ups to spark positive

conversations and amplify the film's visibility. These grassroots efforts encourage audience enthusiasm and create a collective sense of identity and pride around Makassar cinema, fostering a deeper emotional connection with the local community.

As the regional film industry develops, addressing systemic challenges in distribution and promotion will be crucial. Calls for regulatory intervention and government agencies that oversee fairer distribution practices underscore the need for a more level playing field where local films can compete on equal footing with national and international films. Such measures can reduce exhibitors' monopolistic tendencies and ensure that voices from the region are given a fair chance to resonate with audiences across Indonesia and beyond.

In addition, the insights gained from this research emphasize the importance of audience-centricity in distribution and promotion strategies. Understanding the nuances of target demographics, cultural affinities, and consumption patterns is crucial to customizing an approach that resonates with Makassar's diverse community. Regional filmmakers can establish a sustainable path for their artistic endeavours while preserving and celebrating Makassar's rich cultural tapestry by forging stronger connections with audiences and amplifying their voices.

As the industry evolves, the synergy between innovative distribution models, strategic promotional campaigns, and a deep appreciation for audience perspectives will be crucial in shaping the trajectory of Makassar's regional cinema. This resilient and adaptable industry has the potential to inspire and influence other regional filmmaking communities, contributing to the development of Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape.

Ultimately, the future of Makassar regional cinema lies in its ability to navigate the complexities of distribution and promotion while staying true to its roots and authentic stories. By embracing technological advancements, encouraging community engagement, and advocating for a fairer playing field, this vibrant industry can strengthen local narratives, preserve cultural heritage, and captivate audiences within and beyond Makassar's borders.

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