

Producer Strategy in Distribution of Yogyakarta Special Fund Documentary Film “YK48”

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ABSTRACT

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Documentary films face challenges in distribution, especially in reaching a wider audience. This study analyzes the distribution strategy of the documentary film "YK48," funded by the Yogyakarta Special Fund (Danais) by Pehagengsi. Using a qualitative approach with a case study method, data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document studies. The study results show that the distribution strategy of "YK48" focuses on community screenings as the main channel, supported by film festivals, social media, and collaboration with alternative screening spaces. This community-based approach allows the film to reach more audiences even though it does not prioritize distribution in cinemas or digital platforms. The film won an award at the 2023 Tanah Lado Film Fest and received a recommendation from the Indonesian Film Festival (FFI). This study confirms that a community-based distribution strategy can be an effective model for independent filmmakers to expand the reach of documentary films in Indonesia.

1. Introduction

The distribution of documentary films in Yogyakarta still faces major challenges despite its rapid production growth. One of the main obstacles is limited access to commercial cinemas, which are dominated by commercially oriented fiction films (Mumpuni, 2019). In addition, audience preferences that tend to prefer popular films make it difficult for documentaries to get decent screening slots (Handanti, 2022).

Indonesia's documentary film distribution system is also poorly structured, so many filmmakers rely on film festivals as the main distribution channel. However, the exclusive nature of festivals limits the exposure of documentary films to a wider audience (Tamara Indratmo, 2022). Although the Yogyakarta Special Fund (Danais) has increased documentary film production, the program still focuses more on production than distribution, causing a gap in the accessibility of films that have been produced (Kukuh, 2024). From 2010 to 2023, Danais funded 108 documentary films, but most were not optimally distributed.

A real example of this development is the documentary YK48, produced by the Pehagengsi production house. This film not only raises relevant social and cultural issues in Yogyakarta but also managed to win several prestigious awards, including Best Film, Best Story, Best Editor, and Best Director at Tanah Lado Film Fest 2023, and was selected in the recommendation selection of the Indonesian Documentary Association for FFI 2022. Despite reaching 31 screenings, the YK48 film still faces challenges in reaching a wider audience. This shows that, although there is great potential in documentary film production, distribution issues remain a major concern that needs to be addressed seriously.

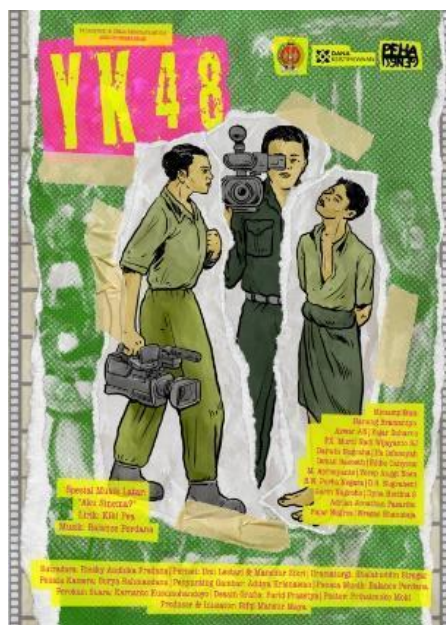


Figure 1. YK48 Documentary Film Poster

The YK48 film was produced by Pehagengsi, a creative supergroup that produced knowledge through various media, emphasizing Visual-Audio disciplines and alternative spirits. Pehagengsi combines the functions of a Production House (PH) and agency to offer solutions in advertising, marketing, and audiovisual production. Founded by Rifqi Mansur Maya, Pehagengsi was born from the need to handle creative projects integrating marketing strategies and film production in one unit.

In addition to accepting projects from external parties, Pehagengsi is also active in producing original works and organizing various creative programs, such as Bioskop Musik and Tabrak Lari (an audio-visual-based internship program). Pehagengsi is known for its inclusive approach to the local cinema. It supports the industry's sustainability through the *saran* or pay-as-you-wish system, which Mergo Konco Studio has supported since May 2024. With these various initiatives, Pehagengsi is not only a place for film production but also plays a role in developing the film ecosystem in Yogyakarta.

In addition to cinemas, distribution through digital platforms also faces obstacles. Although YouTube and Vimeo are alternatives, many filmmakers have difficulty monetizing and promoting their films, especially due to the dominance of lighter entertainment content (Cubitt, 2005). Community screenings are often used as an alternative strategy to increase direct interaction with audiences, but their scope remains limited (Sianipar & Panjaitan, 2019).

The lack of distributor involvement is also an obstacle because they are more interested in commercial films that promise greater profits, so the distribution of documentary films is increasingly limited (Lauren Carroll Harris, 2016). Digitalizing the film industry should open up new opportunities for distributing documentary films. However, without the right distribution strategy, these films still have difficulty reaching a wider audience (Anderson, 2006).

Various previous studies have discussed the problem of documentary film distribution. First, Cici Eka Iswahyuningtyas and Mochammad Fajar (2021), with the title "Strategies and Challenges of Conventional and Digital Film Distribution and Exhibition in Indonesia," examines the challenges of conventional and digital film distribution in Indonesia, especially the obstacles to an exhibition in cinemas for documentary films. Second, Permana, Puspitasari, Indriani, and Hafiar (2019), regarding Indie Film Marketing Communication Strategy: Indonesian Indie Film Marketing and Distribution Models explain that the success of indie film marketing is greatly influenced by the creativity of the communication strategy used, including the use of social media, film communities, and alternative distribution networks. Third, Annisa Surya Dani (2023), with the title "Distribution Strategy for Documentary Film The EndGame," found that choosing the right distribution platform, especially through social media and digital platforms, can increase audience reach. However, there is still a gap

in understanding how distribution strategies can reach a wider audience, especially for documentaries funded by the Yogyakarta Special Fund.

This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing community-based distribution strategies through a case study of YK48 while linking them to the challenges and opportunities in Indonesia's documentary film distribution system in general. This focus broadly represents local documentary distribution patterns and offers lessons for alternative distribution models.

This aligns with Chris Anderson's "Long Tail" concept, which emphasizes the importance of niche markets in product distribution, including documentary films. Anderson argues that digital platforms allow less popular products to reach a wider audience. In this study, innovative distribution strategies through digital media and producer-distributor collaboration can help local documentary films, such as YK48, break traditional distribution boundaries.

This study assesses the effectiveness of distribution strategies and the application of the "Long Tail" concept to increase the visibility and impact of documentary films in Yogyakarta. This work aims to analyze the effectiveness of distribution strategies implemented by YK48 film producers in reaching audiences, as well as to understand the distribution process of Danais-funded documentary films. This study will use a qualitative approach to explore the existing challenges and solutions, with the hope of providing practical recommendations for local filmmakers in facing the challenges of documentary film distribution.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study method to explore the distribution strategy of the documentary film "YK48" funded by the Yogyakarta Special Fund (Danais). This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study in a real context, especially in implementing the distribution strategy carried out by the producers of the documentary film "YK48" (Yin, 2019).

Data collection in this study was carried out through three main techniques. First, a document study was used to obtain data from various written sources related to the documentary film "YK48" distribution. This study includes the analysis of administrative documents, articles, posters, trailers, and official archives related to the distribution process of the documentary film in Yogyakarta. This technique aims to obtain historical information and strengthen the findings from other data collection methods (Prihatsanti et al., 2018).

Second, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with film producers and distributors. This interview aims to explore information about the distribution strategy implemented and the challenges faced in reaching a wider audience. The semi-structured approach was chosen so that informants could provide more open and in-depth answers (Prihatsanti et al., 2018).

Third, observation was applied by directly observing the distribution and promotion process of the film "YK48", including film screenings in various locations and the audience's response to the film. This observation technique provides a more contextual understanding of the distribution strategy's implementation and the film's interaction with the audience (Prihatsanti et al., 2018).

After all the data was collected, analysis was carried out using two main methods. First, thematic analysis was used to identify key patterns in the data obtained from interviews and observations. This analysis helps in organizing and interpreting data systematically to reveal themes that emerge in the distribution strategy of the film "YK48" (Rozali, 2022). Second, content analysis was applied to examine film promotional materials, such as posters and trailers, to understand how messages and distribution approaches are communicated to the audience. This analysis focuses on the elements of the film distribution strategy's visual and textual communication (Bone, 2019).

To ensure the validity of the data, this study applies triangulation and rechecking. First, triangulation is done by comparing the results of various data collection techniques, such as interviews, observations, and document studies. This approach aims to increase the validity and reliability of the study by ensuring that information obtained from various sources is consistent (Murti, 2013). Second, rechecking is carried out by verifying the results of interviews with related informants to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. This step aims to avoid misinterpretation and increase the credibility of research findings (Sutriani & Octaviani, 2019).

With this approach, this study is expected to provide more comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of the distribution strategy of the documentary film "YK48" and contribute to local filmmakers increasing the distribution of their documentary films.

3. Result and Discussion

This section explains the research findings and discusses the strategies producers employ in distributing the documentary film *Yogyakarta Special Fund 'YK48.'* The analysis focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of these distribution strategies and identifying the challenges encountered during the process. Additionally, the discussion compares the research outcomes with existing theories and previous studies to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the subject.

3.1. Presenting the Results

This section presents research results on producer strategies in distributing the Yogyakarta Special Fund (Danais) documentary film "YK48". The data obtained came from interviews with two main informants, namely Rifqi Mansur Maya (Founder/Director of Pehagengsi and Producer of the YK48 film) and Aanisah Pangrutiningtias (YK48 film distribution management). In addition, supporting data was also collected from various documentation and relevant library sources.

Producer Strategy in the Distribution of the YK48 Documentary Film

Strategy is a key element in planning the distribution of a documentary film to reach a wider audience. In this case, producer Rifqi Mansur Maya implemented a distribution strategy that included pre-production research, audience understanding, marketing, and the formation of a distribution team from the beginning of production. Before producing YK48, Rifqi Mansur Maya conducted an in-depth study on the film's theme's social, cultural, and historical aspects. This research became the main foundation for developing the film concept to suit the audience's expectations.

"Long before YK48 was made, I had done a little research..." (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary film, on January 18, 2025).

In addition to conducting research, understanding the audience is an important part of the production strategy. To understand the expectations and responses of potential audiences, the producer attended various film screening discussions in Yogyakarta. This helped determine a more effective narrative approach.

"Understanding the audience's problems by coming to film screening discussions in Jogja and trying to provide answers to questions that often arise." (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary film, on December 30, 2024).

To ensure that the distribution of YK48 runs systematically, the production team formed Pehagangster, a special group responsible for planning distribution channels, coordinating with the film community, and implementing screenings. Pehagangster consists of individuals experienced in independent film distribution management, ensuring that each screening runs effectively and has maximum impact.

"After that, we formed a team that is focused on distributing our ideas." (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya as the producer of the YK48 documentary film, on January 18, 2025).

As part of the community-based distribution, Pehagangster initiated the Domestic Tour to help film communities learn to be independent in distributing films. This program was further developed to strengthen the alternative cinema ecosystem after successfully holding this tour during the 2022 National Film Month in 11 cities with 12 screens.

"We want to see how communities can be more independent and sustainable in film distribution." (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya as the producer of the YK48 documentary film, on January 10, 2025).



Figure 2. Pehagengster Poster: Domestic Tour

As a strategic step, the production team built an audience database containing film communities, academics, and individuals interested in documentary films. With this data, film promotion and distribution can be more targeted, ensuring the film reaches the right audience. In addition, film exposure has been built since the early stages of production by utilizing print and digital media. Publication since the first day of shooting helped increase public awareness of the film and facilitate distribution in the next stage.

“Mainstream distribution uses offline & online print media and advertisements.” (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary film, on December 30, 2024).

“The first kick-off, the first day of shooting alone, we were in the newspaper, in KR, in Suara Merdeka.” (Interview with Anisah Pangrutintingias, YK48 Documentary Film Management, on January 10, 2025).



Figure 3. Coverage of the Kedaulatan Rakyat (KR) Newspaper

With a systematic and community-based distribution strategy, YK48 has not only succeeded in reaching a wider audience but has also strengthened the documentary film ecosystem in Indonesia. This effort shows that independent film distribution can be effective with the right approach, ensuring sustainability and maximum impact for the local film community.

YK48 Film Distribution Strategy

The distribution of the YK48 documentary film is carried out through a combination of mainstream and sidestream approaches, with a primary focus on community screenings and film festivals. This strategy aims to introduce the film to a more specific audience but still adopts a mainstream promotional approach to ensure wider coverage. One of the main distribution channels is the use of mass media and film festivals to increase exposure at the national and international levels. However, festivals and digital platforms are not the main priority. The main focus of distribution remains on community screenings, which allow direct interaction between filmmakers and audiences.

“The target is sidestream, the method is mainstream.” (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary film, on January 18, 2025).

To expand the film's reach, YK48 is also distributed through roadshows to various communities in Indonesia. These screenings are conducted in alternative spaces such as cultural centers, cafes, and community forums. This approach allows the production team to interact directly with the audience and discuss the issues raised in the film. This distribution strategy adopts a proactive approach, as explained in the interview, “The proactive strategy means that we offer, not wait. We have to actively seek out relevant communities.” (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya as the producer of the YK48 documentary, on January 18, 2025), where the distribution team actively offers screenings to potentially interested communities, rather than simply waiting for screening requests. In this way, the film can reach more communities and ensure more effective distribution. In addition, film promotion is carried out through collaboration with local communities and extensive networks to strengthen distribution.

“We do not prioritize festivals or digital. That is the second choice. We rely on the problems faced by our target market through offline screenings between communities.” (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya as the producer of the YK48 documentary, on December 30, 2024).

“We also conduct roadshows, to bring this film directly to audiences in various places.” (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya the producer of the YK48 documentary, on January 18, 2025).



Figure 4. Film screening with the community

In addition to the distribution aspect, the payment system in film screenings is designed to be flexible and can be adjusted to the conditions of the organizing community. The payment model includes a donation scheme or a profit-sharing system, allowing the community to contribute according to their capacity.

“The payment system in film screenings is carried out with a donation or a profit-sharing scheme” (Interview with Aanisah Pangrutiningtias, YK48 Documentary Film Management, on January 10, 2025).



Figure 5. Payment system during film screenings

Table 1. List of YK48 Documentary Films Showing Festival Route

Festival	years
Arkipel "Catch 22"	2022
Tanah Lado Film Festival	2022
Jogja Film Academy Short Film Festival (JOFAFEST)	2023
Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival (JAFF 18)	2023
Navi Film Festival & Gerakan Ayo Nonton	2023

Source: Pehagensi Archives

Table 2. Roadshow and Community Track Exhibition Screenings

No	City	Show Name	Date
1.	Yogyakarta	Bioskop Sonobudoyo (<i>Release Party</i>)	30 March 2022
2.	Solo	Ruang Baca Ke Ruang	30 March 2022
3.	Sidoarjo	Asosiasi Sineas Sidoarjo	30 March 2022
4.	Lombok	Pasir Putih Lombok	30 March 2022
5.	Medan	Literacy Coffee	30 March 2022
6.	Bali	Singaraja Menonton	31 March 2022
7.	Ponorogo	Gang Gayam	31 March 2022
8.	Cirebon	Cinema Cirebon	1 April 2022
9.	Semarang	Sudahkah Anda Menonton	2 April 2022
10.	Demak	Sinema Demak	4 April 2022
11.	Palu	Klub Penonton	31 March 2022
12.	Semarang	Peer-Sitence	5 April 2022
13.	Yogyakarta	International Program of Communication Studies UMY	11 August 2022
14.	Semarang	Layar Disco 4/Sudahkah Anda Menonton (Pehagengster; Tur Dalam Negeri)	4 November 2022

15.	Sidoarjo	'Focus on Pehagensi' Layar Lokal 3	17 December 2022
16.	Sukoharjo	Nonton Bareng	27 December 2022
17.	Bojonegoro	Regularia 7	8 February 2023
18.	Yogyakarta	Komunitas DIY Menonton	March 2023
19.	Yogyakarta	Flea Market Fest	17-19 March 2023
20.	Jakarta	Metro Cinema Kemang	17 August 2023
21.	Bandung	Bandung Film Commission	30 November 2023
22.	Yogyakarta	Pekan Budaya Difabel	1 December 2023
23.	Malang	Network Creators Academy	14 December 2023
24.	Yogyakarta	JNM Bloc	30 March 2024
25.	Malang	Nol Derajat X Srawunghub	3 June 2024
26.	Bekasi	PannaLab	23 September 2024

source: Pehagensi Archives

With this flexible and community-oriented distribution strategy, YK48 can reach a wider audience without neglecting the main value of the documentary.

In the distribution process of the YK48 documentary, the production team adopted a mainstream approach to expand the film's reach. The strategies include utilizing media publications from the early stages of production, implementing independent film screening tours, and participating in film festivals. This approach allows YK48 to be known by the independent film community and a wider audience, including general audiences who access films through more conventional distribution channels.

“Mainstream distribution such as promotions in the mass media and film festivals are the main methods.” (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary, on January 18, 2025).

Evaluation of the Success of the YK48 Distribution Strategy

The community-based distribution strategy implemented by the YK48 documentary has proven effective in expanding the reach of its audience. Many previously unfamiliar communities with YK48 are now part of the film's screening network. According to Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary, this approach has succeeded in creating closer relationships with the community and introducing the film to a wider audience.

“Many communities that were initially unfamiliar with YK48 are now part of our screening network. This shows that the community-based distribution strategy has succeeded in expanding the reach of the film” (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary, on January 18, 2025).

Based on the research results, the YK48 film has been screened 31 times in various communities and film festivals. This number reflects the effectiveness of the community distribution strategy in reaching audiences outside of conventional channels. The network of communities that are screening partners also continues to grow, proving that this approach can build broader and more sustainable connections.

Most viewers come from the community, and according to Rifqi, feedback from the community is easier to obtain than from individual viewers. “If you ask the community, maybe I can get feedback” (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary, on January 18, 2025).

Evaluation of distribution strategies becomes more effective through this interaction because the community tends to provide more structured and in-depth input.

In addition to getting feedback, YK48 also encourages the community to appreciate the creators' work. "We make it a habit for the community to also appreciate us as creators" (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary, on January 18, 2025) said Rifqi. Community support for the film and its creators is an important factor in maintaining the sustainability of the film's distribution across various screening networks.

Choosing the right distribution channel is also a key factor in the effectiveness of this strategy. Rifqi emphasized the importance of early selection of marketing channels in bringing the film closer to the target audience. "Effective. The selection of marketing channels at the beginning of the process is very important in determining how we can get closer to the target audience" (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary, on January 18, 2025), he explained. This approach shows that decisions made in the early stages majorly impact the final distribution results.

Evaluation of distribution strategies is also carried out by exploring various distribution methods and internal team discussions. "Exploration. Using various ways to distribute it and then evaluating it by discussing it with the team." (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary, on January 18, 2025). This approach allows the team to measure the effectiveness of each strategy implemented and adjust it as needed.

Rifqi also highlighted the gap in the production of historical film content. "Even now, no one has worked on film history" (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary, on January 18, 2025) he said. The lack of production of historical film content shows that there is a great opportunity for filmmakers to explore this theme and utilize it in a community-based distribution strategy.

One of the advantages of a community-based distribution strategy is the direct interaction between filmmakers and audiences through post-screening discussions. Rifqi Mansur Maya explained that this discussion allows audiences to express their views and deepen their understanding of the themes raised in the film.

"Through post-screening discussions, we can understand how the audience responded to the film. Many new perspectives emerged and added value to the film itself" (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary, on January 18, 2025).

Such discussions not only enrich the viewing experience but also increase the film's social impact. The audience can relate their personal experiences to the issues raised, thus creating a deeper space for dialogue.

The success of YK48's distribution strategy is also reflected in the various awards it has won. At the 2023 Tanah Lado Film Festival, the film won several prestigious categories, including Best Film, Best Story Idea, Best Picture Editing, and Best Director. In addition, YK48 also received a recommendation from the Indonesian Documentary Association for the 2022 Indonesian Film Festival (FFI). This achievement shows that even though its distribution focuses on the community, YK48 still receives recognition at the national level.



Figure 6. YK48 Documentary Film Award Certificate at the Tanah Lado Festival

With this success, YK48's community-based distribution strategy can serve as an example for other documentaries seeking to reach a wider audience. This approach proves that films can be distributed effectively without relying on digital platforms or conventional commercial channels while building a closer relationship with the audience.

The Role of Producers in the Distribution of YK48 Documentary Films

Producers are important in ensuring the film distribution process runs effectively and efficiently. One of the main responsibilities of a producer is to manage and allocate a balanced budget between the production and distribution processes. Optimal fund management is the key to the success of a film so that it can be produced well and reach a wider audience.

Rifqi Mansur Maya, producer of the YK48 documentary film, says, "A balanced division of funds between distribution and production is very important for an effective distribution strategy" (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary, on January 18, 2025). This statement confirms that films risk experiencing limitations in reaching a wider audience without proper financial planning.

However, in practice, Indonesia's documentary film distribution process faces structural challenges such as funding bureaucracy, lack of incentives from regulators for non-commercial distribution, and the absence of affirmative policies for documentary films. In the case of YK48, these challenges include limited human resources, dependence on public funds, and adherence to Danais regulations that limit distribution flexibility. One of the main obstacles faced is limited human resources and time. The production team must divide its attention between the production, marketing, and distribution processes. This condition creates the need for a larger and more focused marketing team to increase the effectiveness of film promotion.

In addition, bureaucracy and regulations related to Special Fund (Danais) funding are challenging. One of the rules in this funding is that the Yogyakarta Special Fund must control the film distribution rights for 1-2 years. This rule is a major obstacle in developing a long-term distribution strategy because it limits the flexibility of producers to distribute films to digital platforms or establish commercial cooperation with external parties during the contract period. This impacts the limited distribution reach and slows down the process of cinema reaching a wider audience, both nationally and internationally.

"The YK48 film, for 1-2 years, is jointly owned by Pehagengsi and the DIY Cultural Service. During that period, we routinely provide reports, including those related to film screenings. After two years, the film management rights are fully ours, including if we want to sell it to OTT or upload it to YouTube," explained Rifqi Mansur Maya (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary, on January 18, 2025). This statement emphasizes that even though there is a time limit on managing distribution rights, producers still have the opportunity to expand the reach of the film after that period ends.

To overcome these challenges, producers play an active role in establishing strategic partnerships with local communities and cultural spaces. This collaboration is one of the main strategies for expanding the reach of film distribution and ensuring that the wider community can accept the film. Partnerships with communities also open up opportunities for film screenings in various independent cultural spaces, which not only expand the audience reach but also strengthen the film's social impact.

"We utilize existing local resources, for example by collaborating with communities and cultural venues in Yogyakarta for film screenings" explained Rifqi Mansur Maya (Interview with Rifqi Mansur Maya, the producer of the YK48 documentary, on January 18, 2025). This step shows that collaboration with various parties is a key strategy in ensuring that the YK48 documentary can be accessed by the wider community and make a real contribution to social and cultural discussions at the local and national levels.

Thus, the role of the producer in distributing the YK48 documentary is not only limited to technical and financial aspects but also involves strategic efforts in building networks, overcoming bureaucratic obstacles, and maximizing the potential for collaboration to ensure that the film can reach a wider audience and provide significant social impact.

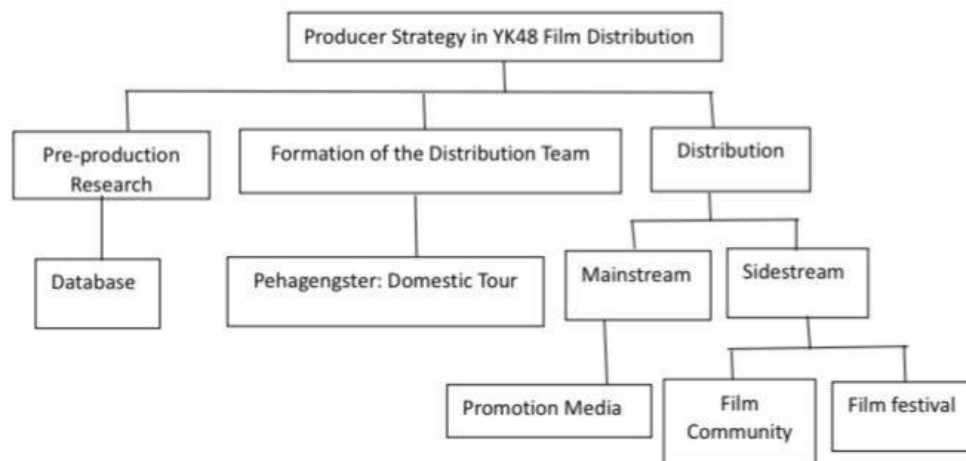


Chart 1. Producer Strategy in YK48 Film Distribution

3.2. Create a Discussion

The distribution strategy of the YK48 documentary film implemented by producer Rifqi Mansur Maya shows a structured and community-based approach. This study refers to The Long Tail (Anderson, 2006). Which emphasizes the importance of niche market-based distribution. By prioritizing sidestream channels through communities and roadshows, this film's distribution has reached a more specific audience and is oriented toward cultural appreciation.

In the film industry, distribution strategies are not only limited to conventional channels such as cinemas (mainstream) but also through alternative channels (sidestream) such as film festivals and community screenings (van Heeren, 2012). This aligns with the strategy implemented in the YK48 film, which emphasizes community screenings and domestic screening tours as the main strategy. This study emphasizes that community-based distribution effectively reaches a more segmented audience and has a long-term impact on building a documentary film ecosystem network in Indonesia.

A comparison with previous studies shows that community-based distribution has a deeper impact on the audience than through digital platforms or film festivals alone. A study by Eric Sasono et al. (2011) revealed that film festivals play an important role in increasing the exposure of independent films but have limitations in building direct interaction with the audience. In contrast, the strategy used in the distribution of YK48 allows direct interaction between filmmakers and audiences through post-screening discussions. This aligns with community-based independent film distribution (Arifianto & Junaedi, 2014). Thus, the results of this study not only confirm the importance of film festivals but show that community-based distribution models can be a complement or even a more sustainable alternative.

In addition, this study emphasizes the importance of the role of producers in distributing documentary films. According to Morrison (2013), producers are responsible for production and planning an effective distribution strategy. In the case of YK48, Rifqi Mansur Maya not only conducted pre-production research and understood the target audience but also formed a special distribution team, Pehagangster, to ensure the effectiveness of the distribution strategy. This approach is in line with Thompson's opinion (2016), which states that producers must be able to adjust distribution strategies based on audience responses and developing trends.

However, this study also found several challenges in community-based documentary film distribution. One of the main obstacles is the limited resources and bureaucracy in funding from Danais (Yogyakarta Special Fund), which limits the flexibility of producers in distributing films to various other platforms. This finding supports the study by Sianipar and Panjaitan (2019), which emphasized that independent film distribution often faces obstacles in market access and regulation. In addition, although community-based distribution strategies allow for a more segmented audience reach, there are challenges in the sustainability of this system without stable financial support.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of YK48's distribution strategy shows that the community-based approach has succeeded in expanding the screening network and increasing appreciation for local documentaries. The film has been screened 31 times in various communities and festivals,

which shows the effectiveness of this approach compared to relying solely on digital distribution or film festivals (Aguayo, 2019). In addition, the awards won by YK48 at the 2023 Tanah Lado Film Festival show that this distribution strategy also contributes to increasing recognition of films at the national level.

Thus, this study confirms that community-based distribution is an effective strategy for distributing independent documentary films. The success of YK48 can serve as a model for other documentaries to reach a wider audience without relying on conventional commercial platforms. However, further research is needed to explore how this distribution strategy can be adapted in the broader context of filmmaking, including how digital platforms can be integrated with community-based approaches to expand audience reach more effectively. Future research should also evaluate the long-term impact of this strategy on the documentary film ecosystem in Indonesia, as well as how film communities can maintain an independent and sustainable distribution system.

4. Conclusion

This study reveals that a community-based distribution strategy is an effective and innovative approach to expanding the reach of independent documentary films. This effectiveness is demonstrated in the case of the YK48 film, which utilizes a multifaceted distribution strategy encompassing community screenings, participation in film festivals, and collaboration with alternative screening venues. Adopting this approach allows the film to reach a broader and more diverse audience. It fosters a more inclusive and participatory distribution network than traditional methods relying exclusively on cinemas or commercial digital platforms.

The results of this study underscore that the side distribution strategy adopted by the YK48 production team significantly increased the film's accessibility to a wide range of audience segments, especially those with a strong interest in documentary films. This strategy strengthened the film's reach and demonstrated the potential of the community approach as a temporary solution. However, in the long term, alternative funding models such as ongoing crowdfunding, private sector grants, or partnerships with international cultural institutions are needed to maintain the continuity of local documentary distribution. This strategy provides independent filmmakers alternative channels to share their work and fosters a deeper appreciation for independent cinematic narratives. The success of this approach is closely related to the comprehensive marketing strategy used from the early stages of production. By continuously sharing updates from the first day of filming and strategically utilizing mass media and social media platforms, the YK48 film captured public attention and created anticipation long before the official distribution phase began.

A crucial element driving the success of this distribution model was the formation of a dedicated distribution team known as Pehagangster. This specialized team played a pivotal role in managing the logistics of film screenings, establishing collaborations with film communities, and ensuring that the distribution process was systematic and goal-oriented. The presence of this team allowed for a more structured and sustained distribution effort, facilitating the film's ability to engage with a wider audience over a prolonged period. The distribution process evolved from a sporadic to a well-organized operation with clear objectives and strategies throughout their work.

This study makes a significant contribution to the understanding of independent documentary film distribution models in Indonesia. One of the most prominent findings is the important role played by community networks as the main distribution channel for independent films, especially in a context where access to conventional distribution channels, such as cinemas and major digital platforms, is still limited. Furthermore, this study strengthens the application of the Long Tail concept, which emphasizes the importance of niche markets in supporting and sustaining independent film distribution. However, implementing this concept requires regulatory support that is friendly to non-profit distribution, such as simplifying film screening permits, incentives for community screenings, and policies for redistributing documentary content on national digital platforms. By utilizing community engagement as the basis for its distribution, independent documentaries can continue to grow, gradually reaching a wider audience while maintaining their artistic and cultural integrity.

Looking ahead, future research should delve deeper into how community-based distribution strategies can effectively integrate with digital platforms. Such integration could enhance the efficiency and sustainability of film distribution, enabling independent films to reach broader

audiences without relying solely on physical screenings. Furthermore, it is essential to conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of community-driven distribution strategies on the documentary film ecosystem in Indonesia. Future investigations could explore how film communities can sustain and evolve these distribution models over time while also identifying mechanisms for securing stable support in terms of funding and industry policies. This research direction is vital to ensuring the region's continued growth and resilience of independent documentary filmmaking.

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