





# Identity of the National Film Festival in Indonesia

## *Identidad del Festival Nacional de Cine de Indonesia*

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## Abstract

Film festivals serve as vital platforms for disseminating and appreciating film works, acting as cultural events that involve multiple stakeholders. This study examines the organizational challenges and communication barriers within the Festival Film Indonesia (FFI) from 2019 to 2021. We utilized a qualitative case study methodology and conducted semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, film practitioners, and industry experts. The findings reveal significant communication barriers that impact program coordination, organizer involvement, curation processes, and audience engagement. These barriers contribute to inconsistencies and inefficiencies in the festival's execution. The study highlights the need for structured communication protocols and the integration of digital tools to enhance coordination among stakeholders. The proposed solutions aim to improve the festival's organization, ensuring it fulfills its role as a platform for cultural exchange and industry development. This research contributes to the broader understanding of film festival management and offers practical insights for future improvements in similar events.

**Keywords:** film festival, identity, media communication, Indonesia.

## Resumen

Los festivales de cine sirven como plataformas vitales para difundir y apreciar obras cinematográficas, actuando como eventos culturales que involucran a múltiples partes interesadas. Este artículo examina los desafíos organizativos y las barreras de comunicación dentro del Festival de Cine de Indonesia (FFI, por su sigla en inglés: Festival Film Indonesia), de 2019 a 2021. Utilizamos una metodología cualitativa de estudio de caso y realizamos entrevistas semiestructuradas con interesados clave, incluidos funcionarios del Gobierno, profesionales del cine y expertos de la industria. Los resultados revelan importantes barreras de comunicación que afectan la coordinación del programa, la participación de los organizadores, los procesos de selección y la participación del público. Estas aportan a la incoherencia y la ineficacia en la ejecución del festival. El estudio subraya la necesidad de protocolos de comunicación estructurados y la integración de herramientas digitales para mejorar la coordinación entre las partes interesadas. Las soluciones propuestas pretenden optimizar la organización del festival, garantizando que cumpla su función de plataforma para el intercambio cultural y el desarrollo

methodology, data processing, analysis, research process, and writing of the text.

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de la industria. Esta investigación contribuye a una comprensión más amplia de la gestión de los festivales de cine y ofrece ideas prácticas para mejoras futuras en eventos similares.

**Palabras clave:** festival de cine, identidad, comunicación con los medios, Indonesia.

## Introduction

A film festival is a public activity that involves various parties in the film ecosystem. Apart from being a medium for appreciating film works, film festivals can also be oriented towards the market that revives the film industry itself. The development of film festivals cannot be separated from the emergence of avant-garde film styles, experimental films, and post-WWI political cinema (de Valck, 2007, p. 26). According to de Valck (2007), the concept of a film festival as a form of celebration aims to interpret the transformation based on the personality and ideology of each of its initiators. Therefore, after World War II, the film festival succeeded in creating an institutional concept that determined problems based on the cultural agenda in organizing a film festival. In addition, de Valck (2007) states that film festivals in the world have three phases of development, initiated by the era of the birth of the Cannes and Venice festivals (1932–1968), which was the formation of a film festival format as part of national cinema shows. After that was the period of independent film festivals, which served as a bridge between motion picture aesthetics and the film industry, from 1970 to 1980. The last was the period when film festivals became part of the institutions that formed professionalization that connected various festivals around the world from the 1980s to the present.

Film festivals, which are numerous today, have become an important and inseparable part of the development of films. We browsed filmfreeway.com, a website portal for film festivals held around the world. This portal accommodates more than ten thousand film festivals spread all over the world. Based on this exploration, it can be said that film festivals are also a space for the intersection of art, business, technology, culture, identity, power, and politics (Rüling & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2010, p. 318). It is common for film festivals to be used as an arena for film practitioners to introduce new products, develop industry standards, build social networks, give awards, and conduct business transactions (Lampel & Meyer, 2008).

As a cultural space, film festivals also form discussion rooms, hold workshops in the form of classes and seminars, and present film markets that bring together film practitioners and the industry that will fund film productions. Although it is undeniable that each film festival has its own style and color, emerging film festivals tend to convey special content. This can be seen in the film festival that emerged in Poland in 1960, where party resolutions in Poland that year indirectly linked the Holocaust or Poland's relations with Jewish people with strong criticism of ideologically inappropriate interpretations of war (Haltof, 2012, p. 109). Communist censorship at the time prevented Polish filmmakers from voicing their real concerns about national history, politics, and issues related to the state of the country at that time. Therefore, the practice of film festivals has emerged to voice several important issues, such as human rights, heroism, and the persistent struggle of the Polish people to issues related to the post-World War II events that befell the country.

In this study, films become part of the mass media in the form of audio-visual that not only has an entertainment function but can also be a means of education (Kabadayi, 2012, p. 317). Films can be an important part of developing an understanding in a country. As previously stated, we tried to understand the emergence of film festivals as a form of publication in a country. This also makes the development of film as a science an important and inseparable part of the emergence of film festivals. This



section is the main framework that forms the emergence of film festival activities, starting from the development of science, to having the possibility to develop a scientific context in the form of industrial applications, which is not only entertaining but also a process of scientific distribution in the form of activity program.

*Festival Film Indonesia* (the Indonesian Film Festival) aka FFI, which was started in 1955, has become the highest event for filmmakers in Indonesia. This festival gives awards for Indonesian film works. In addition to giving awards to filmmakers, FFI is also a benchmark for the success of the Indonesian film industry. FFI as a forum for Indonesian cultural products should ideally not only be an arena for increasing distribution and existence in business. Rather, it should also serve as a place of appreciation for works that reflect the state of the nation and raise important issues. To achieve this ideal, improvements are necessary in the process of organizing the festival. Garin Nugroho on Kompas.com illustrates how a film festival can have an impact on social life in a country. One good example is the Filipino film *Shackled*, which won the best film at the Hanoi International Film Festival (Haniff), 25-29 November 2012. This film unraveled the depravity of the Philippine police, who slickly protected crime in markets and city corners, from pickpockets to drug offenders. A theme that has never straightforwardly appeared in Indonesian cinema. Filipino films were able to win various awards. Their films always contain the three important aspects of freedom, partisanship, and innovation with a simple economy and technology (Nugroho, 2012).

Today, so much of the Indonesian government funds are spent on film activities, from workshops to FFI. However, a film festival is deemed to have less impact in representing film as a cultural product and a marker of the times, as well as insufficient in serving the film community and the work of the professionals. Finally, the film activities culminating in FFI are just ceremonial. This has the potential to encourage the country's best filmmakers to choose to find their homes and their growth map in other places, such as Singapore, Hanoi, Tokyo, and Berlin (Nugroho, 2012).

The main problem examined in this study is the communication barriers in the process of organizing a film festival. These barriers have an impact on the form of the program, the involvement of the organizers, the curation process, the jury, the owner of the works, and the target audience of FFI. Specifically, we examined the implementation of FFI using a phenomenological approach. This approach can identify so many changes that show that this institution is still not "steady" as a forum that should have a role and function in developing the context of films in Indonesia. Films have been declared as a cultural product that can also be a medium for the distribution of knowledge so the practice of film festivals should become a place to accommodate it. Currently, the pattern of organizing FFI is still seen as a celebration to appreciate those who are directly or indirectly involved in it. This is shown by the absence of screenings in FFI until 2020.

In the research process, we assumed that science would create the impression that everyone could participate without difficulty in dealing with issues of legitimacy (Whitley, 1985). This is a symptom that is often found in the process of organizing a festival. Festival activities should be an educational event for the public, not only showing film works but also inviting the wider community to be able to understand the messages in the films. Thus, scientific communication should be able to present a challenge for film festival practitioners or organizers to be smarter in presenting programs with educational content that can be presented to the public.

The main problem investigated in this study is communication barriers in organizing film festivals, impacting program forms, organizer involvement, curation processes, jury,

work owners, and target audiences. Using a phenomenological approach, we identify changes showing that FFI is not yet stable as a platform for film development in Indonesia. Film festivals should serve as educational events, presenting films and inviting public understanding. Effective scientific communication should challenge festival organizers to present educational content to the public.

Adhering to certain conventions to solve communication issues in festivals, this study aims to develop alternative solutions providing academic insights into film festival organization involving stakeholders like film practitioners, program directors, curators, judges, and audiences. The goal is to present an ideal implementation of FFI, serving entertainment, cultural, and industry development sustainably. This study also aims to contribute positively to future research and serve as a reference for similar studies. This research asks several questions, including:

1. What are the communication barriers in the process of organizing the Indonesian Film Festival (FFI) and how do these barriers affect the program forms, organizer involvement, curation process, jury work, owners, and target audience of FFI?
2. How can a phenomenological approach identify changes in the organization of FFI and develop alternative solutions to overcome these communication barriers?
3. How can these alternative solutions provide academic insights and practical improvements in film festival organization involving various stakeholders, and contribute positively to the future development of FFI?

Like a professional actor, we adhered to certain conventions to be accepted in the process of solving problems in the communication process that occurs at the film festival, such as the selection of methods and interpretation of the responses that arise from the data collection process in the field. This complexity can create communication barriers for users who are directly involved in it. In this case, film practitioners as filmmakers and viewers or festival visitors who attend the festival.

Based on the aforementioned problems, this study aims to develop alternative solutions that can provide insight into the academic field of the practice of organizing a film festival that involves various stakeholders, such as film practitioners, program directors (artistic), curator judges, and audiences. Furthermore, this study is expected to provide an ideal picture of the implementation of FFI as a benchmark for film development in Indonesia, both in terms of entertainment, cultural products, and industry, which will ultimately make this activity sustainable. This study is also expected to make a positive contribution to future research and can be used as an information reference for similar research in the future.

## Literature Review

### Previous Studies

The substantial amount of scholarly work on the subject highlights how these events have become embedded in cultural practices. In other words, the higher the quality and recognition of a film festival, the less effort is required to educate practitioners about its functional dimensions. Taking the above into account, we felt the urge to develop a discourse on curatorial practice as a form of support that builds discourse on the implementation of the film festival. Here is the summary of studies related to film festivals:

1. "Film Festivals, Programming, and the Building of a National Cinema" (Czach, 2004).

The focus of this research is film festival programming that is poorly understood or interrogated:

As Patricia Thomson recently noted in a *Variety* article, “Everyone knows that acceptance to a high-profile fest ratchets up the chances of a film’s success. But few understand the mechanics of the selection process.” How film festivals determine their choices and the impact of these choices is a complex yet unexplored phenomenon.

As film festivals around the world continue to evolve, the question of how film festivals and forms of programming contribute to global film culture, the life of film festival cities, and the success of individual films and filmmakers require serious consideration. (Czach, 2004, p. 77)

2. “Film Festivals: History, Theory, Method, Practice” (de Valck *et al.*, 2016).

This study presents a major addition to the literature on film festivals:

With a combination of chapters that specifically examine history, theory, method, and practice, it offers a clear structure and a systematic approach to the study of film festivals. Offering a collection of essays written by well-established international scholars, it covers well-known film festivals in Europe, North America, and Asia, but equally pays attention to the wide variety of small and/or specialized events taking place around the world. [This research] provided essential knowledge on the origin and development of film festivals, discusses the use of theory to study festivals, explores the methods of ethnographic and archival research, and looks closely at the professional practice of film programming and film funding. (p. i)

3. “Implementation of SWOT Analysis in the Solo Documentary Film Festival Development Strategy” (Putra, 2021).

This research is formulated for the implementation of the Solo Documentary Film Festival. The researcher described a SWOT analysis that aimed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the ongoing film festival program (Putra, 2021, p. 11).

4. “Research on the Construction of Intercultural Management Strategy in the ‘Silk Road International Film Festival’” (Hu & Gao, 2019).

This research is used as a form of cultural exchange. The Silk Road International Film Festival provides the possibility of fruitful collaboration on the growth of the city and the national film industry. The holding of the festival with the theme of culture tries to promote the culture of the Silk Road in China. This film festival aims to carry out city branding through cultural programs contained in film festival activities (Hu & Gao, 2019, p. 600).

5. “The Dutch Film Festival Landscape: A Walk-Through” (van Vliet, 2018).

This research compared two festival seasons that took place in the Netherlands. From the comparison, the researcher saw the tendency of emerging trends in the film works in the Netherlands. This research also made observations on several types of films that represent the development of issues in the Netherlands (van Vliet, 2018, p. 269).

6. “The Concept of Urban Space of Yogyakarta in the Curation of the Documentary Film Festival and the Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival 2019” (Setiawati, 2020).

This study described the process of making a film festival program to provide social space in film festival activities, especially at two major film festivals held in Yogyakarta (Setiawati, 2020, p. 6).

## Communication Management in Organizing Film Festivals

Effective communication management refers to the systematics directed at planning, monitoring, and controlling all communication channels in an organization. Aspects of developing a communication management strategy lead to internal and external communication from information managers, including online communication (Johnson, 2012). Communication management in organizing a film festival is a form of proactive effort from the organizers, stakeholders, and practitioners, including filmmakers, curators, judges, and audiences.

Krezner's definition of effective communication includes the following key factors: (a) the exchange of information, (b) the act of transmitting information, (c) oral and written messages, (d) techniques for expressing ideas effectively, and (e) the process of exchanging meaning between individuals through the same system and symbols (Rajhans, 2018). In effective communication, the stakeholders carry out effective management of information exchange. This is done to ensure that every job goes well. Stakeholders involved in a process (work) need confidence that the efforts they are undertaking can be identified and communicated (Bourne, 2016).

Bourne (2013) also proposes five important steps in the process of effective communication management to understand the concept of efficiency in communication, including (1) identifying all stakeholders, (2) prioritizing all stakeholders, (3) visualizing and deciding on the strategy that will be used by stakeholders, (4) involve stakeholders, and (5) monitor the communication of all stakeholders during activities taking place. The first three steps provide all the information needed to develop an effective communication strategy, and the fourth step allows the entire team involved to identify additional information. The fifth step would provide a platform to see if the strategy implemented has been successful.

The communication factor is often considered as a sub-system that complements the overall management pattern in an organization. In other words, the communication factor is not an essential factor in achieving the organization's goals. However, it is common for problems caused by communication failures in the management pattern of an organization to occur. Therefore, it is necessary to have a plan or strategic steps in making decisions related to communication management in an organization.

Communication management is a substantial area of project management that arises because of the significant effect on an activity program. Communication management can also be regarded as an instrument to manage all forms of communication that are aligned internally and externally to achieve effective results (Elving *et al.*, 2012). The nature of communication management is that the process can systematically control and review the communication channels used in a project, it also accurately manages and distributes communication instructions (Elving *et al.*, 2012).

The communication management process helps to approach the key relationships between the individuals involved and the information needed to fulfill communication needs (Caltrans, 2007). Therefore, communication management is particularly useful in helping to indicate and develop a communication plan for a project, effectively using relevant methods to disseminate information and document project records for future needs (Ahuja & Priyadarshini, 2015; Caltrans, 2007). In organizing a film festival, it is necessary to design supporting programs that can clearly convey information to a wide audience.



## Methodology

Williams in Moleong (2010, p. 4) states that qualitative research methodology is collecting data in a natural setting, using natural methods, and carried out by people or researchers who are naturally interested. According to Bogdan and Taylor, qualitative research methods produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior (Moleong, 2010). Other experts state that methodology is the process, principles, and procedures used to approach problems and seek answers, or a general approach to examining research topics (Mulyana, 2004, p. 145).

This study uses pieces of thought from previous research on film festivals. Research related to film festivals is a research discipline built from the many film festivals and thoughts about the importance of organizing them. Filmmakers, film practitioners, and media activists have shown their attention to film festivals, which in turn has developed a scientific discipline that examines the relationship between film festivals and fields of science outside the humanities and social sciences (Rüling & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2010). Film festivals are multidisciplinary studies that provide space for film studies, media studies, culture, and organizational studies (de Valck, 2006; Jordanova, 2009).

Upon collecting data through observation, document analysis, event material, and event interviews, the last step is analyzing the data collected with credibility. Since all the required data had been collected, the next process was to select the data and classify it into primary and secondary data groups. We did this to facilitate the process of preparing research reports. In addition, the process of selecting the data makes it easier to direct the research focus so that it is not biased.

This study used a qualitative study approach to see the forms of communication barriers in the implementation of FFI using the case analysis method. Maxfield in Nazir (2011) describes research on the status of research subjects concerning a specific or distinctive phase of the overall personality. Case analysis research aims to provide in detail the background, nature, and distinctive character of the case, which then from the characteristics above will be made into a general matter (Nazir, 2011). The data obtained came from a semi-structured interview process with eight stakeholders who have been and are currently involved in the implementation of FFI (2019–2021).

Yin (2018) describes five components of a case study research design, which includes (1) research question, (2) proposition (if any), (3) unit of analysis, (4) logic connecting data to the proposition, and (5) criteria for interpreting findings (Yin, 2018). Initially, Yin (2011) described only three steps, including (1) defining the “case,” (2) selecting one of four types of case study designs, and (3) using theory in design work. Additionally, Yin (2014, p. 32) also explains that case studies are research methods that examine contemporary events when relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated reasonably in a scientific study.

Meanwhile, Zucker (2009) suggests more specific steps as a general case study guide that can guide the researcher’s methodology, including (1) the purpose and rationale of the case study, (2) design based on the unit of analysis and research objectives, (3) data collection and management techniques, (4) complete case description, (5) focus on analysis that builds on themes related to objectives and units of analysis, (6) analysis of findings based on objectives, reasons, and research questions (case perspective, disciplinary perspectives, cross-case comparisons, case writing from an emic perspective, and biographies, autobiographies, narratives), and (7) formation of rigor (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmation).

In this study, the interviews carried out included three recommended stages, including interpretation of meaning memory, where the researcher offered an interpretation of the interviewees' understanding of the phenomena; hermeneutics or interpretation of suspicion in which we compare the experiences of the interviewees with other similar experiences of the researcher; and provision of simple case studies derived from the interviewees' own experiences (Davidsen, 2013; Ricoeur, 2008).

In this study, the policymakers who were the main samples could tell or provide data in the form of activities that occurred during FFI. In other words, the personal experiences of the respondents were the main data to be analyzed. Data collection for this study used a purposive sampling technique from five respondents who were related to FFI from 2019 to 2021.

We conducted semi-structured interviews with eight stakeholders who were directly involved in the organization of FFI during the specified period. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility in probing deeper into specific areas of interest while maintaining consistency across interviews. The interviewees were selected based on their roles and involvement in the FFI, with criteria including direct involvement in organizing or managing FFI, experience in film festival programming or curation, and stakeholder perspectives from different areas such as government officials, film practitioners, and industry experts.

The interview questions were designed to cover topics such as communication barriers encountered during the organization of FFI, the impact of these barriers on program forms, organizer involvement, and curation processes, perceptions of FFI's role in promoting Indonesian cinema, and suggestions for improving the organization and communication strategies of FFI. The interviews were transcribed and coded using thematic analysis. The coding process involved familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts, generating initial codes for key concepts and themes, reviewing and refining codes to identify patterns, and defining and naming themes that capture the essence of the data. Data analysis was conducted using NVivo software to ensure a systematic and rigorous approach. The analysis focused on identifying common themes related to communication barriers and their effects, as well as potential solutions to improve the festival's organization.

The theoretical framework for this study is informed by works on film festival studies, communication management, and organizational behavior. Key references include Cudny's (2016) "research methodology in the analysis of festivals" and Vilhjálmsdóttir's (2011) master's dissertation on film festivals as field-configuring events and their adaptation to digitalization. These references provide insights into the complexities of organizing film festivals and the role of communication in facilitating effective festival management.

We linked communication and socialization management in the implementation of FFI in 2021 with its implementation in previous years (2018-2020). This comparison was made based on the decision of the organizing committee which rotates stakeholders (in this case, the FFI executive committee) every three years. The selection of FFI as a case study was a decision that we took, considering that FFI is a national-scale film festival that can represent the development of film as a product of Indonesian culture in the global arena.

## Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study are based on the analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with eight stakeholders involved in the organization of the Indonesian Film





Festival (FFI) from 2019 to 2021. The interviewees included government officials, film practitioners, and industry experts. The analysis revealed several key themes related to communication barriers, their impact on the festival's organization, and potential improvement solutions.

A major theme that emerged from the interviews was the existence of significant communication barriers during the organization of FFI. All interviewees acknowledged that these barriers affected various aspects of the festival, including program forms, organizer involvement, curation processes, jury work, ownership of works, and audience engagement. One interviewee noted, "The communication between different stakeholders is often fragmented, leading to misunderstandings and delays in decision-making" (personal communication, August 13, 2022). Another interviewee highlighted the lack of a cohesive communication strategy, stating, "There is no clear protocol for communication, which results in inconsistent messaging and confusion among organizers and participants" (personal communication, October 8, 2022).

The communication barriers identified had a profound impact on the overall organization of FFI. Several interviewees pointed out that the lack of effective communication led to poorly coordinated programs and events. One interviewee mentioned, "The curation process suffers because the curators are not always on the same page with the organizers. This affects the quality of the film selection" (personal communication, October 8, 2022). Another interviewee emphasized the impact on jury work, explaining, "Jurors often receive incomplete information about the films they are supposed to judge, which affects their ability to make informed decisions" (personal communication, October 8, 2022).

Despite the challenges, there was a consensus among the interviewees on certain key issues. All agreed that the current communication practices need substantial improvement to enhance the effectiveness of FFI. One interviewee suggested, "We need a standardized communication protocol that all stakeholders can follow to ensure clarity and consistency" (personal communication, August 13, 2022). Another common point of agreement was the need for greater audience involvement in the festival. An interviewee remarked, "The festival should not only cater to industry professionals but also engage the general public more effectively" (personal communication, October 8, 2022).

The interviewees proposed several solutions to overcome the communication barriers and improve the organization of FFI. One of the primary suggestions was the implementation of regular and structured communication channels. As one interviewee put it, "We should have regular meetings and updates to keep everyone informed and aligned" (personal communication, October 8, 2022). Another suggestion was the use of digital tools to facilitate better communication and coordination. An interviewee noted, "Utilizing project management software and communication platforms can help streamline the process and reduce misunderstandings" (personal communication, October 8, 2022).

The thematic analysis of the interview data provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by FFI and the potential strategies for improvement. The use of NVivo software allowed for systematic coding and identification of recurring themes. The analysis highlighted the importance of effective communication in the successful organization of film festivals and the need for a more structured approach to managing communication among stakeholders.

To enter the global film scene, the Indonesian film industry is trying to keep up with competitions that are considered strategic. In 1954, Indonesia intended to participate in the Asia Pacific Film Festival, which was first held in Tokyo. However, the tension between the Indonesian government and the Japanese government regarding the war at

that time resulted in Indonesia not participating. Djamaluddin Malik as the initiator of Indonesia's participation in the Asia Pacific Film Festival with Umar Ismail finally held FFI on March 30–April 5, 1955, in Jakarta (Teguh, 2018). 1955 was the first year FFI was held. This Film Festival activity was initiated by film figures who formed the Indonesian Film Festival committee. The award was named the First Indonesian Film Festival prize.

FFI failed to be held in 1957, 1958, and 1959. In 1960 the second FFI was held, then in 1967, the Film Appreciation Week was held and later considered the third FFI. Later, in 1970, journalists through *Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia* (the Indonesian Journalists Association) aka PWI, Wijaya Seksi Film, organized a festival entitled the selection of the best actors and actresses. In the third year, namely 1973, this festival was held in conjunction with FFI which was held by *Yayasan Film Indonesia* (the Indonesian Film Foundation) aka YFI. The two festivals lasted until 1975 when the government forced the PWI version to be integrated with the YFI version. Furthermore, FFI took place regularly with the chairman of the organizers alternating from the two film organizations.

FFI was held regularly from 1973 to 1991. In 1979, the government through the Ministry of Information formed the National Film Council. In 1981, the role of YFI in organizing FFI was taken over by the government. In 1982, FFI was officially managed by the National Film Council. Starting in 1986, the National Film Council formed a permanent committee for FFI as the executor until 1992. For the next twelve years, FFI was not held at the same time as the decline of film, which was known as the suspended animation period for Indonesian films. It was only in 2004 that FFI was held again with the facilitation of the government. Specifically, the organizer of FFI this year is the implementing committee of *Badan Pertimbangan Perfilman Nasional* (the National Film Advisory Board) aka BP2N.

The re-organization of FFI in 2004 would have restored the confidence of filmmakers in Indonesia. In 2005, FFI was again held in Jakarta with a significant increase in the number of participants in line with the increase in the number of Indonesian film productions. Through FFI, filmmakers and the public interact through quality-oriented films.

In 2006, FFI was held again in Jakarta. Meanwhile, in 2007, FFI culminated in Pekanbaru. Aside from being marked by an increase in the number of FFI participants that year, it was also marked by the widespread appreciation of the public for national films. In 2008, FFI took place in Jakarta and Bandung, and a series of appreciation and promotion activities were held at FFI with the highest number of participants in FFI history since 2004. It was at FFI 2008 that the slogan Rise Towards a New Image was proclaimed, marked by an updated Citra trophy design. The 2008 FFI is listed as the cleanest when it comes to controversy. In 2009, the National Film Advisory Board together with the government formed the Indonesian Film Festival Committee as the executor of FFI. Since then, the implementation of the FFI has been controversial again, so the committee was disbanded.

In 2011, FFI was held again by an executive committee formed by the government through the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. In 2012, the organizing committee and the executive committee were formed by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy to carry out FFI until now.

A film festival is a cultural production event in which there is a meaning-making process, this process is seen as the result of the institutional structure, or values held by certain actors (filmmakers and film practitioners). The artistic value of a work of art (film) that is displayed does not lie in its material properties, but in the individuals, institutions, and processes that mediate between the artist/filmmaker and the audience



(Bowler, 1984; Crane, 1989; Moulin, 1987). The mediator's position in this social space (the sphere of cultural production) plays an important structuring role by suggesting cognitive (filling) strategies for meaning-making (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 728).

Making artistic meanings becomes a reference as well as a form of spreading cultural codes, which are related to the mediator's position (and taking strategic positions) in the cultural field. This is done through mediator tendencies, a set of dispositions (objective) held by virtue of their place in the social order (Bourdieu, 1984). Film festivals can be regarded as a modern art biennale that functions as a unique way of presenting films to the art world and gathering people/visitors to participate in a particular program (Hayes, 2016, p. 68). This activity is also an important event that brings together film producers, directors, artists, audiences, aspiring directors, and producers. Major film festivals started with the Academy Awards, also known as the Oscars, in 1929. While these are more of a ceremony than a festival, the Oscars recognize and honor film excellence. After the Academy Awards, the Venice Film Festival (1932), the Moscow International Film Festival (1932), the Locarno Film Festival (1946), and the Cannes Film Festival (1946) emerged and enlivened the film festival program in various parts of the world. Most of these festivals are considered prestigious events in the film industry, and each assigns a different value to the films it chooses. Submitting a film to a prestigious festival allows the film to be recognized by a certain group of fans and establishes its place in the cinema industry. Film festivals also have an important role in strengthening and introducing different cultures globally, providing cultural activities, and spaces for experimentation and entertainment (de Valck, 2007).

## Film Festival as Public Media

Currently, film festivals have become an agenda that not only displays films as works, but also shows the process of production, distribution, and publication of films. The people involved in it are increasingly diverse. Initially, the film festival only accommodated film practitioners or actors, but now it is starting to spread to college campuses and film schools. This activity is also an event that can showcase works so that they can be appreciated by the public.

The practice and pattern of conducting film festivals have also developed very rapidly. They were originally just a celebration and a place of appreciation, but transformed into a complex form, and provided greater opportunities for the people involved. Therefore, the notion that the festival is just an exhibition is slowly disappearing, considering that currently the world's major film festivals, such as the Cannes Film Festival and the Berlinale International Film Festival, also offer finance for production, social networks, and distribution of film works (Iordanova, 2009). Hence, film festivals have indeed become very closely related to political and industrial aspects since the beginning. Thus, film festivals can also be said to be key players in the development of the current film industry (Iordanova & van de Peer, 2014).

Today, there have been various recent studies on the history of cinema globally through the lens of film festivals. These studies are a concrete attempt to highlight things that were initially overlooked, especially in the understanding of film as an entertainment medium. Nowadays, film festivals have moved forward in a more realistic direction, especially with the fact that film works are part of a cultural product.

Whether film festivals can be described as a "public space" (de Valck, 2007) or a cosmopolitan space (Chan, 2011), film festivals are related to social and cultural issues (Elsaesser, 2005). Elsaesser (2005) brings this focus to a wider audience discussion that

refers to the place or region of the film festival being held. There is a dynamic relationship between the organization of film festivals and their audiences, this is due to the involvement of many policymakers and public actors who are related to the organization of film festivals, both on the national and international levels (de Valck, 2019). There is a shift in the form of the program that appears in the organization of the film festival. Film festivals are not only a place to receive awards but also adjust to the needs of the audience. This decision is interpreted as a process of rediscovering identity and seeking independent industrial partnerships to continue to grow and remain competitive (de Valck, 2019).

The process of organizing a film festival involves many parties. It also involves sending messages in various forms. The form of the message that is distributed can be said to be very important, considering that the current process of organizing a film festival needs to be interpreted as a cultural activity that is not only entertaining but can also be an educational medium that ultimately provides positive values for the films presented. In addition, film as a cultural product has an educational function, so the delivery of messages in the process of organizing a film festival needs to reach the recipient of the message correctly.

Communication barriers often occur in the process of organizing film festivals. This study looks at the extent to which communication barriers affect the program form, the decision-making process, and the form of publication contained in FFI. Communication barriers also affect the process of how film festival attendees receive messages. This of course affects the way the community understands, interprets, and appreciates the ongoing FFI implementation.

This study includes a study of the forms of communication barriers that occurred in the implementation of FFI in 2019, 2020, and 2021. This is because the implementation of the largest film festival in Indonesia has undergone structural changes that seem significant, especially in the delivery of theme ideas, program forms, and the implementation of the ongoing festival.

As described briefly in the previous section, the FFI that has been going on since 1955 has often encountered problems. However, in the last three years, FFI has begun to show changes that also follow the development of the current pattern of Film Festival implementation.

Referring to the development of third-world cinema, FFI—which has been held since the 50s—should be a regular form to discuss the trends of the film works circulating in Indonesia. However, based on changes in the management structure to the naming of activities, the program, which is considered the highest event for filmmakers in Indonesia, shows that it does not have consistency in its implementation. This is one of the factors causing the loss of identity in national film works, especially in Indonesia.

Films that are circulated both through cinemas and over-the-top (OTT) services are still unable to show the uniqueness of Indonesian films. Their storytelling and visual form still cannot represent the reality that happens in this country. Films are still shown as entertainment that seeks to bring happiness without bringing educational value, which is not in line with the principle that films are cultural products that have an educational purpose.

Famous international film festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Toronto, and Sundance play a significant role in national and international film culture, bringing concentrated attention from the press, industry, and public to local films. While each of these festivals provides a platform to showcase their international selections, highlighting



local filmmaking is also common in programs such as the *Perspektive Deutsches Kino* (Perspectives on German Cinema) at the Berlin Festival, the American Showcase and American Spectrum at Sundance, or the Canadian Perspective at TIFF (Czach, 2004).

In this study, interviews were conducted with four respondents who are related to the implementation of the Indonesian Film Festival. The analysis in the interview is the practice of organizing the Indonesian Film Festival and the programming patterns that appear in each of its implementations. The Indonesian Film Festival, which has been going on since the 1950s, can be said to have not had an established form to this day. This is shown by the constant changes in each implementation. These changes are a form of inconsistency that ultimately impacts the program in its implementation.

FFI is an appreciation activity that is funded by the government, especially the Ministry of Education and Culture, and part of the funding is from sponsors. The support that can be obtained from FFI is information about appreciation and campaigns for Indonesian films. (Chand Parwez, former chairman of the Indonesian Film Agency, personal communication, January 5, 2022)

FFI, which is currently under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, in practice, is still looking for an established form of implementation. The Indonesian Film Agency is an organization ratified by Law No. 33 of 2009 concerning Film in Indonesia. Since its inception, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology has mandated the implementation of the Indonesian Film Festival at the Indonesian Film Festival per the mandate stated in Law No. 33 of 2009.

We [Indonesian Film Agency] always evaluate and I as a practitioner realize that every festival has its own character. Practically, evaluations are carried out regularly and improvements to things that have not been maximized are going quite well (Chand Parwez, personal communication, January 5, 2022).

In the last two years, FFI has succeeded in proving that Indonesian cinema continues to move and advance under any conditions. Two years ago, under the leadership of Lukman Sardi, and last year, under the leadership of Reza Rahadian, the FFI committee managed to include the President, and it was a success. (Chand Parwez, personal communication, January 5, 2022)

We still feel that the benchmark that should be achieved by holding FFI as the highest event for film practitioners in Indonesia must substantially appreciate film works. The euphoria of holding FFI in practice has not been able to distribute film works optimally. "There are many kinds of film festivals. In general, some film festivals do film screenings and some only hold pitching programs for filmmakers to get production funds" (Budi Irawanto, academician, director of JAFF NETPACK, and member of the 2021 FFI Judging Commission, personal communication, September 26, 2022). FFI only gives awards to film practitioners determined by the relevant associations without involving the public's view as film audiences.

The films that are circulated every year are included in the committee's pocket. Film producers can also directly register their films for inclusion in FFI, but most of them are chosen by the organizers. That is why we set up a selection committee consisting of film practitioners, directors, writers, and others. (Marlina Yulianti, Civil Service for Film Culture, Directorate of Film, Music and New Media, Ministry of Cultural Education, Research and Technology, personal communication, May 22, 2021)

We believe that the possibility of subjectivity in the selection of film works that enter this event is extremely high, considering that the selection process does not go through the presentation stage (either in the form of work data or direct presentation).

We believe that the selection process is a key factor in the formation of the objectivity of the selected film. It can also fundamentally show the development of film works that appear in a country. Films as a representation of cultural forms need to have a vital role in the distribution process to their consumers (in this case the audience) both at national and international levels (de Valck, 2010).

The selection process that does not go through public presentations and screening programs is also a big question mark; how do they determine the films that qualify for the nominations?

The films that have been entered are selected based on their genre. After being selected, we will give it to the related association. After that, the association determines the winner according to the category. For example, the directors' association chooses the best director, and so on. (Rangga Wisesha, curator of the 2020 Indonesian Film Festival, and academic, personal communication, May 2, 2021)

This statement strengthens our suspicion of subjectivity in the selection of nominations at FFI. The nominations chosen may be contrary to the dynamics of the emerging trends in society (audience).

Film festivals need to facilitate public access to outstanding film works. Associations of policymakers, practitioners, and film actors who are members of associations in their respective fields can meet the needs of selecting categories in a film festival. However, it would be better if it were carried out in conjunction with the implementation of supporting programs, such as screenings, open applications, and pitching programs to fulfill the understanding of film practitioners and the public in general regarding the great ideas and objectives of organizing a film festival.

Programs in the form of parallel events that are side by side with the main event of organizing a film festival can be an alternative to fulfill the public's understanding of the idea of organizing a film festival. Events in the form of seminars, workshops, studio visits, and program residencies for international filmmakers can provide insight into the ideas raised by film festival organizers. In addition, film festivals also need to get more in-depth attention as an organization of public activities. Therefore, the involvement of the wider community is an important part of its implementation.

## Conclusion

Identity in organizing a film festival requires ideas on the diversity of experience of ideas. The findings on the organization of film festivals with the FFI case study provide a perspective on the organization of film festivals as an alternative distribution and exhibition network. This means that the festival is not only a form of celebration filled with frenetic and luxurious events but also needs to be a medium for public education. Film as a cultural product should be a channel for delivering education to the public. Using a study point of view related to the implementation of the film festival, we saw the need to design an activity program that coincided with the main FFI event as a context for understanding audience-centered ideas. The many program activities in organizing film festivals that intersect with art, industry, technology, culture, organization, curation process, programming, and identity in the film industry create space for policymakers and film practitioners to develop a common frame of reference (Rüling & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2010).

Informants and respondents who were interviewed in this study openly stated that the film festival is a combination of a business model and audience appreciation. In other words, audience involvement is an important part of organizing a film festival. The process

of organizing FFI still does not explicitly involve the audience as an important part of the continuity of the activity. The involvement of the audience should be a benchmark for the delivery of ideas from organizing a film festival. In this way, program activities that involve audiences can provide an identity that strengthens the experience of a film festival (Ingold, 2013; Rastegar, 2012), which means program designers at film festivals need to ensure that the platform and form of activity can effectively convey ideas, forms of engagement, and variety of materials provided to film festival audiences.

This study contributes to the process of understanding the role of an effective program form in organizing a film festival. The role of this program form will also have an impact on the formation of identity, reputation, and film festival experience for the audience. This study shows that the implementation of FFI needs to pay attention to the form of activities contained in the idea of public programs. The consideration from the input of this study is that film festivals need to be a model for distributing cultural products complete with educational aspects so that public understanding of films as cultural products can also have an impact on the process of public education about film works. Therefore, films can be a representation of national identity, not just for entertainment. In addition, this research also considers the side of the film industry, which in practice is a form of multi-disciplinary industry, so there needs to be an understanding of the values that arise from every appreciation of film works.

Film festivals need to have a positive impact, so the programs in them need to be a representation of the ideas raised. Departing from the programming pattern that occurs in the organization of the film festival, stakeholders, practitioners, and filmmakers have a two-way appreciation platform. In addition, for the audience (appreciators), the appreciation platform can also be a space for criticism that can advance films in a country, in terms of work, aesthetics, industry, distribution, and identity.

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