



Mappacci Film Marketing Communication Strategy in Penetrating the National Film Industry

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Abstract

This study aims to examine and analyze the marketing communication strategies of the film Mappacci, as well as to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in its distribution process toward entering the national film industry. The research was conducted at PT 786 Production and Timur Picture. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation studies, then analyzed to provide a comprehensive picture of the film's marketing strategy. The study discusses how the film Mappacci managed to penetrate the national film industry despite the challenges faced by local films in competing with dominant national and international productions. The findings reveal that Mappacci implemented an Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) approach by combining both online and offline communication channels. However, not all elements of the marketing mix (7P) were optimally utilized. Supporting factors for its success include the strength of local cultural narratives and strong community engagement, while inhibiting factors involve limited distribution networks, restricted market access, and constrained promotional capacity. This study concludes that the success of Mappacci cannot be separated from the implementation of an integrated marketing communication strategy. Nevertheless, further optimization of all marketing mix elements is required to achieve more sustainable competitiveness in the national film industry.

Introduction

Film, as defined in Undang-Undang No. 33 Tahun 2009 tentang Perfilman, is an artistic and cultural work that functions not only as entertainment but also as a medium of information, education, culture, and economy, built upon the principles of cinematography (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia No. 33 Tahun 2009). As a mass communication tool, film is capable of shaping perceptions, strengthening collective memory, and negotiating cultural identity (Sen & Hill, 2000; Imanjaya, 2009). In Indonesia, the journey of film has been intertwined with the broader dynamics of political power, social transformation, and cultural resistance, reflecting both global cinematic influences and the unique characteristics of local narratives (Heider, 1991; Hanan, 2017).

The history of Indonesian cinema demonstrates cycles of rise, stagnation, and revival. The first film acknowledged as Indonesian, *Lutung Kasarung* (1926), though produced by foreign filmmakers, introduced the practice of adapting local stories into film format (Kristanto, 2005; Said, 1991). Usmar Ismail, considered the father of Indonesian cinema, strengthened this identity through *Darah dan Doa* (1950), a film entirely directed and produced by Indonesians, thus establishing the foundation for the national film industry. The 1950s to the 1970s saw a golden age, marked by institutional support and prolific production, including the birth of

Festival Film Indonesia. However, political upheavals during the 1960s, coupled with economic challenges, brought stagnation to the industry.

The resurgence of Indonesian cinema in the late 1990s and early 2000s coincided with the reform era, which provided greater freedom of expression and opened new opportunities for young filmmakers (Uddin et al., 2025; Chukwuma, 2026; Asena et al., 2026). The new wave of Indonesian films not only revived domestic audiences' interest but also expanded to international festivals, elevating the country's cultural diplomacy (Intason, 2026; Putri & Sazali, 2026; HA, 2022). Alongside this national development, local film industries in regional cities such as Makassar began to show significant creative energy, albeit with structural and distributional challenges (Puspitasari et al., 2024; Ferdiansyah, 2025; Yoedtadi et al., 2025).

Makassar, as a cultural and economic hub of Eastern Indonesia, has its own historical trajectory in cinema (Perkasa & Arainikasih, 2023; Strassler, 2008). During the 1970s, locally produced films such as *Pendekar Sumur Tujuh* (1971) and *Senja di Pantai Losari* (1975) showcased the capacity of Makassar-based filmmakers to connect with audiences. However, for decades afterward, the city's film production landscape lay dormant, overshadowed by the dominance of Jakarta-based production houses (Nurhafizah et al., 2025). The revival came in the 2010s with independent productions like *Aliguka* (2010), which, despite lacking mainstream distribution, energized a new generation of filmmakers and audiences through alternative screenings in campuses and cultural venues (Parinussa, 2015). The establishment of the South East Asian Screen Academy (SEAScreen) by director Riri Riza further provided training and international exposure for young talents, positioning Makassar as an emerging site of film innovation (Indriasari et al., 2025; Hamdi et al., 2025; Rahmat & Dollah, 2025).

Several Makassar films have achieved both national and international recognition. Short films such as *Sepatu Baru* (2014) by Aditya Ahmad, which won at the Berlin International Film Festival, proved that local narratives from Makassar could resonate globally (Yulianto, 2019). The feature film *Bombe* (2014), though modest in its release, attracted thousands of local viewers and reignited enthusiasm for Makassar-based cinema (Imanjaya & Hanan, 2020). The turning point, however, came with *Uang Panai'* (2016), which drew over half a million viewers nationwide, signaling that local stories rooted in Bugis-Makassar culture could thrive commercially within the competitive Indonesian film industry.

The recent release of *Mappacci* (2023), directed by Andi Burhamzah and produced by Timur Pictures in collaboration with 786 Production, continues this trajectory. By integrating Bugis-Makassar cultural traditions into a modern cinematic narrative, the film successfully attracted more than 328,000 viewers and became one of the most successful regional films after *Uang Panai'* (Daftar Film Indonesia, 2023). The film underscores the relevance of local traditions such as *Mappacci* a cleansing ritual performed before marriage in articulating universal themes of love, loss, and resilience (Hadrawi, 2022). This demonstrates how local culture, when framed cinematically, can bridge regional identity and national audience expectations (Khan et al., 2025; Guo & Srijinda, 2025; Chervyakova & Damásio, 2025).

The success of *Mappacci* also highlights broader issues in the Indonesian film ecosystem. The industry remains highly centralized, with major production houses like Falcon, MD, and Starvision dominating screens and distribution networks. Regional filmmakers often struggle with distribution, marketing, and funding, which hampers their ability to reach national audiences despite strong local support. The achievement of *Mappacci* in penetrating national cinema circuits such as XXI, CGV, and Cinepolis suggests the effectiveness of deliberate communication and marketing strategies in overcoming these structural barriers. Moreover, the

film's use of national music bands like Noah and Geisha for its soundtrack indicates a hybrid strategy of local storytelling paired with national cultural capital.

From a socio-cultural perspective, films like *Mappacci* reveal the power of cinema to negotiate between local specificity and national identity. The debate over whether regional productions should be considered “local” or “national” reflects deeper questions about cultural representation and the inclusivity of the Indonesian film industry (Nuryadin, 2021). As argued by Sen and Hill (2000), cinema in Indonesia is not merely a cultural product but also a political site where regional identities and national discourses intersect. The resonance of Bugis-Makassar traditions with audiences across Indonesia demonstrates that regional culture, when articulated through compelling storytelling, contributes significantly to the pluralism of national cinema.

In this regard, *Mappacci* stands as a valuable case for understanding how local filmmakers navigate the challenges of production, distribution, and marketing in an industry dominated by Jakarta-based players. It shows how cultural narratives rooted in local traditions can be positioned for national consumption through strategic adaptation, collaboration, and promotion. Furthermore, it contributes to the ongoing discussion about the decentralization of Indonesian cinema and the recognition of regional film industries as integral to the national cinematic landscape (Hamdani, 2025; Putri et al., 2023; Anshari, 2026).

Thus, the phenomenon of *Mappacci* is not only a story of a film's commercial success but also a reflection of the broader dynamics of cultural negotiation, industry structure, and audience transformation in contemporary Indonesian cinema. It exemplifies the intersection of tradition and modernity, regional identity and national recognition, as well as art and commerce (Hong, 2026; Abouelela et al., 2026; Hendriyana et al., 2025). Investigating the strategies behind the success of *Mappacci* offers insights into how regional filmmakers can assert their presence within the national film industry and how Indonesian cinema, in its plurality, continues to evolve.

Methods

Research Approach and Design

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach that prioritizes meaning over measurement and seeks to capture the depth and nuance of practices surrounding the marketing and distribution of the film *Mappacci*. Qualitative description is appropriate because the phenomenon under examination how a locally produced film strategizes to enter and perform within the national exhibition circuit unfolds in social, cultural, and industrial contexts that cannot be reduced to numeric indicators. The design emphasizes rich, contextualized accounts of actions, decisions, and interpretations made by producers, publicists, marketers, exhibitors, and observers. Drawing on classic guidance that qualitative research privileges words, images, and documents as data, the study treats the accounts of stakeholders, field observations, and textual traces of campaigns and negotiations as primary material for analysis (cf. Moleong, 2012; Rakhmat, 2012). The descriptive intent is to render a coherent portrait of strategies actually used, the constraints faced, and the reasoning that guided tactical choices during the film's journey to national screens.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher functions as the primary instrument who plans the inquiry, accesses the field, gathers and organizes data, and performs iterative analysis. As an instrument, the researcher's preparedness is validated through familiarity with qualitative methodology and strong domain knowledge of Indonesian film production, marketing, distribution, and exhibition. The

researcher designed interview protocols that contain both closed prompts useful for ensuring systematic coverage of core topics and open prompts that invite participants to narrate experiences, elaborate rationales, and reflect critically on outcomes. In the field, the researcher alternates between an observant and participatory stance: observing events such as campaign rollouts, premiere activities, or exhibitor negotiations when accessible, while also engaging participants in sustained conversations. Field notes, reflexive memos, audio recordings, and photographs are maintained to preserve context and support analytic rigor.

Research Site and Context

The research is situated in Makassar, South Sulawesi, the principal locus of *Mappacci*'s production and a dynamic hub of creative activity in Eastern Indonesia. Makassar provides a fertile setting for examining how regional film ecosystems operate, including their relationships with national distributors and exhibitors such as Cinema XXI, CGV, and Cinepolis. The city's cultural texture especially Bugis-Makassar traditions that inform the film's narrative world offers critical context for understanding the film's branding, positioning, and audience resonance. Conducting the study in Makassar also facilitates proximity to the filmmakers and marketing team, enabling direct access to primary sources and relevant documentation. Fieldwork was undertaken during 2025, aligning with the availability of key informants and the post-release cycle in which strategic reflections could be articulated with clarity.

Participants and Sampling Strategy

Participants were recruited using purposive sampling, focusing on those with direct involvement in or expert knowledge of *Mappacci*'s production, marketing, distribution, and exhibition. The sample includes the producer-director Andi Burhamzah, whose dual role offers a vantage point on creative and business decisions; film director Rusmin Nuryadin, who provides comparative insights on positioning regional films in the national market; film critic and senior journalist Yan Wijdaya, whose observations capture audience trends and industry shifts; digital marketing specialist Novita Sutopo and marketing team member Nirwana, who elucidate campaign planning and execution; and program manager Sunaryo from Cinema XXI, who represents the exhibitor perspective on scheduling, placement, and performance. This constellation of roles ensures triangulation across stakeholder groups and yields a comprehensive view of strategic choices and their outcomes. When participants consented to attribution, names are reported; otherwise, pseudonyms are used to protect confidentiality.

Data Sources and Data Collection

The study draws on primary and secondary data. Primary data consist of in-depth interviews, non-participant observations, and research memos produced during field engagement. Interviews are semi-structured to balance comparability across cases with the freedom to probe contingencies and emergent themes. Conversations are conducted primarily in Bahasa Indonesia (and Makassar where appropriate), recorded with permission, and transcribed verbatim to preserve meaning and tone. Observations focus on visible elements of the marketing mix messaging, timing, partnerships, soundtrack leverage, influencer and media relations

as well as interactions with exhibitors and audience activation efforts around release windows. Secondary data encompass documents that corroborate and contextualize primary accounts, including press kits, social media assets, trailer performance indicators when available, trade and news coverage, festival or award dossiers, and internal notes or schedules that participants agreed to share. The research also consults scholarly and professional literature on Indonesian

film marketing, distribution bottlenecks, and regional cinema to situate findings conceptually (cf. Bungin, 2013).

Data Analysis Procedures

Analysis follows the interactive model articulated by Miles and Huberman, proceeding iteratively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with ongoing verification (Miles & Huberman, 2005). Data reduction begins during fieldwork as transcripts, notes, and documents are read closely and coded inductively to identify salient categories such as positioning strategies, exhibitor negotiations, release timing, soundtrack synergies, regional–national branding, risk management, and post-release amplification. Memo writing accompanies coding to capture emerging connections and rival explanations. Data display is achieved through analytic narratives and matrices that array participants' accounts across themes and phases (pre-release, release, post-release), enabling pattern recognition and comparison. Conclusion drawing proceeds through constant comparison, seeking convergences and divergences among stakeholders' perspectives and checking for negative cases that challenge preliminary interpretations. Verification is embedded throughout via returns to the data, cross-source corroboration, and participant feedback on factual accuracy where feasible. While coding is performed manually to remain close to the material, the researcher maintains an audit trail of code notes, memos, and display drafts to enhance transparency.

Trustworthiness and Validity Checks

Credibility is pursued through triangulation of sources, methods, and times: filmmakers, marketers, critics, and exhibitors are engaged; interviews, observations, and documents are compared; and accounts are revisited across the study period to identify stability or change (Moleong, 2010). Prolonged engagement in the field strengthens contextual understanding and supports the detection of overgeneralizations. Member checks are conducted selectively to confirm descriptive accuracy and correct potential misunderstandings about events or decisions. Dependability is supported by an audit trail that documents sampling rationales, protocol versions, coding notes, and analytic decisions from first contact to final synthesis. Confirmability is reinforced through reflexive memos that record the researcher's assumptions, positionality, and responses to the field, thereby distinguishing participant meanings from researcher interpretations. Transferability is addressed by providing thick description of setting, participants, and processes so that readers can assess applicability to other regional film cases.

Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any point without penalty. Participants are briefed on the study's aims, procedures, and uses of data; consent is obtained prior to recording; and permissions are sought for attributing names when participants prefer to be identified. When anonymity is requested, pseudonyms are used and identifying details are masked in transcripts and reports. Audio files, transcripts, and documents are stored securely on encrypted drives, with access limited to the researcher. Because some participants occupy public roles, the study distinguishes between public statements already in circulation and private disclosures made during interviews, treating the latter as confidential unless explicit permission is granted for attribution.

Data Management and Documentation

All digital assets including audio recordings, transcripts, field notes, photographs, and collected documents are organized in a structured repository with consistent file naming and metadata to

facilitate retrieval and audit. Version control is maintained for interview protocols, consent forms, and analytic memos. Transcripts are checked against recordings for accuracy, and translations to English, when needed for quotation or analysis, are performed by the researcher with attention to preserving idiomatic meaning. Data retention follows institutional norms, with secure storage during the study and responsible disposal or archiving upon completion in accordance with ethical approvals.

Scope and Limitations

The study focuses on *Mappacci* as a single, information-rich case that illuminates how a regional film can penetrate the national market through strategic marketing and distribution. The single-case design affords depth but does not claim statistical generalizability. Access constraints may limit observation of confidential negotiations with exhibitors or proprietary performance metrics; in such instances, triangulation with multiple participants and corroborating documents mitigates gaps. Self-reporting by stakeholders may introduce retrospective rationalization; to address this, the analysis seeks disconfirming evidence, compares accounts across roles, and anchors interpretations in traceable artifacts of the campaign. These limitations are acknowledged as typical of qualitative inquiry into contemporary industry practice and are managed through the validity strategies outlined above.

Results and Discussion

The film *Mappacci* was shot in Makassar, South Sulawesi, and produced by PT 786 Production in collaboration with Timur Picture, two production houses based in the same city. The film has a running time of 109 minutes and premiered in Indonesian cinemas on 24 August 2023. According to director Andi Burhamzah, the project initially began under the direction of Andi Mattuju. However, midway through production, the funding company, 786 Production, terminated Mattuju's contract and appointed Burhamzah to continue as director. The screenplay was written by Oka Aurora, an experienced screenwriter from Jakarta who has worked on several feature-length films.

Filming in Makassar was originally scheduled for 20 days but extended to 30 days due to retakes and the addition of new scenes involving comedians Adhy Basto and Sukri Bassitoayya. This extension altered the production timeline and increased costs. During filming, a dedicated team also recorded behind-the-scenes (BTS) footage, which was later used as promotional material on Instagram and TikTok to attract audience interest. According to Nirwana, the social media administrator, she was tasked by the director to edit and upload one BTS video per day throughout the 30 days of filming.

The production structure of *Mappacci* was relatively simple, with certain roles being merged to reduce costs. For instance, the director also acted as producer and editor. According to Burhamzah, this streamlining helped manage the limited budget. After filming wrapped, the post-production stage began. Editing and color grading were handled directly by Burhamzah himself to save costs, rather than hiring additional professionals. The film's musical score was entrusted to Makassar musician Juang Manyala, who already had experience composing for films.

Parallel to post-production, the executive producer prepared for distribution by securing the necessary permits. Before filming began, the production house had already applied for and obtained the *Tanda Pemberitahuan Pembuatan Film* (TPPF) from the Ministry of Culture's Film Development Center (Pusbangfilm). The TPPF is a prerequisite for any film production that intends to apply for theatrical release. In addition, the film later obtained the *Surat Tanda Lulus Sensor* (STLS) from the Indonesian Film Censorship Board (LSF), confirming its eligibility for public screening.

In terms of distribution, *Mappacci* was released across several national cinema networks, including Cinema XXI, Cinepolis, CGV, Platinum, and independent theaters in smaller towns such as Bone, Sengkang, Poso, and Kendari. The film opened nationwide on 24 August 2023 on 80 screens and remained in cinemas for 45 days. Although the film has yet to be released on streaming platforms (OTT) such as Vidio, WeTV, or Netflix, opportunities remain open for future distribution through both digital platforms and free-to-air television stations like RCTI, SCTV, MNC, and Indosiar.

One of the strengths of *Mappacci* was the early submission of its release request to Cinema XXI, even before filming had been completed. This was crucial, as obtaining a screening slot can take months or even years due to strict programming schedules. Applications are submitted through Cinema XXI's programming division in Jakarta, and only films that pass their curation process are granted release dates. The agreement between production houses and cinemas also includes a revenue-sharing contract.

According to Burhamzah, one of the greatest challenges for regional filmmakers is securing screening schedules in major cinema chains. Many local production houses struggle with distribution access, despite completing their films. He noted, "Many filmmakers in Makassar produce films, but they become stuck when it comes to distribution" (Interview, 7 July 2025). To address this, 786 Production began marketing communications early, negotiating with cinema chains even before post-production was completed. This proactive approach became especially significant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had severely reduced cinema occupancy and even forced nationwide closures.

Field observations and interviews revealed several integrated marketing communication strategies used for *Mappacci*. The production team played a dual role, not only handling technical aspects of filmmaking but also actively promoting the film, liaising with the media, and managing social media campaigns. However, there was no dedicated distribution or marketing division, which meant tasks were often combined with production roles. Only one team member, Nirwana, focused exclusively on managing Instagram and TikTok accounts. She produced and uploaded 30 daily BTS videos in the month leading up to the release, creating consistent and engaging content that allowed audiences to feel emotionally connected to the filmmaking process. Notably, the film's trailer posted on TikTok was viewed 1.3 million times.

Beyond social media, the team also reached traditional media audiences by distributing press releases five times. These were not limited to Makassar-based outlets such as *Harian Fajar*, *Tribun Timur*, *Ujungpandang Ekspres*, and *Berita Kota Makassar*, but also extended to regional newspapers in areas where the film was screened, including *Radar Bone*, *Radar Selatan*, *Palopo Pos*, *Buton Pos*, and *Ambon Ekspres*. This geographically targeted approach successfully built local awareness and community involvement. As a result, *Mappacci* was warmly received upon release, drawing more than 40,000 viewers in its first four days.

Cinemas in Makassar and other eastern Indonesian cities scheduled the film in multiple theaters and screenings per day. For instance, Makassar's M'Tos XXI and Panakukang 21 cinemas screened *Mappacci* up to 11 times daily. Producer Burhamzah and executive producer Mohit expressed pride in the enthusiastic audience response. However, digital marketing specialist Novita Sutopo argued that the marketing strategy was not yet optimal. She emphasized the importance of systematic planning based on segmenting, targeting, and positioning (STP) as well as a complete marketing mix strategy. "Marketing cannot stand alone; it requires research, pricing strategies, product planning, and persuasive tactics to attract audiences to cinemas," she explained (Interview, 15 July 2025).

Film critic and senior journalist Yan Widjaya offered an external perspective, praising the film's universal story, strong editing, and emotional resonance, despite being delivered in the Makassar dialect. He noted significant improvements in cinematography compared to previous regional films and highlighted the use of popular national band soundtracks (Noah, Geisha, D'Masiv), combined with the Bugis folk song *Mappadendang*, which became the closing number of the film. Actor and cultural figure Muhary Wahyu Nurba, who appeared briefly in one scene, praised the film's cultural authenticity, particularly in its portrayal of the traditional *madduta* ceremony, which he considered iconic.

When released, *Mappacci* competed with national and international films such as *Catatan Si Boy*, *Puspa Indah Taman Hati*, *Primbon*, *Megalodon 2*, *Gran Turismo*, and *Batman Returns*. Before its official release, the film held a special screening at Metropole XXI Jakarta on 25 May 2023, attended by Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy Sandiaga Uno. He praised the film for its cultural richness, local dialect, and inclusion of Makassar's tourist destinations, calling it an inspiration for Indonesian filmmakers. He further expressed optimism that the success of films like *Mappacci* could contribute to the revival of the national film industry and generate new employment opportunities.

Ultimately, *Mappacci* screened in 80 cinemas nationwide for over a month, until early October 2023. Its success was the result of combined efforts in early distribution planning, social media activation, traditional media engagement, and community-based cultural positioning.

Marketing Communication Strategies of *Mappacci*

One of the key promotional efforts undertaken by the *Mappacci* team was the organization of a Gala Premiere in Makassar. The event was attended by the cast, crew, social media influencers, community leaders, and various local communities. The Gala Premiere served as a public announcement that the film was ready for release. After the screening, many of the invited guests created posts and content on their personal social media accounts, highlighting the strengths of the film and encouraging wider audiences to watch *Mappacci* in cinemas.

Another major strategy was social media promotion. The film was actively marketed across multiple platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. On these platforms, the production team shared teasers, trailers, and essential information, including release schedules and the list of cinemas screening the film. These online activities significantly expanded the film's reach and engaged audiences beyond Makassar.

In addition, the film emphasized cultural values through community screenings (*nobar komunitas*). Since *Mappacci* portrays the traditional Bugis-Makassar pre-wedding ceremony of the same name, the production team used this cultural theme to connect with local audiences and diaspora communities across Indonesia. They organized community viewing events with groups such as the South Sulawesi Family Association (Kerukunan Keluarga Sulawesi Selatan/KKSS) in Jakarta. These screenings not only introduced Bugis-Makassar traditions but also promoted Makassar's tourism destinations, including Lae-lae Island and Samata Hill.

The film also involved local influencers and comedians in its promotional activities. Well-known Makassar comedians such as Tumming and Abu, Sukri Bassitoayya, Adhy Basto, Oki Palu, Mamak Ramlah, Adhe MPJ, and Zakaribo were cast in the film to add comedic elements. Beyond their roles in the movie, these influencers also promoted *Mappacci* on their Instagram accounts, effectively leveraging their large followings to boost awareness and attract audiences.

Another unique element of the film's communication strategy was the use of popular Indonesian music. *Mappacci* featured hit songs from famous bands such as Noah, D'Masiv, and Geisha. For instance, Noah's *Jalani Mimpi* has been viewed more than 20 million times

on YouTube, while D'Masiv's *Aku Percaya Kamu* has 1.7 million views, and Geisha's *Kering Air Matak* has 17 million views. The inclusion of these songs provided cross-promotional opportunities and helped the film connect with fans of these bands.

To strengthen audience engagement, the production team implemented a Cinema Visit strategy. From the first day of release, the cast visited cinemas in Makassar and other South Sulawesi cities such as Bone and Sengkang, greeting audiences, taking photos, and interacting directly with viewers. According to director Andi Burhamzah, this strategy was effective in creating word-of-mouth promotion, as audiences who met the actors were more likely to share their experiences on social media, thereby encouraging others to watch the film.

Burhamzah also noted that the integration of cultural and tourism elements was a deliberate strategy. By showcasing the Mappacci ceremony alongside a romantic storyline and comedic scenes, the film was designed not only to entertain but also to promote Bugis-Makassar traditions and encourage tourism in South Sulawesi. Furthermore, the film carried an educational dimension by imparting cultural values embedded in the traditional ceremony.

Data from the Indonesian Film Board (BPI) shows that in the last five years, the growth of national films has been promising, reflected in the rising number of productions and audiences. In Makassar, filmmakers have increasingly dared to bring local themes into commercial cinema. At least ten production houses have produced films with local content. For example, Art2tonic's *Bombe* (2014), a drama film, attracted around 50,000 viewers despite being initially released on just one screen. In 2015, PT 786 Production produced the horror film *Sumiati*, which garnered 65,000 viewers, and in 2016, *Uang Panai* became a breakthrough success with 560,000 viewers, the highest for a Makassar-made film.

Following *Uang Panai*, several other local films were released, such as *Parakang* (2017, 42,000 viewers) and *Silariang* (2017, 120,000 viewers). In 2019, Timur Picture and PT 786 Production began working on *Mappacci*, but its release was delayed until 2023 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Upon release, the film was watched by 328,608 people an impressive figure, though still below the record of *Uang Panai*.

Despite these achievements, no Makassar-produced film has yet reached one million viewers, in contrast to major Jakarta-based productions from Falcon, MD, Starvision, and Rapi Films, which benefit from hundreds of screens nationwide and guaranteed release slots. Cultural Minister Fadli Zon has acknowledged the need for fairer screen distribution across Indonesia, noting that the concentration of cinemas in provincial capitals limits access for many regions.

Currently, Indonesia has fewer than 3,000 screens across 800 cinemas, serving a population of more than 277 million. This disparity highlights the challenges faced by regional filmmakers in securing adequate distribution. Research from Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting (SMRC) and Rumahfilm further emphasizes that the concentration of film distribution in the hands of a few major players reduces opportunities for smaller productions.

The broader issue lies in the absence of a plural film market that accommodates diverse genres, budgets, and audience segments. While big-budget films may require millions of viewers to be profitable, smaller films can succeed with 300,000–500,000 viewers if given fair access to screens. Building such a pluralistic market would not only support cultural diversity but also ensure the sustainable growth of Indonesia's film industry as a whole.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the industry, with film production and cinema attendance declining sharply in 2020–2021 due to government restrictions. However, the recovery has been remarkable. Data from Bicara Box Office indicates that cinema attendance in 2023 rose

by 14.5 percent, reaching 114.5 million viewers. This rebound demonstrates that, despite the rise of digital platforms, audiences remain eager to return to cinemas.

Marketing Communication Strategy of *Mappacci*

The marketing communication strategy of *Mappacci* can be analyzed using Don E. Schultz's theory of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and the Marketing Mix (7P) approach. The findings of this study indicate that the marketing team consistently emphasized cultural themes, local identity, and family-related emotions in every promotional material. This was evident in the poster designs, which portrayed the main characters wearing traditional South Sulawesi attire, as well as in the film trailer distributed through Timur Picture's social media platforms and YouTube channel. As a product, *Mappacci* consistently communicated the message that the film belongs to the Bugis-Makassar people, while still remaining relevant to Indonesian audiences more broadly. This created a strong and easily recognizable product identity and brand positioning.

Promotional efforts were primarily directed at the Bugis-Makassar diaspora, cultural communities, students, and housewives. The strategy leveraged nostalgia and local pride to attract audiences to cinemas. This approach is consistent with previous findings by Arifianto and Junaedi (2014) in their research *Distribution and Exhibition of Alternative Films in Yogyakarta*, which concluded that film communities often become the foundation for distributing short and alternative films. Similarly, *Mappacci* relied heavily on Bugis-Makassar communities and diaspora groups. The cultural tradition of *Mappacci* itself became the central strength that resonated with diaspora communities across different Indonesian cities.

Empirical evidence shows that various Bugis-Makassar diaspora communities, particularly the South Sulawesi Family Association (KKSS), organized community screenings (*nonton bareng*) in several cities, including Jakarta, Tanjung Pinang, Jayapura, and Yogyakarta. This marketing communication strategy aligned with the business objective of positioning Makassar-based films as capable of competing nationally. Accordingly, the film's distribution and promotional activities extended beyond Makassar to larger Indonesian cities, particularly in Eastern Indonesia, where cinema facilities are available, such as Kendari, Palu, Kolaka, Sorong, Ambon, and Jayapura. In Jakarta, the marketing team conducted multiple community screenings in collaboration with KKSS organizations across Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek).

Another central component of *Mappacci*'s strategy was the use of multiple communication channels. These included social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, as well as national and local mass media, influencer collaborations, media visits, and cinema visits. Each channel was selected and tailored to the specific characteristics of its target audience. This approach is in line with earlier research by Syifa Mutiara Ummah, Tantan Hermansyah, and Nasichah (2023) in their study *Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy in the Film Nanti Kita Cerita tentang Hari Ini*. Their findings demonstrated that integrated marketing strategies in film typically involve advertising, promotion, public relations, and personal selling, with social media (Instagram and YouTube) serving as primary platforms.

The success of *Mappacci*'s marketing communication can be measured through its achievements: the film attracted 328,608 viewers, generated significant social media engagement, and became a trending topic across various platforms. This reflects the effectiveness of its buzz marketing strategy. From the perspective of the Marketing Mix (7P), *Mappacci* implemented the following strategies:

Product

Mappacci positioned itself as a cultural product offering unique content rarely explored in Indonesian cinema. Its strength lies in the portrayal of Bugis-Makassar traditions, specifically the *Mappacci* ceremony in wedding customs. Beyond entertainment, the film served as cultural documentation and education, conveying philosophical values such as togetherness, family blessings, and cultural identity. The film also demonstrated strong differentiation in a market dominated by horror, comedy, and urban romance genres, offering instead an authentic cultural narrative supported by aesthetic cinematography, traditional costumes, music, and settings.

Price

The pricing strategy adhered to the standard ticket prices of national cinema chains, ensuring that *Mappacci* was neither perceived as overpriced nor undervalued compared to other films. In certain regions with strong emotional ties to the story, such as Bone and Bulukumba, special promotions were offered, including “buy one, get one free” programs. Community screenings (*nobar komunitas*) were also organized at more affordable package rates, strengthening audience engagement and local participation. Giveaways and exclusive screenings with the cast further enhanced audience experiences by turning the ticket price into an entry point for cultural appreciation and direct interaction with the filmmakers.

Place

Distribution was carried out through both national cinema chains (XXI, CGV, Cinepolis) and independent theaters across Indonesia, such as Dakota Sinema Sengkang, Platinum Palopo, and Planet Hollywood Kendari. The strategy combined large-scale exposure in metropolitan cities with outreach to smaller regions, particularly in Eastern Indonesia, to ensure inclusivity. Distribution was launched from Makassar symbolically important as the cultural hub of Eastern Indonesia before expanding gradually to Jakarta and other regions. This phased approach created anticipation and buzz across cities.

Promotion

Promotion was conducted in an integrated and aggressive manner. Online campaigns included trailers, teasers, and behind-the-scenes content distributed across digital platforms, while offline activities such as Gala Premieres, Media Visits, and Cinema Visits built closer relationships with audiences. Collaborations with popular musicians such as NOAH, Geisha, and D'Masiv amplified promotional reach by attracting their fan bases. Local and national media coverage further broadened visibility, ensuring that promotional messages were both nationally widespread and locally grounded.

People

The human element was central to the campaign. The director, cast, and crew actively participated in roadshows, community events, and screenings, engaging audiences directly and creating a sense of authenticity. Influencers and local comedians also played an important role in amplifying promotional efforts through their personal social media accounts, making the campaign relatable and culturally embedded. This “people-to-people connection” approach helped strengthen trust and audience loyalty.

Process

The promotional process was dynamic, iterative, and participatory. Daily behind-the-scenes content created transparency and fostered audience attachment by allowing them to feel involved in the filmmaking journey. The marketing team also adapted strategies based on audience feedback, producing more of the content types that generated higher engagement.

Collaborations with local influencers, student organizations, and community groups turned promotion into a participatory ecosystem rather than a one-way communication process.

Physical Evidence

The physical evidence of the film's promotion was visible through posters, billboards, banners, and official merchandise such as T-shirts. Gala Premieres and roadshows provided tangible experiences for audiences, complete with decorations, red carpets, and interactive booths, reinforcing the professionalism and celebratory spirit of the campaign. The cultural settings and costumes featured in the film itself further served as authentic physical evidence, visually demonstrating the richness of Bugis-Makassar traditions and strengthening cultural pride.

Overall, the marketing communication strategy of *Mappacci* successfully covered all dimensions of the marketing mix (7P). The campaign combined strong cultural narratives (product), adaptive pricing strategies (price), broad and inclusive distribution (place), integrated promotional channels (promotion), direct audience involvement (people), responsive marketing processes (process), and tangible visual representation (physical evidence). By maintaining message consistency, utilizing both digital and traditional media, and leveraging community networks, *Mappacci* was able to penetrate the national market. The film not only entertained but also served as a medium for promoting Bugis-Makassar culture, demonstrating how localized and culturally rooted communication strategies can resonate on a national scale.

The application of Schultz's IMC framework to *Mappacci* highlights that message consistency, integration of communication channels, and audience orientation are critical determinants of success. The film's marketing team effectively implemented these principles by unifying a single cultural message across diverse platforms, from social media to conventional media to community-based promotion. The result was a coherent campaign that elevated *Mappacci* as both a cultural product and a commercially viable film within Indonesia's competitive film industry.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for *Mappacci* in Entering the National Film Industry

Supporting Factors

The supporting factors that enable *Mappacci* to penetrate the national film industry can be seen from the strength of its local cultural content. The film highlights the Bugis-Makassar wedding tradition, specifically the *Mappacci* procession, which carries deep philosophical meaning. This cultural uniqueness becomes a strong differentiating point compared to mainstream national films that often focus on modern urban narratives. The authenticity of local cultural values adds a distinct appeal, especially amid the growing appreciation for content rooted in local wisdom.

Second, the quality of visual and artistic presentation is an essential supporting factor. *Mappacci* successfully showcases authentic settings, costumes, and artistic arrangements that reflect Bugis culture. Its aesthetic visual representation, supported by strong cinematography, increases its potential acceptance by national audiences who are becoming increasingly critical of technical quality. This aligns with the dimension of *physical evidence* in the marketing communication mix, where the visual experience significantly shapes audience perceptions.

Third, community and locality support serve as valuable social capital for *Mappacci*. The Bugis-Makassar community, spread across major cities in Indonesia, has strong emotional ties to their traditions. They can potentially act as early adopters as well as promoters of the film through word of mouth and social media. This community-driven network has often been a powerful force behind the success of culturally rooted films.

Fourth, the relevance of universal values also plays a role as a supporting factor. Although the film is grounded in local tradition, its broader themes of love, family, and marriage customs are universal, making it accessible to diverse audiences across Indonesia. In marketing communication theory, message relevance to a wide audience increases the likelihood of national market penetration.

Fifth, another supporting factor is the opportunity for cross-sector collaboration. *Mappacci* has the potential to partner with local governments, tourism stakeholders, and cultural institutions in promoting Bugis-Makassar traditions. Such institutional support not only helps financially but also expands film promotion channels through regional promotional agendas.

Inhibiting Factors

The main inhibiting factor for *Mappacci* in penetrating the national film industry lies in distribution limitations. The national film industry is still dominated by large cinema networks in major cities, which tend to prioritize high-capital films from Jakarta. Regional films like *Mappacci* face difficulties in securing broader screening slots due to structural barriers.

Another major obstacle is the limited promotional budget, which becomes a significant barrier. Successful national films are usually accompanied by integrated marketing campaigns involving television ads, social media, billboards, product branding, and offline promotional events. *Mappacci*, however, lacks aggressive and sustained promotion, making it less known beyond certain regions, particularly Eastern Indonesia, despite its strong content quality.

Additionally, there remains a market perception challenge regarding regionally produced films. Many audiences in major cities, especially Jakarta, still perceive regional films as being of lower quality in terms of technical aspects and storytelling. This stereotype must be countered through recognition at film festivals, critical acclaim, or convincing branding strategies. Without this, regional films will struggle to compete against mainstream productions.

Another inhibiting factor is the limited access to major industry networks. The national film industry is heavily influenced by connections with large production houses, mainstream media, and distributors. Despite its narrative and artistic quality, *Mappacci* lacks entry into these networks.

Adapting to audience preferences also poses a challenge. National audiences are accustomed to light-hearted romance, comedy, or horror films. Culturally based films like *Mappacci* demand more reflective engagement with traditional values. Without a universal and entertaining narrative structure, the film risks appealing only to a niche audience.

Technological and digital distribution limitations also hinder the film's reach. In the era of OTT platforms such as Netflix or Prime Video, local films should ideally leverage digital channels. However, the strict curation process of major platforms makes it difficult for regional films to break through without solid digital marketing strategies.

Another obstacle lies in human resources and professionalism within the local film industry. While many regional filmmakers are talented, limited experience in managing productions at the national scale often becomes a hindrance. Acting quality, editing, or narrative pacing can fall short of national standards.

Most importantly, insufficient government policy support further exacerbates the situation. National film regulations and incentives still do not fully favor regional filmmakers. Without affirmative policies, films like *Mappacci* must struggle independently to survive in a highly competitive national market.

Finally, the issue of production sustainability remains a long-term challenge. Even if *Mappacci* successfully enters the national market, regional film industries will struggle to develop without consistent output. Without continuity, culturally based films risk being seen as temporary phenomena rather than integral components of the national film industry.

Conclusion

This study aims to reveal and analyze the marketing communication strategy used by the production team of the film *Mappacci* in order to penetrate the national film industry. Produced by Timur Picture and 786 Production, the film attracted 328,608 viewers a significant achievement for a Makassar-based production. The findings show that *Mappacci*'s marketing communication strategy was integrated and multi-channeled, although not all aspects of the 7P marketing mix were fully maximized. The production team played a dual role as both filmmakers and promoters, creating strong synergy between creative and marketing functions. Social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok were utilized intensively, with daily behind-the-scenes content fostering early audience engagement and a sense of ownership, particularly among younger viewers. Local press releases and collaborations with regional media (e.g., *Palopo Pos*, *Radar Bone*, *Ambon Ekspres*) created market penetration strategies rooted in locality. This built emotional ties with communities, encouraging cinema attendance. The 7P elements were applied effectively: promotion was participatory, distribution extended beyond Jakarta, and all cast and crew actively promoted the film both online and offline. Supporting factors included strong community backing, particularly from the South Sulawesi Family Association (KKSS), which organized group screenings across major cities. This grassroots marketing strengthened emotional bonds with audiences. However, challenges included limited promotional budgets and restricted access to national cinema networks, where regional films are often allocated fewer than 100 screens out of 3,000 nationwide. Despite this, creativity and community collaboration helped overcome barriers. Overall, *Mappacci* demonstrates that regional films can break into the national industry through integrated, collaborative marketing communication rooted in local identity. This highlights the importance of comprehensive planning and optimal use of internal resources.

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