Netflix Originals as a Strategy for Non-Theatrical Distribution: Case Study of the Indonesian Blockbuster Borderless Fog

Star J Sunaryadi*[1], Cinta M Auliana[2], Ignasius H Japrianta[3], Muhammad S N R P Arief[4], and Petrus Damiami Sitepu[5]

[1, 2, 3, 4, 5] Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, Tangerang, Indonesia

star.jessalyn@student.umn.ac.id,
mutiara.cinta@student.umn.ac.id,
ignasius.hugo@student.umn.ac.id,
muhammad.sebastian@student.umn.ac.id,
petrus.sitepu@umn.ac.id

Abstract. The digital era has significantly transformed blockbuster film distribution, particularly through Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms like Netflix. One of Netflix's key strategies is the production and distribution of exclusive content known as Netflix Originals. This study explores the non-theatrical distribution strategy of *Borderless Fog* (2024), an Indonesian Netflix Original film that addresses cross-border human trafficking along the Indonesia–Malaysia border. Employing a qualitative case study approach, the research is based on film observation and literature analysis. The study applies theoretical frameworks of blockbuster cinema, non-theatrical distribution, and Netflix Originals. The findings reveal that *Borderless Fog* meets the characteristics of a blockbuster in terms of production quality, narrative complexity, and the presence of a well-known director, despite not being released theatrically. Its classification as commissioned content enabled Netflix to support regional storytelling while expanding its content variety and market reach in Southeast Asia. The collaboration benefited filmmakers through funding and global exposure, while Netflix strengthened its catalog with locally grounded, globally resonant content. This study concludes that Netflix Originals can serve as an effective strategy for non-theatrical distribution of blockbuster films, redefining success beyond box office numbers through visibility, algorithmic reach, and cultural impact.

Keywords: Netflix Originals, non-theatrical distribution, blockbuster films, Borderless Fog, Over-The-Top

T. E. Widiasih et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Moving Image Cultures Conference (IMOVICCON 2025)*, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 1023,
https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-603-1_6

1 INTRODUCTION

Film distribution has undergone a significant transformation in the digital era, moving from cinemas and cable television to flexible internet-based platforms. Over-The-Top (OTT) services constitute a major innovation by enabling the direct online distribution of audio and video content, independent of traditional providers, thereby fundamentally altering the delivery and monetization of blockbuster films (Prihantoro & Handayani, 2022). This shift disrupts traditional value chains by bypassing theatres and cable networks, which were traditional gatekeepers of film content. Specifically, it eliminates the distribution of bottlenecks present when films were reliant on these channels, challenging the previously dominant roles of cinemas and broadcast television networks. By circumventing these legacy distributors, OTT platforms allow filmmakers greater control over how and to whom their films are released.

The emergence of OTT services has enabled blockbuster films to adopt diverse distribution strategies to reach broader audiences and increase profitability. The OTT business model enables users to access content across multiple devices, such as smartphones, tablets, computers, and smart TVs. As internet penetration continues to rise, OTT services are increasingly becoming the preferred medium for entertainment consumption. This shift prompts a reevaluation of audience segmentation, as demographic and psychographic profiles evolve with the accessibility of content on various devices. For instance, a notable user segment includes young urban professionals who prefer consuming media on-the-go via smartphones. Their adaptation to OTT platforms broadens the reach beyond traditional formats, reflecting a significant shift in viewing habits and audience engagement.

This transformation has significantly impacted the film industry, particularly in content distribution and consumption patterns. The number of OTT service subscribers in Indonesia reached 12 million in 2021. This demonstrates a shift from conventional film distribution via cinemas and television to internet-based digital platforms. To put this into a global perspective, the number of OTT subscribers worldwide is estimated to be over one billion, highlighting Indonesia's substantial contribution to this growing trend. Beyond providing flexible access for viewers, OTT platforms also create new opportunities for filmmakers to distribute their work independently of traditional channels. By comparing these local numbers with global trends, we can understand the scalability and significance of the Indonesian market within the worldwide digital distribution landscape.

Indonesia hosts several OTT services, including Netflix, Disney+ Hotstar, HBO Max, and Amazon Prime Video. Netflix, a pioneering OTT platform, was established by Reed Hastings and Marc Randolph in 1997 as a DVD rental service. In 2007, Netflix transitioned to a digital streaming model, enabling customers to watch movies and series without downloading or owning physical copies. As OTT platforms gain popularity, major services such as Netflix produce exclusive content, known as Netflix Originals, to enhance customer loyalty and brand equity, distributing these works internationally (Palomba, 2022). The availability of original series exclusively on specific platforms serves as a unique selling proposition and incentivises consumer subscriptions. Netflix Originals have recently entered the blockbuster film landscape, intensifying competition among OTT providers. The creation of original content forms a core component of Netflix's strategy to dominate the global streaming market and attract new users, influenced by evolving audience preferences, the replacement of conventional media, industry entry barriers, and heightened competition in digital film distribution (Lobato, 2019). Hidden cost structures, such as lower distribution and marketing expenses compared to traditional studios, allow Netflix to allocate more resources towards content creation and innovation. Additionally, the agility in resource allocation gives Netflix the capability to rapidly adapt to market demands, setting it apart from incumbent studios constrained by legacy systems. This operational flexibility sharpens Netflix's disruptive edge, enabling it to continuously challenge traditional film distribution models.

AMPD's 2023 study states that 11% of Netflix viewers in Indonesia and 21% in Thailand subscribed between January and March. Analyzing these figures reveals a key strategic insight: the increase in subscriber numbers highlights the impact of Netflix's investment in local productions. For instance, in Thailand, where the subscription rate is nearly double that of Indonesia, watch-time statistics could offer further evidence of the success of this localization strategy. Meanwhile, with Disney+ and Prime Video having exited Southeast Asia to reduce costs after Korean content price hikes, Netflix's focus on regional storytelling has proven beneficial. By emphasizing retention rates over mere subscriptions, the data indicates that local content not only attracts new users but also enhances engagement and loyalty. Highlighted the importance of investing in regional content to grow Netflix's user base and profile in Southeast Asia.

At the APAC Showcase in Jakarta, Netflix announced new Netflix Originals from Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines, spanning genres like zombie thrillers, science fiction, and psychological dramas. Four Indonesian projects include Abadi Nan Jaya, The Shadow Strays, Joko Anwar's Nightmares and Daydreams, and Borderless Fog (2024). Dacanay reports Netflix collaborates with regional filmmakers to bring culturally resonant stories to global audiences, expanding the reach and creative freedom of Asian filmmakers beyond conventional theatre demands. Based on the preceding background, the main research question is: In what ways might viewers' discovery pathways or binge-watching behaviours illuminate the non-theatrical distribution strategy for the blockbuster film Borderless Fog (2024) on Netflix, and how do these audience practices represent a shift from traditional to digital distribution models?

This study is confined to analysing the non-theatrical distribution strategy of Borderless Fog (2024) through Netflix, with a specific focus on the role of Netflix Originals content in enhancing this strategy. To ensure clarity and maintain a focused scope, this analysis deliberately excludes certain factors that could influence distribution success. Issues such as piracy and theatrical windowing, while relevant to broader distribution discussions, are not within the parameters of this study. By clearly defining these boundaries, the study aims to sharpen reader expectations and enhance methodological rigor, concentrating exclusively on Netflix's digital strategy and its impact on content distribution. This analysis examines the role of original content on OTT platforms, particularly Netflix, as an alternative distribution strategy for the blockbuster film Borderless Fog (2024). It focuses on how such content can support wider distribution compared to traditional methods. To measure the success of this distribution strategy, the study will consider observable indicators such as the reach of Borderless Fog (2024), the revenue share generated from Netflix Originals, and viewer engagement metrics. These indicators will help align the objectives with the forthcoming analysis.

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method. It specifically utilizes a case study approach to provide an in-depth examination of contemporary streaming phenomena. This approach is best suited for capturing the nuances and depth of Netflix's strategic operations, offering insights that quantitative or survey-based methods might overlook. The research design integrates multiple data collection techniques. The primary techniques are observation and a comprehensive literature review, both used to ensure methodological rigor and triangulation of findings. Primary data were collected through systematic observation and a detailed analysis of the film Borderless Fog (2024). This film serves as a compelling case study of a blockbuster film distributed via an OTT platform Netflix.

The selection of Borderless Fog (2024) was both deliberate and strategic. It was chosen for its significant impact on the OTT market and for its cultural relevance. This film exemplifies the complexities of Netflix's global distribution strategies. It also demonstrates sophisticated mechanisms for viewer engagement and illustrates the platform's approach to content localisation and international market penetration. Additionally, its narrative complexity, production quality, and technical aspects embody the key characteristics that define Netflix Originals. This makes it an ideal case to explore broader trends in streaming media, audience consumption patterns, and the evolving landscape of digital film distribution. Secondary data were systematically gathered from a diverse range of scholarly and industry sources. These included peer-reviewed academic articles, authoritative books on digital media and streaming platforms, and specialised journals focusing on Netflix's business model, content strategy, and the wider phenomenon of Netflix Originals.

The analytical process began with identifying and categorizing primary data, focusing on the unique aspects of blockbuster films in the form, style, and content of Borderless Fog (2024). First, the film was screened to isolate relevant elements. Next, the data were coded into categories aligned with Netflix Originals, including narrative style, structure, cinematic techniques, production values, genre conventions, and distribution methods. Each data segment was assigned to these categories to enable detailed analysis of how the film matches Netflix's content philosophy. After coding, the data were interpreted using a theoretical framework that covered Netflix as an OTT platform, the features of Netflix Originals, and Netflix's global strategy. In this phase, patterns, themes, and anomalies from the coding were carefully examined to see how coded elements related and contributed to the film's success. Finally, primary data from the film and secondary data from scholarly sources were compared. The findings appear in a narrative that brings together observations and theoretical insights to explain how Borderless Fog (2024) reflects Netflix's blockbuster strategy.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Blockbuster

A blockbuster film is characterized by a high production budget and is intended to attract large audiences and generate substantial box-office revenue. Ryan (2017) notes that such films typically feature well-known actors, advanced visual effects, and extensive marketing campaigns to maximize commercial impact from the outset. The initial success of blockbuster films is often attributed to robust launch strategies and emotional resonance that motivates audiences to promote the film through word of mouth (De Vany, 2003) In contemporary cinema, this model has become the dominant revenue-generating strategy for major studios. Blockbuster films often have budgets ranging from $100 million to $300 million, with some high-profile productions exceeding these figures. These investments generally promise significant returns, sometimes achieving two to four times the initial budget in revenue. Nevertheless, extensive promotion alone does not ensure sustained success over time.

The term 'blockbuster' originated in a 1942 TIME article, where it described a military bomb capable of destroying an entire city block during World War II (Waxman, 2020) Subsequently, the term transitioned from military usage to popular culture. Its first application to film appeared in a 1943 TIME article, referring to movies that were explosive in content rather than box-office performance. This semantic shift culminated with the release of Jaws in 1975, which is widely recognized as the inception of the summer blockbuster era. Jaws represented a pivotal moment by integrating wide distribution, extensive marketing, and narrative suspense that resonated with global audiences. Today, much like the wartime bomb it was named after, the modern blockbuster embodies significant financial risk for studios, aiming for massive returns by strategically deploying large budgets and marketing to capture audience attention worldwide.

Research on blockbuster films emphasizes the significance of substantial budgets, prominent actors, and extensive advertising in shaping a film's initial performance. However, long-term success is frequently driven by organic audience responses, such as reviews and personal recommendations (De Vany, 2003). The example of Jaws demonstrates that positive word of mouth can considerably prolong a film's theatrical run. (Kermode, 2015)) This underscores the necessity for marketing strategies to be complemented by strong narrative quality to ensure lasting appeal. One storytelling device that can sustain viewer buzz is the strategic use of suspense. By carefully timing suspenseful moments, filmmakers can maintain audience interest and encourage discussion, further driving engagement and promoting continuous interest. Consequently, analyses of blockbuster films should encompass not only economic considerations but also the social dynamics of audience engagement.

The blockbuster model extends beyond Hollywood and has been adopted by film industries in various countries Gunter (2018) observes that Australian films such as

Mad Max: Fury Road and Moulin Rouge! display attributes akin to Hollywood blockbusters, including large-scale production, broad distribution, and globally accessible themes (Chang, 2020). This trend illustrates that the blockbuster strategy can be localized and adapted to fit distinct cultural and industrial contexts. For instance, the marketing campaign for Mad Max: Fury Road showcased varied posters across regions, emphasizing different cultural values. In the United States, posters highlighted high-octane action scenes, while in Japan, the focus was more on character development and storyline depth. This adaptation in visuals highlights the cultural localization of marketing strategies aimed at resonating with diverse audiences. Thus, blockbusters function as a versatile global production model, adaptable to the specific requirements of national film industries.

3.2 Non-theatrical distribution

Another significant distribution model is non-theatrical distribution, which refers to the exhibition of films outside commercial cinemas, including television, home video, educational institutions, and online platforms. Bordwell et al. (2024) define non-theatrical distribution as encompassing home video, cable, limited screenings, and online releases (Oscar, 2024) This approach offers flexibility and targets specific audiences, such as educators who incorporate films into their curricula for educational purposes, or festival cinephiles who seek unique, independent film experiences in limited screenings and community events Streible et al. (2007). By identifying these audience niches, non-theatrical distribution can be tailored to meet the specific needs and interests of diverse viewer segments.

Non-theatrical distribution has experienced substantial transformation as a result of digital technology advancements. A key development is the restructuring of distribution patterns, which previously adhered to a tiered system. Squire (2017) observes that the traditional distribution window system, which dictated the sequence from cinema screenings to physical media, video on demand (VOD), and eventually television, has been shortened or eliminated (Kaufman, 2018). For example, the average theatrical window has drastically decreased from 90 days to just 17 days (Richwine, 2025). Consequently, films—particularly independent and non-commercial productions—can now be released simultaneously or directly via digital channels, enabling access to broader and more geographically diverse audiences.

As a result of these changes, independent filmmakers increasingly employ self-distribution practices, reducing reliance on traditional cinema exhibition. By adopting a do-it-yourself approach, filmmakers utilize film festivals, social media, and digital platforms such as video on demand (VOD) and over-the-top (OTT) services to reach audiences directly. This distribution model is particularly relevant for films with limited mainstream appeal, whether due to unconventional genres or experimental narrative structures. However, self-distribution carries risks that filmmakers must consider. Financially, the lack of a traditional distributor can mean upfront costs without guaranteed income, challenging filmmakers to manage marketing and distribution on their own. Curatorially, there is a risk of losing the curated showcasing that established festivals or cinemas provide, which can impact a film's perceived legitimacy or artistic presence.

Addressing these risks highlights the strategic calculations involved when filmmakers choose self-distribution, balancing potential financial gains against the risks of reduced visibility and recognition.

Economically, non-theatrical distribution offers cost efficiencies and creates new revenue opportunities. Motion Picture Association (2021) reports that global revenue from home and mobile entertainment has exceeded that of the cinema sector, particularly following changes in viewing habits during the pandemic. In 2019, before the pandemic's impact, cinema revenues significantly outweighed those from streaming services. However, the 2020 shift saw home-mobile entertainment quickly surpass traditional cinema earnings, reflecting a broader and possibly enduring trend (Motion Picture Association, 2021). This trend suggests that digital distribution channels have evolved from being alternatives to becoming the primary infrastructure of the modern film industry.

Platforms such as Netflix function both as distribution channels and as content curators. Netflix actively acquires films with artistic merit and social significance, including those from non-Western regions, to enhance its reputation and expand into regional markets (Higson, 2021; Shackleton, 2023). An example of this is the acquisition of the film "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: Sword of Destiny," which demonstrates Netflix's role in bringing non-Western narratives to a global audience (Barber, 2024). By doing so, Netflix reinforces its cultural gatekeeping power, selecting which stories reach a wider audience and effectively shaping the global film discourse (Wong, 2025). Films characterized by distinctive visual styles, deliberate pacing, and socio-political themes are often selected to enrich the platform's catalogue.

In summary, non-theatrical distribution redefines the global film distribution landscape by offering a new paradigm that shifts away from traditional cinema dominance. This model enables non-commercial films to reach broad audiences without direct competition from mainstream cinema. Non-theatrical distribution not only creates new opportunities for filmmakers but also constitutes a fundamental transformation in film dissemination and consumption in the era of digital platforms.

3.3 Netflix originals

Netflix is among the largest Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms currently operating. Imagine OTT platforms as a digital express lane, where content travels directly to your devices through the internet, bypassing traditional broadcasting methods with ease and speed (Induparvathy J, 2023) identifies three defining characteristics of OTT services:

1. Direct Delivery: Provides content directly via the internet, eliminating the need for traditional broadcasting methods.
2. Content Variety: Offering a wide range of media, from original programs and films to live sports.
3. Accessibility: Content can be accessed anywhere and anytime, providing convenience and flexibility to users.

Ulin (2009) comprehensive analysis in the third edition of “The Business of Media Distribution: Monetising Film, TV, and Video Content in an Online World” explains that Netflix began as a DVD rental service before transitioning to a Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) model. SVOD, a type of OTT business model, requires users to pay a recurring fee for unlimited access to a content library at any time and location (Ulin, 2009). The primary revenue source is consumer subscriptions.

Initially, Netflix concentrated on securing third-party licensing rights to stream content, exemplified by exclusive agreements with networks such as the CW. As the platform's subscriber base and content offerings expanded, Netflix recognized that acquiring studio content rights was expensive and insufficient for customer retention. The company also sought to establish a distinct brand identity beyond serving as an aggregator of external content. This strategic shift resulted in the production of exclusive content under the Netflix Originals label (Roig et al., 2021) identify three primary classifications of Netflix Originals content:

1. Commission: Content that is fully funded by Netflix and often produced by third-party production companies.
2. Co-commission: Projects jointly funded with partners.
3. Acquisition: External productions marketed as Originals when Netflix obtains exclusive regional rights.

The term Netflix Originals is broad and frequently misunderstood due to its flexible application. Generally, Netflix Originals refers to content for which Netflix holds exclusive rights in specific regions, although this varies based on intellectual property agreements and the degree of Netflix's production involvement. According to Roig et al.'s (2021) 'Commission' classification, Netflix Originals are produced in collaboration with local filmmakers and fully funded by Netflix, allowing the company to influence creative direction for targeted markets. For example, filmmaker Alex Martinez notes that Netflix's funding enabled him to incorporate advanced special effects that were otherwise unattainable on conventional budgets, thus shaping the overall storytelling approach (Reid, 2025). Netflix Originals can also establish new markets for series or films typically rejected by traditional platforms, such as television or theatrical release, but which attract significant interest within Netflix's subscriber base (Ulin, 2009)

As an OTT platform, Netflix distinguishes itself through several unique features. By positioning itself as a premium content provider, Netflix seeks to disrupt traditional television by delivering original, high-quality productions and supporting both established and emerging local filmmakers (Cuelenaere, 2024; Reid, 2025) This strategy is informed by Netflix's status as an independent entity, unaffiliated with legacy video businesses or integrated conglomerates, and is a response to content scarcity and the withdrawal of competitor intellectual property licenses. To retain its subscriber base, Netflix prioritizes convenient, on-demand access to its content library and curates exclusive offerings tailored to individual consumer preferences (Hadida et al., 2021) Netflix analyses viewer data to identify popular genres and themes across regions, thereby determining the number of cultural adaptations in content production (Idiz, 2024). According to Wang (2025), in an effort to target specific regional markets while ensuring global audience appeal for its content, Netflix collaborates with local filmmakers to reflect regional tastes and narratives, while sticking to universal genres and themes that have proven appealing to international audiences without sparking controversy. Consequently, Netflix Originals share three creative traits: speed in storytelling, clarity in plot explanations, and the use of cliff-hangers and plot twists to sustain engagement. As Cuelenaere (2024) notes, Netflix has successfully built an impressive global streaming empire with its unique business model and content approach, but it remains open to revisiting content strategies that have proven effective in retaining its existing customer base.

4 RESULTS & ANALYSIS

4.1 Borderless Fog (2024) as a Blockbuster Film

In the shifting landscape of global cinema, Borderless Fog (2024) is a key example of how Southeast Asian films are redefining both production and distribution strategies. This case study argues that the film's release as a Netflix Original and its subsequent success represent a significant shift in what it means to be a blockbuster in Southeast Asia, moving away from traditional box office models toward a new model rooted in digital platforms and international accessibility. The analysis highlights how streaming platforms now allow regional cultural narratives to achieve global prominence.

This case asks: Can a non-theatrical, streaming-only release function as a blockbuster in today's Southeast Asian market? To answer, it examines Borderless Fog (2024), a crime-investigative thriller directed by Edwin and produced by Palari Films production house. Set in the Indonesia-Malaysia border region, the film addresses human trafficking and serial killings as an investigator exposes a criminal network in a real, conflict-prone area, the notorious Jalan Merapuh corridor. By situating its urgent themes within a vivid social context, and through high technical standards, international recognition, and exclusive Netflix distribution, Borderless Fog (2024) achieved over 20 million viewing hours in its first month. Its streaming performance and socially relevant narrative serve as evidence of how blockbusters are now defined in the digital era.

In comparison, the Netflix-funded Asian thriller The Night Comes For Us (2018) shows how the platform's global reach redefines blockbuster success. The film, despite niche appeal and a non-traditional release, attracted international attention. This validates Netflix's strategy of sharing culturally specific yet universally appealing content. The success aligns with Borderless Fog (2024), showing how OTT platforms are expanding and redefining the blockbuster model in Southeast Asia.

Despite bypassing conventional cinema chains, Borderless Fog (2024) demonstrates attributes of a new form of blockbuster. Traditionally, blockbuster films are defined by large budgets, extensive production scales, prominent stars, and substantial opening-week revenue (De Vany, 2003). However, the rise of platforms such as Netflix has altered this definition by enabling carefully curated, non-theatrical films like Borderless Fog (2024) to achieve global visibility and distribution without relying on box-office channels (Lobato, 2019).

Borderless Fog (2024) exemplifies the modern blockbuster with its high production values, regional star power, and technical excellence. Edwin's directorial reputation and the commercially appealing cast boost its marketability. The film's crime-investigation thriller genre, focused on cross-border issues and human rights, fits Netflix's global strategy of universal themes in local content. As a Netflix Original, it achieves broad accessibility, replacing traditional cinema distribution (Gunter, 2018). Although streaming visibility is crucial, analyzing profitability alongside exposure provides a fuller view of Borderless Fog (2024)'s blockbuster status and the paradigm's evolution.

Borderless Fog (2024) shows a major shift in the blockbuster model. Distribution is no longer just in cinemas; OTT platforms now set new standards for success. Tryon (2019) notes that blockbusters are now defined by global reach and cultural impact through digital distribution, not just profits. Borderless Fog (2024)'s place in Netflix's catalog shows its cinematic quality and strategic value in Southeast Asia. The film sets a new blockbuster model with broad digital distribution, thematic depth, and cross-border reach.

This foundational understanding of Borderless Fog (2024)'s role as a modern blockbuster lays the groundwork for an exploration of its digital distribution strategy. By examining the film's release as a Netflix Original, we can further understand how its widespread accessibility and strategic positioning are designed to reach a diverse, global audience. Borderless Fog (2024)'s status as a Netflix Original stem from a digital distribution strategy aligned with OTT trends. Roig et al. (2021) notes the film is commissioned content: Netflix funds it and co-produces with local filmmakers. This provides film production with support, global reach, and validation from a top platform. Netflix is involved from the story's start to its release. Netflix usually keeps distribution rights for a limited time, after which local producers can use other channels to generate more revenue. Explaining these deals shows how filmmakers keep control and financial potential.

Beyond production support, Borderless Fog (2024) diversifies Netflix's content portfolio and broadens its appeal in Southeast Asia. The film's depiction of human trafficking along the Indonesia-Malaysia border connects regional experience with global anxieties about exploitation and human rights. This distinctive narrative style, rooted in universal concerns, positions the film to resonate with both local and international audiences.

Within the domestic theater market, Borderless Fog (2024) does not align with the predominant preferences of Indonesian audiences, who generally favor drama, horror, or comedy genres (Wisanggeni et al., 2025). This trend is reflected in the commercial success of Indonesian films, which typically feature these genres and employ familiar, relatable storytelling (Hidayat et al., 2023; Wibowo et al., 2022). However, it's worth noting that recent Indonesian thrillers like 'The Code Breaker' (2023) have defied this trend by achieving notable success in local theaters. This suggests that, while these genres are traditionally favored, the thriller genre can captivate audiences when executed with compelling narratives and high production values. Such instances complicate the assertion that audiences consistently avoid thrillers, further supporting the strategic decision

4.2 Distribution Strategy for Borderless Fog (2024) through Netflix Originals

Distributing blockbuster films on Netflix offers several advantages. Borderless Fog (2024) reaches a broader audience without the limitations of geography, culture, or theater logistics, such as limited screening times or early removal for underperformance The film also reaches all Netflix subscribers, bypassing the problem of too few domestic theater screens in Indonesia (Putri, 2024).

Netflix uses algorithmic data to enhance the visibility of films among both domestic Indonesian viewers and international audiences interested in crime thrillers, social issue narratives, and murder investigations. The platform's accessibility is further supported by technical features such as multilingual subtitles, dubbing, and international promotion, which facilitate access for audiences outside Indonesia (Hadida et al., 2021; Massidda, 2023). However, it is important to consider potential biases in Netflix's recommendation engine that might inadvertently limit the reach of Southeast Asian titles, despite these multilingual assets. The algorithm's reliance on viewing history and popular trends could still overshadow lesser-known regional content, posing a challenge for films like Borderless Fog (2024). Acknowledging this limitation adds balance to the film's current optimism. The effectiveness of this strategy is demonstrated by "Borderless Fog (2024)," which ranked third among the most popular non-English films globally and entered the Top 10 in 25 countries within four days of release (Tempo, 2024).

Given these dynamics, an implication for regional policy is that the Indonesian government must support regulation of streaming platforms to ensure equitable visibility for local content. This could involve creating incentives for platforms to showcase a wider array of regional productions or establishing policies encouraging algorithm transparency to prevent potential biases against local films. By doing so, the government could amplify the representation of Indonesian stories on global platforms while fostering a supportive environment for local filmmakers. Such measures would not only enhance cultural diversity but also promote long-term growth for the country's creative economy.

5 CONCLUSION

The analysis demonstrates that Borderless Fog (2024) marks a significant shift in the concept of blockbuster cinema within non-theatrical distribution. Its release as a Netflix Original illustrates that blockbuster success is no longer solely determined by theatrical box-office performance but is increasingly influenced by digital visibility, algorithmic reach, and global accessibility. The findings confirm that over-the-top (OTT) platforms, particularly Netflix, play a central role in redefining distribution strategies and expanding the boundaries of film circulation in the digital era.

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by repositioning blockbuster classification within platform-based distribution, with particular attention to the Southeast Asian context. Unlike conventional studies that emphasize financial performance, this analysis highlights alternative indicators of success, such as viewing hours, global rankings, and cross-border audience reach. This approach offers a new perspective on how regional films can achieve global recognition through digital platforms.

From a theoretical perspective, this research extends the understanding of film distribution by integrating concepts of platform power and algorithmic visibility into blockbuster theory. It underscores the role of OTT platforms not only as distributors but also as curators that actively shape audience exposure and engagement. This shift challenges traditional distribution models and necessitates a reconsideration of how success and value are defined in contemporary cinema.

The findings indicate that OTT platforms provide filmmakers with new opportunities to achieve global distribution without reliance on theatrical releases. The Netflix Originals model offers financial support, production resources, and international exposure, enabling the creation of culturally specific content with global appeal. The analysis also emphasizes the importance of examining how algorithms may contribute to unequal visibility across different content types.

Future research should explore comparative analyses across multiple Netflix Originals or OTT platforms in diverse regional contexts. Additional studies may investigate audience behavior, algorithmic bias, and the long-term sustainability of non-theatrical blockbuster models. Such inquiries would deepen understanding of how digital platforms continue to transform the global film industry.

REFERENCES

1. Barber, E. (2024, September 30). Netflix to Release First Original Movie. *Https://Time.Com/.*
2. Bordwell, D., Thompson, K., & Smith, J. (2024). *Film Art An Introduction Thirteen Edition* (Vol. 13).
3. Chang, J. (2020, May 12). We’re Choosing the Ultimate Summer Movie. This Week, It’s ‘The Empire Strikes Back’ vs. Everything Else. *Https://Www.Latimes.Com/.*
4. Cuelenaere, E. (2024). How “Original” are Netflix Original films? Mapping and Understanding the Recycling of Content in The Age of Streaming Cinema. *Media, Culture & Society*, *46*(5), 991–1009. https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437231224081
5. De Vany, A. (2003). *Hollywood Economics*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203489970
6. Gunter, B. (2018). Predicting movie success at the box office. In *Predicting Movie Success at the Box Office*. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71803-3
7. Hadida, A. L., Lampel, J., Walls, W. D., & Joshi, A. (2021). Hollywood Studio Filmmaking in The Age of Netflix: a Tale of Two Institutional Logics. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, *45*(2), 213–238. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10824-020-09379-z
8. Hidayat, E., Susilo, D., & Mujiono, M. (2023). Are Audience Preferences for Electronic Cinema Affected by Preferences in Indonesian Movie Choices?

Nyimak: Journal of Communication, *7*(2), 297. https://doi.org/10.31000/nyimak.v7i2.9299
9. Higson, A. (2021). Netflix - The Curation Of Taste And The Business Of Diversification. *Studia Humanistyczne AGH*, *20*(4), 7–25. https://doi.org/10.7494/human.2021.20.4.7
10. Idiz, D. R. (2024). Local Production for Global Streamers: How Netflix Shapes European Production Cultures. *International Journal of Communication*, *18*.
11. Induparvathy J. (2023). OTT Platform. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Communication and Technology*, 197–200. https://doi.org/10.48175/IJARSCT-12936
12. Kaufman, A. (2018, June 22). *Wide Open or Ajar: Theatrical Windows in the VOD Age*. Https://Filmmakermagazine.Com/.
13. Kermode, M. (2015, May 31). Jaws, 40 Years on: 'One of the Truly Great and Lasting Classics of American Cinema". *Https://Www.Theguardian.Com/.*
14. Lobato, R. (2019). *Netflix Nations: The Geography of Digital Distribution* (Vol. 28). NYU Press .
15. Massidda, S. (2023). Disruptive AVT workflows in the age of streaming. *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies*, *35*(3), 455–475. https://doi.org/10.1075/target.00021.mas
16. Motion Picture Association, Inc. (2021). *2021 THEME Report*.
17. Oscar. (2024, November 22). *Awards Rules And Campaign Promotional Regulations Approved For 97th Oscars*. Https://Www.Oscars.Org/.
18. Palomba, A. (2022). Building OTT Brand Loyalty and Brand Equity: Impact of Original Series on OTT Services. *Telematics and Informatics*, *66*, 101733. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TELE.2021.101733
19. Prihantoro, E., & Handayani, A. A. (2022). Streaming Media Over The Top (OTT) di Masa Pandemi COVID-19. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, *20*(3), 382. https://doi.org/10.31315/jik.v20i3.7276
20. Putri, G. V. S. (2024, October 28). Transformasi Industri Film Indonesia : Tantangan Menuju Era baru. *Https://Kumparan.Com/.*
21. Reid, C. (2025, January 30). The Number One Netflix Movie That Blew Its Budget With $145.1 Million Costs. *Https://Www.Forbes.Com/.*
22. Richwine, L. (2025, April 2). *Cinema Group Pushes for Movies to Stay in Theaters Longer*. Https://Www.Reuters.Com/.
23. Roig, A., Clares-Gavilán, J., & Sánchez-Navarro, J. (2021). Netflix Fictional Feature Film Originals: an Analysis of Release Strategies. *Communication & Society*, 125–139. https://doi.org/10.15581/003.34.2.125-139
24. Ryan, M. (2017). *Producer to Producer: A Step-By-Step Guide to Low Budget Independent Film Producing 2nd Edition*. Michael Wiese Productions.
25. Shackleton, L. (2023, October 19). Netflix Korea Content Chief Don Kang On Where The Streamer Is Spending Its $2.5 Billion In The 'Squid Game' Nation & Recent Industry Controversy – Mipcom Cannes Special. *Https://Deadline.Com/.*
26. Squire, J. E. . (2017). *The Movie Business Book* (4th ed.). Routledge.
27. Streible, D., Roepke, M., & Mebold, A. (2007). Introduction: Nontheatrical Film. *Film History: An International Journal*, *19*(4), 339–343. https://doi.org/10.2979/FIL.2007.19.4.339

28. Tempo. (2024, August 7). *Kabut Berduri Ditonton 3,7 Juta Kali dalam 4 Hari, Masuk Global Netflix Top 10*.
29. Tryon, C. (2019). *On-Demand Culture*. Rutgers University Press. https://doi.org/10.36019/9780813561110
30. Ulin, J. (2009). *The Business of Media Distribution: Monetizing Film, TV and Video Content in an Online World (American Film Market Presents)* (1st ed.). Focal Press.
31. Wang, M. (2025). The Impact of Netflix Co-Production Models on Brazilian Film Narratives: Negotiating Artistic Integrity and Innovation. *Art and Society*, *4*(1), 29–39. https://doi.org/10.56397/AS.2025.01.06
32. Waxman, O. B. (2020, February 7). Why Hit Movies Are Called Blockbusters. *Https://Time.Com/*.
33. Wibowo, B. S., Rubiana, F., & Hartono, B. (2022). A Data-Driven Investigation of Successful Local Film Profiles in The Indonesian Box Office. *Jurnal Manajemen Indonesia*, *22*(3), 333–344. https://doi.org/10.25124/jmi.v22i3.4106
34. Wisanggeni, S. P., Widyastuti, R. S., & Rejeki, S. (2025, March 29). Indonesian Film Genre Map: Timeless Drama, Rampant Horror. *Https://Www.Kompas.Id/*.
35. Wong, S. (2025, August 20). Netflix Reveals $200m Investment In First Thailand Impact Report. *Https://Www.Screenglobalproduction.Com/*.