

Application of A Zone-Based System in A Short Film Production During Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Undertaking film production during the Covid-19 pandemic made some crews feel afraid and uncomfortable while working because many crews still did not follow health protocols and social distancing. In this research, the authors try to apply a zoning system at the shooting location. According to research that the authors have done, there are still crews who do not understand what a zone-based system is, how it is implemented, and how many do not comply with the protocol. In this research, the authors want to try to improve the existing zoning system to be even better to prevent and break the chain of transmission of Covid-19 at the shooting location of the short film *Budak Bidak*.

Keywords

Covid-19, Film Production, Pandemic, Short Film, Zoning.

1. Introduction

In March 2020, the Covid-19 or Coronavirus 2019 pandemic first entered Indonesia and implemented a continuous regional quarantine. In order to avoid the crowd, people had to work at home. Many industries are affected by the implementation of this regional quarantine. One of the industries affected is the film industry. In 2019, the average film production in Indonesia was around 140 titles per year, and the profit reached two trillion. However, as a result of this pandemic, as many as 30 films have had their production postponed (Dampak Pandemi terhadap Industri Perfilman dan Keberlangsungan Festival Film 2020).

Most filmmakers have not dared to restart film production due to fear of virus transmission if filming involves many people. After months of stalling, the government began evaluating policies to revive the national film industry and allow film filming by applying strict health protocols.

The head of DKI Disparekraf, Cucu Ahmad Kurnia, said that there are several COVID-19 prevention protocols that the entire production crew must follow. The crew must use masks or personal protective equipment (PPE), maintain distance and also routinely clean themselves (wash hands) (Wardani 2020). Preferably, the crew minimizes the use of work equipment done simultaneously or alternately. This equipment should be routinely cleaned before and after use alternately.

In addition, a zone-based system was created to break the chain of transmission of Covid-19 in the production process at the filming location. Where in this system, the filming location is divided into four zones, namely zone A, zone B, zone C, and zone D. Zone A is the most vulnerable and vital zone, where individuals such as actors can work without keeping a distance, and protective equipment personal protective equipment (PPE). Zona B is a set filled by the crew working around the filming set. Zone C is a zone for the production team that does not work on the filming location. Zone D is a zone for workers related to the production team. This zone is the limit of interaction between the outside world (Protokol Hollywood, Kru-Aktor Wajib Tes Covid sebelum Syuting 2020).

Based on interviews with fellow filmmakers, the authors found that in his work, some crews still do not obey the rules set because the crews do not get an in-depth explanation of what the zone system is and how to apply it. Some crews can still access zones that should not be accessible, and no one strictly monitors this zone system. They are unaware

of wearing masks or personal protective equipment (PPE). When they wear masks, there are still many among the crew who often take off their masks.

They also still use work equipment simultaneously and alternately, and there is still a lot of unnecessary interaction and direct contact between the crew that can create a place for the transmission of Covid-19 in the filming location, so this problem makes many crew and actors who are afraid and feel uncomfortable when they are at the filming location.

With this problem, the authors want to improve the existing system to be even better with a more detailed explanation of the zone system to the crew and actors, adding information at the filming location about the division of zones, as well as adding people who take care of each existing zone boundary so that people entering and exiting the zone can be appropriately controlled. With the improvement of this system, it is hoped that it can provide a new model for the application of a zone-based system at the location of short film filming so that it can help break the chain of transmission of Covid-19 in the production process at the location of short film filming, take care of the health of all the crew at the filming location, and create a safe and comfortable atmosphere in work.

1.1 Objectives

Based on the formulation of the problem, the purpose and benefits of this research are as follows:

- Provide a template for applying a zone-based system based on the role of a short film shooting location.
- Provide knowledge and understanding to cinematographers related to the application of the zone system at the location of short film filming if needed in the future.
- Be a reference that can be developed for further research in the future.

2. Literature Review

The authors will explain each keyword and concept in the literature study section. There are two sub-chapters in this section: the health protocol in film production and the zone system in film production.

2.1 Health Protocol on Film Production

In order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 at the filming location, the Minister of Education and Culture, together with the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy/Head of the Tourism and Creative Economy Agency, stated that all crews must comply with the health protocols that the government has determined. The primary condition that the crew and actors must implement is the COVID-19 test (Wardani 2020).

General and specific protocols for every film worker must be applied at the filming location during the Covid-19 pandemic. In general protocol, management or film producers must provide hand washing facilities, apply safe distance, use masks or personal protective equipment (PPE), and prepare self-isolation places for workers indicated by Covid-19 (Wardani 2020).

For specific protocols, all crew at the filming location must clean their hands upon arrival at the filming location, after using the bathroom, before and after eating, after making contact with shared filming equipment, or as often as possible. "Hand hygiene is the foundation of prevention and should be widely practiced in the work environment. Bearing in mind; there is potential concern about the transmission of COVID-19 through contact" (Wardani 2020).

In addition, the crew must wear a mask when on location. However, when it is necessary to take pictures, the actor can remove his mask with the note to maintain distance from the crew. In addition, the crew should also minimize jointly or alternately usage of work equipment. This joint work equipment must be cleaned before and after use. The crew is also asked to minimize the use of paper during production activities and maximize the use of digital, such as in film scripts, crew lists, production reports, and other similar documents (Wardani 2020).

The entire crew must work in turn if many people are needed on the set; no one can crowd; as much as possible, keep a safe distance of at least one meter. Then, disinfection is required for properties and production tools that are applied alternately. Disinfectant and periodic spraying of the entire filming location is also very necessary. In addition, the

entire crew and actors are prohibited from bringing other non-interested people to the filming location. Location security is enforced using the zone system (Wardani 2020) if possible.

2.2 Zone-Based System According to the UMN Film Study Program

Zone-based systems or zoning are often also called production rings. This system was created to help implement social distancing during film production. Universitas Multimedia Nusantara (UMN) Film Study Program also created a zone-based production ring system. This system consists of four parts: Ring 1: Clear Set Area, Ring 2: Traffic (between set and basecamp unit) or Set Boundary, Ring 3: Basecamp Unit, and Ring 4: Location/Location Boundary (Wijaya 2021).



Figure 1. UMN Film Study Program Production Rings

UMN Film Study Program explained that the production ring system should be planned as in Figure 1, each department should have its room, and each crew in each department can only access the room. Crew traffic should be arranged so there is no crew crowding at the filming location. For each crew that needs to reach ring 1, other crews that are not interested should get out of ring one and vice versa. Meal time arrangements should also be implemented using a rotating system; the crew waiting to eat can leave their belongings in their respective department rooms. Each crew only has access to the basecamp with the name listed in front of the basecamp door (Wijaya 2021).

2.3 Zone-Based System According to Georgia Film Academy

Georgia Film Academy also created a zone system with different provisions. This zone system is divided into three zones: zone A, zone B, and zone C.

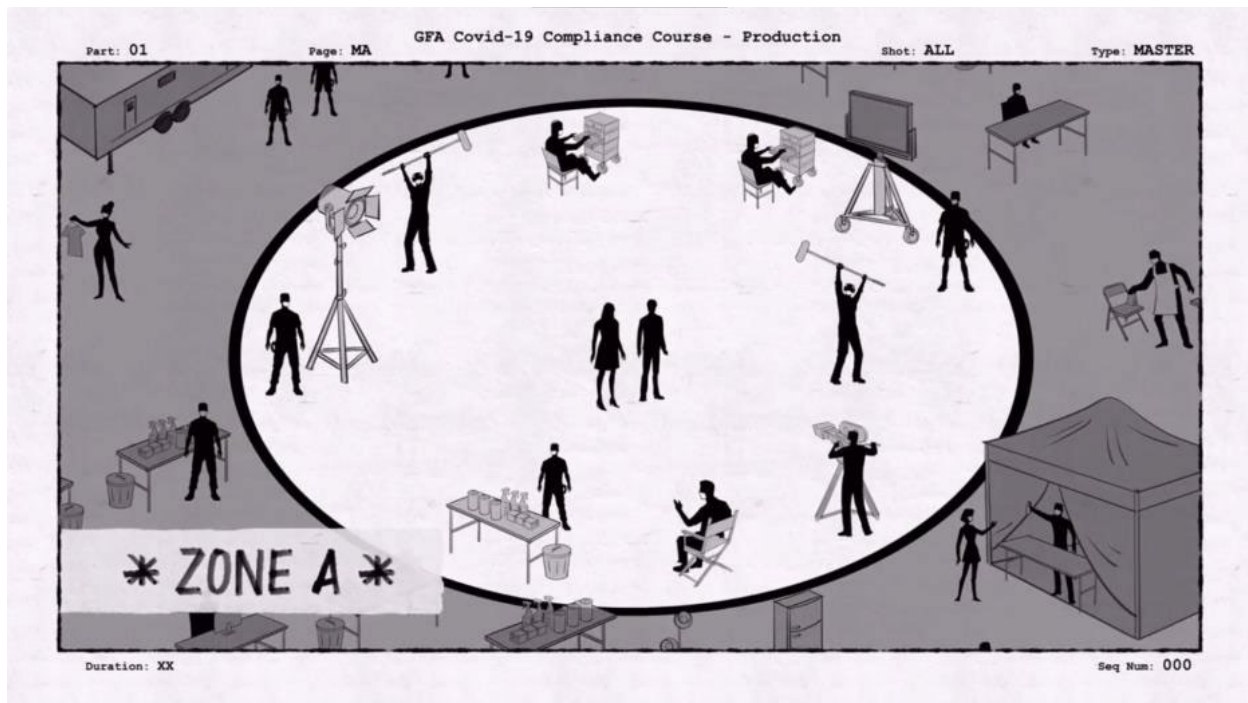


Figure 2. Georgia Film Academy's Zone A

As we can see in Figure 2, Zone A can also be called a work set, where individuals such as actors can work without physical distance or personal protective equipment (PPE).

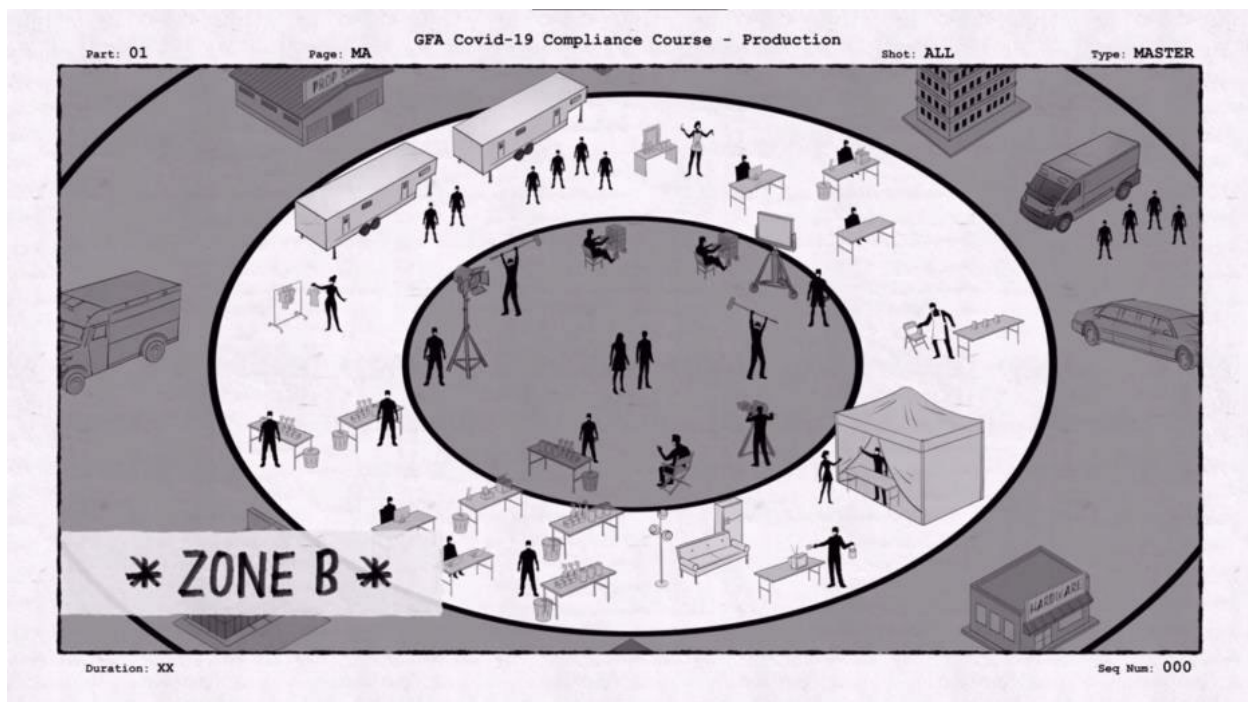


Figure 3. Georgia Film Academy's Zone B

Zone B will be all other areas that will do production work, as we can see in Figure 3.

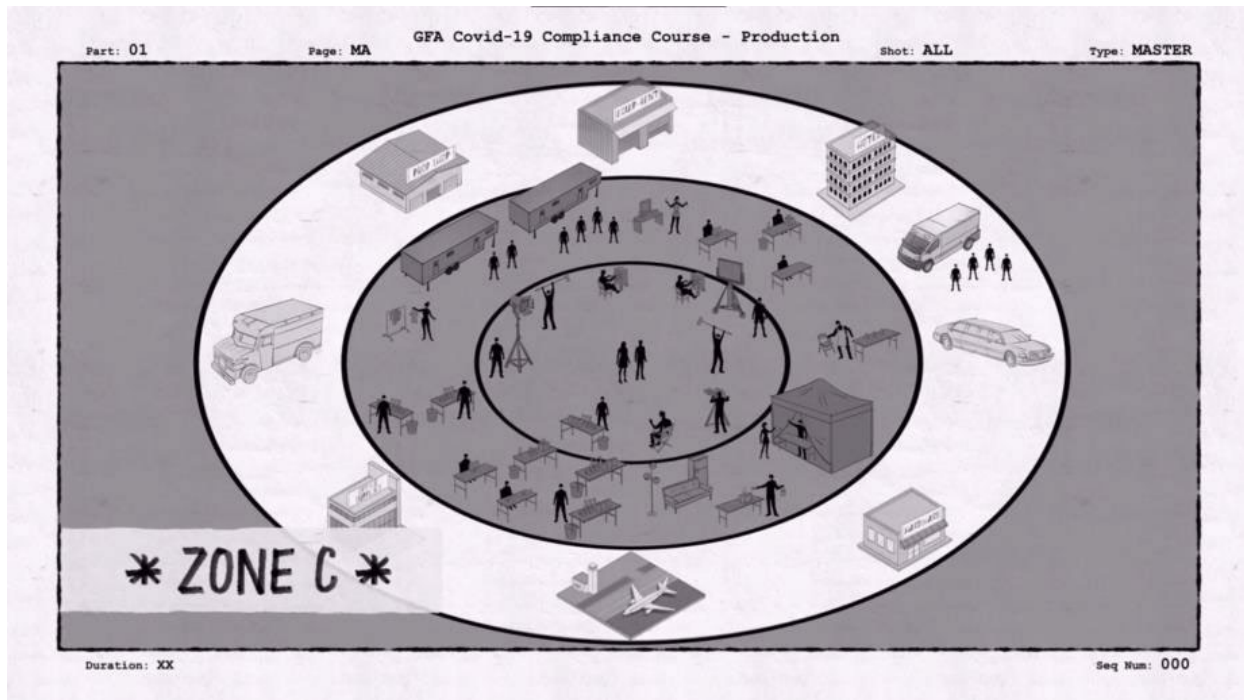


Figure 4. Georgia Film Academy's Zone C

As in Figure 4, Zone C will include all interactions with the world outside the production-controlled area.

Crews should work in their respective departments to limit direct contact with other crews. The selected crew must be able to work well because each crew is prohibited from entering another zone. Minimizing contact with other crew members is more recommended if the work can be done virtually than directly. Anyone who is in zone A must be tested for antigens first, bearing in mind that zone A is the most crucial area and anyone assigned to zone A cannot access or have direct contact with zone B. Zone B is the limit for the delivery of equipment needed in a contactless exchange. Anyone who has no interest in the set is not allowed in.

2.4 Zone-Based System According to Lionsgate

As shown in Figure 5, Lionsgate divides four areas: On Set Crew, Base Camp, Set Design/Prep, and Remote Crew.

Based on the guidelines made by Lionsgate entitled New Production Safety Guidelines in 2020, the role of the script supervisor becomes more critical at the filming location because they will be the ones who pay attention to fashion and other details. Because there will not be representatives from the fashion team in zone A, the script supervisor will ensure that the clothes and appearance are suitable for what is to be recorded. In addition, the voice department became one person.

Based on the guidelines made by Lionsgate entitled New Production Safety Guidelines in 2020, everything that can be done at home should be done at home. The script should also be modified to minimize daily players. Production should be developed into a limited crew. Actors should have extra protections because they are the only ones who can cross the zone boundary. All crews must be in their respective zones and cannot interact directly with other crews. All information or call sheets are distributed digitally.

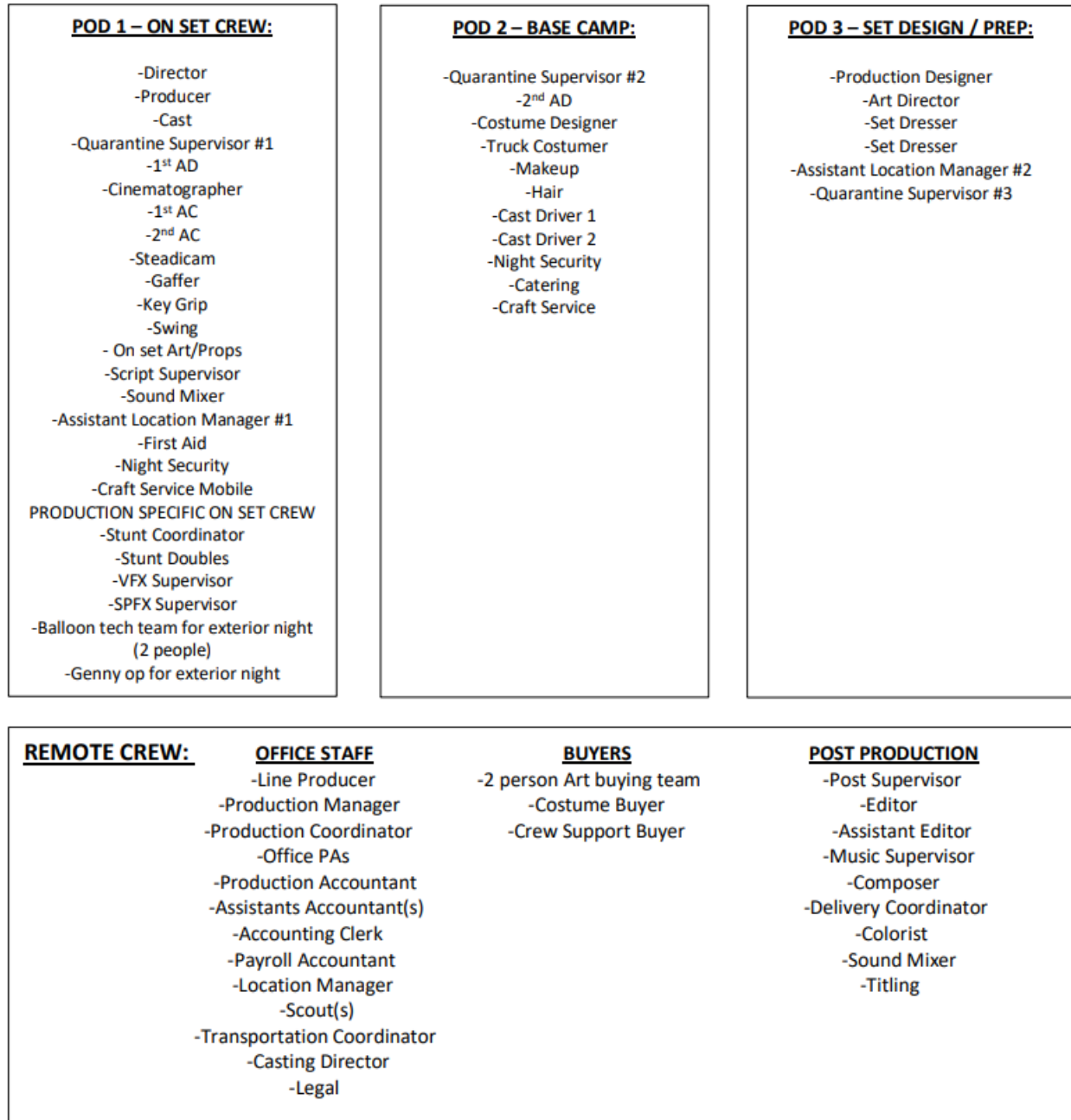


Figure 5. Pod System According to Lionsgate

Based on the background above, the problem of this research is “how can the application of a zone-based system in the production of the short film *Budak Bidak* be done to create a safe shooting location during the pandemic?”.

The scope of this research focuses on applying a zone-based system in the filming location of the short film *Budak Bidak*. This research is done to help maintain the health of the *Budak Bidak* short film production to create a safe and comfortable atmosphere during the filming process. Cooperation between the producer and all the crew will be crucial in the production process of this short film.

3. Methods

The authors use exploratory research methods in this reflective research by designing a technique and analyzing it afterward. The study that the authors did focuses on how to implement a zone-based system or zoning at the filming location of the short film *Budak Bidak*. This study is essential to see the effectiveness of the zone-based system carried out at the location of the short film filming during the pandemic to reduce the crowd. This research is done in two stages. In the first stage, the authors made a concept during pre-production related to how to implement zoning in the filming location. The authors made three methods that would later be tested during the filming of the short film *Budak Bidak*. The second stage is to apply the concept during the filming of the short film *Budak Bidak*.

4. Data Collection

The zone-based system that the authors will apply at the filming location of the short film *Budak Bidak*, was made by combining several zone systems already made by others. The author divides the zone into three parts, as shown in Figure 6 dan Figure 7.

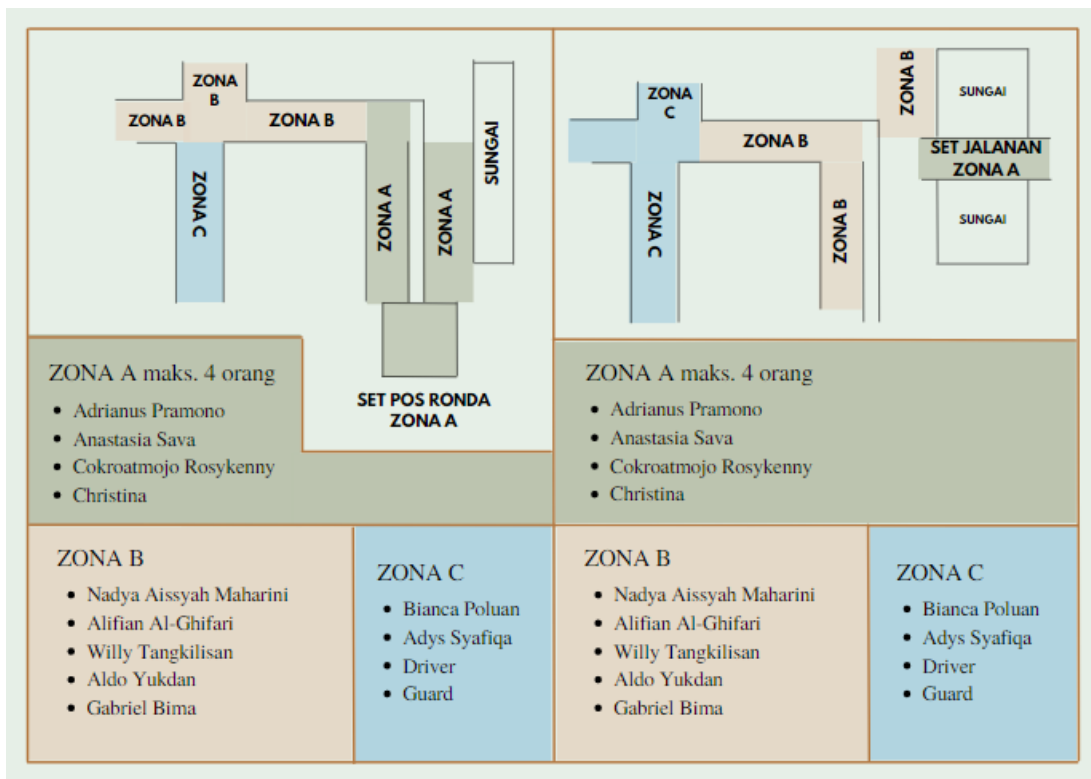


Figure 6. First Zone Plan

Zone A is the most vulnerable and essential zone, where individuals such as actors can work without physical distancing and personal protective equipment (PPE). The crew can only access this zone in direct contact with the actors. Those who can access this zone are the director, assistant director, script supervisor, cinematographer, and sound recorder. Before any item is brought from another zone to zone A, the item must be sterilized first. The maximum crew in zone A is four people. If the crew in zone B must enter zone A, ensure the crew in zone A exits first or take turns. Anyone who will access zone A must be sterilized first.

Zone B is filled by the crew working around the filming set. Those who can access this zone are producers, camera assistants, lighting designers, and lighting assistants. The maximum crew in zone B is five people. If the crew in zone C must access zone B, they must alternate with one of the crews in Zone B.

Zone C is a zone for the production team that does not work on set. This zone serves as a base for all crews not directly related to the set and a basecamp for the entire department to store their respective tools. In addition, this zone limits

the interaction with the outside world. All workers dealing with equipment delivery can only be in this zone; all equipment already in this zone is given to zone B with the person in charge. Fashion stylists and production assistants fill this zone. All crew can access this zone.

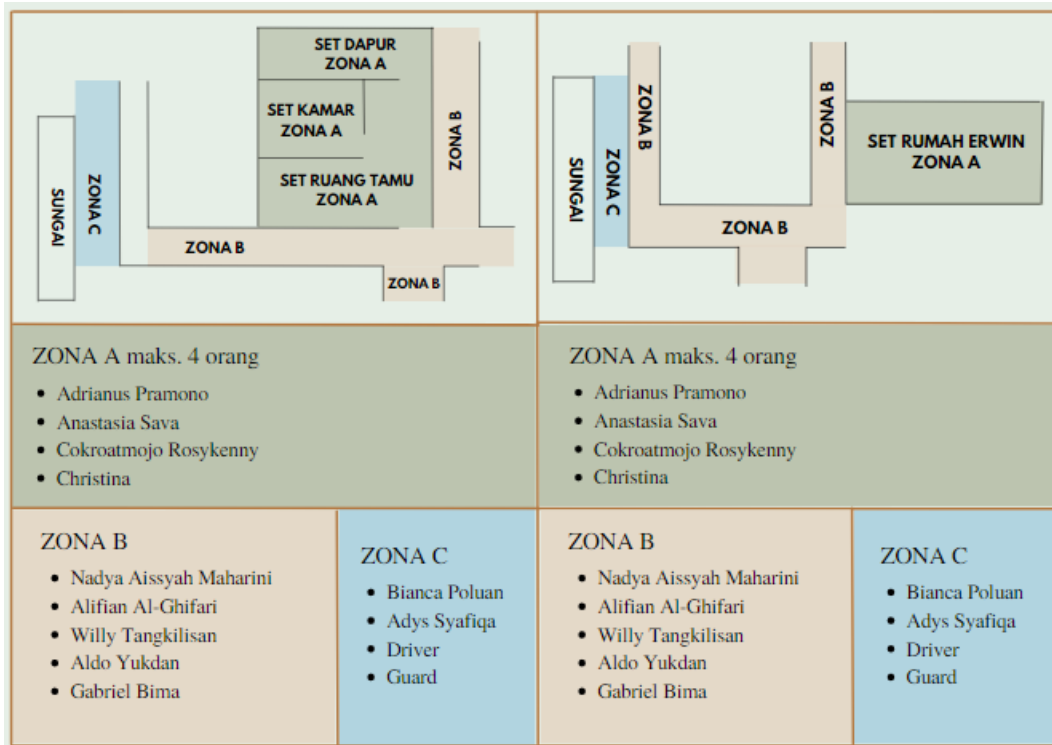


Figure 7. Second Zone Plan

5. Results and Discussion

The author did several ways to answer the research questions. The following is an explanation related to the implementation of the concept at the time of filming:

5.1 Providing more detailed information regarding the zone-based system at the filming location to the crew

Before starting the production process, the first author, the film's producer, held a pre-production meeting to provide filming information and regulations during filming. The authors also use this to explain the zone system, how it is applied, who the crew is in each zone, and other regulations attached to the implementation of zoning. In addition, the author also shared a map of the zone division's location and the crews' names in each zone. With the explanation provided by the author, the whole crew better understood what the zone system was and how it was applied.

5.2 Attaching zone information in each zone

As explained above, the producer printed and pasted the zoning information to provide information on the location of each zone on the filming location. With these writings, the crew knows where the zone is, and the crew knows its limitations better.

5.3 Control the number of crew in each zone

The concept that the producer should do is that she controls the number of crew in each zone, but this concept is not realized well when on location. At the beginning of filming, the producer controls how the zone system is implemented and who gets to be in each zone—with the producer in zone B. However, as the filming progresses, the producer has to change positions with the stylist in zone C because the stylist is more needed in zone B to arrange the clothes worn by the actors, considering the number of clothes worn is very large, and the distance from zone B and zone C is far

enough that it becomes difficult if you have to go back and forth. The producer occasionally checks the location to see how the zoning is applied, but the crew already understands so that no one enters the other zone randomly.

5.4 Give ID Card to the whole crew

In addition to providing information with zone location maps and the names of the crew in each zone, the producer also made an ID Card containing the name, zone information, and job description. This ID Card provides personal information for each crew so that other crews can identify other crews. This ID Card is differentiated by color according to the zone of each crew.

There are restrictions on the number of crews from majors and campuses, making several crews concurrently with departments. The existence of multiple departments often causes problems when applying the zone system at the filming location. The crew staying in Zone C should enter Zone B to carry out their duties. That way, the authors should rethink the appropriate way to apply the zone system at the time of the filming location.

The implementation of the zone system at the *Budak Bidak* filming location went well. Although the producer often experienced obstacles in applying the zone system, the producer dealt with the problem well. Although it was well planned during the pre-production related to this zone system, the producer had to adapt to the conditions on location in its implementation.

A comparison between the swab results in the first and last days of production has both swab reports showed negative results for all the crew of the short film *Budak Bidak*. From the swab reports, the use of the zone system at the filming location of the short film *Budak Bidak* was successfully carried out.

6. Conclusion

During the covid-19 pandemic, a regional quarantine was imposed that required everyone to stay at home. Many industries are affected, one of which is the film sector. Filming was delayed, and many were canceled. As time passed, the government began allowing filmmakers to film with strict health protocols and some other conditions. However, many crews still feel scared and uncomfortable when they are on location because they still do not follow strict health protocols and do not keep their distance from other crews.

Implementing a zone-based system or zoning at the filming location is done to avoid crowding the crew. Usually, filming locations are divided into several zones. Zone A is the most extensive zone because its actors are required not to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) and not to keep a distance. Zone B is a zone for the crew directly related to Zone A. Zone C is a zone for the production team that does not work on set. This zone serves as a base for all crews not directly related to the set and a basecamp for the entire department to store their respective tools. In its work, many still do not understand what a zone-based system is, how it is applied and many crews do not comply with it.

Implementing the zone system at the *Budak Bidak* filming location went well and smoothly. Although the producer experienced several obstacles in applying this zone system, the producer dealt with the problem well. Although it was well planned during pre-production related to this zone system, in its implementation, the producer had to adapt to the conditions on location.

In this research, the authors want to try to improve the existing zone-based system to be even better. The implementation of a zone-based system was then applied at the filming location of the short film *Budak Bidak* to prevent and break the chain of transmission of the Covid-19 virus at the location of the short film filming and also to answer the research questions of this research. The research question for this study is “How can the application of a zone-based system in the production of short films be made to create a safe shooting location during a pandemic?”

After making a case study of the short film *Budak Bidak*, the authors can answer the research question. The implementation of a zone-based system can be done well if there is a more detailed explanation related to the zone system itself, making information about the zone system, the producer making a map of the location of the zone, and whoever is the crew in each zone, making zone writings such as zone A, zone B, and zone C are then attached to each zone, and control all crews on duty to comply with the zone system. After two days of applying the system, the

producer did an independent antigen test with negative results for the entire crew and actors to implement the system successfully.

The obstacle encountered during this research process is that during the production process of the short film *Budak Bidak*, the producer cannot control the application of this zone at all times because the producer changes positions with one of the crews in zone C. The crew is considered more helpful to be in zone B. In addition, the location does not support the application of this zone system due to the large number of people passing by and watching the filming process. Some crews have two positions at once, which makes crews have to interact directly more often.

So that when there are filmmakers who want to implement this zone system in the pre-production process, they must think carefully about the management of the crew and their role in the filming location so that no one changes positions. Location selection is also essential for the application of this zone system. The ideal location to apply this system is in the studio or a location where not many people can access the location to minimize contact with the outside environment.

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Biographies

Nadya Aissyah Maharini is a student from Bina Nusantara University majoring in film. Currently, Maharini is in her final year as a film student and is working on her thesis. Maharini has an interest in film production. During her time as a film student, Maharini has always been a producer of short films for assigned tasks. Maharini became interested in becoming a film producer when she was in high school, at which time she was producing short films for the first time. Since then, Maharini has always been eager to become a film producer. Maharini has produced short films entitled “HUNI” (2019), “KEKANG” (2019), and “BUDAK BIDAK” (2022). Maharini has a dream to build her own production house. In the even semester of 2020/2021, Maharini participated in a certification from the Georgia Film Academy which discussed how to produce films during the Covid-19 pandemic and its regulations. From this certification, Maharini got the idea to research the zone-based system in the production of short films during the Covid-19 pandemic. Maharini wants her research to be useful for filmmakers who want to produce short films during the Covid-19 pandemic by implementing a zone-based system to reduce the chain of virus transmission at shooting locations.

Azalia Primadita Muchransyah is a filmmaker, writer, and scholar from Indonesia. She received her Ph.D. in Media Study from the University at Buffalo, The State University of New York (SUNY), in 2021. Dr. Muchransyah’s research interests revolve around the intersections of media study, film study, film production, documentary and its hybrid forms, HIV study, feminist study, and activism, specifically in Indonesia. Her dissertation investigates alternative modes in documentary media production and distribution to highlight the paradoxes of HIV advocacy in Indonesia from the media ecology perspective. A two-time Fulbright scholarship recipient, Dr. Muchransyah received funding and support from The Gender Institute’s Isabel S. Marcus International Research Fellowship and the Mark Diamond Research Fund from The Graduate Student Association at the University at Buffalo to complete her doctorate. Her research has already begun to garner awards, including the UB Three Minute Dissertation Award. In the past, she published a paper on the framing of the Bali Bombing in the media and co-authored two other published papers on HIV care in Indonesian prison settings. Dr. Muchransyah uses her filmmaking practice as her scholarly explorative mode and has showcased her films internationally at academic conferences, film festivals, and alternative screening venues. Her scholarly research and media practice continue to challenge dominant, repressive, and Eurocentric media discourses, raise awareness, and encourage media activism about HIV in Indonesia and globally.