Vertical Video Trends Among Amateur Digital Platform Users as an Alternative for Film Production

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ABSTRACT

The Vertical Video Syndrome expression adequately represents the spread of the production process and projection of amateur digital content in vertical format. For smartphone users, vertical is king. All components of digital life make users subconsciously hold their phones vertically on various occasions. Penetration after penetration is carried out, flexibility, and artificial intelligence, to private viewing rooms that move dynamically. As a new starting point in quite an extended period, the vertical video gives birth to a glimmer of hope in a film atmosphere that seems exclusive and rigid. However, problems have arisen as user demands have increased and smartphones have become sociocultural over the last decade. With a vertical screen, people are used to spending time watching video shows, including recording all their activities. Because of that, there is a big challenge for filmmakers to see the opportunities that exist. The vertical format creates a narrow, elongated reading space. Moving the camera movement, which used to use action from left to right, now switches from top to bottom. Subjects in vertical formats are also forced to submit to limited reading space. In conventional films, close-ups can isolate the field of view while at the same time emphasizing facial expressions. But not vertically because it will bring out a different density; what arises is not a close-up but a big close-up and even an extreme close-up. As a result, this gives motivation and a different meaning visually. It would be a lie if this didn't fall into the challenges to be solved. The field of view gets more complicated. The vertical concept encourages creators to get out of the conventional mindset. Likewise, with the actors involved, the vertical format provides a more challenging exploration of expressions and gestures. This research uses qualitative methods in collecting data and utilizes a lot of current literature. The research results are in the form of knowledge and recommendations regarding the packaging and distribution of film production in a vertical format.

Keywords: vertical video; film production; aspect ratio; art

ABSTRAK

Tren Video Vertikal di Antara Pengguna Platform Digital Amatir sebagai Alternatif Produksi Film. Sindrom Video Vertikal, ungkapan itu cukup mewakili merebaknya proses produksi dan proyeksi konten digital amatir berformat vertikal. Bagi pengguna smartphone, vertikal adalah raja. Seluruh komponen kehidupan digital membuat pengguna secara alam bawah sadar memegang telepon secara vertikal dalam beragam kesempatan. Penetrasi demi penetrasi dilakukan, fleksibilitas, kecerdasan buatan, hingga ruang tonton privasi yang bergerak dinamis. Sebagai titik pijak baru dalam kurun waktu yang cukup panjang, video vertikal melahirkan secercah harapan dalam suasana perfilman yang terkesan eksklusif dan kaku. Namun, persoalan pun muncul, di kala tuntutan pengguna semakin tinggi dan smartphone menjadi sosiokultural selama dekade terakhir. Dengan layar vertikal, orang terbiasa menghabiskan waktu untuk menonton tayangan video termasuk merekam segala aktivitasnya. Karena itulah, muncul tantangan besar bagi pembuat film guna melihat peluang yang ada. Format vertikal mencipta ruang baca yang menyempit memanjang. Memindahkan pergerakan kamera yang terbiasa memanfaatkan pergerakan dari kiri ke kanan, kini beralih dari

atas ke bawah. Subjek pada format vertikalpun dipaksa untuk tunduk pada ruang baca yang terbatas. Pada film konvensional, *close-up* sudah mampu mengisolasi ruang pandang sekaligus mempertegas ekspresi wajah. Namun tidak pada vertikal karena akan memunculkan kepadatan yang berbeda, yang timbul bukan *close-up* akan tetapi *big close-up* bahkan *extreme close-up*. Alhasil ini memberi motivasi dan makna yang berbeda secara visual. Suatu kebohongan jika ini tidak masuk dalam kategori tantangan yang harus dipecahkan. Ruang pandang menjadi sedikit lebih rumit. Konsep vertikal benar-benar mendorong kreator untuk keluar dari pola pikir konvensional. Begitu pula dengan aktor yang terlibat, format vertikal memberikan tantangan eksplorasi yang lebih pada ekspresi dan gerak tubuh. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dalam mengumpulkan data dan memanfaatkan banyak literatur saat ini. Hasil penelitian berupa pengetahuan dan rekomendasi tentang pengemasan dan distribusi produksi film dalam format vertikal.

Kata kunci: video vertikal; produksi film; rasio aspek; seni

Introduction

Digital media has exploded over the last quarter century, presenting new challenges compared to traditional media. Digital media, such as the digital divide and digital production, has changed over time. Now digital media focuses on humans, the interaction between technological advances and cultural practices (Aspray, 2011).

Vertical videos are gaining popularity among content creators for social media because of the aspect ratio that suits the way mobile users hold and watch video content today. In recent years, the 9:16 aspect ratio has been established as an emerging requirement in the professional video market as companies have realized the commercial value of vertical video creation for mobile consumption. The potential that digital technology offers provides a social and environmental opportunity to do more than depict technological marvels but also address growing challenges (Wilsdon et al., 2001). This is marked by the emergence of these facilities on digital platforms. Like Snapchat, TikTok, IG Reels, and Youtube Shorts which then responded to positively by content creators.

Despite the increasing demand for vertical video production, the absence of literature on how vertical videos should be produced and, in particular, the absence of teaching materials concerning vertical narrative, composition, and cinematography still need to be made significant (Clayton, 2019). Although filmmaking has been discussed and analyzed for more than a century, the rise of vertical video production has been met with a lack of theoretical analysis for this medium. Some video producers dismiss the practicality of vertical video production as unprofitable or impossible, without investigating the creative opportunities that aspect ratios allow. Thus, filmmakers must now literally and metaphorically think outside the box of 'horizontal' framing, the vertical video platform transformed social variety when it first emerged in 2013 and has taken time for the marketing world to accept that the trend persists today. , even more, common among amateur digital platform users. With the rapid development of digital technology, the vertical video content difference between amateurs and professionals is becoming increasingly blurred. With a relatively short duration, interesting plot, and slick characterizations, it is considered a powerful ingredient to hold smartphone users for a moment to fully understand the story (tendency) of the film without moving from place to place.

Below are some of the results of previous studies and published books in vertical formats. Research conducted by Rafe Clayton (2022) entitled The Context of Vertical Filmmaking Literature suggests that there are three reasons why wide bias frames would suit standard cinema formats: first, there is the prevalence of "narrative" paintings shown in horizontal format from the 19th century. Second, it is suggested that the horizontal projections fit into the successful tradition of curved theater stages and the seating arrangements associated with them.

Thirdly, it is said that the horizontal frame is more compatible with natural human physiology in terms of the field of vision because the two eyes are positioned laterally next to each other and our peripheral view is wider than it is high.

However, Clayton later incorporated Eisenstein's argument in 1930 (duChemin, 2015) that by embracing horizontal frames, the consequence is to exclude a myriad of creative possibilities and entertaining moving images in favor of more vertical compositions. Eisenstein talks about the biological, cultural, intellectual, and industrial tendencies of human beings towards vertical manifestation efforts and how psychological aspirations are represented throughout human evolution in the history of civilization. Eisenstein also emphasized that the vertical aspect, as much as the horizontal aspect, has a fundamental meaning in human experience. Furthermore, Eisenstein admits and concludes that neither the vertical nor the horizontal frames are sufficiently representative of the world around us (duChemin, 2015). The argument is that if there is to be a standard dimension for film exposure and projection, then it must be square and thus, 'dynamic square' to be suitable for all possible framing. Vertical frames are commonly used for composing images in photographic works. The choice between vertical and horizontal frames is based on how a photo is to be read. A situation with a vertical orientation (vertical story) will be focused and effectively shot with a vertical orientation (Eisenstein, 1988).

While research conducted by Mats Ulenius (2018) under the title Tall Tales Ancestry and Artistry of Vertical Video states that in the spring of 2017, both Snapchat and Instagram introduced vertical video ads in their smartphone apps; some classically trained film workers (classic/conventional film) feel that vertical frames are unnatural, unaesthetic, unprofessional. But Ulenius' research is starting to reframe some footage, plan some vertical shots, and – above all – experiments to encourage more creative possibilities.

Ulenius's research says that there is strong hype surrounding vertical videos. The vertical video format in ads is seen as something truly revolutionary – the format of the new mobile generation. The way

users use all the components, even the structured and orderly filing of digital life, enhances and simplifies conventional forms (Baldridge, 2009). According to this hype, horizontal frames are now a thing of the past, used mainly for old folk media like television and cinema. The production of strong, inspiring, and educative content is an opportunity for the film industry in an era of growth and the spread of new media. Merely changing old content (eg books into e-books, compasses into digital compasses, etc.) to renewable media is not the final answer. This is precisely a new starting line, innovation is needed that connects aesthetics with engineering, humanities with technology, and art and technology. Then, Ulenius confirmed in his research that the term "vertical video" is more suitable for today's media, than the longer phrase "vertical film". Shorter expressions feel justified, as digital technology dominates both vertical media production and playback today.

When viewed from a narrative perspective, it is not much different from a horizontal format film, even the same. However, the concept of a video with a vertical format certainly affects all aspects of the cinematography. This is where the opportunity should be explored further by the creators. The shift in visual language, the dominance of the elongated space forces the subject to be the center of the view, and the duration of human vision (the level of eye fatigue in vertical videos) until the conception of motivation is intertwined with each other. The process of cinema identification and projection needs to be considered. How about User Experience (UX) when sharing movies made in vertical format? The viewing experience can sometimes seem like a small and trivial part but don't forget, movies always and relate to the audience. We all need a new strategy: a distinctive strategy, produced by the latest generation. Despite the differences in screen formats and intended audiences, films have always had a philosophical concern at their center (Wartenberg, 2007). That a show must be able to answer the aesthetic and practical needs of the community.

We are witnessing a development of human civilization that was never imagined before. The meeting of the fields of art, technology, and science

is a very productive point. Owning a cell phone, which was once considered an adult technology, has become a necessity in the youth culture of many societies. Even video games, once confined to stand-alone computers, are now a vehicle for youth social encounters (Blair et al., 2015). Each field competes to provide easy access to shifting from what was originally an additional need (soft skill) to a secondary and even primary need. Technically and aesthetically, the question is, how can viewers interact with the visuals they see in the idea of producing films in a vertical format as an alternative?

The popularity of smartphones and digital technology has increasingly penetrated the video production process to enter the sociocultural space. Vertical images have now become.

To answer the questions above, it is necessary to establish mutually beneficial cooperation between ideas and renewable technologies. This new paradigm brings a 'way' or a new understanding of active participation in the media, which is no longer sourced in one direction. (Malilang, 2017). Cultivating creative partners between these two poles is key if we still want to compete and get attention from the outside world. "I think therefore I exist", Rene Descartes's words are very apt to describe the existence of today. An individual is considered present if his frame of mind appears in two parts of the world, real and virtual. From a social standpoint, people replace direct interaction and communication with digital media. See and measure someone from relations on social media, and judge it from the visuals displayed on the social network (Kusrini, 2015). This openness to the two realms can generate confidence in increasing the spirit of work. Looking for breakthroughs to create opportunities for filmmakers in a fast-paced world.

Methodology

To describe the phenomenon of research with material objects in the form of vertical video trends among amateur digital platform users as an alternative to film production, the research was carried out using a qualitative method, which is a method obtained from understanding

the meaning of an object and research data. With qualitative methods, researchers can find a broad and deep understanding of complex social situations, understand the interactions in these social situations so that hypotheses can be found (Sugiyono, 2019). The purpose of research using qualitative methods is still temporary. This research is an analytical interpretation study by observing and reading trends in a film production.

a. Documentation
   Documentation is done through recording and vertical video recording on various platforms or films that use aspect ratios as visual language. The goal is to get a variety of content from many digital creators. Thus, vertical videos can be mapped and traced so that accurate and complete information and data are obtained.

b. Observation
   Observation is a data collection technique by making in-depth observations using the five human senses of the object to be studied. This study will use non-participant observation. Observation does not play a role in which the researcher makes observations without being noticed by the subject being observed. The first thing to do is to observe the data directly on the trend of using vertical video on digital platforms, via mobile phones. The purpose of observing vertical video is to find the data needed in film production using vertical video. So that the film will be studied and discussed in this study.

c. Literature Study
   The literature is used to assist in the preparation and writing of studies. Broadly speaking, reading sources (library) are divided into: general reading sources, in the form of books; other reference sources such as magazines, newspapers, and the internet. In connection with this research, library data collection was carried out as a material to assist in analyzing data in research.

Results

Ease of access to information in the digital era enlarges the burst of creative ideas, including watching movies or television programs in renewable, vertical formats. Before discussing

further about vertical video, I think we need to understand first what is meant by aspect ratio. Aspect ratio is the relationship between the width and length of an image in framing. Generally, it is written in numbers such as 4:3 or 16:9. Regardless of the recording medium used, the aspect ratio is essential, as it determines the image's shape (Stadler & McWilliam, 2008). In cinema culture, the aspect ratio innovation is not just this time, but continuous innovation on how the content created is distributed to the audience. The presence of a 16:9 horizontal screen on television was then passed on to the streaming platform until today, aiming to achieve wide and quality framing.

One of the uses of aspect ratios other than as a framing space can be seen in the film The Grand Budapest Hotel (2014) by Wes Anderson. In this film, the aspect ratio is chosen to determine the identification of the time that occurs. From 1985 to the present, the director uses an aspect ratio of 1.85:1 shown at the beginning of the film (present time representation when referring to the standard format of theatrical or cinema releases in 1953).

Meanwhile, to represent 1960, the aspect ratio used is 2.35:1. Scenes in the film refer to the past or flashbacks. The screen that is wider than before could also be a director's response to the history of the emergence of television in the 1960s. Where television seems to represent the presence of a small screen or a small projection space in a private place. So it makes sense if the aspect ratio was then made wider both in the production process and in the projection of films in theaters at that time. The 1.37:1 aspect ratio was used by the director to represent the 1930s. In line with the official determination of the ratio by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences which proposes making films with standard horizontal frames for cinema viewing based on aesthetics, commercial purposes, and physiological justifications (Clayton, 2019).

The consistency of the aspect ratio in the film The Grand Budapest Hotel (2014) makes it easy for viewers to identify the year the event occurred. Different year settings require the creativity of directors and cinematographers to use and

Figure 1. Screen shot film The Grand Budapest Hotel, Director Wes Anderson, 2014

Figure 2. Screen shot film X&Y, Director Jason Iskandar, 2021

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maximize various elements of cinematography as a tool for storytelling, one of which is aspect ratio.

Meanwhile, the application of the 9:16 aspect ratio or vertical format can be seen in the film X&Y (2021) made by Jason Iskandar from Studio Antelope in collaboration with TikTok which is predicted to be a vertical video platform in the film industry. More than 120 thousand eyes watched the story, which was divided into six episodes with a duration of one minute (according to the initial duration of TikTok). The idea of vertical film distribution on this platform is an interesting achievement in exploiting the tendency of mobile users to consume information today. Experimentation of the X&Y film production medium to the distribution method that was further developed from the horizontal format seemed to provide resistance to conventional screen forms.

Unfortunately, not all areas of framing with a vertical format in X&Y films can provide a new picture of the development of cinema. The concept of horizontal space still haunts and manifests in some of the visuals displayed. It's as if just turning the horizontal screen into a vertical one without bringing up the possibilities that can be responded to by the presence of a vertical screen. Smartphones with their vertical characteristics have entered a private space in everyday life, for example, while lying down in the room, still accessing information, or at the dining table while completing a web series.

> "Selecting the frame is the fundamental act of filmmaking; as filmmakers, we must direct the audience's attention: "look here, now look at this, now over here..." Choosing the frame is a matter of conveying the story, but it is also a question of composition, rhythm, and perspective" (Brown, 2016: 4).

Choosing to frame is very basic in filmmaking, as a way of directing the audience's attention to see what the creator wants. Choosing to frame is not only about how the story is told, but also about the composition, rhythm, and perspective used. Many elements are present in the framing process: aspect ratio, composition, point of view, and perspective. In the context of the aspect ratio, one of the conceptual elements has been shown in the two films above.

Discussion

So, is it true that making films in a vertical format is the future of cinema? Or one of the original forms of content on today's streaming platforms? Film producers' consideration of screen format changes how they produce and influences how viewers consume entertainment. Vertical seems to be "bridging" the mechanism that encourages people to look at a broader and more diverse world (Tsui, 2008). New problems also arise, when smartphones become part of daily needs. Since smartphones have become sociocultural over the last decade or more, people are accustomed to spending their time watching videos on their mobile phones, including recording all their activities. And all of that is done with a vertical screen or 9:16. So, it feels very normal if then people start to get used to watching with a vertical view, including watching movies. Therefore, a big question arises for the film production process. Are you ready to face the challenge of making an interesting short film both narratively and of course cinematic at a ratio of 9:16? The answer, of course, is YES. The vertical concept really pushes creators out of the conventional mindset. Literally, it is required to be more creative in packaging visual language, considering that the medium is much different from television or cinema. If you want to step back a little or look to other mediums, actually there is a visual experience that the audience has already felt. For example, characters that have been arranged in comic books on a panel will display more visuals vertically. The reason, of course, is that the book is printed vertically. In addition, in order to show the character looks bigger or looks more manly like a superhero, the vertical in the comic is able to represent it.

The challenge that needs to be answered in the vertical format is the reading room that narrows lengthwise. Moving the camera movement that usually uses movement from left to right to be filled as story space now switches from top to bottom. This shift, of course, has an impact on the resulting spatial dimensions. Subjects in the vertical format have a more specific focus of view because reading space is limited. Vertical always leaves empty space

both at the top of the subject (eg head) and bottom (eg subject sitting on a park bench).

Close-up shots are also an opportunity to isolate the eye. However, what needs to be taken into consideration, how far is the visual impact when isolating space in a vertical format using a close-up shot? In conventional films, to show facial expressions, close-ups are able to isolate the field of view. When this is vertical, the top and bottom frames will remain. If forced closer to remove the top and bottom frames, what appears is not close-ups but big close-ups and even extreme close-ups. As a result this gives motivation and a visually different meaning. It would be a lie if this didn't fall into the category of challenges to be solved either technically taking or visually motivated. The field of view becomes a bit more complicated, which can usually be kept very dense when vertical. Because the subject's body in the film, the majority of humans are naturally vertical. Not to mention when two shots and even group shots. Characters will appear small and crowded due to limited framing.

Possible Solution

A number of opportunities that can be offered to overcome challenges in vertical video production include: (1) The process of shooting on vertical format films must be done by adjusting the camera position vertically on the supporting accessories (tripod, monopod, etc.) instead of recording the conventional film format. which is then processed digitally during post production. Because by placing the camera vertically from the start, it gives an idea of how wide the viewfinder can be. (2) Camera movement. Due to the slimmer and elongated field of view it requires adjustments to camera movement as well as creative opportunities for actors to explore their expressions and gestures. When viewed from the point of view of its use, vertical videos are very suitable for body movements such as dances on TikTok. It could be that the resulting story leads to it. Then a combination or variation of both shot size and camera movement is needed to keep the actor in a frame that has little looking room or space for movement. (3) The vertical

format does not mean that imaginary lines and rules of thirds are useless, in fact it is very helpful to bring up a new visual language so as not to be trapped in the language of classic films. (4) The selective focus game to attract the attention of the audience can also be applied from the top to the bottom frame. As well as being sensitive to utilizing the available space by using the right image composition. (5) Always experimenting to find the best pattern cinematically. Because the narrative aspect is not much different from the horizontal format. Experiments that are carried out consistently are what makes each person able to find the best and most appropriate formula to visualize the story.

Conclusions

After reviewing the two films above, although not all of them are in vertical format, they both talk about the use of aspect ratios as story space or visual language, it can be concluded that aspect ratio as one of the elements in framing (mise en scene) still holds various opportunities. can be encouraged to come up with new ideas, at least alternatives to conventional films. Previously, concerns arose over the broadcast space, now all of them have been answered by various platforms that actually provide creative space. That is, in the distribution area the problem was resolved, at least until this research was conducted. It's just a matter of building a creative space regarding the proliferation of these digital platforms.

The popularity of smartphones and digital technology has increasingly penetrated the video production process to enter the sociocultural space. Vertical images have now become common for consumption. Aesthetically, the idea of a vertical format gives rise to intimate ways in which viewers can interact with the visuals they are viewing. It makes it possible that vertical video is the identity of viewing on digital platforms. Indeed, in some cases, challenges in the production process, especially the visual aspect, still arise. This actually indicates that the vertical theme has wide potential to be explored to represent the story.

So, by applying some of the solutions that have been offered to the vertical video production

process, at least it can even be able to realize an alternative visual language on the 9:16 screen that is really not trapped by conventional film styles. Technological advances have led to a revolution where films and videos are no longer dominated by wealthy commercial and corporate entities, even ordinary people with non-film backgrounds can also make their first films to be disseminated on digital media. The majority of motion pictures in today's world are created by everyone who has access to a smartphone, and they have their own ideal approach, chosen as the framework of convenience, namely vertical.

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