

Vertical Cinema in the Transformation of Digital Promotional Media for Top Coffee Products in the Mobile Viewing Era

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ABSTRACT:

The shift in screen orientation from landscape (16:9) to portrait (9:16) format has driven a fundamental change in how audiovisual content is produced and consumed in what is now known as the mobile viewing era. This phenomenon, widely recognized as vertical cinema, is not merely a technical change in frame ratio but constitutes a new cinematic language that restructures spatial composition, editing rhythm, and viewer engagement psychology. This study aims to analyze how the principles of vertical cinema are implemented in the digital promotional campaign of Top Coffee through a vertical micro-drama series titled "The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto," aired on the YouTube Shorts channel @TopCoffeeIndonesia. The analysis was conducted using a qualitative-descriptive approach combined with quantitative analysis of engagement metrics (views, likes, comments) across five episodes (Episode 1, Episode 2, Episode 3, Episode 4 Part 1, and Episode 4 Part 2). The resulting findings were subsequently elaborated through an examination of five pillars of vertical cinema: (1) vertical spatial composition, (2) cinematic language and pacing, (3) hook strategy and attention economy, (4) the shift in promotional format from conventional TVC to serial micro-drama, and (5) native product placement. The findings reveal two distinct patterns of audience engagement: an organic emotional engagement pattern dominating the early episodes, marked by a 46.81% decline in likes from Episode 1 to Episode 2 and a 52.00% decline from Episode 2 to Episode 3, and a massive algorithm-driven reach in Episode 4, which recorded over one million views yet exhibited a very low rate of active interaction. These findings confirm that the effectiveness of vertical cinema in the FMCG context depends on the balance between emotional narrative structure and platform algorithmic optimization. This study contributes theoretically to digital marketing research on short-form video and offers practical implications for coffee industry practitioners in designing more effective vertical content.

Keywords: vertical cinema, digital promotional media, short-form video, mobile viewing, consumer engagement, Top Coffee

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Introduction

This decade has been marked by a fundamental turning point in the ecosystem of audiovisual media consumption. Technological developments driven by the emergence of artificial intelligence and the increasing sophistication of mobile devices (smartphones) have given rise to a variety of short-form video distribution platforms such as YouTube Shorts, TikTok, and Instagram Reels, which have fundamentally transformed the media consumption landscape (Dou, 2025). The most conspicuous change lies in the shift in screen orientation from the conventional landscape format (16:9) to the portrait format (9:16), a phenomenon referred to in contemporary cinematographic scholarship as vertical cinema. This shift is not merely a technical adjustment in frame ratio but rather the emergence of a new cinematic language. This novelty demands a restructuring of storytelling, spatial composition, and the attention economy of viewers (Wijaya et al., 2025).

This phenomenon is closely tied to a fundamental change in mobile device usage habits. The vertical format has now become the orientation regarded as "normal" by smartphone users, thereby supplanting the historical dominance of the horizontal format long associated with television and cinema screens (Redaksi Jurnal Kajian dan Penelitian Umum, 2026). As affirmed in a study on the aesthetics of vertical cinema in the film "Siklus" by Garin Nugroho, which examined several aspects namely color, camera angle, and camera movement these elements proved highly significant in shaping viewers' aesthetic experience of portrait-format works, with a high level of visual satisfaction reported among respondents (Wijaya et al., 2025). A similar phenomenon occurs in the realm of short films circulating on social media, where vertical orientation influences visual strategy in cinematography. This phenomenon has driven the dominance of medium shots to close-ups, as well as the use of vertical space to reinforce emotional delivery (Redaksi Jurnal Kajian dan Penelitian Umum, 2026). In a broader context,

the transformation of audiovisual narrative on digital platforms is also reflected in research on scientific storytelling through vertical video on social media, which demonstrates how this format creates new ways of communicating messages concisely while capturing the attention of mobile users (Muñoz-Pico, 2024).

On the other hand, this transformation creates both opportunities and strategic challenges for the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry, particularly coffee products. Competition in Indonesia's coffee market has intensified significantly alongside the growth of domestic coffee consumption, compelling companies in this sector to devise new marketing strategies relevant to the media consumption habits of the mobile-first generation (Mustapha & Issa, 2021; Tulib, 2026). Research on FMCG brand positioning affirms that a brand's success in a crowded market depends heavily on its ability to create narrative differentiation relevant to contemporary consumer values (Tulib, 2026), while research on brand trust and brand ambassadors in the FMCG industry shows that the credibility of marketing communication is a key determinant of customer loyalty (Mustapha & Issa, 2021).

Short-form vertical video currently stands out as a winner in terms of interaction, popularity, and marketing effectiveness for business practitioners in the digital era (Judijanto, 2025). A bibliometric analysis of short-form video marketing research reveals that this field of study is heavily centered on social media platforms particularly TikTok with a growing emphasis on consumer behavior, purchase intention, and digital engagement (Judijanto, 2025). Within this context, the official channel of Top Coffee Indonesia has adapted the vertical cinema approach through a serialized micro-drama campaign titled "The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto," which explores a social parody of exclusive café culture (specialty coffee shop) by positioning instant sachet coffee as a rational, practical alternative that nonetheless retains a competitive flavor quality.

Although the literature on short-form video marketing has developed rapidly, most prior

research has focused on two relatively separate streams. The first stream examines the effectiveness of short-form video platforms (TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts) in relation to marketing variables such as brand engagement, purchase intention, and brand recall, as found in studies on the impact of short-form video on purchase intention for FMCG products among Generation Z (Gorai et al., 2026) and research on the role of Instagram Reels content in building brand loyalty among small businesses (Kamdar, 2026). The second stream concerns the aesthetics and cinematic language of the vertical format itself, which largely addresses independent narrative short films or works of cinematic art (Wijaya et al., 2025; Redaksi Jurnal Kajian dan Penelitian Umum, 2026), without explicitly linking these to the marketing effectiveness of commercial products.

The gap identified in this study is the scarcity of research integrating the analysis of vertical cinema's cinematic language (spatial composition, pacing, hook, product placement) with quantitative data on real audience engagement in FMCG marketing campaigns in Indonesia, particularly at the level of scene-by-scene analysis mapped against actual performance metrics. Studies on digital marketing strategies in the Indonesian coffee business such as those on Zaza Coffee Pontianak (Yulanda & Fachri, 2025), Hero Coffee Indonesia (Maulana et al., 2026), and community service programs for coffee based micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) around Mount Kelud (Hidayati et al., 2025) have generally relied on quantitative survey approaches to consumer attitudes without delving deeply into the dimension of visual content production. Conversely, studies focusing on vertical aesthetics tend not to include FMCG case studies that are commercially measurable. This study seeks to bridge this gap by simultaneously analyzing the cinematographic aspects of vertical format and the actual audience engagement performance data of a single, thoroughly documented Indonesian coffee product campaign.

Building on this background and the identified research gap, this study aims to: (1) analyze the implementation of five pillars of vertical cinema vertical spatial composition, cinematic language and pacing, hook strategy and attention economy, the shift in promotional format, and native product placement in the "The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto" campaign by Top Coffee Indonesia; (2) measure and interpret the dynamics of audience engagement throughout the campaign's episode series; and (3) formulate theoretical and practical implications for digital promotional strategies of vertical-video-based FMCG products in Indonesia. This study is expected to contribute to the development of an analytical framework that integrates a qualitative cinematographic approach with quantitative digital performance data, while also serving as a practical reference for marketing practitioners in the coffee and FMCG industries in designing more effective vertical content strategies in the mobile viewing era.

Research Design and Approach

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach supported by quantitative analysis (a mixed method sequential design), combining visual content analysis of vertical cinematography with descriptive statistical analysis of audience engagement metrics. The qualitative approach is used to deconstruct the elements of vertical cinema's cinematic language at the scene level (scene level analysis), while the quantitative approach is used to measure and interpret patterns of audience engagement numerically throughout the advertising campaign series. The combination of these two approaches enables the study to address not only "how" the vertical visual language is constructed, but also "how effectively" that construction is received by the actual audience.

Research Object and Data Source

The object of this study is the vertical micro-drama campaign titled "The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto," produced and published by the official @TopCoffeeIndonesia account on the YouTube Shorts platform, comprising five videos that form a single continuous narrative sequence.

These five videos are: Episode 1 The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto, Episode 2 The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto, Episode 3 The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto, Episode 4 Part 1 The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto, and Episode 4 Part 2 The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto. These five videos were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) they form part of a single serialized narrative on the same official brand account; (2) they span a broadcast period allowing observation of both audience decay dynamics and algorithmic reach; and (3) publicly available engagement metrics (views, likes, comments) that can be directly verified through each respective link.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection was carried out through two complementary approaches. First, visual observation and documentation of the five videos were conducted using a timestamp-mapping technique to identify cinematographic elements in each key scene. Each video was viewed repeatedly and mapped according to five categories of analytical pillars: (a) vertical spatial composition and frame arrangement, (b) camera movement technique and editing rhythm, (c) hook structure within the first three seconds, (d) micro-drama narrative elements and each episode's position within the overall continuing storyline, and (e) narrative product placement technique. The observation results were recorded on a coding sheet listing the timestamp, visual description, and functional interpretation for each pillar. Second, quantitative data on engagement metrics (views, likes, comments) were collected by directly recording the publicly available data on each episode's video link. These data were then compiled into a Key Performance

Indicator (KPI) table to allow systematic comparison of performance across episodes.

Campaign Profile and Audience Engagement Metrics

The "The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto" campaign is a vertical micro-drama series produced by Top Coffee Indonesia as an episodic-narrative-based digital promotional strategy. This campaign employs a social parody of exclusive café culture (specialty coffee shop) often associated with premium pricing and elaborate brewing processes. The drama positioning sachet coffee as a rational, practical alternative that nonetheless retains a competitive flavor quality. The narrative is constructed through five interconnected touchpoints Episode 1, 2, 3, and Episode 4 Part 1 and Part 2 each with a short runtime consistent with the YouTube Shorts format convention.

The choice of vertical cinema format for this campaign is consistent with the shift in media consumption preferences among the mobile-first generation, for whom portrait orientation has become the de facto standard in daily digital interaction (Redaksi Jurnal Kajian dan Penelitian Umum, 2026). This strategy also reflects a broader trend within Indonesia's FMCG industry, in which local and national coffee brands are increasingly leveraging short-form video as their primary marketing channel rather than conventional television advertising (Tamimi et al., 2025; Rifky et al., 2026). Table 1 presents the Key Performance Indicator data compiled across all episodes of the "The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto" series, serving as the basis for the quantitative analysis of audience engagement dynamics throughout the campaign.

Table 1. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) per Episode of the "The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto" Series

Episode	Views	Likes	Comments	Specific Audio Element
Episode 1	Not recorded	4,700	27	Standard audio / telenovela
Episode 2	Not recorded	2,500	7	Auto-dubbed
Episode 3	Not recorded	1,200	1	"Spirit of War" – YesteryBeat
Episode 4 Pt. 1	1,100,000	0	Not recorded	Auto-dubbed
Episode 4 Pt. 2	1,000,000	8	1	Auto-dubbed

The data in Table 1 reveal an interesting pattern in the early episodes (Episode 1 through Episode 3) show a relatively high volume of likes and comments compared to the proportion of their views. This analysis indicating strong organic emotional engagement during the campaign's introductory phase. By contrast Episode 4 Parts 1 and 2 recorded a significant surge in views, surpassing one million views in each part, yet with a considerably lower volume of active interaction (likes and comments) proportionally.

Audience Decay Dynamics in the Early Episodes

Episode 1 successfully garnered 4,700 likes and 27 comments on the YouTube Shorts platform on which it aired. This episode functioned as the primary entry point, capitalizing on the novelty effect and a curiosity-driven hook within the first three seconds of the broadcast. Figure 1 visualizes the declining trend in active engagement from Episode 1 through Episode 3.

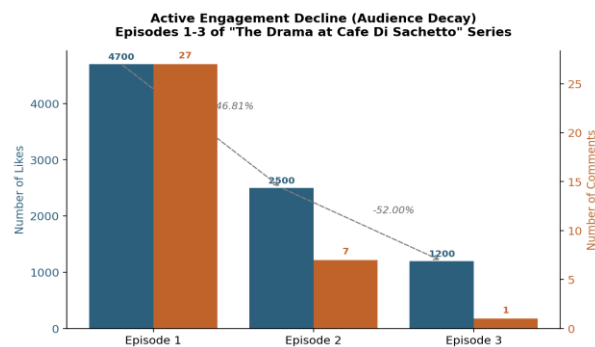


Figure 1. Decline in active engagement (audience decay), Episodes 1–3.

Entering Episode 2 the number of likes fell to 2,500 while comments dropped sharply to 7. That's representing a 46.81% decline in the likes indicator. This decline continued into Episode 3 which recorded 1,200 likes and only 1 comment. This showing 52.00% decrease from the previous episode. This sustained decline reflects the audience decay phenomenon commonly observed in episodic content marketing strategies, whereby the novelty effect of the opening episode naturally diminishes as the number of episodes viewers must follow to grasp the full storyline increases. The sharper decline in comments (74.07% from Episode 1 to Episode 2) compared to the decline in likes (46.81% over the same period) indicates that viewer retention barriers at this stage were more pronounced in the higher-order participation dimension (writing comments) than in the lower-order passive dimension (clicking the like button). This finding is consistent with prior literature indicating that emotionally charged videos tend to generate more passive behaviors such as views and likes, whereas active behaviors such as commenting require a higher degree of narrative engagement

(Pirraglia et al., 2022). Although Episode 3 incorporated a distinctive, dramatically themed audio track to reinforce its atmosphere. This supporting technical element was unable to arrest the decline in active engagement, suggesting that background music cannot fully substitute for the escalation of a compelling narrative conflict.

Effectiveness of Multi-part Content in Episode 4

Episode 4 divided its story into two parts, there was Part 1 and Part 2 with the aim of creating a narrative cliffhanger in Part 1. This analysis to proactively drive viewers to seek the continuation of the story in Part 2. Based on view distribution data Episode 4 Part 1 recorded 1,100,000 views, while Episode 4 Part 2 garnered 1,000,000 views. Yielding a viewer conversion ratio of 90.91%. This exceptionally high conversion rate indicates that the cliffhanger structure in Part 1 successfully generated a sufficiently strong sense of curiosity to sustain viewer continuity through to Part 2. However a fundamental anomaly emerged when comparing view reach with active interaction metrics, as visualized in Figure 2.

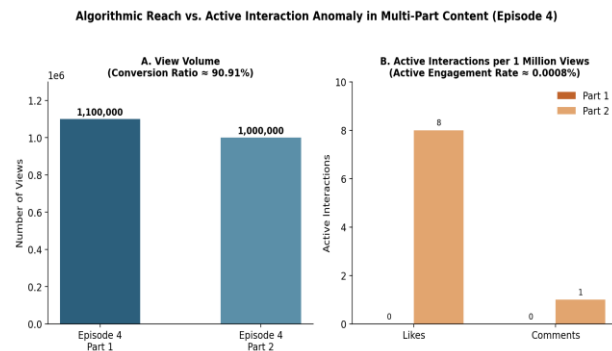


Figure 2. Algorithmic reach vs. active interaction anomaly in Episode 4.

In Episode 4 Part 2 of the one million views obtained, only 8 likes and 1 comment were recorded an exceedingly low active engagement rate relative to its reach. This phenomenon reflects two interrelated possible mechanisms. The first is passive algorithmic push, whereby content receives high-volume placement in users Shorts feed through platform distribution or paid promotion. This makes generating a high accumulation of views without a sufficiently strong emotional trigger to prompt viewers to like or comment. The second is engagement transition friction whereby viewers are compelled to complete the viewing duration due to the fragmented storyline. However the dramatic resolution offered in Part 2 is not compelling enough to elicit an active emotional response.

This finding aligns with patterns identified in research on user engagement with short-form

video content on TikTok and Instagram Reels. Which reveals that viewers more often discover branded content passively through an algorithmically personalized feed rather than through active search driven by strong personal interest (Molem et al., 2024). This pattern is also relevant to the finding that visually compelling short-form video content can generate substantial view volume through algorithmic optimization, yet still requires a strong emotional storytelling element to convert passive reach into active engagement that sustains long-term brand engagement (Bikowski, 2025; Gorai et al., 2026).

Figure 3 presents a comprehensive visualization of the shift in engagement patterns throughout the campaign, from the dominance of organic emotional engagement in the early episodes to the dominance of algorithmic reach in Episode 4.

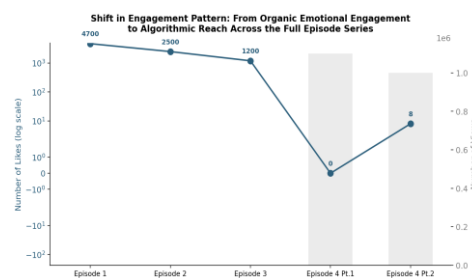


Figure 3. Shift in engagement pattern across the episode series.

The pattern visualized in Figure 3 confirms the existence of two fundamentally distinct audience engagement regimes within a single campaign: an organic emotional engagement regime dominating Episodes 1 through 3, and an algorithmic reach regime dominating Episode 4. These two regimes carry distinct strategic implications for the design of vertical cinema content for FMCG products, as will be further

discussed in the strategic implications section of this study.

Analysis of the Five Pillars of Vertical Cinema

Vertical Spatial Composition

The use of the 9:16 aspect ratio in the "The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto" campaign eliminates

the lateral horizontal space conventionally used in traditional cinema to display landscape backdrops, instead maximizing the vertical axis and depth of field. In Episode 1 an extreme close-up shot captured vertically on the main character's face (scene: 00:00–00:03), fills the entire frame from top to bottom of the smartphone screen. thereby creating an intimate tension without any lateral background space. The high-angle vertical shot at 00:12–00:16, depicting the coffee cup positioned at the bottom of the frame while the barista's facial expression occupies the top, optimizes the symmetrical top-bottom framing characteristic of vertical composition.

A similar pattern continues across subsequent episodes with consistent creative variation. Episode 2 leverages the vertical movement axis to emphasize the physical rejection gesture of a hand pushing away a coffee cup (scene: 00:01–00:04), while in Episode 3 the 9:16 frame ratio proves effective in capturing the full human form (human-anatomy-friendly) as the character performs an expressive dance movement (scene: 00:03–00:08). In Episode 4 Part 1 a stacked tight-framing technique positions two characters symmetrically facing each other yet constrained by the frame's left-right boundaries (scene: opening to 00:06). Thus deliberately creating creating a claustrophobic tension that heightens the dramatic build-up toward the climax. Meanwhile, in Episode 4 Part 2 : a vertical macro close-up on the pouring of hot water (00:01–00:05) optimally exploits gravity and the vertical lines of the smartphone screen. which is followed by a full vertical framing of the arrayed Top Coffee products (00:40–00:46) as a structured visual closing. The consistent application of vertical composition principles across the five episodes affirms that the campaign's creative team possesses a deep understanding of the new grammar of vertical cinematography, as emphasized in research on the visual language of vertical short films namely that the constraints of lateral space direct the use of vertical space, along with color and framing, to reinforce the delivery of emotion to the viewer (Redaksi Jurnal Kajian dan Penelitian Umum, 2026).

Cinematic Language and Pacing

Given that mobile audiences tend toward rapid scanning behavior, the editing rhythm across the five episodes was designed to avoid visual fatigue while sustaining viewer attention. Episode 1 features repeated dramatic shot transitions between the barista's expression and the customer's reaction, with cuts lasting less than one second each (00:06–00:11). These elements are combined with a classic telenovela sound effect to reinforce the satirical comedic tone. Episode 2 employs a quick-tilt camera movement (a rapid vertical pan) from the character's face to the coffee cup (00:08–00:12), directing the viewer's gaze to the main object almost instantaneously.

In Episode 3, an abrupt shift in visual rhythm from a stiff café atmosphere to a fast-paced dance sequence (00:00–00:05) functions as an effective rhythm interrupt, followed by rhythmic editing synchronized to the beat (beat-matching) at 00:28–00:35. Episode 4 Part 1 features high-speed shot-reverse-shot editing during the debate over the secret coffee recipe (00:02–00:08), with an accelerating cutting pace approaching the cliffhanger moment (00:42–00:48). Conversely, Episode 4 Part 2 deliberately employs a slow-motion technique in the coffee-brewing scene (00:01–00:06) as a contrast to the faster tempo of preceding episodes, providing a calming cinematic pause while highlighting the product's aesthetic appetite appeal. The variation in editing tempo, tailored to each episode's narrative function fast-paced to build comedic tension and conflict. On the other hand slower-paced to deliver resolution and emphasize the product demonstrates a strategic understanding that the long, linear logic of traditional editing has been replaced by a new editing discipline that rapidly captures attention and is conducive to algorithmic distribution on short-form video platforms.

Hook Strategy and Attention Economy

The greatest obstacle in social media content is users' tendency to swipe away within seconds. Consequently, the first three seconds must serve as a hook as critical factor determining the

completion rate for each episode. Episode 1 opens with a wide-eyed, startled facial expression accompanied by dramatic telenovela music, as seen in the scene within the first three seconds of the episode. Thereby leveraging emotional dissonance and eccentric visuals to trigger a curiosity gap in under two seconds. Episode 2 relies on an action-first hook a table slam or an abrupt gesture rejecting the coffee cup within the opening three seconds, immediately thrusting viewers into the midst of the conflict without a lengthy narrative introduction.

Episode 3 employs an audiovisual jolt through a sudden burst of rock-pop music paired with an expressive dance movement, serving as a pattern interrupt to startle viewers mid-scroll. Episode 4 Part 1 features a montage of successive startled reactions from the characters with truncated dialogue within the first three seconds of the video, creating an information gap that compels viewers to keep watching until it concludes with an explicit cliffhanger hook reading "To be continued in Part 2". Thereby leveraging the psychological drive toward narrative closure. Episode 4 Part 2 delivers an immediate emotional payoff through a cinematic depiction of water parameters between these two promotional format approaches.

being poured over the sachet coffee, accompanied by the characters' expressions of relief within the first three seconds of the video, providing a narrative resolution for viewers arriving from the Part 1 cliffhanger.

The effectiveness of this hook strategy is reflected in the 90.91% viewer conversion ratio from Episode 4 Part 1 to Part 2, as discussed in the quantitative analysis section above. Nevertheless as previously noted, the success of a hook in sustaining viewing volume does not directly correlate with success in driving active interaction. Thereby underscoring that the attention economy on short-form video platforms operates across two distinct layers: viewing retention and active emotional engagement.

Shift in Promotional Format

The "The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto" campaign represents a paradigm shift from the Traditional TV Commercial (TVC), which relies on direct persuasive messaging (hard sell), toward a continuous story-first entertainment narrative. Table 2 summarizes the comparative

Table 2. Comparison of Parameters between Conventional TVC and Vertical Micro-Drama

Comparative Parameter	Conventional TVC (Landscape 16:9)	Vertical Micro-Drama (Portrait 9:16)
Screen Orientation	Horizontal (TV, cinema, desktop)	Vertical (smartphone-native)
Messaging Approach	Hard-sell / direct product-feature education	Story-first / comedic parody and social satire
Duration Structure	Single (15, 30, or 60 seconds)	Serialized / episodic (multi-touchpoint)
Conflict Format	Resolved within a single complete broadcast	Employs a cliffhanger tactic between episodes
Product Integration	Product is the main subject of the advertisement	Product is an organic solution within the storyline

Through this five touchpoint serial format ,Top Coffee builds progressive narrative engagement in which viewers do not feel coerced into watching an advertisement, but instead enjoy a

short comedic series that happens to be set in the parody café "Cafe Di Sachetto." This approach is consistent with the broader trend in film and consumer product marketing toward leveraging

short-duration vertical video platforms as a primary marketing tool, relying on creator collaboration and hashtag-driven organic circulation to expand reach (Xue, 2024). The use of a cliffhanger in Episode 4 Part 1 effectively leverages the YouTube Shorts recommendation algorithm to drive viewers to independently move on to Episode 4 Part 2 a mechanism not achievable within a single, fixed-duration TVC format.

Native Product Placement

The primary challenge in native product placement within the vertical format is presenting FMCG products naturally without compromising cinematic visual aesthetics. In Episode 1 the process of brewing sachet coffee is carried out discreetly by the barista behind the café counter in a time-lapse scene (00:33–00:40), positioning the product as a narrative secret (plot device) that generates ironic humor between the café's upscale name and the practicality of the sachet. Episode 2 depicts the serving of the sachet-brewed coffee to a skeptical customer (00:36–00:42), where the product demonstrates its quality through a taste-proof reaction of satisfaction without any overt verbal claims.

Episode 3 positions the coffee cup as a trigger for the character's shift in energy (00:12–00:16), as well as a "social catalyst" that eases the atmosphere when placed at the center of the table as all characters dance together (00:40–00:50).

Episode 4 Part 1 turns the physical sachet packaging into an element of suspense within the story's climax, nearly discovered by the customer at the barista's preparation counter (00:20–00:28), before ultimately being revealed as the answer to the supposedly expensive secret recipe (00:38–00:44). Episode 4 Part 2 closes the entire series with a display of the official packaging (pack shot) and the Top Coffee Indonesia logo in full within the vertical frame (00:45–00:58), elevating the economical product's aesthetic into a polished cinematic visual that solidifies its positioning as the resolution to the entire story.

The evolving pattern of product placement from concealed (Episode 1) to increasingly open and cinematic (Episode 4 Part 2)—reflects a deliberate narrative escalation strategy, consistent with the principle that visual product elements, including sachet packaging, play an important role in shaping consumers' perception of quality when presented aesthetically and contextually (Clara, 2021).

Systematic Findings Matrix

Table 3 presents a synthesis matrix deconstructing the five episodes according to the five analytical pillars of vertical cinema, along with specific timestamp ranges, providing a comprehensive overview of how each element of vertical cinematic language is applied consistently yet with creative variation throughout the campaign.

Table 3. Systematic Findings Matrix: Five Pillars of Vertical Cinema across Each Episode

Episode	1. Vertical Spatial Composition	2. Cinematic Language & Pacing	3. Hook Strategy (0–3s)	4. Micro-Drama Format	5. Native Product Placement
Episode 1	Dense vertical extreme close-up on face (00:00–00:03); high-angle cup shot (00:12–00:16)	Fast cuts <1s + telenovela audio (00:06–00:11); angle shift dialogue (00:25–00:30)	Visual-audio dissonance, startled expression (00:00–00:03); secondary hook (00:18–00:21)	Satirical parody of exclusive café culture; early comedic resolution	Sachet as barista's secret recipe (00:33–00:40); early taste proof (00:45–00:50)
Episode 2	Vertical-axis cup-push gesture (00:01–00:04); medium-long standing posture	Quick tilt from face to cup (00:08–00:12); whip pan during	Action-first hook, cup rejection (00:00–00:03); SFX pop zoom-in on	Escalating skeptical debate on price vs. quality	Taste validation via emotional response (00:36–00:42); close-up on

	shot (00:22–00:26)	tense dialogue (00:32–00:36)	eyes (00:15–00:18)		logo (00:48–00:52)
Episode 3	Medium shot of full body proportion (00:03–00:08); layered vertical depth of field (00:18–00:24)	Pacing shift to dance (00:00–00:05); beat-matching editing (00:28–00:35)	Audio-visual jolt, music & dance (00:00–00:03); comedic pose visual anchor (00:20–00:23)	Transition from verbal conflict to comedic action; atmosphere of togetherness	Cup as energy trigger (00:12–00:16); "social catalyst" at center of table (00:40–00:50)
Episode 4 Pt.1	Stacked / claustrophobic tight framing (00:00–00:06); centered framing on sachet (00:30–00:35)	Rapid micro shot-reverse-shot (00:02–00:08); accelerating cutting (00:42–00:48)	Montage of startled reactions & cut dialogue (00:00–00:03); closing cliffhanger hook (00:50–00:55)	Climax of café-secret confrontation; serialized story suspension	Sachet packaging as narrative crisis trigger (00:20–00:28); product secret revealed (00:38–00:44)
Episode 4 Pt.2	Macro close-up of water pouring (00:01–00:05); full vertical framing of product lineup (00:40–00:46)	Slow-motion tempo contrast (00:01–00:06); smooth whip transition (00:25–00:32)	Emotional payoff resolving curiosity (00:00–00:03); auditory brand-hook jingle (00:35–00:38)	Narrative resolution, character harmony; unified brand-message closing	Coffee extraction & crema aesthetics (00:01–00:08); elevated pack shot & closing logo (00:45–00:58)

The matrix in Table 3 confirms that the "The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto" campaign applies the five pillars of vertical cinema systematically and progressively. The spatial composition and native product placement pillars show a clear pattern of escalation, moving from concealed placement toward increasingly cinematic and explicit placement. Whereas the hook and pacing pillars display functional variation tailored to each episode's narrative position within the overall serialized storyline.

Two Engagement Regimes of Vertical Cinema in Top Coffee's Digital Campaign

The findings of this study confirm that vertical cinema, within the context of FMCG digital marketing, operates across two interrelated yet not always aligned layers of effectiveness : a cinematic language layer. Which determines narrative quality and visual aesthetics, and an algorithmic-performance layer, which determines the reach of content distribution. The "The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto" campaign consistently mastered the first layer, as evidenced

by the systematic application of all five pillars of vertical cinema throughout the episodes. The analysis, however, revealed variable outcomes at the second layer, as reflected in the audience decay pattern in the early episodes and the reach engagement anomaly in Episode 4.

This pattern is consistent with the short-form video marketing literature, which asserts that high emotional engagement in an opening episode tends to decline naturally without an adequate escalation of narrative conflict (Pirraglia et al., 2022; Bikowski, 2025). While massive algorithm driven reach can occur without proportional emotional resonance (Molem et al., 2024). From the perspective of the coffee and FMCG industry in Indonesia, these findings are consistent with prior research showing that the success of social media marketing depends on authentic consumer engagement rather than mere exposure volume (Maulana et al., 2026; Yulanda & Fachri, 2025).

The micro-drama narrative approach adopted in the Top Coffee campaign proved effective in building emotional engagement during the early

stage, consistent with Generation Z's preference for content that feels genuine and not overtly promotional (Parisi, 2025; Bhalla et al., 2026). As well as with the principle of progressive native product placement that highlights the practicality of the sachet product without sacrificing its perceived quality (Clara, 2021). The concept of two engagement regimes an organic emotional regime and an algorithmic reach regime identified in this study constitutes a theoretical contribution that integrates the study of vertical cinematic aesthetics with the study of short-form video consumer behavior, two domains that have generally been examined separately (Wijaya et al., 2025; Gorai et al., 2026). Practically, this study recommends strengthening continuous conflict in mid-series episodes, embedding discussion-provoking prompts (calls-to-action) to address low interaction on multi-part content, and optimizing follower-conversion elements in high-reach episodes.

Conclusion

This study analyzed the application of vertical cinema in the digital promotional campaign of Top Coffee through the vertical micro-drama series "The Drama at Cafe Di Sachetto," aired on YouTube Shorts. Through an analysis of the five pillars of vertical cinema (vertical spatial composition, cinematic language and pacing, hook strategy, attention economy, and native product placement), the shift in promotional format from conventional TVC to serial micro-drama is comprehensively demonstrated. This study found that the campaign applied the principles of vertical cinematography consistently and progressively throughout the episode series.

The quantitative analysis of audience engagement metrics revealed two fundamentally distinct patterns of engagement. In the early episodes (Episode 1 through Episode 3), the campaign exhibited an organic emotional engagement pattern marked by a gradual decline of 46.81% and 52.00% in the likes indicator, reflecting the audience decay phenomenon commonly observed in episodic content. In Episode 4, which employed a two-part cliffhanger structure, the campaign recorded a massive surge in views exceeding one million in each part, with a viewer conversion ratio of 90.91%. Unfortunately, this outcome was accompanied by a very low rate of active interaction, constituting an anomaly that indicates the dominance of algorithmic distribution over emotional resonance at that stage.

These findings confirm that the effectiveness of vertical cinema in the context of FMCG marketing cannot be assessed solely on the basis of cinematic language quality or distribution reach volume in isolation, but rather requires a strategic balance between the two. Campaigns that rely on a strong emotional narrative structure in the early stage need to be complemented with an explicit interaction-conversion strategy in subsequent stages, particularly once the campaign begins to rely on algorithmic distribution mechanisms to expand its reach. This study contributes theoretically through an integrated analytical framework linking vertical cinematography with digital engagement performance, as well as practically through strategic recommendations for coffee and FMCG industry practitioners in designing more effective vertical cinema content in the mobile viewing era.

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