



THE FUTURE SCREEN LOGIC: VERTICAL ASPECT RATIO, PERCEPTION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF COMMERCIAL FILM EDITING

GELECEĞİN EKRAN MANTIĞI: DİKEY ORAN, ALGI VE REKLAM FİLMİ KURGUSUNUN DÖNÜŞÜMÜ

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Abstract

This study examines how a new “screen logic,” shaped by the intersection of mobile screen ergonomics, vertical video format, and algorithmic feeds, transforms commercial film editing. Treating the vertical format not merely as a technical change but as a perceptual regime that reconstructs the sense of time-space and the viewer-attention relationship, the research argues that in this environment, the commercial film turns into a design problem operating under “conditions of uncertainty.” The study conceptually analyzes the “hook” function of the first 1-3 seconds in vertical commercials, micro-narrative structures, the central role of typography due to silent viewing habits, and the capacity of AI-powered production tools to create modular, speculative prototypes. The findings show that the traditional logic of long-form, linear editing has been replaced by a new editing discipline that is quick to capture attention, legible, conducive to producing platform-specific variants, and optimized for algorithmic distribution logic. In conclusion, it is revealed that the vertical screen regime is already constructing the “future screen logic” that fundamentally reshapes the aesthetics, production economy, and consumption practices of the commercial film.

Keywords: Digital Art, Vertical Video, Commercial Film Editing, Algorithmic Feed, Attention Economy.

Öz

Bu çalışma, mobil ekran ergonomisi, dikey video formatı ve algoritmik akışların kesişiminde şekillenen yeni bir “ekran mantığının”, reklam filmi kurgusunu nasıl dönüştürdüğünü incelemektedir. Dikey formatı salt teknik bir değişim değil, zaman-mekân algısını ve izleyici-dikkat ilişkisini yeniden kuran algısal bir rejim olarak ele alan araştırma, bu ortamda reklam filminin “belirsizlik koşullarında” işleyen bir tasarım problemine dönüştüğünü savunmaktadır. Çalışmada, dikey reklam filmlerinde ilk 1-3 saniyenin “kanca” işlevi, mikro-anlatı yapıları, sessiz izleme alışkanlığı nedeniyle tipografinin merkezi rolü ve yapay zekâ destekli üretim araçlarının modüler, spekülatif prototipler üretme kapasitesi, kavramsal bir çerçeve analiziyle irdelenmektedir. Bulgular, geleneksel uzun soluklu ve doğrusal kurgu mantığının yerini, hızla yakalayan, okunabilir, platforma özgü varyantlar üretmeye elverişli ve algoritmik dağıtım mantığına göre optimize edilmiş yeni bir kurgu disiplinin aldığını göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak, dikey ekran rejimini, reklam filminin estetiğini, üretim ekonomisini ve tüketim pratiklerini köklü bir şekilde yeniden şekillendiren “geleceğin ekran mantığını” şimdiden inşa ettiği ortaya konulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijital Sanat, Dikey Video, Reklam Filmi Kurgusu, Algoritmik Akış, Dikkat Ekonomisi.



INTRODUCTION

This study departs from the premise that the historical journey of the moving image, from the Lumière Brothers to the present day, has been built upon a continuous redefinition of the relationship between film and audience. As Koçak and Tüplek (2018, p. 58) note, cinema was first put at the service of humanity in 1895 with the Lumière screenings in Paris. Technological shifts have not only transformed the means of production but have also fundamentally altered narrative structures, relocating viewing practices to the mobile screen while unsettling the foundational paradigms of visual communication.

The present moment represents perhaps one of the most radical ruptures in this history. As Zhu et al. (2021, p. 1) observe, the unprecedented growth of social media platforms has allowed vertical video to take over mass consumption, leaving horizontal content increasingly exposed. This new order, which Dinculeană (2025, p. 55) situates within the rapid rise of short-form video marketing in the digital economy, has fundamentally restructured advertising film production. The horizontal format, long considered the universal language of visual storytelling, is now being displaced. As Clayton (2022, p. 645) notes, the wide screen was once the assumed medium for any feature film with ambitions of scale and success, yet scholars increasingly recognize that clinging to a single format has become anachronistic in today's mobile ecosystem (Napoli, 2016, p. 47). Moreover, the long-term viability of short-video platforms depends not on entertainment value alone but on genuinely substantive content, since quality rather than novelty sustains engagement over time (Lu & Nam, 2021, p. 10).

Media channels are now locked in a relentless struggle for finite cognitive resources. As Lu and Nam (2021, p. 4) observe, a deepening disconnect has formed between the accelerating rate of content production and users' limited capacity to process it. Advertising films have consequently evolved into brief directive designs aimed at capturing the viewer within seconds; Lee et al. (2025, p. 2) found that abandonment rates peak dramatically within the initial five-second window of playback. Yet as Vafeiadis et al. (2020, p. 4377) remind us, even in a visually saturated digital era, content built around a strong storyline retains deep cognitive and affective persuasive power.

Against this backdrop, the central problem of this study is as follows: how does the new screen logic, mobile-first, rooted in vertical format, and governed by algorithmic feeds, transform the aesthetic principles, narrative structures, and production processes of advertising film editing? As Juanna et al. (2024, p. 94) point out, short videos produced on platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels are reorganizing editing practices around viral trends. The aim of this study is to analyze the multilayered effects of vertical video culture on advertising film practices. As Özdemir and Işık (2025, p. 286) emphasize, narrative combined with moving images enables a stronger emotional connection with the audience. In this new landscape, advertising production is evolving toward an AI-assisted discipline aligned with Gu et al.'s (2023, p. 8) vision that AI has shown potential in optimizing art production and simplifying digital storytelling. Adopting a qualitative research design, this study brings conceptual clarity to this phenomenon through the lens of Özkirişçi's (2025, p. 70) projection that motion graphic design, integrated with artificial intelligence, will continue to transform the viewer experience in more individual and interactive ways.

METHOD

This study is a conceptual article that conducts a theoretical and qualitative inquiry into the transformation of advertising film editing within the context of vertical video culture. Conceptual analysis was deliberately chosen as the primary methodology because the phenomenon under investigation, the emergence of a new “screen logic” shaped by vertical video culture is still in formation, and the field has not yet developed standardized empirical instruments adequate to its complexity. As Jabareen (2009, p. 49) proposes, conceptual framework analysis is “*a procedure of theorization for building conceptual frameworks*” that draws on multidisciplinary bodies of knowledge a design particularly well suited to emerging media phenomena that simultaneously cut across communication studies, design theory, and cognitive psychology. Its central advantage lies in what Jabareen (2009) identifies as its emphasis on *understanding* rather than prediction, making it appropriate for phenomena whose boundaries are still being negotiated in the literature.



The goal of this study is therefore not to test pre-existing hypotheses but to synthesize dispersed bodies of literature into a coherent conceptual architecture, one that subsequent empirical studies can use as a point of departure.

The literature review was structured to cover the period from 2010 to 2026 and was conducted across the Google Scholar, Scopus, JSTOR, and YÖK AKADEMİK databases. The search drew on both Turkish and English keywords, including “vertical video advertising,” “short-form video editing,” “mobile-first storytelling,” “dikey reklam filmi,” “mikro içerik kurgusu,” “attention economy,” and “AI video production,” among others. The selection criteria prioritized peer-reviewed journal articles. Sources that were not directly relevant to the study’s focus or whose methodological reliability was found to be questionable were excluded from the scope of the review.

In constructing the conceptual framework, the definitional boundaries of the advertising film concept were first established. This rested on a fundamental distinction: films that aim to inform the audience about a product or service are referred to as promotional films. Advertising films, by contrast, are typically sixty seconds or shorter in duration, bombarding the viewer in rapid succession with striking images, sounds, and typography. Building on this definition, the study focuses specifically on advertising films produced in vertical format and micro-durations, between fifteen and sixty seconds, with the explicit aim of persuading and prompting action.

The collected literature was analyzed through a structured thematic coding procedure informed by the principles of systematic conceptual analysis (Jabareen, 2009). The process unfolded in three sequential stages. In the first stage open categorization each source was read with the explicit aim of identifying the core arguments, theoretical claims, definitions, and implicit assumptions it contained; these were individually labeled as discrete conceptual units. In the second stage, axial categorization, conceptual units that addressed the same underlying phenomenon were grouped into clusters, and the relationships between clusters were mapped. In the third stage, selective categorization; the most analytically central clusters were foregrounded and integrated into the three axes described below, while peripheral material was retained for illustrative purposes. Throughout this process, the criterion of theoretical saturation guided the boundary of the review: categorization continued until no new conceptual categories emerged from the literature. This procedure constitutes a systematic, replicable analytical method appropriate to the study’s epistemological orientation, which is interpretive rather than positivist.

Perception and Attention Psychology: The perceptual shifts and attentional mechanisms that the vertical format induces in the viewer, including first-second impact, visual hierarchy, and silent-viewing habits. *Narrative and Editing Structure:* Micro-narratives, rhythm, tempo, and the meaning-carrying function of typography.

Production Technologies and Political Economy: The ways in which AI-assisted animation and production tools are transforming the process and economics of advertising film production.

These three axes were discussed in relation to one another in light of the key arguments found in the relevant literature and were synthesized into a holistic conceptual framework referred to throughout this study as the “future screen logic”.

As is consistent with the conceptual article format, this study does not include primary empirical data collection or systematic content analysis of actual advertising films. This is not a limitation to be overcome but a deliberate methodological choice: the study aims to provide the theoretical scaffolding that makes subsequent empirical inquiries possible. Nevertheless, to illustrate the conceptual framework’s explanatory power and to anchor abstract arguments in observable practice, each of the three analytical axes is accompanied by indicative examples drawn from widely documented advertising campaigns and platform practices. These examples function as “theoretical illustrations” rather than as empirical evidence, and are presented as such throughout the text. Future studies are invited to subject the propositions advanced here to systematic empirical verification through content analysis, experimental design, or comparative case studies.

FINDINGS

The vertical format is not simply a formal shift from horizontal to vertical framing; it produces a regime of perception that reorganizes the viewer's relationship with content along the axes of "flow," "speed," and "instant decision." As Napoli (2016, p. 47) observes, within this new order "*the thought of using a single format for their production anachronistic*" has become self-evident. The dominance of vertical video is not arbitrary; it is deeply rooted in the physical reality of how people actually hold and use their phones. Gripping a device in one hand and consuming content in that same upright position is not merely a habit but the natural ergonomic logic that has driven the vertical format to its current prominence. Layered onto this is the continuous scrolling gesture, which transforms the viewing experience into something closer to an ongoing act of filtering, where selection and elimination happen almost instinctively, one swipe at a time. The scale of this shift becomes particularly apparent in the findings of Zhu et al. (2021, p. 10), who report that reformatting standard horizontal video to a vertical orientation can generate daily exposure increases of up to 1.5 million views. This figure is not simply a performance metric; it is a testament to the market hegemony that the vertical format has quietly but decisively established. Within the algorithmic feed structures of these platforms, users are, as Li et al. (2022, p. 4180) note, exposed to the phenomenon of being "*trapped in their cocoons with homogeneous video content*." This creates fertile ground for advertising content to parasitically occupy the viewer's cognitive resources. As Çöl (2025, p. 449) puts it, "*The digital economy is an attention economy where media compete parasitically for our limited cognitive resources*."

This ecosystem has fundamentally altered promotional practices and completely restructured the logic of content production. The radical transformation in screen orientation has brought with it a new "viewing ecology" In the traditional television or cinema experience, the viewer accepts to remain focused on the screen for a predetermined duration; on the vertical mobile screen, however, this "attention contract" is constantly renegotiated. As Chen and Ha (2023, p. 303) describe, a new generation of content creators must "*adapt their content to consolidate their 'viewing contract' with target Generation Z*". Every scroll means the viewer retains the power to terminate the agreement with the content at any moment. In this new ecosystem, the key to success lies in placing at the center of the editing process the principle articulated by Tungpantong et al. (2023, p. 172) that "*motion graphics media have a concise timeline suitable for the content causing interest and inviting followers to learn the content*" so as to capture the attention of an audience whose attention span has significantly shortened.

This new functioning of the attention economy has also transformed the temporal structure of advertising films. As Xue (2024, p. 3) notes, "*short videos (under sixty seconds long) are perfect for trailer uploading, movie teasers, behind-the-scenes clips, and other movie content explicitly edited for mobile viewing*". In traditional advertising, the first few seconds could serve as a moment of "introduction"; in the vertical format, that luxury no longer exists. In Wei's (2021, p. 403) words, "animation time in the short video is designed to be 'short, precise and fast.'" As demonstrated by Çakmak Ekinci and Bitlis (2025, p. 1031), in digital media "*It has been found that perceived goal impediment is the most important factor causing ad avoidance on the internet*". For this reason, the fundamental design challenge in vertical advertising films is not to construct a narrative step by step, but to surpass the viewer's attention threshold and establish meaning within a matter of seconds. Adopting the structure that Yoo et al. (2014, p. 81) define as "*micro-content as short content that delivers important idea or concept*" has become unavoidable. Optimizing visual hierarchy at every stage of the design in order to maximize what Boyd and Bond (2021, p. 2) describe as the "*Reduce cognitive burden*" effect is a critical imperative for effective message delivery.

The focusing power afforded by the vertical format confines the viewer to the center of the content. Mingti et al. (2022, p. 2511) summarize this as follows: "*Vertical screen creates a strong sense of cognitive intimacy, visual closure and viewing surround; produces the pleasure of staring and immersive experience; and improves visual productivity and visual efficiency*". Yet this centralization also creates a design paradox: the frame edges that carry semantic value in horizontal cinematic composition largely disappear in the vertical format, and the entire narrative burden is compressed into a narrow vertical corridor.

As Shirakawa et al. (2025, p. 8) note, this constraint makes it imperative to “*ensure(s) active text motion with text readability and object motion with less distortion*” that is, to achieve maximum visual efficiency within a confined space. While this pushes designers toward a minimalist aesthetic, the approach Liu (2023, p. 108) underscores that “*MG animation is created with a minimalist production method and movement of picture elements. It integrates the minimalist concept of ‘less is more’ into the public service promotion*” has become a foundational structural principle. Every element within the vertical advertising frame must have a functional justification. As Özkirişçi (2022, p. 1540) observes, in this new domain “*It has caused the language of the subject to be directed towards a flow in which the graphic design mode of expression is dominant.*” The insight expressed by Türkmenoğlu (2015, p. 68) that “*Animation is also a powerful method that has effects on recall, enjoyment, and attitudes toward the brand and product*” confirms that no “space-filling” element has a place within this narrow frame. In the vertical feed, the viewer makes a decision “before beginning.” The opening seconds therefore serve a far more demanding function than the establishing shot in classical cinema: they must halt the viewer’s scrolling reflex. As Barua et al. (2025, p. 970) note, success in vertical videos depends on the ability to craft “*a clear concise message... and a compelling hook within the first 3 seconds.*” This “hook” mechanism is also meaningful at the neurobiological level: a visual or auditory shock in the first second triggers the brain’s reward system, locking the viewer into the content. As Yan et al. (2023, p. 6) explain, “*stimulation activates the brain’s reward pathway. Neurons within the reward pathway release large amounts of dopamine, allowing the brain to associate a specific behavior with pleasure.*” However, this mechanism is a depletable resource. The more relentlessly viewers are exposed to “shocking” content, the higher the threshold for stimulation rises; as Gilbert et al. (2025, p. 10) find, this process “*exacerbates findings on constant vigilance and user fatigue*”. This dynamic compels advertising producers toward constant innovation and creative reinvention.

Theoretical Illustration - Axis 1 (Perception and Attention): Spotify’s “Wrapped” campaign, distributed annually across *TikTok* and *Instagram Stories* since 2019, offers a paradigmatic illustration of the perceptual regime described above. Each micro-clip is built around a single bold typographic statement occupying the full vertical frame, accompanied by high-contrast colour gradients and a two-to-three second display window per card. The absence of spoken narration and the deliberate restriction of each card to a single data point directly enacts the principles of visual hierarchy optimisation and cognitive load reduction. The hook is not a dramatic scene but an identity mirror: the viewer’s own listening data functions as the attentional trigger, exploiting personalisation to bypass the scrolling reflex. This example illustrates how the perceptual regime of the vertical screen transforms not only the formal properties of the advertisement but also its rhetorical logic, displacing persuasion-through-argument with persuasion-through-recognition.

The Evolution of Micro-Narrative and Editing: Hook, Rhythm and Silent Viewing

The vertical advertising film exists in an environment where time is an acutely scarce resource. Narrative structures have consequently been compressed to the micro level, accelerated in tempo, and evolved into a non-linear form. As Van Daele et al. (2024, p. 1) highlight, current research describes how “*Creators make densely packed videos featuring rapid scene changes... to capture viewer attention,*” underscoring the inevitability of this pace. Rapid editing generates a form of “cumulative persuasion” by presenting a product’s various use moments or emotional benefits in quick succession.

In this process, the success of micro-content is reinforced by the memorability of animation. As Fang and Gong (2023, p. 3) observe, “*animated advertising has better memorability and impact, which can be deeply imprinted in consumers’ minds and sustainably promote brand marketing effects*”. This persuasive process relies on strategic repetitions to embed the message in memory yet these repetitions appear not as prolonged exposure in the manner of traditional advertising, but as motifs compressed and rhythmically distributed within the short video feed.

The structural logic of micro-narrative diverges radically from the traditional dramatic arc model. Classical narrative schemas such as the three-act structure (setup, confrontation, resolution) or the five-act structure are far too heavy for vertical advertising. In their place, a far simpler and more direct sequential structure emerges, something like “trigger–response–outcome.”



For instance: the problem is shown (1–2 seconds) -> the product is introduced (2–3 seconds) -> the solution and benefit are demonstrated (2–3 seconds) -> a call to action appears (1–2 seconds). This structure can be completed in an extremely short span of roughly eight to ten seconds in total.

This structural necessity aligns with the reality identified by Jiang et al. (2024, p. 12): in vertical channels, with “short-form videos such as TikToks or Instagram Reels, participants generally wanted additional descriptions to augment the limited AD given during a video’s restrictive dialogue gaps.” Loading every second of the edit with maximum semantic weight minimizes the viewer’s cognitive load while maximizing the impact of the message.

Theoretical Illustration — Axis 2 (Narrative and Editing Structure): Apple’s “Shot on iPhone” vertical campaign provides a concrete illustration of the micro-narrative and typography-centred editing principles developed above. A particularly instructive case is the 2019 short film directed by Damien Chazelle, shot entirely on iPhone XS in vertical format, in which a succession of brief emotionally charged vignettes, each lasting only a few seconds yet carrying a complete narrative arc, demonstrates that the vertical frame need not be treated as a constraint but as a compositional choice that intensifies intimacy by isolating the subject at the centre of the screen. Individual clips follow a compressed trigger–response–outcome arc: an unexpected moment is captured (trigger), image quality implicitly demonstrates the camera’s capabilities (response), and a minimal super-imposed caption delivers the brand attribution (outcome). The entire argument “extraordinary images are within reach” is conveyed without a single spoken word, with bold sans-serif typography functioning simultaneously as caption, brand signature, and rhythmic editorial beat. This example demonstrates how micro-narrative and kinetic typography operate not as separate design decisions but as a unified editing logic whose effectiveness depends on the precise orchestration of each element.

Yet this compression simultaneously intensifies semantic density. Every frame, every transition, every movement must be intentional and contribute directly to the narrative. The transitional moments that might be described as “dead time” in traditional cinematic language (characters’ moments of reflection or atmospheric establishing shots) are luxuries in vertical advertising. The aesthetic of vertical advertising is therefore an aesthetic of efficiency, grounded in the principle of “maximum information, minimum duration.” In this process, the guiding principle is the one Zheng (2024, p. 14) foregrounds: “digital media animation can utilize diverse audio-visual language, rich creation methods, and diversified display channels to enhance the dissemination range.”

At this accelerating tempo, the narrative must be balanced with a structure that focuses on immediate results rather than complex processes. As Erwin et al. (2023, p. 1028) find, the preference of modern mobile users to “often prefer immediate results over complex processes” explains why micro-narratives (problem -> solution → outcome) are compressed so forcefully into ten to twenty seconds. This tendency is directly connected to the expectations of digital natives. As Mude and Undale (2023, p. 12) note, “Gen Z are the ones who can steer the online community more sophisticatedly than Gen Y.”

This transformation also reshapes advertising rhetoric, reinforcing the observation by Gökmen and Özen (2023, pp. 37–38) that “Promotional films that reveal the potential of the promoted destination and inform the masses stand out as extremely important promotional materials.” As extended verbal explanations give way to visual metaphors and iconic representations, the power of metaphor is affirmed by Ulus’s (2022, p. 624) insight that “It is thought that metaphors are a qualified tool for examining teacher candidates’ ideas about the concept of creativity.” Ultimately, from the perspective of Dumanlı et al. (2024, p. 315) — that “The examination of visual symbols can help understand cultural values and reach deeper layers of communication” — the semantic power of this compression method becomes fully apparent.

This use of visual metaphors has become almost indispensable in vertical advertising. Rather than verbally explaining the benefits of a product, associating it with a universal symbol simultaneously transcends cultural boundaries and accelerates cognitive processing.

Such symbolic language allows the viewer to perceive meaning directly, without “reading” or “thinking,” and is among the most powerful means of achieving maximum impact within the narrow vertical corridor.

Rhythm and tempo control is perhaps the most critical editing element in vertical advertising. Whereas slow-paced shots deepen reflection in the traditional cinematic aesthetic, speed is constant in vertical advertising — yet within this tempo, editorial maneuvers must be executed along the lines of what Jia (2024, p. 662) describes as “understanding how different camera angles, movements, and transition effects affect the audience’s visual experience.” For instance, three rapid cuts in quick succession followed by a half-second pause allows the viewer to refocus and absorb the message. Such rhythmic “breathing moments” prevent the viewer from being lost within the relentless bombardment.

A significant portion of users on mobile platforms consume video in silent environments; this practice elevates subtitles and on-screen text from “optional” elements to “core” components of the advertising film. In the words of Bingöl (2025, p. 253), contemporary vertical editing reproduces on mobile screens an aesthetic reminiscent of the era “in cinema without sound and in the history of cartoon animation that we can call the ‘Silent Pioneers.’” “Due to the habit of silent viewing, as Çalışkan (2022, p. 17) observes, “In some films, the parts of the narrative that are not completed by images, sound, or music are completed with text” — which positions text not as a supplement to the visual but as its primary carrier. This elevates typography to a central position, consistent with the observation by Güzel and Mercin (2022, p. 1496) that “The combined use of typography together with photographs containing historical, cultural, and symbolic elements has served as an example of reflecting two fields that have a very important place in graphic design with a rich and aesthetic understanding.”

Silent viewing also makes a strategy of “multiple accessibility” a necessity in design. A vertical advertisement must be equally effective whether watched with or without sound. The proper management of each design element is guided by the principle Boyd and Bond (2021, p. 4) articulate: “micro interactions are greater than their sum of parts, when combined together they can make the overall experience more usable.” This demands redundant narration: everything that is said must also be written, and everything that is shown must be supported both visually and textually. Yet this redundancy must not overcrowd the screen; it must be organized within a disciplined minimalist design framework. This central role of typography transforms it from a design detail into one of the primary components of the edit itself. Kinetic typography does not merely “convey information”; it creates rhythm, communicates emotion, and establishes visual hierarchy. The manner in which a word enters the screen reinforces the meaning it carries, while technical touches such as what Wardhana et al. (2020, p. 296) describe as “*interesting scribble animation effects to add to the impression of a video*” generate an *aesthetic force that defines the emotional tone of the vertical advertisement*.

AI-Assisted Production: Speculative Prototypes and Modular Design

Artificial intelligence technologies have become a transformative force reshaping the production process of vertical advertising films from end to end. Where the traditional production pipeline once required days or even weeks at every stage, AI tools have dramatically accelerated this process, driving a fundamental restructuring of the industry. As Ikonomi (2019, p. 99) puts it, “Digital retooling is taking place, causing dramatic industry restructuring.” This transformation emerges as a direct response to the high-volume, high-speed demands of the micro-content economy. AI is involved at every stage — from the ideation phase through asset production, from storyboard development to the animation process. As Köse et al. (2024, p. 285) note, “It is a fact that creating creative content, designing messages and visuals through artificial intelligence has now become much easier.”

The integration of AI into the production process is fundamentally altering the economic logic of the advertising industry. The traditional model’s conception of the advertisement as a costly “artifact” — produced with large budgets and expensive to modify — has given way to the logic of an AI-assisted “experimentation set.” As Liu et al. (2024, p. 24) emphasize, current technologies have enhanced brands’ ability to “produce advertising videos that swiftly adapt to market changes and create customized marketing content.”



In this new production order, the advertisement is no longer a fixed output for designers but a continuously optimizable “speculative prototype.”

Generative AI reduces dependency on stock assets through what Demir Demiralp (2025, p. 147) describes as “*a type of artificial intelligence that enables the creation of images, and thanks to self-learning systems, it offers the possibility of creating human-like content.*” This technological capacity also reinforces a modular design approach. The ability of AI algorithms, as described by Ayyappan and Nirmala (2024, p. 22), to “identify and arrange materials based on metadata, keywords, and file formats, making it easier for animators to find, retrieve, and reuse assets” is radically transforming the content production process. This allows modules such as opening sequences and calls to action to be produced independently and a large number of variants to be generated automatically. Yet reaching the intended target through this variety is not an automatic process. As Coşkun (2024, p. 484) stresses, “*In order for the artist to achieve the expected correct or desired result, they need to experiment with various prompts.*”

This capacity of AI also elevates the concept of “personalization” to an entirely new dimension. An advertisement can now be tailored not merely to a general audience but to micro-segments or even individual users. As Buschek et al. (2015, p. 200) note, in digital channels “fitting content to the user’s individual taste and interests can be expected to be more engaging and enjoyable.” A sports shoe brand, for instance, could serve running-focused versions to users who run and weightlifting-focused versions to users who train with weights. In this process, keeping viewers on the platform means every variant can be generated instantly by AI — all while bearing in mind the reality Zhang (2023, p. 658) identifies, that the investigation into the factors driving viewers to click on and watch video content remains a work in progress.

The impact of AI animation on audience attention is, however, far from straightforward. As Zhang et al. (2025, p. 1) acknowledge, our understanding of what actually compels viewers to click on and watch online video content remains an evolving area of inquiry. In this sense, the novelty and unpredictability that AI-generated visuals can introduce may serve as a genuinely powerful counterforce to the habitual scrolling reflex, catching the eye precisely because it defies expectation. Yet this same technical sophistication carries a risk: when visual perfection becomes the primary achievement, emotional resonance can quietly recede into the background. For this reason, AI’s role in advertising production is best understood not as a substitute for human creativity but as an extension of its reach. This is precisely the dynamic that Gao (2023, p. 151) captures in describing a symbiotic relationship between computational intelligence and human imagination, one in which each draws on the strengths of the other to compensate for what the other, on its own, cannot fully provide. Within this symbiotic relationship, the role of the human creator changes but does not disappear. AI can produce outputs that comply with technical rules; however, determining strategic decisions and brand voice remains a human responsibility. Successful production requires a collaboration in which the machine’s speed is fused with the human’s cultural intelligence. The originality questions surrounding AI-generated content must also be addressed. As Fu et al. (2025, p. 9) observe, “current state-of-the-art video generation models, despite advancements, struggle to accurately interpret complex prompts, often losing critical details and producing oversimplified or incomplete outputs.” Content that genuinely pushes boundaries must combine AI’s accelerative power with the risk-taking capacity of human creativity.

The Aesthetics of the Future: Design and Advertising Under Conditions of Uncertainty

When all the dynamics discussed above — perceptual flow, micro-narrative, silent communication, and AI-assisted modular production — converge, a new aesthetic and design paradigm for advertising films comes into view. In this paradigm, design is no longer made for a fixed, predictable moment of consumption but for “conditions of uncertainty.” As Ma et al. (2017, p. 12) find, in the modern content ecosystem “Our results show that the geographic request distribution in a mobile video system can be highly diverse, and the content requested varies among changing locations and periods.” When the viewer will watch, where they will watch, whether they will have the sound on or off, and in what context the algorithm will surface the video — all of this remains unknown. A successful vertical advertisement must therefore be resilient to this uncertainty.



As Kasap et al. (2022, p. 340) relay, *“Through promotional videos, tourists become informed about destinations, and therefore these promotions affect tourists’ travel decision-making processes.”* Ensuring that an advertisement can be watched silently and preserve its message integrity across every context is a strategic necessity that lightens the viewer’s cognitive load.

This “design for uncertainty” is, at its core, an acceptance of the loss of control. In traditional advertising, it was possible to control when and how a message would be consumed; in vertical mobile advertising, that control vanishes. The viewer may be on a bus or in bed; they may be watching with or without sound; they may lose interest in the first second and scroll away, or they may watch to the end. Under conditions of uncertainty, the vertical advertisement must be designed to retain its function across all of these variable scenarios. Even when played automatically by the algorithm, the video must be able to preserve its meaning and construct a modular story world that is resilient to the instant of consumption. This compels designers to optimize for the “worst-case scenario”: a distracted viewer with almost no focus in the opening second, watching in silence. The advertisement must deliver its message even under these conditions. This carries the risk of oversimplification and reducing everything to slogans, but it can equally push the boundaries of design creativity. The solutions employed to make the message “legible” — powerful visual metaphors, arresting openings, minimal yet impactful typography — can simultaneously become aesthetic expressions in their own right. As Zhang and Yang (2023, p. 2) find, in the vertical plane “In this study, reliability means that consumers can trust the attribute in animation advertising. Attractiveness refers to the design attractiveness of the animation advertising to draw consumers’ attention” — underscoring the power of these visual strategies to build an emotional bond with the brand. This represents a fundamental departure from traditional cinematic language. “Editing” is no longer merely the timing of transitions between shots; it is an integrated “attention management” strategy concerning how visual, textual, kinetic, and sonic layers are to be organized for maximum impact within this uncertain ecosystem. As Chen et al. (2024, p. 5) note, in contemporary editing practices “The visibility of the action in videos is greatly affected by the rendering quality of the action subject, which is a crucial element of visual saliency information, while humans excel at perceiving such generated artifacts” — confirming that attention management is a technical imperative.

This holistic power of design is captured in Karaşahinoğlu and Dönmez’s (2024, p. 480) observation that “The totality of these visual identity designs facilitates the emotional connection of the audience and can play a critical role in the success of the animation.” In this process, color is not merely ornamentation but a strategic element that determines the direction of the design. As Çevik (2022, p. 87) emphasizes, *“The color element, considered a form of non-verbal communication, is used by the designer to connect, conceal, or emphasize forms, and to guide the design.”*

Color use is especially critical in vertical advertising because it is the primary visual signal that directs the viewer’s attention. On a small mobile screen, as the principle articulated by Ucuzal et al. (2022, p. 298) suggests — whereby visual elements “can be distinguished from normal mucosa by color and surface patterns” — color contrast either renders the message legible or conceals it. High contrast attracts attention but induces fatigue; low contrast soothes but risks being overlooked. This balance must be finely calibrated according to each advertisement’s target audience, platform aesthetic, and brand identity. Color psychology also enters the equation: warm colors convey urgency and energy while cool colors project trust and professionalism. The conscious deployment of these cultural codes maximizes the power of non-verbal communication.

Platform-specific optimization is another indispensable element of this new aesthetic. Every platform brings its own algorithmic logic and technical constraints. The finding of Wang et al. (2021, p. 5) — that “the periodical patterns of mobile video requests are highly affected by the functional type of locations, which can be utilized to distinguish locations with different functionalities” — illustrates just how variable the contexts in which content is consumed can be. An advertisement that performs well on TikTok may not achieve the same results on Instagram Reels. A successful strategy therefore requires producing optimized variants for each platform and incorporating into the editing process aesthetic touches suited to each platform’s dynamism — such as what Wardhana et al. (2020, p. 296) describe as *“interesting scribble animation effects to add to the impression of a video.”*

This complexity makes AI-assisted automation tools all but essential.

Finally, the culture of “continuous optimization” underscores the dynamic and never-finished nature of vertical advertising aesthetics. From the moment an advertisement is published, it is evaluated against data such as click-through and watch-time metrics. As Chen et al. (2021, pp. 3–4) caution, in mobile networks “the hit rate of cached content items could be rather low in mobile networks due to the content dynamics, user mobility, and limited number of users in a cell” — a risk that is ever-present. Underperforming variants are quickly deactivated; successful ones are scaled. AI systems automatically generating new variants based on this data transforms the advertisement into an entity that is never “finished” but in a state of constant evolution. The traditional notion of the “final cut” gives way to the concept of the “current best version.”

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that mobile-first vertical video culture subjects advertising film editing to a profound transformation at the perceptual, narrative, and productive levels — one that extends far beyond mere formal adaptation. The vertical screen has established a new regime of perception that builds the relationship with the viewer around “flow” and “instant decision.” Within this regime, advertising has taken the form of speculative prototypes shaped by the obligation to create a “hook” within the first one to three seconds, micro-narrative structures, typography-centered communication designed to accommodate silent viewing, and AI-assisted modular production tools.

In sum, the traditional, linear, long-form conception of the advertising film — premised on the logic of the definitive “final work” — is yielding to a new discipline focused on speed, adaptability, platform-specific optimization, and continuous testability. This discipline forms the foundation of what this study calls the “future screen logic”: a logic defined not by the viewer but by algorithmic feeds and uncertain conditions of consumption, in which every design detail is optimized for the attention economy and production is restructured to generate personalized, automated variants.

This transformation also opens up new areas of inquiry. Future studies could comparatively measure the effects of different vertical advertising formats — product promotion, brand story, influencer content — on audience engagement and recall. The ways in which AI-generated content and human-made content differ in terms of emotional connection and persuasiveness could be investigated empirically. Furthermore, how the vertical video aesthetic has permeated long-form content (series, documentary) from its origins in short form, and how this permeation is transforming the narrative arts, could be addressed through interdisciplinary research. Such investigations are of critical importance for understanding the digital visual culture transformation we are currently living through.

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