

Cinematography Strategies in Promoting Local Culture: A Study of the Documentary ‘It’s More than Candlenut Indudur.’

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Abstract: *Nagari Indudur, IX Koto Sungai Lasi District, Solok Regency, West Sumatra, is a major producer of candlenut oil. Its annual contribution is Rp. 147,350,000 and plays a crucial role in the local economy. However, limited accessibility and promotion remain major challenges for farmers. The Indonesian Conservation Community (KKI) WARSI produced a short documentary titled "It's More Than Candlenut Indudur" to promote Indudur's traditional candlenut oil to national and international audiences. A qualitative descriptive method is used to analyse the cinematographic techniques used in the film, including aerial cinematography, the application of the rule of thirds composition, as well as drone shots and other cinematic techniques. The findings indicate that visual techniques such as eagle-eye angle, high angle, composition in framing, and camera movements like dolly-in-out and following shots effectively showcase the topographical beauty and the activities of candlenut oil farmers in an aesthetic and informative manner. The 6 minutes and 27 seconds film delivers a strong visual narrative, supported by Minang-language audio and subtitles, to highlight Indudur's potential as a producer of high-quality candlenut oil. The study result provide insights into the importance of a cinematic approach, referring to how visuals are used to convey narratives emotionally and immersivity in documentary films aimed at promoting local products while also supporting the economic sustainability of rural communities in remote areas. This study addresses a gap in prior cinematography research, which has rarely examined promotional documentaries for rural products, and contributes novelty by highlighting the role of aerial techniques in enhancing both aesthetic value and promotional effectiveness.*

Keywords: *Framing Composition, Local Promotion, Camera Movement, Aerial Photography, Documentary Film, and Cinematography Techniques*

Abstrak : Nagari Indudur, terletak di Kecamatan IX Koto Sungai Lasi, Kabupaten Solok, Sumatera Barat, merupakan daerah penghasil utama minyak kemiri. Dengan kontribusi tahunan sebesar Rp. 147.350.000, minyak kemiri memainkan peran penting dalam perekonomian masyarakat setempat. Namun, keterbatasan aksesibilitas dan promosi menjadi tantangan utama bagi para petani. Untuk mendukung pengenalan produk minyak kemiri, Komunitas Konservasi Indonesia (KKI) WARSI memproduksi sebuah film dokumenter pendek berjudul "It's More Than Candlenut Indudur". Film ini bertujuan untuk mempromosikan minyak kemiri tradisional Indudur kepada khalayak nasional dan internasional. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif untuk menganalisis teknik sinematografi dalam film tersebut, termasuk penggunaan aerial cinematography, pengaplikasian komposisi rule of third, serta pengambilan gambar dengan kamera drone dan teknik sinematik lainnya. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa teknik visual seperti eagle eye angle, high angle, komposisi dalam pengambilan gambar, serta camera movement seperti dolly-in-out, following berhasil menampilkan keindahan topografi serta aktivitas masyarakat petani minyak kemiri secara estetik dan informatif. Dengan durasi 6 menit 27 detik, film ini menghadirkan narasi visual yang kuat, didukung oleh audio berbahasa Minang dan subtitle, untuk memperkenalkan potensi daerah Indudur sebagai penghasil minyak kemiri berkualitas. Hasil penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang pentingnya pendekatan sinematik yang merujuk pada bagaimana visual digunakan untuk menyampaikan narasi secara emosional dan imersif, dalam film dokumenter yang bertujuan sebagai promosi produk lokal sekaligus mendukung keberlanjutan ekonomi masyarakat pedesaan di wilayah terpencil. Penelitian ini mengisi kesenjangan dalam kajian sinematografi yang jarang menelaah dokumenter promosi produk pedesaan, serta menghadirkan kebaruan melalui penekanan pada teknik pengambilan gambar udara yang tidak hanya memperkuat nilai estetik tetapi juga efektivitas promosi.

Kata kunci: Komposisi bingkai, Promosi lokal, Camera Movement, Aerial Cinematography, Film Dokumenter, dan Teknik Sinematografi

INTRODUCTION

Indudur is a Nagari or area producing candlenut oil located in District IX Koto Sungai Lasi, Solok Regency. The results of research in 2023, the commodity that has the highest contribution in supporting the economy of the Solok Community, especially the Indudur village, is candlenut fruit with a total per year of IDR 147,350,000 (Ega Ramadani, 2023). The condition of the village which is surrounded by forest areas and located in the hills with steep and winding roads is one of the reasons why the community has limited access to the city center of Solok which is up to 18 km away (SSC/Sonya, 2023).

The group of Candlenut Oil producers from the Indudur area has a problem of lack of support from many parties in introducing and marketing Indudur Candlenut Oil products so that many people still have economic difficulties. Therefore, cinematography techniques are used to analyze this documentary film and its role in promoting candlenut oil. And this problem was finally supported by the Komunitas Konservasi Indonesia WARSI in promoting candlenut oil farmers. KKI WARSI, which is a non-profit institution and carries out mentoring activities for communities around the forest with areas of activity covering Sumatra, Kalimantan and Papua. Komunitas Konservasi Indonesia (KKI) WARSI was first established as a network institution with the name Yayasan Warsi (Warung Informasi Konservasi) in 1991 December (*Profile / KKI WARSI*, n.d.). KKI WARSI finally took the initiative to make a Documentary Short Film that shows the life of the Indudur Community in managing candlenut oil with existing limitations as a document of knowledge and research results. This documentary short film is intended as a promotional media for candlenut oil farmers so that the products produced can be known by people outside West Sumatra and are expected to be known internationally. This Documentary Short Film uses cinematic techniques in showing the natural beauty of the Indudur area, Solok, West Sumatra. Using Aerial Cinematography techniques in some shots and several camera movement techniques that support the storyline. The main purpose of this study is to analyze the cinematographic techniques employed in the promotional documentary and to examine their role in supporting the promotion of candlenut oil. By focusing on visual strategies such as framing, aerial shots, and camera movement, the study seeks to demonstrate how cinematography contributes not only to the aesthetic quality of the documentary but also to its effectiveness in enhancing product visibility and appeal.

METHODS

The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method, which aims to describe, understand, and analyze phenomena in depth based on the data obtained (Sugiono, 2014). Data collection was carried out by watching the Documentary Short Film "It's More Than Candlenut Indudur" repeatedly to study camera movements and identify shooting angles. The analysis is supported by interviews and discussions from

practitioners involved in the making of this Documentary Short Film, particularly Trija Halim Perdana as the filmmaker and a professional photographer, who provided insights into the creative and technical decisions of the production. Library data collection was carried out by studying film theories and relevant scientific articles. This study focuses on shooting techniques that insert Aerial Cinematography as a supporter of the cinematic depiction of the Indudur area, Solok, West Sumatra. Several camera movements with following and still techniques that adjust to the conditions and information to be conveyed to the audience. The choice of a single short film with a duration of 6 minutes and 27 seconds is justified as a representative case study that allows for in-depth exploration of cinematographic strategies, even though it limits generalizability. The results of the making of this documentary short film were published on the YouTube channel by the Halim Perdana Trija account as the publisher and related practitioners who generally worked on the entire documentary short film. To ensure consistency and replicability, the analysis was carried out step by step: key scenes were first identified and described shot by shot, then categorized by angle, framing, composition, and movement, and finally compared with established cinematography framework. (David & Kristin, 2007; Richard Garvey-Williams, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The documentary short film “It’s More Than Candlenut Indudur” was made with the aim of introducing the agricultural product in the form of candlenut oil which is traditionally produced by the people of Indudur village, Solok, West Sumatra. This short film uses two equipment in shooting, namely the use of a CANON 60D camera with 720p format, SONY full HD with 1080 resolution and a PHANTOM 4 Drone with 1080 resolution. This documentary short film was made with the request and cooperation between candlenut farmers of Indudur village with Komunitas Konservasi Indonesia (KKI) WARSI. The production of this short documentary film is expected to introduce the Indudur village and its natural products in the form of candlenut oil to the wider community. The production of this Documentary Short Film was carried out in

2021 and was finally published on September 24, 2021. This 6 minute 27 second short film is filled with original Minang language audio so it requires subtitles to help the audience understand the information presented. This study is limited to a single documentary film on candlenut oil in Indudur. While the findings are context-specific and not intended for broad generalization, the case provides unique insights into how cinematographic techniques, particularly aerial cinematography, can be applied to promote rural products through visual storytelling. Essentially, film is a photographic work that is arranged to produce moving images. A film is a series of still images that, when projected in rapid succession, create the illusion of movement — what we perceive as moving images (David & Kristin, 2007). This concept is closely related to how the audience can visually enjoy a film in a more appealing and comfortable manner. This connection requires the use of photographic composition to create sequences of shots that are visually pleasing to the audience, allowing information to be delivered more effectively.

“Composition represents the outcome of a highly subjective assessment of visual elements and the relationships among them. During the creative process, this assessment may shift as new elements are introduced, leading to modifications in the overall composition.” (Laszlo Moholy-Nagy & Daphne M. Hoffmann, 1938)

Employing thoughtful visual composition aims not only to enhance the aesthetic appeal of an image but also to communicate its intended meaning effectively to the audience. This research is conducted to understand the use of composition in short films and to analyze how composition is applied in aerial cinematography (Tyas Arum Delimasari & Heriyanto, 2022)



Figure 1, Time 00:00:13

Source: YouTube Chanel Halim Perdana Trija

Composition: Rule of Third

Angle: High Angle

Movement: Tilt

“Aerial videography is exciting because it removes many of the limitations you face while tethered to the ground. Not only can cameras now be sent higher than the tallest of cranes, but they can pass through openings and between objects, all while shooting silky-smooth, gimbal-stabilized video” (Eric Cheng, 2016).

The use of aerial photography techniques in short documentary films allows the audience to enjoy and recognize the area of the Indudur village in Solok, West Sumatra. To attract the audience's interest in enjoying this short documentary film, aerial photography was developed into footage in the form of aerial cinematography so that the short film can display the natural beauty of the Indudur village as an introduction to the area producing candlenut oil. The above shots combine aerial photography with eagle eye angle and rule of third composition. As the language of cinema developed, certain rules of composition have become standardized in the way they are applied to certain shots (Mercado, 2010). Aerial photography techniques can provide a broad overview of the topography of the area and the environment of the Indudur village which is still in the form of forest areas with hilly conditions and cold highland temperatures depicted by foggy forest conditions. The shot of this scene used tilt movement to show the landscape

of Indudur Village from the sky angle. (Johnson, 2022) state that The simplest of camera movements, pan and tilt, are typically used to reveal information, but they can also be used to follow a subject, giving the audience a more active part of the story.

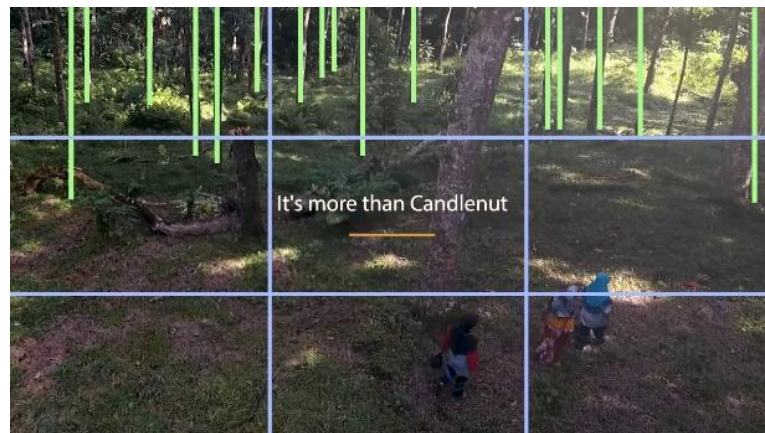


Figure 2 Time: 00:00:45

Source: YouTube Chanel Halim Perdana Trija

Composition: Rule of Third

Angle: Eagle Eye Angle

Movement: Tilt

Aerial Photography is very suitable for depicting the topography of the area and showing the real conditions of the Indudur village. This shooting technique combines High Angle and Vertical created from trees. (L Mai et al., 2011) state that the rule of thirds is one of the most widely recognized compositional guidelines used by photographers to produce high-quality images. This principle is achieved by dividing the frame into three equal and proportional sections both horizontally and vertically, thereby generating imaginary lines and four points of intersection. The Rule of Third is used to regulate balance and ensure that the mise en scene is maintained. The vertical technique is positioned in the upper area of the rule of third so that the position of the mothers walking towards the forest which is the subject of this film can be displayed in a balanced manner. The position of the Subtitle is placed in the middle area of the imaginary rule of third line and fills the empty space when the camera movement tilts up and begins to point away from the object which is also walking in a different direction.

“Camera movement is an important part of shooting moving images, especially in a film” (Ahmad, 2024).

This condition allows the audience to see the focus on the text that is the sub-title and the message that is to be conveyed can be received optimally.



Figure 3 Time: 00:00:56

Source: YouTube Chanel Halim Perdana Trija

Composition: Rule of Third

Angle: Medium

Movement: Dolly-Out

The scene above was created with the intention of conveying information in the form of activities of the hazelnut oil farming community in processing hazelnut seeds taken from the forest. The use of the rule of third composition makes it easier for the cameraman to frame the moving image. The movement of the subject is ensured not far from the imaginary right vertical line of the rule of third. Dolly-Out and medium angle combined with the slow motion effect help the audience focus on observing the movement and expression of the subject in carrying out his work carrying the seeds.

“The principle is that the frame is imagined as being split into thirds both horizontally and vertically. Points of interest are then placed on the thirds lines that create these divisions, or at one of the points where the lines meet (the “intersection of thirds”)(Richard Garvey-Williams, 2014).



Figure 4 Time: 00:03:19

Source: YouTube Chanel Halim Perdana Trija

Composition: Rule of Third

Angle: High

Movement: Drone Dolly-In

One of the important scenes in the documentary *It's More than Candlenut Indudur* presents a visualization of the natural beauty and culture of the Indudur region through the depiction of traditional building structures, especially the rumah gadang which is an icon of Minangkabau architecture. This scene shows the roof of the rumah gadang which is characterized by bagonjong — a pointed roof shape resembling a buffalo horn — as the main focal point. The placement of these visual objects is not done haphazardly, but by considering the principle of visual composition rule of thirds. In cinematography theory, the rule of thirds is a compositional technique that divides the visual frame into nine imaginary parts through two horizontal lines and two vertical lines that are evenly spaced. By placing important objects at the intersection of these lines, the image creator can direct the audience's attention naturally while creating a dynamic but not monotonous visual balance.

The application of the rule of thirds in this context is not only a visual technique, but also functions as a visual narrative strategy to strengthen the cultural meaning contained in the rumah gadang building. The placement of the bagonjong roof at one of the intersection points of the composition makes the cultural element the center of

attention in the image frame, so that the audience intuitively captures the message that the Indudur area is an inseparable part of the Minangkabau cultural landscape. In addition, the placement of the object from a high angle perspective provides a comprehensive visual perspective on the residential landscape and topography of the area, which not only strengthens the spatial dimension but also gives a majestic and monumental visual impression to the traditional building.

Technically, shooting from a high angle utilizes a drone camera that is precisely directed by the operator or pilot, while maintaining the principle of the rule of thirds to maintain visual balance. The combination of a high shooting angle and a structured visual composition allows for the creation of a cinematic visual experience, where the audience not only observes but also “feels” the presence of local culture in an authentic geographical context. (Reid & Sanders, 2021) state that High-quality video drones represent a new approach to replacing dolly shots, providing smooth tracking footage and expanding creative options for dynamic camera movement when guided by an experienced pilot. In addition, camera movements using the dolly-in technique with a slow tempo play an important role in building a deep visual narrative. The slow dolly-in creates a dramatic effect that strengthens the visual exposition of the object, while giving the audience space to observe the details in the scene slowly and intentionally.

The use of the dolly-in technique is not only intended to provide visual depth, but also functions as a form of visual expression that conveys an emotional message about the relationship between society and its environment. When the camera movement slowly approaches the roof of the bagonjong, this represents an approach to the cultural values and local wisdom inherent in the structure of traditional buildings. The slow camera movement seems to invite the audience to enter deeper into the cultural space of the Indudur community and understand the values that are passed down through generations through these architectural forms.

Thus, this scene can be understood as a concrete example of how cinematographic techniques such as the rule of thirds, high angle, and dolly-in are not only utilized for the sake of visual aesthetics alone, but also as a medium for conveying a strong cultural message. Cinematography in the context of this documentary acts as an interpretive tool

that builds meaning through the visualization of local space, culture, and identity. The careful integration of visual techniques and cultural content makes this documentary not only cinematically interesting, but also ethnographically relevant, especially in introducing and promoting Indudur as a region rich in Minangkabau cultural values.



Figure 5 Time: 00:01:01

Source: YouTube Chanel Halim Perdana Trija

Composition: Rule of Third

Angle: Eye Level

Movement: Still

In displaying a scene in the form of an interview, using the Rule of Third composition, the object is placed right on the left side of the imaginary line of the rule of third so as to provide space on the right side. The subtitle is placed no higher than the imaginary bottom horizontal line and is placed in the middle of the frame so as to provide a sense of "comfort" to the eyes of the audience, the position of the credit that explains the identity of the source is placed not exceeding the imaginary line of the lower left area of the rule of third. Eye level angle gives a serious effect, but does not elevate or degrade the source so that the audience can judge for themselves

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the documentary short film It's More than Candlenut Indudur, published on YouTube by the Halim Perdana Trija account, shows that the film consistently

implements cinematography principles that include aspects of visual composition, variations in shooting angles, camera movement, and the use of aerial cinematography technology. Throughout the visual narrative, the application of the rule of thirds composition is dominant, creating a structured visual balance and supporting the audience's focus on the main object. The film effectively uses various shooting angles to build visual dynamics, with the dominant eye-level angle in the interview session to build closeness and a neutral impression towards the source.

One of the main obstacles in cinematic scene composition is the requirement to design a plan that not only elaborates on the scene description but also conveys meaning within a cinematic framework. (Phung et al., 2025).

One of the main strengths of this film lies in the continuous use of aerial cinematography, especially to display the geographical landscape, natural panorama, and spatial layout of Nagari Indudur. This technique not only strengthens the visual appeal, but also increases the aesthetic value of the documentary through the tilt camera movement produced by the drone. This movement is able to provide the illusion of depth and a more complex spatial dimension, which in turn enriches the audience's cinematic experience.

Furthermore, the use of DSLR camera devices contributes to visual quality through the presentation of sharp details, especially in documenting community activities and the process of producing candlenut oil. Thus, the results of this analysis confirm that the integration of aerial cinematography, mature visual composition, and aesthetically planned shooting angles can produce a short documentary that is not only visually appealing, but also effective as a medium for promoting local culture and economic potential, especially in raising the image of Nagari Indudur as one of the centers of candlenut oil production in West Sumatra. This study is limited to the analysis of a single promotional documentary and relies on a descriptive approach without audience reception data. Future research could extend this work by comparing multiple documentaries, incorporating audience perception studies, and applying more advanced cinematographic analysis tools.

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