An Exploratory Research on the Effects of Social Media on Artists

An interview-based study on the Filipino indie music scene

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Abstract

This paper delves into the impact of social media on artists specifically those in the independent music scene of Metro Manila, Philippines. Where social media seamlessly integrates itself into daily life, the effects of it on the music industry are examined. This study aims to explore several aspects such as the functions of social media, its implication with regard to maintaining online engagement, the presented and curated content, its role in personal and professional boundaries, and its further function as means of additional revenue generation. Results are drawn from a qualitative method of data gathering by facilitating interviews with several independent artists in Metro Manila, all of whom are representative of their respective bands. The study concludes by providing insights on social media's effect on the role of an independent artist, as well as a label's. Added, it discusses the changing music product. Lastly, the study also elaborates on the role of social media in cultivating music communities within the context of the Philippines.

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1.   Introduction

Prelude

A typical situation of a Filipino university student, where social media integrates with daily life, would be seen in this scenario:

Seating outside the classroom while waiting for their next class to start, with a phone in one hand and having just put on a pair of earphones, they open an app to start playing some music. They scroll through an endless feed of videos, pictures, and everything else under the sun. They come across a poster of an artist they follow, who is going to have a small show soon, along with other artists they have listened to before or have heard about. Some posts by their friends go by and another internet figure pop up after that. The app they were using now suggested places to eat in Japan since they were browsing through the explore page last night and found themselves in that black hole of travel content.

Next, they see a post from some acquaintance they recently followed and then a video by another artist promoting a show for the launch of a single. The video was a funny way of advertising the event because the artist used a viral meme to share about it. They close the app and open another where everyone is doing some kind of dance challenge. An artist they listen to has just posted their own take on the challenge. Suddenly, they received a notification from yet another artist announcing that they were "Finally coming to Manila!". They tap on it to like it and read through replies of other fans who just cannot wait for the concert.

Besides the above scenario demonstrating the interaction of a person with current technology and its advancement, it provides a viewpoint of the intersection of technology, music, and others as seen in the vast array of other content available. It also shows how there is great engagement from those within the locality of the Philippines, and everyone else at around the world.

1.1.   Background of the Study

About almost a quarter into the twenty-first century, digital technology has woven itself quite seamlessly into one's daily life. Living in a technologically advanced city, an individual would own a handy gadget like a mobile phone, a computer, or some other kind of smart device. They would most likely have access to the internet as well. The combination of

these elements brings about a great transformation such as a massive gain in the information that can be reached, and a global network which connects one to another of any distance, whether they are within proximity or countries and continents apart. To add, today, with wireless technology, access becomes anywhere at any time. With all of these, the world seems smaller, as some would put it.

This reformation through digital technology is immensely evident in the industry of music and its business. Peter Tschmuck has referred to this time of change as the *digital revolution* in the industry (Tschmuck, 2016). To Monika Schoop, digital technology is said to have altered the structure of the music industry substantially. She mentions Timothy Taylor who pertains to the advent of digital technology as the mark of the "most fundamental change in the history of Western music since the invention of music notation in the ninth century" (Schoop, 2017, p. 1).

One of the best ways in which this change that was mentioned is exemplified in the field is in music recording. It has evolved where creators have gained more access or ability to make music in their own homes or in small studios. On the format of storing music, where once a reliance on physical formats was present, like vinyl records to cassettes to CDs, music evolved and has taken a non-physical format, particularly the MP3. Overall, digital formats which pertain to the CD and mp3, enabled higher quality of copies (Schoop, 2017). Moreover, it has changed music distribution.

Nowadays, streaming has become one of the modes in which music is consumed. Wikström, who wrote about The Cloud and its link to the music industry, acknowledged how recorded music is primarily stored in server farms to be enjoyed by listeners through devices that can stream from these server clients. Some may say that this has brought disruption, just as Wikström describes music may now have a transient existence (Wikström, 2020) or that it is more fleeting or temporary. Another perspective is how these changes empower since it has expanded opportunities making musicians more independent (Schoop, 2017).

Besides this, the digital revolution has also further developed communication and the interaction of artists *to* and *with* their listeners — the mention of *to* and *with* merely indicates how interaction can be one-directional or reciprocal which pertains to an exchange. A technology born from the internet which plays a significant role in providing more possibilities for musicians to achieve greater independence in this aspect is social media. It is described on the Britannica online encyclopedia as "a form of mass media communications on the Internet (such as on websites for social networking and microblogging) through which

users share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)" (Britannica, 2024). It is accessible to everyone in the world who has a gadget and is connected to the web through the internet. As Hesmondhalgh had stated, "The internet, web, and social media are now an important if often banal part of the life of billions of people (Hesmondhalgh, 2018, p. 26). He expressed how this has a large implication on cultural experiences and organization of cultural production. One can see this significant change in experience when meeting someone new. Reaching out through "socials", a term that pertains to platforms like that of Facebook, or Instagram to name a couple.

Salo, Lankinen, & Mäntymäki (2013) mentioned music business to be quick to adapt to these changes. They stated the use of the internet as a marketing channel and medium through these social media platforms. Musicians today can endorse their social media accounts to potential listeners when they promote, hoping for a "follow" or a "like" at least. Oh and Lee (2013) voiced out, in context with the global rise of K-pop The industry, that from the previous conventional LPs, CDs, and DVDs, music is now distributed on digital platforms such as YouTube and iTunes. This builds on what was mentioned on the topic of transformation of physical formats of recorded music to digital – including platforms for access.

Social media continues to evolve rapidly. This is evident with the emergence of new platforms, and the modification of features within these already existing platforms. Musicians are impacted with how they approach their music, engage with their audience, promote their art, and navigate through the industry. The music industry landscape transforms non-stop.

The Philippines also experiences the effect of the digital revolution on its music industry. Connections from international acts are made easier evident in the live performances that are scheduled or have already taken place in the country. Examples of previous performances would be Bruno Mars back in 2023, which marks his fourth time in Manila (Arnaldo, 2023), Madonna in 2016 (Villano, 2015), and the countless K-pop acts the have been performing in the country, including the Asia Artist Awards 2023, an international music awards show with one of its organizers being Korea based *StarNews Korea* (Leon, 2023).

Locally, there constantly have been artists, solo or in groups, who operate independently in their practice of music. They are often known as the *indie scene*. This was the subject focus of a study by Monika Schoop, in her published dissertation titled Independent Music and Digital Technology in the Philippines back in 2017. She notes how

online 'self-promotion', mentioning Suhr is clear in the Philippine setting (Suhr, 2012, p. 5 as cited in Schoop, 2017).

The focal point of what had been mentioned provides the aim of this paper. This study explores how indie artists in the Philippines today leverage social media and examines its influence on the music industry. This includes both which appear to be beneficial and those which test and shape their chosen path in the music industry. What does social media imply for these users who were meant to *market their music*? How does it affect content they create for their audience to consume? Has social media challenged what being an active artist means? How has it affected the industry? This study hopes to give insight on these matters.

1.2.   Motivation

This section explores the motivation for the research which narrows down the scope of the study. In doing so, the research setting, and its subjects will be made clear. In order to achieve this, it is important to present my, the researcher, own background information.

My studies of music business in Norway positioned me in conversations about the music industry, whether in an academic setting or in general. I would be discussing from an understanding of my own experience of music, besides what I have gathered from my master's program. Those instances made me realize that a key factor that molds my insights is my culture or where I come from, the Philippines. This realization became apparent as I assimilated myself in an unfamiliar turf, yet still somewhat familiar because of music. Additionally, in those conversations, I would sense a curiosity from whom I was talking to about my country. In a way, I would feel as if my own country was "uncharted territory", as Monika Schoop, a researcher in ethnomusicology, introduced the Philippines as the setting of her study (Schoop, 2017). In the book, she also mentions that there is not much academic publication on this field of Popular Music in Metro Manila. From these, as well as having gone through the challenge to of finding research about my home country, I have set my focal point of the study to be on the Philippines.

With the vastness of cultures, which includes music, within the country (Buenconsejo, 2010; Castro, 2010; as cited in Schoop, 2017), the need to make the choice of study more specific became apparent. For this research, a spotlight on the indie music scene in Metro Manila is examined, where the tie between social media and music is inferred to be present here. Furthermore, it is where I, as the researcher, find myself connected and involved with. There is an understanding of how the culture is which adds to the analysis and conclusion

made for this research. This choice of subject serves to bring awareness that there are still others where light must be shined on.

Building on the notion on the lack of publication about Philippine Popular Music studies earlier, it was also recognized how most of what is presently out there in a similar topic is already outdated. I had a yearning for something more current, as those particularly written about social media and music were not as applicable anymore. As an example, the referenced work by Monika Schoop was published in 2017, where most of the work for it was done between the years of 2012-2014. Her entry on social media was on Bandcamp and Soundcloud, with mentions of MySpace, Tumblr, Twitter, and Youtube. Though these platforms have played a significant role in music, I have observed that at present, newer platforms have risen and took over some of what were named. Other platforms have evolved. Their use today includes something new like being able to easily add background music, usually a clip of a song, along with a shared image or a quick video.

What has been enumerated above is what sparked this research. My deep interest in music, not only as a musician, but as a casual and avid listener and an academic, keeps me wanting to understand it more. It is hoped that the study gives profound ideas, insights, and revelations on the landscape of pop music today.

1.3. Research Question

The previous segments talked about different matters from the ongoing involvement of the internet, web, and social media in the music industry, to how there is a non-stop transformation of digital technology, and to the Philippine music industry and a scene of what is observed to be present in it. These constitute the rationale in creating this study. The convergence or the meeting point of these variables, the music industry, social media, the Philippines, and indie artists introduces the main research question:

> Q: What is the impact of social media on artists who are a part of the Filipino indie music scene?

In order to answer the main research question better, the following supporting questions are also asked:

- What social media platforms at present do the artists use and what are their function or purpose?
- How significant is keeping an online presence and active online engagement at present?

- What are examples of content posted on these social media platforms?
- Does social media challenge boundaries of personal or professional? And
- What new income stream opportunities have opened because of social media?

These supporting questions test the inferred idea that the current changes in social media have impacted the music industry differently, and immensely.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study is positioned to contribute to ongoing discourses on the digital impacts on the music industry. As digital technology advances, this discussion seeks to enhance an understanding of the social dynamics in the industry. It talks about communication and interaction – essential aspects of music and its business – between an audience, and also with the people within the industry itself. In doing so, it can provide insights to create effective strategies and tools for the music business. Added, it helps provide more information for the development of critical legislation, policies, and regulations to effectively manage platforms at present and to be made in the future.

Furthermore, this paper expands on the knowledge of Popular Music in the Philippines, specifically Metro Manila and the indie scene. It hopes to add more to this area considering that there is limited published literature about the Philippines. By exploring the country's music industry, it can build on the development of solutions or offer solutions to issues that stem from digital technology at a smaller scale compared to one that is more global.

In summary, the paper hopes to contribute to the music industry and its business particularly with the dynamics of the actors, business strategies, and regulation. It also adds on knowledge about the Philippines. Lastly, given that the industry has globalized and continuously functions in that manner, examining from a less charted perspective can bring new insights. It can help identify parallels, similarities, as well as differences from a wider perspective and therefore contribute to a more comprehensive discussion.

2.   Theoretical Framework

This portion discusses topics the study covers which begins with the music industry and the impact of digitalization. It is followed by the developments of the internet – the convergence of computer and telecommunication which ties to social media. Lastly, is a focus on the Philippines, the chosen setting. The focal point of these three links to the research question on the impact of social media to indie artists in the Philippines. This section also elaborates the scope and limitations for the discussion of the findings.

2.1.   Music Industry

2.1.1.   Defining Music Industry

This section explains the complexity of the music industry and its stakeholders. This is enumerated in the differing definitions presented. One focuses on the actors who are present and their respective roles and responsibilities, as well as the systems where they may be part of. The other focuses on the plurality and the issues of missing this kind of view. This research is not focused on the specificity of the use of the term of industry or industries. Rather, it is more important to highlight how there are different tasks, ideally taken under different roles, and how the industry is complex.

(i) Definition

In his book, *The Economics of Music*, Peter Tschmuck, identified different ways in defining the music industry. He mentioned that one way in which the music industry could be defined was through giving examples of the actors that were present in the industry. He gave Wikipedia as an example of this which stated that the industry consisted of individuals and organizations such as singers and musicians, composers, companies, and professionals who create and sell music, engineers, producers, promoters doing live concerts, and many more. He then followed this up mentioning a second way in which the industry as defined by how the Oxford Music Online provided its definition. In his quotation, it is seen to highlight the processes carried out like production, distribution, dissemination, and consumption of music as the networks that consisted of the industry. The author pointed out how these definitions lacked delineation of organization or structure within the industry. However, from the given definitions, Tschmuck identifies three closely linked sectors of the industry, recording, publishing, and live – the core of the industry. Additionally, he included other entities that make up the industry such as collective management organizations, those that license music, as a significant body along with the core sectors (Tschmuck, 2017).

From his discussion, he established his thoughts on the music economy. He noted organizations outside of the core industry which he referred to as secondary markets. This included those that link to the technical aspect of creating or performing music or considered ancillary to the core industry like instrument manufacturers, and those that were part of the production and trade of merchandise. He also put media, whether online, print, or radio as part of the secondary market; as well as branding and sponsoring. And in a final outer layer, he placed music education lobbying, funding, and export (Tschmuck, 2017).

Another take on defining the music industry is by Patrik Wikstrom, in his book *The Music Industry: Music in the Cloud*. He started by specifying what an "industry" was. He described it as "part of the economy concerned with the factory production of goods aimed for mass consumption" (Wikström, 2020, p. 42); however, he noted that this definition had changed and connecting it to the present, he said that an industry "is now generally used to refer to the production, marketing, and distribution of most commodities, including services and immaterial goods"(Wikström, 2020, p. 42). He elaborated on this more by stating that an industry can also be defined by its output. Additionally, he said that it is usual to group activities and be structured as core, supporting, or related. With this, he took a description of the music industry given by Keith Negus (1992) in which the music industry is define as,

> …concerned with developing global personalities that can be communicated across multiple media; through recordings, videos, films, television, magazines, books and via advertising, product endorsement ad sponsorship over a range of consumer merchandise (Negus, 1992, p. 1).

He made a few alterations to it by removing the word global for artists stating that not all are intended for global markets and specified musical content, to give this more significance in comparison to different kinds of intellectual property. Wikstrom concluded saying,

> The music industry consists of those organizations concerned with developing musical content and personalities which can be communicated across multiple media (Wikström, 2020, p. 61).

(ii) On Pluralization of the Music Industries

In their paper, *Rethinking the music industry*, John Williamson and Martin Cloonan broke down the use of the term 'the music industry'. They discussed the issues and implications when referring to the music industry in singular form, and they raised the need for a conversation on using 'the music industries' instead. In using the singular word 'industry', the authors stated that, "It suggests simplicity where there is complexity and

homogeneity where there is diversity" (Williamson & Cloonan, 2007, p. 305). They examined four places where the use of music industry was present: representative and umbrella organizations, media use, official use, and in the academics.

From their study, the use of industry was described to provide a smokescreen in some places. In this sense, it misrepresented. In the authors' words, they said "these organizations tend to portray themselves as representative of a greater section of the music industries than they actually are" (Williamson & Cloonan, 2007, p. 307). They continue by mentioning that it could be that the concerns of one area could appear to be that of the whole industry, which is not true. In the case of peer-to-peer file sharing, the authors used this to illustrate the misrepresentation issue. They termed this case as the 'piracy epidemic' which they stated does not prevent the growth of the live sector; however, it may have placed the recording and publishing industry in a crisis. William and Cloonan (2007) placed most significance on how this misrepresentation needs to be recognized because it allows organizations to talk on behalf of the interest of the range of those inside the music industry when lobbying government. This reference to the music industry can be misleading.

In another part of their study, the use of music industry did pertain to distinct interrelated industries. They noted that there is this recognition by others. On the other hand, in academics, there is still the use of the music industry to refer mainly to the recording industry. And during the times where the use of 'music industries' is present, the consistency in incorporating this term was lacking (Williamson & Cloonan, 2007).

Nonetheless, from the discourse on the pluralization of the industry, it can be drawn that the industry is complex and made up of multiple sectors. There is relevance in the acknowledgment of a heterogeneous and intricate industry.

2.1.2.   The Industry and Digitalization

The subsequent sections elaborate how digitization and digitalization has overridden traditional roles in the music industries. According to Wikström and DeFillippi, media technologies greatly affected industries, not only of music but as with other creative industries. As an example, the authors mention the event of vinyl records transitioning to Compact Discs and the eventual advent of peer-to-peer file-sharing. This led to the decrease in physical sales in the music industry and more transformative impacts on the music industry (Wikström & DeFillippi, 2016).Where once records were considered the 'centerpiece of value creation' with labels acts as the primary gatekeepers, the digital revolution allowed some means of do-it-yourself processes (Tschmuck, 2016).

(i) Defining Digitization and Digitalization

This portion intends to distinguish digitization and digitalization from one another to provide a clearer understanding of these terminologies and provide a clearer view of the changes that happened in the music industry. It is observed, however, that in different popular music and music business literature, these terms are interchangeable due to how closely linked the concepts are.

To begin, digitization is the "technical process of data conversion, generation, storage, or processing" (Frenzel et al., 2021). This was presented in the music industry, particularly in the recording sector, where physical formats transitioned to digital formats. The introduction of the CD to the market by Philips and Sony and 1982 was identified by Tschmuck as one example of digitization of the music business. He says that this event "did not disrupt the music industry's value-added network " (Tschmuck, 2017, p. 175). Another case of digitization was by François Moreau who discussed how digitization in the industry has a disruptive nature. His example was on the development of the MP3 technology by German Fraunhoder laboratories. It was initially intended to transform videos into small-size digital files, but later was recognized for its capability to compress music. This is what he referred to as "dematerializing" of music from what once was a physical product like the CD. He connects this to the events of peer-to-peer filesharing and other changes in the structure and strategies in the music industry (Moreau, 2013).

On the other hand, digitalization refers to "a socio-technical phenomenon, the use of digital technologies, and their influence on societies, businesses, and personal lives" (Frenzel et al., 2021). In Rogers and Preston's discussion on "news modes of appropriation in the twenty-first century music industry", they mentioned transformation of the industry due to the various innovations of technology. They described the twenty-first century music to be in a *crisis of digitalization* – "where new media innovations are widely perceived to be radically undermining the fundamental economics of the music business and collapsing the established order" (Rogers & Preston, 2016, p. 53).

The muddle in definition appears in writing like that of Hesmondhalgh who has talked about digitalization as "the increasing use of electronic storage and transmission technologies that allow images, words, sounds, and so on to be converted into binary code that can be read and stored by computers" (Hesmondhalgh, 2018, p. 336). He continued and enumerated "the internet and the world wide web, smartphones, social media, and many other related

developments such as audio and video compression software" as such (Hesmondhalgh, 2018, p. 336).

Although the confusion in definitions, what these terminologies point towards is the evolution of the music industries which impacted positively and negatively. It could be attributed to the lowered barriers to entry or the issues with intellectual property rights (Watson, 2016).

(ii) Peer-to-peer files sharing

The onset of peer-to-peer file sharing has been deemed as a point of attention in the music industry. It is described as a technology which "enables internet users to access media files using a software program that searches for other connected computers on the Internet to find the desired content" (Tschmuck, 2017, p. 197). The development of this technology is often associated with the creation of Napster in 1999; a software made by Shawn Fanning, an undergraduate student from Northeastern University in Boston, USA (Tschmuck, 2017; Wikström, 2020). Tschmuck states the huge success of Napster to attract a million registered users in just a month. While Wikström mentions that how it outplayed other physical formats available that time was because it was free. What this shows is how music can now be accessed easily, with speed, and to an extent, without cost.

This technology caused disruption, and some would attribute it to the fall of the recording industry. The decline in physical album sales was seen to have started in this wave and is said to have continued according to Wikström. He says that "Napster usually serves as the marker of the beginning of the end of the twentieth-century music economy" (Wikström, 2020, p. 66). Tschmuck reports how Napster was sued by the Recording Industry Association of America for copyright infringement and won with the shutdown of the software. But even with the shutdown of Napster, new applications rose eventually like that of Limewire and Torrent-based clients like The Pirate Bay. This was the time of high piracy in the world (Tschmuck, 2017). To Allan Watson, this period was a time where breach of intellectual property and illegal copying was conspicuous (Watson, 2016).

(iii) Digital impacts

The digital revolution impacted the music industries in various ways. Often it is attributed to the recording industry since it deals with the transformation of the music product from something physical into a digital format. Wikström & DeFillippi attributes the decrease in recorded music sales to the onset of peer-to-peer filesharing. It even made certain industry competences obsolete. It changed the way music retailing is, de-bundling music albums to

only songs. Furthermore, this brought new ways of consuming music as with the introduction of streaming services (Wikström & DeFillippi, 2016).

These changes led to the reformation of the music industry's organization as discussed by Peter Tschmuck. He noted how artists have less dependence on strong players before like record labels and publishers. An example of Radiohead's release back in 2007 was given, where the band had the option to donate any amount from $0.00 to $9.99 in order to download the new album. Even record production altered, from a reliance on labels to having the opportunity to operate at a home recording studio. In essence, the digital revolution brought about many opportunities towards artists use (explained more in section 2.1.3 Artist Centric) and Tschmuck concluded stating that the role of a musician requires a combination of artistic and entrepreneurial skill nowdays (Tschmuck, 2016).

Additionally, according to Holly Tessler, the revolution led to a change in what is sold, from record sales to the selling of a cultural brand. In that insight, music is able to reach across various creative sectors through multiple media and platforms. This opened up possibilities for music business, particularly the recording sector, to move from a more consumer sale to a business-to-business partnership (Tessler, 2016).

There were also implications for recording studios as mapped out by Allan Watson. The revolution lowered barriers to entry when it came to production. Watson mentioned that these developments began in the late 1980s, when there was a new generation of computer and software. Citing Theberge, personal computers showed better processing power and larger storage capacity (Théberge, 2004; as cited by Watson, 2016). The digital audio workstations (DAW) was also elaborated on to have increased its capability on a single machine (Berk, 2000; as cited in Watson, 2016) . Watson quotes how the music making hierarchy may have been thrown and skills in creating an outstanding track is redefined (Homer, 2009; as cited in Watson, 2016).

There are more sectors affected, like radio, or promotion, licensing, and others. Clearly, the digital revolution changed the dynamics of players in the music industries and may also have provided opportunities for more artist's autonomy as discussed in the next section.

2.1.3.   Artist Centric

Developments due to digitalization, or 'digitization' as used by Peter Tschmuck, provided artists with more autonomy. Tshmuck referred to this as the artist "[moving] to center-stage in the value-added network of the music industry" (Tschmuck, 2016, p. 25). This was the effect of the destruction of traditional relations. What brought about this change was

the decreasing production costs of producing music, the ability to receive help through online crowd funding, and ease of artists to disseminate through content aggregators. Labels were not needed for the distribution infrastructure, as noted by Tschmuck. He continued stating that live performance grew to become the most significant source of income, emphasizing the presence of a fan base. The revolution also allowed artists more avenues to generate income which include branding, merchandising, synchronization in tv, film, games, and advertising. It opened opportunities to collaborate with non-traditional music partners. Finally, through social media, the stage extended to the globe for artists to market and promote themselves (Tschmuck, 2016).

2.2. The Cultural Industries

Cultural industries are described by Hesmondhalgh to have the three related abilities: (1) "to make and circulate products that influence our knowledge, understanding and experience"; (2) "their role as systems for the management of creativity and knowledge"; and (3) "their effects as agents of economic, social and cultural change" (Hesmondhalgh, 2018, p. 39). Hesmondhalgh further explains the term 'cultural industries' is often used to pertain to "institutions that are most directly involved in the production of social meaning", which includes the music recording and publishing industries as they are institutions with intentions to communicate to an audience, as well as create and distribute artifacts that are open to interpretation (Hesmondhalgh, 2018, p. 48). Besides the music sector, there are also other cultural industries the author mentions like television, and film. It must be highlighted that the author also mentions these industries to interact with each other and are interconnected in intricately. Moreover, this link with other industries is said to be due to competition for the same resource such as: limited pool of disposable consumer income; and limited amount of consumption time" (Garnham, 1990, p. 158; as cited in Hesmondhalgh, 2018).

Understanding the music industry as tied with cultural industries puts emphasis on the relevance of culture with music and the music industry. It also aids in understanding discussions on community, and influence in the artists' music. To view the music industry as part of the cultural industries, music presents itself among a sea of different things offered by different people and motives. This may have an effect on how one presents oneself as an artist online. It may also affect what product one is to make. It questions at times who receives the attention, the music or the maker. The maker void of his creation is also a possibility. It is a great way of understanding why there is so much competition on social media.

2.3.   The Internet

Citing several sources, Hesmondhalgh mentioned that the recognition of the internet and web is often connected with the idea of individual freedom, autonomy, and decentralization. The convergence of computer and telecommunication networks in the 1960s and 1970s marked the development towards the Internet. It fully materialized in the form of digital networks in the 1980s (Hesmondhalgh, 2018). This insight highlights the role of the internet in providing independence to a user and underscores its rapid evolution the internet within less than half a century.

2.3.1.   Web 2.0

According to Hesmondhalgh, the term 'Web 2.0' was a term in the early 2000s which referred to the evolving world wide web. He quotes O' Reilly (2005) who elaborated on how Web 2.0 has gone beyond the read-only feature of what was Web 1.0. O' Reilly was quoted stating how the networks became a platform for various applications, services, and devices. The applications and services that are present in Web 2.0 continually update as it is used. There is also the possibility of remixing data from multiple sources which include individual users and their own contributed content. Web 2.0 also allows collaboration or 'architecture of participation' which create a network effect (Hesmondhalgh, 2018). He continued by naming the platforms of YouTube, Wikipedia, and social media, separately, as exemplars of this concept.

Continuing his discussion, he linked this concept to another widely disseminated concept known as 'prosumption', which combines the words production and consumption. In this thought, consumers now have a take on the production or a degree of customization. According to Hesmondhalgh, this concept was attributed to Alvin Toffler who coined the term 'prosumer'(Toffler, 1980; as cited in Hesmondhlagh, 2018). There was also a reference to the concept in a book called *Wikinomics* in 2006 which was said to have disseminated the term where it means the 'customers participate in the production of products in a creative and ongoing way' (Tapscott & Williams, 2006, p. 126; as cited in Hesmondhalgh, 2018). There is now enhanced interactivity.

2.3.2.   Social Media

Wikstrom expounded on social media pertaining to platforms' music feature which he says enables its users to express identities through performance and creation to their friends and the world (Wikström, 2020). He compared social media to analogue means of sharing stories, music, and other cultural artifacts, like books, record tapes, and others that display

these in physical formats. Social media is said to have taken this position where these stories and music are in formats of data files. Including the data network, the new bookshelf are platforms like Facebook, Instagram and others. He cites several authors which regard social media as "the beacon for identity communication" (Wikström, 2020, p. 127).

2.4. Interview Setting: Philippines

This section expounds on the Philippines as the country setting of the study. It covers key aspects such as the overall geography, language, and a focus on Manila – a reference to the city and the metropolitan region. The discussion then shifts to the Philippine Music Industry, emphasizing its history and the industry present in Metro Manila. Additionally, it touches on the industry beyond Metro Manila to broaden awareness. Finally, the segmente elaborated on social media use in the Philippines. Overall, this section lays the foundation for better understanding of the study, clarifying topics of discussion, and encouraging further research related to the Philippine Music Industry.

2.4.1. Country's Geography and Language

In understanding the music industry of the Philippines, the geographical make up and the presence of various languages used in the country must be acknowledged. Along with its colonial past under Spanish and American rule, which is not further discussed here, these characteristics results to the cultural diversity and hybridity experienced in the locale (Buenconsejo, 2010; Castro, 2010; as cited in Schoop, 2017).Thus, it provides an idea of challenges and opportunities the country encounters.

To start the Philippines (Figure 1) is a country located in Southeast Asia. Its main land feature is an archipelago made up of more than 7,000 islands and islets. According to the Britannica Encyclopedia online), these land formations span about 1,850 kilometers from north to south, and 1,130 kilometers wide. Across the waters, surrounding it, are the countries of Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia to name a few. About two fifths of the islands and islets are named.

Figure 1: The Map of the Philippines (https://www.philembassy.org.au/the-philippines/map)

Further the country is divided into three main island groups known as Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Each island group covers specific regions that make up the country, with its provinces and cities that make up that region (Cullinane et al., 2024).

With the vast complexity of the country's geography, the country has different languages and dialects spoken in it. The numbers differ but about 150 would be present and correspond to the ethnic groups found in the country (Cullinane et al., 2024). Among the hundreds of languages, there are eight major languages spoken across the country. These are Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon or Ilonggo, Bicol, Waray, Kapampangan, and Pangasinense (Department of Tourism-Cordillera Administrative Region, 2024). Most Filipinos, referring to the people, would speak Tagalog as it is the basis of Filipino or Pilipino, the official language of the country. A second official language of the country is English which is used more in education and law, as seen in the constitution of the country (*Executive Order No. 210, s. 2003 | GOVPH*, 2003).

2.4.2.   Manila (Metro Manila and the Greater Metro Manila Area)

From practical experience, 'Manila' can encompass various meanings, depending on its context. This section aims to clarify the different uses and provide the extent which the it can pertain to.

At its core, 'Manila' refers to the capital city of the Philippines. It houses the country's economic, political, and administrative centers. It is situated in the main island group of Luzon, and is surrounded by other cities, one of which is Quezon City – the most-populous city (*Regional Profile | EMB - National Capital Region*, n.d.). Manila along with Quezon City and other adjacent cities and municipalities comprise the National Capital Region (NCR), or what is also referred to as Metro Manila. Furthermore, the broader concept of 'Manila' extends to the adjacent provinces of Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal. These provinces comprise the Greater Metro Manila Area (Figure 2) (Senate of the Philippines, 2012).

In application, such as world tours by artists or events, 'Manila' may denote Metro Manila or the Greater Area. The posters (Figure 3 and 4) are examples of what had

Figure 2: Political Map of Metro Manila (taken from Wikimedia Commons, accessed 25 April 2024)

just been discussed. One act (Figure 3) had played a show in a venue called the Mall of Asia Arena, which is situated in the city of Pasay, a city within Metro Manila. The other poster (Figure 4) is of a concert in the Philippine Arena in Bulacan, a province adjacent of the Metro Manila region.

Figure 3: Jonas Brothers' Celebrating Five Albums Manila Poster (left)

Figure 4: IU: H.E.R World Tour 2024 Poster (right)

(taken from Billboard Philippines, accessed 6 May 2024)

The cities of Metro Manila are urban and could be labelled as a melting pot of various cultures, both local and also international today. Schoop noted that these cities are characterized by stark contrasts. A high level of socioeconomic differences and inequality is evident in the surroundings alone; having a group of informal settlers could be next to luxurious high-rise condominiums and shopping malls. The region is also very dense in population due to the movement of people from the provinces, which are more rural, into the urban areas in search of jobs (Schoop, 2017). As observed, the region still continues to transform.

2.4.3.   Philippine Music Industry

This section provides a succinct overview of Philippine Music Industry. It traces the establishment of the recording industry in the early twentieth century and some changes it has gone through due to digital disruptions. It narrows down focusing on the present industry as seen in Metro Manila, followed by a brief segment on the presence of the industry beyond Metro Manila.

(i) History and Overview

In understanding the music, in sound, that present in the Philippines, it must be known that the country had been under the rule of the Spanish and American colonization, for more than 300 years by the former, and almost 50 years by the latter. Baes, in his article on Popular

Music in the Philippines, noted that both regimes have influence on the country, however, establishment of institutions are patterned with the American regime.

Baes notes different music that was heard in various settings during the twentieth century such as vaudeville shows, cakewalk, foxtrot, and ragtime which were traced to the Anglo-American rule. During this period, the Philippines was also introduced to the radio, sheet music, live entertainments which Baes links to the establishment of popular music in the mainstream of Philippine society (Baes, n.d.). This has led to other genres like rock and roll, country music, its reiteration in the Filipino context and the rise of OPM, or Original Pilipino Music, described by Baes as "a handle for music composed and/or performed by Filipinos, even with its eventual use of English lyrics".

In Schoop's study on the Philippines, she cites Danny Yson who had mentioned the emergence of the recording industry in the early twentieth century (Yson, 2003; as cited in Schoop, 2017). This was marked by the importation of discs and players. She continues and cites that the establishment of the industry was not until 1913 marking the recordings of Filipino artists. It was also said that during this time, those of higher stature in society had access to such resources as shellac discs, eventually vinyl records, cassettes, and the CDs. Schoop continued with how digital downloads along with CDs were only gaining acceptance.

Music piracy was also touched upon by Schoop, as she did her research during the time when counterfeit CDs and DVDs were a huge problem in the country. She narrates her experience seeing pirated music CDs sold in markets which compiled MP3s together. She says, "Whereas file sharing platforms caused an upheaval in Western music industries at the turn of the century, piracy in the Philippines took another form," citing Baumgärtel on the piracy in the Philippines (Baumgärtel, 2006; as cited in Schoop, 2017).

Today it can be observed that music consumption, in the recording industry's context, has moved towards streaming. This is done on YouTube, and Spotify.

(ii) Present Metro Manila

This study focuses on artists in Metro Manila, or the National Capital Region of the Philippines. According to Monika Schoop, an ethnomusicologist based in Germany, she writes that "Metro Manila is [also] important on a national as well as international level" (Schoop, 2017, p. 11). She continues by identifying Manila as one of the city-stops for international performances naming the controversial concert of the Beatles in 1966 to a concert by Morrissey during her stay in the Philippines in 2012.

Metro Manila serves as the Philippine subsidiary headquarters for some of the world's largest global music companies, as identified by Wikström in his book Music in the Cloud (Wikström, 2020). Specifically, the offices of Sony Music Philippines and UMG Philippines are located in Mandaluyong City, while Warner Music Philippines and Live Nation Philippines are situated in Taguig City. There are also other leading companies who promote shows in the Metro Manila such a Pulp Live World based in Quezon City (Baizas, 2022) and Ovation Productions (*Ovation Productions*, n.d.), also in Mandaluyong City.

Collective management organizations in the country are also situated in the Metro Manila, such as FILSCAP or the Filipino Society of Composer, Authors and Publishers, Inc., the Philippines Recorded Music Rights Inc. (PRM), and Performers' Rights Society of the Philippines (PRSPh). All offices are located in Quezon City.

The region is also filled with small to large businesses for music performances like venues. Various acts are present in the Metro Manila scene like the names of Ben&Ben, Bini, SB19, Zack Tabudlo, Cup of Joe, Dilaw, Munimuni, Any Name's Okay, The Ridleys, Over October, and many more.

(iii) *Beyond Metro Manila or Beyond Tagalog*

Though it appears that the music industry of the Philippines is mostly in Metro Manila, the country is beyond what has been previously explained, in relation to geography and language. In stating so, the purpose is to be informed of other stakeholders, from artists to independent record label, to music festivals and events that occur as part of the Philippine Music Industry outside the National Capital Region.

In recent times, because of the internet, some artists that are beyond whose background is outside Metro Manila have emerged or stepped to the fore in the. This is evident on Billboard Philippines' post on underrated folk artists such as artists like *dwta,* and *Oh! Caraga*. There are also acts that feature Filipinos of multiple backgrounds like the boy band *Alamat*.

The researcher recognizes the limit of her understanding of the Philippine Music Industry. However, it is clear that the Music Industry of the Philippines is definitely one that is very diverse, in culture, in language, and so much more.

2.4.4.   Internet and Social Media Usage in the Philippines

Filipinos have been reported as one of the heaviest users of the internet (Baclig, 2022). Not only is there are large number of users, but the average time spent online has been

stated to average up to 10 hours daily, as published by the Statista Research Department in their general information about internet usage in the country. They continue by saying that the users spend most of their daily time on social media (Statista Research Department, 2024). This is nothing new as it has been reported since 2018 that Filipinos are heavy users of social media (Camus, 2018).

In line with what was just mentioned, on a Philippine news outlet in 2022, it was relayed that an average of 4 hours is spent on social media daily by Filipinos ages 16 to 64. In comparison with the reports of users then, the worldwide average was about 2 and a half hours (Baclig, 2022). In the current year of 2024, internet spend on social media by Filipinos was said to be around 3 hours and 34 minutes a day; a small decrease in the usage time compared to the couple of years previously, however, the country was still considered to rank high for this usage. Out of Filipino internet users, around 98.9 percent access through mobile phones. This access translates to the consumption of online video content, like music videos and vlogs, and social media use (Mateo, 2024). Statista (2024) mentions this as well, reporting that entertainment content is consumed by Filipinos. The people are also said to be the biggest consumers of vlogs. Other content that is popular and highly consumed are music, comedy, and viral videos.

With knowledge on the extensive usage of internet and social media by the people of the Philippines and the type of content they consume, opportunities to investigate where these variables meet is opened. Even more, to see that the involvement of this technology has been around for some time in this setting, it can build on the notion on the evolution of the music industry shaped by media technologies as presented by Patrik Wikström and Robert DeFillippi (Wikström & DeFillippi, 2016). This is well aligned to this research about understanding the impact of social media, the chosen technology up for discussion, to music through exploratory means.

3.   Methodology

This section of the paper discusses the nature of the research, as well as the approach that was taken in fulfilling the study. That is, it further explains the methods in gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data collected in order to answer the question on the effects of social media on artists and how it could be evolving the musical landscape and the music industry – the art, the artist, and the other players in the industry.

As follows, the section starts with a discussion on exploratory research, the chosen nature of research, it is succeeded by an elaboration on utilizing a qualitative data gathering method, which covers the facilitation of interviews. Another part explains the criteria in choosing informants for the research. This is followed by a discourse on the means by which the data gathered is analyzed, particularly on content and thematic analysis. The application of all these is briefly narrated through a section on application or the interview proper. This reports and explains actions taken during the collection of data. Lastly, this section closes with the limitations the researcher faced for this study.

The goal of this chapter is to make evident what had been understood and what had been carried out for this study. It provides a basis for the findings and interpretation, and it also gives more insight in order to further develop any future studies that may be similar or in line.

3.1.   Nature of the Research (Exploratory)

As the purpose of this study is to map out new possible points of discussion on the implications of social media in the music industry, particularly in Metro Manila, Philippines, the take on the nature of the research is exploratory. According to Robert Stebbins in his article on *Exploratory Research in the Social Sciences*,

> Researchers explore when they have little or no scientific knowledge about the group, process, activity, or situation they want to examine but nevertheless have reason to believe it contains elements worth discovering (Stebbins, 2001).

It had been observed that though there had been some papers and discussions on social media and the music industry, little to no formal writings had been done specific to the Philippines. Furthermore, social media continues to evolve, and as music has a heavy reliance on digital technology and music business uses mass media communication like social media platforms, there are new turfs to be explored and discovered.

To be an effective researcher in this approach, one must have *flexibility* and *open-mindedness* when looking for data and where to search for this data (Stebbins, 2001). This translates to this study by being able to be determined in gathering the data and being resourceful and insightful in analyzing and interpreting what is collected.

Thus, with this research paper taking on an exploratory nature, it hopes to provide opportunities to generate new ideas about the music industry and social media. It also aims to present the Philippine Music Industry in particular. Additionally, the study aspires to cultivate insights on the topic both new and those already pre-existing.

3.2. Utilizing Qualitative Data Gathering

Exploratory research is not specific to one type of data, whether quantitative or qualitative. However, the researcher had chosen to employ qualitative data as it is seen to be more congruent to the goals of this study. Stebbins said,

> … [qualitative data] can help confirm propositions not amenable to quantitative assessment or, through exploration, bring to light important recent changes in social process and social structure that the narrower focus of hypothesis confirmation has led researchers to overlook (Stebbins, 2001, pp. 7).

In contrast, quantitative data was described to be capable of "enhancing precision of the theory" (Stebbins, 2001, p. 6-7). As this study relates to digital technology, which can be very dynamic, the use of qualitative data will provide deeper insights on these changes in comparison to previously written works related to the topic. To be more specific about the process of qualitative data gathering, the next section elaborates on interviewing, the process by which data was collected.

3.3. Process of Interviewing

In line with conducting qualitative exploratory research, interviews were facilitated as the chosen process of gathering data. These interviews were done through online video calls. In this section, the manner in which questions or topics were to be created and presented to the interviewees are clarified with the discussion on the type of interview administered. Subsequently, the facilitation of interviews through online spaces is explained. Finally, it ends with the criteria for choosing respondents for the study.

3.3.1. Type of Interview

The specific type of interviews that were done was a mix of a guided interview and semi-structured interview. Though these types of interviews could be seen as almost

opposites of each other – one being unstructured while the other semi-structured – the researcher incorporated certain characteristics from each to clarify this point. This was considered to accommodate the way the interviewees responded throughout their respective interviews.

Elaborating more on the type of interviews and the combination, a guided interview is a subset of an unstructured interview. This kind of interview was described by Janice Morse as "long, nonstandard, narrative, or open-ended", quoting these descriptive words from referenced authors. It is also called a *guided conversation*. The process an initial preparation of about 6 to 10 questions which provides a general order or sequence to the interview. Further, unstructured, and guided interviews are considered by Morse to

> "…give the participants the freedom to "tell their story" in their own way with minimal interruption from the researcher, hence the label unstructured. These interviews are considered optimally emic (from the participant's perspective), which, with the lack of interference or interjection from the researcher, increases validity" (Morse, 2012, p. 194).

On the other hand, a semi-structured interview is also described to be administered with open-ended questions, where question stems are formed in advance. Responses are described as unscripted, which gives the interviewee freedom in responding. The interviewer is provided an opportunity to ask follow-up questions during the interview. Supposedly, the questions prepared are asked in the same order for all participants (Morse, 2012). In these points, interjecting prompts and order of questions is where the choice of incorporating mix of types of interviews was decided upon.

3.3.2.   Facilitating Online Interviews

Online and synchronous interviews were facilitated for this study. This chosen method of facilitating interviews for the study enables the participants to ease any travel expenses financially and in time, since the setting of the study happens in a highly congested area. Additionally, the interviews were recognized to need not be dependent on a specific setting or location.

Today, with the advancements of technology, online interviews imitate face-to-face interviews well enough. It is said that online interviews today are capable of "[offering] opportunities for real-time responses from participants as well as a high level of participant involvement. To this extent, they mirror the traditional face-to-face interview, providing greater spontaneity" (Chen & Hinton, 1999, as cited in James & Busher, 2012, p. 180). To elaborate more, online interviews is said to be able to provide some individuals more

confidence in speaking free and add to an extensive conversation (James & Busher, 2012). However, though there are these advantages, a disadvantage of this method is the blurred distinction between responding and sending which was also mentioned by James & Blusher. They reference Bowker & Tuffin (2004) stating that the researcher will have less opportunity to clarify points or reciprocate any responses well.

3.3.3. Recruiting Interviewees

To comprehensively investigate the question on the impact of social media on artists further, certain criteria guided the selection of appropriate respondents. These criteria were meticulously applied in pinpointing the sources of responses considered. They are aligned to the scope and limitations established by the provided framework. A well-defined profile of the respondents aids in rigorous critical analysis and enhances the understanding of the research, given that the individuals for this study possess the expertise and experience within their field. The following were the criteria for choosing the respondents:

- The interviewee is an artist affiliated with a band or organization.

The difference in practice of solo artists versus those in groups was considered. For artists within a group, responsibilities are often delegated to meet practical challenges where an individual has to step up. Additionally, group social media accounts represent a collective voice and decision-making which extends beyond the self.

- The interviewee regards their profession as part-time or full-time work.

At this stage of full-time work, informants are perceived to invest substantial time and effort in professional pursuits. They have established themselves in the scene and are backed by community evident whether online or offline; for this research, online is given a high relevance.

- The interviewee associates themselves to be within the Philippine indie music scene.

This criterion aligns with the geographical context of the study, focused on artists in the Philippines. Further, it reinforces the concept of independent artist practice within the music profession. Artists in the indie scene operate autonomously, handling their own promotion, creativity, and overall music business.

- The interviewee is experienced in utilizing social media, and all underlying platforms.

Taking the responses from the individuals with authority on the social media platforms will give deeper insights on the topic at hand. Added, respondents with extensive

practical experience can impart on the intricacies and variety of social media platforms present today, as well as elaborate on their direct effects on their profession.

Subsequently, prospective interviewees were initially identified through systematic observations of the scene it is focused on. Moreover, establishing contact with one of the targeted interviewees, the researcher was aided by valuable referrals from the initial participant. This enhances the comprehension of the researcher on active artists and their presence within the field of the indie music scene.

3.4. Approach to Analysis

There are two ways in which these interviews may be analyzed; through content analysis or thematic analysis. The former, content analysis, is defined as a process by which the data is separated from interview context in order to be placed in files of similar content. After which, these data are categorized, along with other text and paragraphs similar throughout the multiple interviews.

The latter, thematic analysis, deals with the analysis of metaphors and what may be implied in the statement. Unlike content analysis, themes that are found may be exclusive to the interview or interviews they were taken from and need not appear in all interviews. In cases where themes present themselves in multiple interviews, these shall be synthesized (Morse, 2012). For the research, where similar inputs were found across interviews, content analysis was used, otherwise, a thematic analysis was applied to accommodate those with a freer thought.

3.5. Application

An overview of actual data collection is placed in this section to recount the actions done during the process. This part gives insight on the background of the interviewees chosen to position where they are in their career or music journey and state their credibility as respondents of the study. This is followed by the presentation of the interview proper which covers the preparation and the process of actual interviewing.

3.5.1. About the Interviewees

Three respondents were interviewed for this study who met the criteria elaborated in a previous section. Each respondent practices full-time profession as a music artist affiliated with their specific bands, operating independently. As mentioned earlier about the setting of the research, the interviewees are based in Metro Manila, Philippines. Drawing from their extensive experience as a music artist in the industry over the years, along with the

recognition from their listeners, as noted by the researcher, indicates their established profession. The respondents were also consented with the se of their name and affiliated groups to be present in the study.

Benny Manaligod – Singer/Songwriter and Frontman of The Ridleys

Benny Manaligod or "Benny" is the singer and songwriter of the band, The Ridleys. He also represents the band as their frontman and described their songs as storytelling, a sharing of the frontman's stories and the stories of others as well. The Ridleys started in the indie OPM movement in the year 2016. Besides his role in the music of the band, Benny is also the social media manager of their group, leading decisions and strategy in the social media marketing.

Joshua Lua – Guitarist of Over October

Joshua Lua, or "Lua" as he is referred to in his profession, is a guitarist in the band Over October, formed in 2014. Apart from his musical role as guitarist in the band, he is involved with singing, as well as the writing process of the music of the group. Besides a musical role, he performs the responsibility of marketing the band through online means. In this, he handles how to engage, through brainstorming, copywriting, and posting. as some of the things he is in charge of. It is also noteworthy to know that Over October is

John Owen Castro – Flutist of Munimuni

John Owen Castro, or "Owen", is the flutist and a vocalist of the band Munimuni. He joined the band in 2014, where the band's formation was earlier in 2012-2013. Apart from his musician role, he also mentions that he takes on tasks to create visual materials for promotion of the band. In previous experience, he had also become the social media manager of his group. Owen shared taking in a separate person to be their team's social media manager at present.

3.5.2.   Interview Proper

Following an understanding of the type of interview and means of analyzing data, the researcher designed the interviews to be a one-on-one, online call, lasting a duration of 60 minutes per interviewee. A preparation of five main themes to be explored was done before execution of interview proper. These themes included: (1) Creation of Online Presence as a Music Artist, (2) Maintaining Online Engagement, (3) Content Creation and Production, (4)

Personal versus Professional Boundaries, and (5) New Income Stream Opportunities. Additionally, around two to three guide questions under each theme were arranged.

During the briefing of interviewees before the interview proper or actual conversation for the study, all were made to know about the flow of the interview. The five themes that were prepared were also given in advance, however, the guide questions were not included. At the time of the interview proper, the researcher had decided to go with how the interviewees were responding. Some interviews were seen to flow well, encompassing the initial planned themes and questions, without intervention or interjections. On the contrary, if the interviewer observes that the respondent is away from the original outline, prompts and use of guide questions were employed.

Interviews were conducted in a mix of English, Tagalog, or Taglish, a process of code-switching or code-mixing between Tagalog and English language (Bautista, 2004). This opted language of conversation was incorporated for this study to allow interviewees to be at ease and gather as much information as possible.

After each interview was done, transcriptions were simultaneously created and checked to be used as text data for this study. Transcriptions were processed using the built-in feature of the online calling platforms, as well as the use of another platform which can cover other languages besides English. The researcher was tasked to proofread and provide necessary edits of each live transcription before the analysis. After the analysis of the transcription, the information had been translated to English by the researcher to be included on the paper. Translating is considered by the researcher as a necessary step to give readers who do not speak Tagalog access to the data.

3.6. Limitations

In conducting a study, a researcher will have been met by restrictions that may be significant points which affect the outcome of the study. Some of the constraints that are recognized by the researcher are the limited time for the study, the insufficiency of data, and the limits of the chosen methodology. What follows is an elaboration on these which the researcher had faced conducting this study on the effects of social media on indie artists of the Philippines.

In reference to the example cited, as this study is a master's degree requirement, bounded within the timeframe for its fulfillment, it challenges matters such as the choice of interviewees, their quantity, and the diversity of background of the interviewees. In such a

selection, the data gathered may be seen as not enough to draw any general conclusions. However, with the goal of this research to be exploratory in nature, it can still provide an overview for more studies to be made.

When discussing the background of the study, or on the Philippine popular music industry, there is insufficiency of data. As mentioned in prior research,

> there is no academic publication that focuses specifically on popular music in Manila, with the exception of a short encyclopedia entry by ethnomusicologist and composer Jonas Baes (Baes, 2005; as cited by Schoop, 2017)

This poses a difficulty in providing a clearer scope. The search for publications which can provide context to the setting was then tedious and time-consuming. Where background data cannot be properly established through publication alone, they were taken from the interviews themselves which may stray away from the aim of the study. Apart from that, the consumption of time to do so then causes deviation from the substantial analysis of data.

Reviewing the approach to the research, exploratory research may appear broad in scope. Though it presents an expansive space for discussion, outcomes may be deficit of specificity. On the contrary, though there is a lack of more specific outcomes, the nature and type of data gathered provides a means to find topics of interest for further discussion and research. Other restrictions in the methodology are the facilitation of a handful of interviews since they may be considered insufficient in data. However, the facilitation of interviews as individual interviews aims to provide a more in-depth insight into the Philippine Music Industry. Online synchronous interviews were also believed to pose hindrance to a more comprehensive study as there can be a loss of flow in the conversation due to bad internet connection or a lag in the conversation posed by how technology was.

Another restraint that was experienced in this research is the time-consuming nature of analysis. The researcher also acknowledges the complexity of the research and the lack of more experience or expertise in the field. With these limitations, the researcher is challenged in providing a thorough study. Despite all that, recognizing these restrictions allows for the further possibility of developing the research.

4.   Findings

As stated in the chapter on methodology, the interviewees were presented with five themes which were the points of discussion of this study on social media and its implication on the artists based in the Philippines. This section presents the results according to the five themes. Excerpts from the interview quoted in this section are translations of what was verbatim. An appendix at the end of the paper is provided with the original transcription of these.

4.1.   Creation Of Online Presence as A Music Artist

This first theme talks about establishing a digital footprint through the creation of social media profiles by the artists. Prior to the interview, the researcher was interested in knowing which social media platforms were being used and what purpose these platforms serve.

The findings for this theme reveal that social media functions as a marketing and communication tool for the audience, directly connecting artists with various types of consumers. It is highlighted that it enhances the relation between artist and audience even more, touching on community building and fostering. Other aspects which were explored are its function in establishing the music profession, disseminating information, market research, shaping of brand identity, as well as its allowance to translate what is offline to something digital and online. Additionally, while all respondents are empowered to handle their social media, they made mention of being partially signed to a label for distribution alone.

The common platforms used by the respondents were Facebook, X [known as Twitter then], Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Other platforms that were mentioned were Patreon, Discord, and Twitch. These platforms differ in features, but some that were mentioned and worth noting are Facebook with Facebook Live, Facebook Groups, Facebook Gaming and Facebook Stars. Discord has servers, while Instagram has Instagram Reels, and broadcast channels. YouTube has a short-form video format known as YouTube Shorts.

Benny: talked about how the creation of a Facebook page solidified their band's presence. Prior to the making of their page, he mentioned that they were in preparation to join a *battle of the bands*, however he clarified that their main intention was "to be part of the music scene". He stated,

> One of the ways we cemented our presence as a band, the very first thing we did was we
> made a social media page on Facebook. We didn't have any releases then. We were still

preparing for the battle of the bands, but by starting the Facebook page, that was our way of saying, "hey, we are a real band!". We have an intention of being part of the scene and this is the first step to doing that.

It was then asked whether the band is considered as their full-time job or part-time job, to which the respondent confirms that they regard it as a full-time occupation just recently. He attributed social media to have propelled them in this direction saying, "One of the tools that spurred us forward was social media". He explains how their use of social media evolved over time which supported a hobby then to what is now their profession. This was his response,

> Even as a hobby, we were already active on social media. We treated it like a personal page, not really caring about the branding or the marketing, whatever. We were just posting, posting, posting. And then we realized that "oh, by posting online, we got more followers". Followers that we wouldn't have gotten just by performing on stage. So, I guess... the more we treated it as a job, the more professional, quote-unquote, we presented ourselves on social media... We really had to curate our captions, our pictures. And we're at this point in our career, we're doing it full-time. Comparing it to how we used social media back then… eight years ago… [1]

Besides these, the respondent mentioned social media's use for marketing and promotion of projects like music releases and live shows.

Social media is also a tool for market research or in knowing about the listeners in order to extend the audience reach of the band or the business. After mentioning that posts were being made regularly and with the thought of incorporating scheduling posts for their social media, The respondent said,

> …We started looking at our analytics. Asking the question, when are our followers most active on social media? And then, we would post then for maximum reach. So, that's 2019. And then, that's it! Our band was on the rise during that time. Because of social media, we got to reach people outside Metro Manila. I think a prime example of that would be UP Los Baños. [2]

It had propelled the band further with mentions of their talent fee increasing as they were further established.

The pandemic was given notice in the interview as well and for Metro Manila during this period online was the way since face-to-face business was not permitted. The respondent recounted saying, "In 2020, 2021, that's when the band and I, we had talks about, 'okay, guys, we're living in a new era. We don't know how long this pandemic will last. So, let's

fully shift online'". He explained their utilization of social media by posting every day. He continued,

> …Socia media wasn't just a part of our life. It became our life. It was like whatever we were doing, broadcast it on social media. We did Facebook live shows. So, we said, let's simulate what we do in real life shows to social media. Because, well, social media is real life now.

He further shares about performing online for a university fair during that period.

Finally, the respondent mentioned social media's function in connecting and communicating with fans online. He expressed, "There were times when we didn't play music. We just hung out with our fans online through Facebook live or even a Discord server". Relating to understanding what the audience demands, he also said,

> … Through social media, we get more ideas on what products our listeners want from us… It was a way for our audience to tell us themselves, this is what you want. These are the products we want to see. And so, from that came out that, 'yeah, we have shirts now!' [3]

Added, the respondent mentions his own Patreon as a singer-songwriter which houses his unpublished songs. The private community was said to influence his art. He also said, "But I appreciate them because they also know that I flourish more" which shows that function of social media to foster a community and be able to share a journey.

Lua: as he explained the indie practice of their band**,** recalled his previous experience as part of a university organization which focused on music. He also shared his own and his co-member's educational background in communications. He said,

> …With all the talks where we sometimes invited speakers from outside to get to know more about the music industry, that's where we built our foundation in terms of how to market your music, how to put your music out there, what to watch out for in terms of music distribution and all of those. And content strategies. And things like that. To me, it was in line with my undergraduate program... [4]

The researcher links this statement to a function of social media in marketing and communication to get the word out on one's music.

Social media was also said to play a helpful role in art direction. The respondent elaborated on his band's experience during the pandemic which he described as a hard reset. He explained how previously, bands they would be associated with before the pandemic were not as active anymore, thus putting them in an ambiguous position. He said, "…We're in a weird spot, like we're caught in the old indie scene roster while a new indie scene roster starts to emerge" [5]. The respondent then talked about an X account with the handle or name that

combined the names of his group with two other groups. This was identified by the respondent as the point of change in the direction of their band. He said,

> It [the X account] was just like a casual fan account… It's like they grouped us three together. Then, there were a lot who said "hey! I also like those bands". It then became a mini community. And funny, even if they are not that active anymore, the community they left behind is still very active. And then it grew. And so, because of that trend that we saw online, it's like we saw that there's a market if the three bands joined forces together. [6]

He reinforced this at the end of the interview saying, "Social media is such a big help to know who to put in the line-up and which artists we should stick with, since I get to see who else our fans listen to" [7]. It was a tool that aided in getting data to understand the audience and also assisted in the creation of line-ups for tours or to know who to perform with.

Social media was also a way to connect with fans, as well as build and foster communities online. One of the ways in which the respondent utilized social media in this function was in his experience of streaming games. He said, "During the pandemic, I ventured into streaming to be able to keep the community active" [8]. It was then clarified by the interviewer if the community was for the band to which the respondent said it was not necessarily. However, he connected his own community to that of his group's and said,

> Especially if you're in a group or in a band these days, it's not required, but it helps if the individual members have their own… personal following. It's still a way to connect to your fans even if it is not officially under the band. [9]

While discussing the importance of use of language on these platforms, the respondent presented the idea of knowing your audience and what the audience relates to by connecting to them and nurturing them. He mentioned other tools available today for the purpose of building a community. The respondent said,

> Social media has so many tools for us to build communities. There's [Facebook] Groups. There's [Instagram] Broadcast Channels. There are even community chats. And then you get to know about your fans if there are those kinds of interactions within the group. [10]

Moreover, social media was used to gather fans offline outside of music releases and live shows. The respondent shared their team's experience as he talked about how to effectively communicate with the audience online. He stated,

> We have monthly or bimonthly hangouts with our fanbase. So, we have a Facebook group where we post "Okay, let's get together!" Just like that. We have had just two, but it [the number of attendees] doubled the second time. [11]

Owen: enumerated the different social media platforms and their function according to the audience which they target. Through his response, social media served a purpose in marketing and promotion, and in direct conversing with the audience. The respondent said,

> There are different kinds of audiences for each social media platform. So, the attack or approach for each social media platform is different. For example, since we have more followers on Facebook, it's easier to announce anything big on Facebook… The approach on Twitter or X, on the other hand, is more personal… And Instagram is a platform that is better for those who like taking videos, photos of you, and all that. So, there's less interaction in a sense that you are not communicating with words. But I let them feel that they are heard or seen by reposting their stuff. [12]

After this response, it was clarified whether the band was also present on other platforms. The interviewee responded saying that these were their main platforms but said that they are also on Discord and TikTok. The interview focused a bit on Discord and its peak in activity during the pandemic. It aided in community building and fostering besides being able to announce or promote their endeavors. The response was,

> Talking about Discord, it just happened during the pandemic. A lot of people joined. Around 15,000, I'm guessing. Then, in the first two weeks, the platform was very active to the point of having open mics 24/7 [pertaining to all day and all week]. And people just go there to listen or do open mic. [13]

There was a clarification asked as to what the purpose of creating the platform was, whether it was for the artist to connect with the audience or if it was a way for the audience to connect with one another. The respondent said it was both, however he did also say that the main intention was for the band to connect with the listeners.

The interview continued with how the Discord server came to be and was said to have been patterned from a previous server that was the community's initiative. The band then decided to create their own, where those who were part of the initial server migrated to the new server. There were mentions of other community-initiated activities happening within the server such as live-streaming art, or having online study groups, or gaming. However, the server was also said to have died down after the pandemic once on-site activities resumed. The respondent concluded by mentioning their return to using their initial main platforms.

4.2. Maintaining Online Engagement

Following building a presence online, this theme explores the active maintenance of social media profiles, its significance, and its toll on independent artists. The practice of

maintaining their social media profiles can be attributed to the marketing concept of lead engagement or "the process of keeping potential customers, or leads, interested and involved with a brand or product through various communication channels and tactics" (Hodak, 2023). The respondent acknowledged its significance to the relevancy of an artist. However, some showed uneasiness in talking about the topic.

Benny: acknowledged that social media is *the* strategy in reference to the pandemic when people were in an online space and had no other choice. He said,

> Social media is not just part of our strategy. It is the strategy. And everything we do now is to point people to our social media, to our online... Spotify profile. We are an online band. And the way we did that was... so I talked about prime time and scheduling content at peak hours. We did that more. And another thing we started doing was posting every day.

The discussion ended with the idea that social media, along with the pandemic, paved the way to "two very real avenues," said the interviewee. He mentioned this after talking about how it was when live shows started to come back. He stated,

> But that [Live face-to-face shows] did not take away the importance of social media. Pre-pandemic, we were focused on real life. And then in the pandemic, we were focused on our social media life. After, pandemic, we had these two, very real avenues. Two very real lives to think about. So, we added more work.

The respondent elaborated more on this and recognized that being online, though it adds pressure, was also a blessing to reach a wider audience. He said, "our music gets to reach, people we wouldn't have reached, offline". Along with that, he also mentioned his increased responsibility and said,

> There's also that, added work of translating what you do, offline, to the online sphere. It's one of the reasons I went full-time, in the band. Because I realized, I cannot live these two worlds, just doing this part-time, and doing this on weekends. I need the weekdays to edit. I do the video editing, it saves the band a lot more money, and, I trust my editing skills more… You really need to dedicate hours into translating and curating that presence online. So when I say that the online sphere has been another life, I really mean it. The amount of effort we put practicing, in the studio, so that we sound great live, writing songs, right? It's the same effort we put online. Editing videos, scheduling posts, all that.

He added to the purpose of actively maintaining their online presence and said,

> It's a way to keep our listeners, our audience thinking about us. So just to describe my role also as a social media manager, my job is to post content consistently so that our audience will always think about us.

During the discussion of this topic, the respondent expressed some discomfort, stating, "I'm never super comfortable talking about the business side of music this candidly, but it's research".

Lua: acknowledged the significance of actively maintaining online presence and said, "Yeah, in a way because there are bands who don't announce that they are on hiatus. But since they are not that active online anymore, you question, 'I wonder where they are?'." [14]

Added, as the interview progressed, the respondent revisited our earlier discussion on the importance of actively maintaining an online presence and stated,

> Our social media presence and, I guess, social media marketing strategy will heavily influence our earnings for shows.... We started posting again and pushing ourselves out there and also actively putting up for bookings. "Book us!" Just like that. We've been getting more and more shows. [15]

Owen: responded saying that there is a need from his observations not just for music artists but even visual artists. He said, "if you are more exposed, the faster you will be seen by the people. The quicker they'll remember that 'Ah, this artist exists. So, I have to listen to you'." [16] When asked about how it affects his line of work, the respondent stated,

> If you're part of an independent band or if you're you an independent artist, your workload during the weekdays is really directed to social media and how you will maintain that… You have to think about your content for your socmed [social media]. [17]

He gave an overview of different formats present in these platforms like reels and posts and said that each would be consumed by a certain type of audience. He ends saying,

> So, it's like you have to think about what kind of content you will have for reels, for posts, Facebook posts, Facebook reels, Instagram reels. And then you also have YouTube shorts. You have TikTok. There's a lot. Just thinking about… it is already exhausting. [18]

4.3. Content Creation and Production

Social media content is not limited to posts that are music-related since it is used by a wide variety of users. The third theme explored content production or *what* is present on social media by music artists. It looks into how it touches on multimedia content which may be directly related to music or if it is not related at all.

Content utilized by the interviewees could be in formats of text, image, video or a combination of them. Videos for example could be pre-recorded or a documentation of an event, or even live streams. Texts are not limited to just mere announcements but even

asynchronous chats. Along with these is the presence of community servers which allow community member interactions. The types these formats discussed throughout appeared as promotions for releases, live shows, and other events, gig schedules publicity materials, live stream hangouts, community chats, recorded full performances, behind-the-scenes teasers, performance recaps, and unreleased songs or projects. It could also look like community-initiated activities like online open mics, or community hosted live streams for art. Additionally, content may also be *reposted* or *reshared* material the artists presents on their social media which come from their audience.

The interviews also touched on the content subject where all interviewees made a mention of how social media content focuses on the musician as the product, instead of their music. Packaging and presenting on social media, to the respondents, meant the artist – captured in words like 'ourselves', 'you're the actual product', and 'package yourself'.

Benny: recounted the band's early days, where social media was used to announce a finished product, like a CD. As an example, this was said regarding their first EP, "We used social media to tell people that they can buy the CD from us personally. 'We will be in [a specified location] at this time'". In 2017, upon releasing their second EP, the respondent mentioned the change to put up their songs on Spotify and social media. He noted their changing content on social media in subsequent years, stating, "And then, 2018 to 2019, we recorded our first album. Fully incorporating social media in our strategy. Posting teasers about, 'oh, we're recording an album'". Besides that, they were also said to promote their performances. He mentioned, "We fully utilized social media for promotions of shows. 'The show will be here in this bar'".

The respondent expounded on the time of the pandemic. As this was a period of no "offline" or face-to-face interaction, he shared their thoughts on simulating *real life shows* onto social media. He then narrated their online performance for a school or university fair,

> …There were schools, universities who kind of adopted that online show set up. And so, I think [this university] Fair in 2020... or 2021, it was all online. So, they paid us a talent fee to produce a video that they could play online. So, that's how the set up was.

During this time, he also discussed what means they do in order to interact more with their listeners. He uttered,

> We interacted with our fans more. So, there was that music aspect of posting our gigs online. But also, a non-music aspect. There were times when we didn't play music. We just hung out with our fans online through Facebook live or even a Discord server. So, that was totally new.

In addition to this is the respondent's reference to Instagram Broadcast Channels. He remarked,

> More content creators and artists are making use of Instagram broadcast channels... When you're part of that broadcast channel, you feel like you're in a group chat with your favorite artist. I mean, you can't reply, but the format is like you're part of the GC [group chat].

This observation was voiced uneasily by the respondent which the researcher interprets as indicating that avenues and *content* relating to social interaction serve as a means of carrying out the business, albeit with underlying intentions not relating to business.

Throughout the interview, additional examples of content can be inferred. One is when he talked about documenting shows, he said,

> We kind of want to still portray who we are offline… For example, when we do shows, and we take videos… We will show the parts where the crowd is singing, or we will show the parts where there's meaningful audience interaction.

He also discussed his Patreon briefly, where he shares unreleased songs described as "a musical naked soul".

Finally, the respondent imparts that the product had now become their identity and brand which came from insights into their audience preferences of them. He stated,

> I mean, we're musicians, but we're not just musicians. Like our product isn't just the music. Our product is ourselves at this point. It's the brand that we produce. At least how we do it and how many artists are doing it now. You can see it in K-pop. You can see it in Taylor Swift. Their product isn't just the music.

Lua: in his responses, displayed the different kinds of content that their group would have in their social media platforms. One that he noted was a screenshot of a playlist. He said,

> I think our best post, in terms of numbers, was a screenshot I shared of a playlist that included our song. The playlist was titled "bagnet yung hiningi pero confession yung pinili", something like that. [19]

To the knowledge of the researcher, the title of the playlist was in reference to a well-received Filipino movie. Along with a "witty caption", this was described as a kind of "easy content" by the respondent which he mixes with other content that may require more editing or preparation before posting online. He explained that the reason was their relatability, and said,

People will find it relatable. But it doesn't really get as much streams that we want. It is like that sometimes if it is directed to a song released. It's just a small bump. It's more for social media mileage. [20]

The respondent added, linking his response on relatable content with his observations of social media content in K-pop. He stated,

They [the listeners or fans] want it [content] to be more relatable. It doesn't just stop on music. Like the strategy in K-pop, for example, right? They have reality content, vlogs, and all. And then even outside traditional social media… I forgot what they're called. Those where you're like chatting with your idol [K-pop idol] as an example. I think IG broadcast channels took that as inspiration. [21]

Continuing, content creation and music releases are seen to be in a cycle where one has an impact on the other and vice versa. In the recount of the interviewee, he mentioned that their process of music creation is affected by the thought of what and how their creation will be "pushed" on social media platforms. He said,

I'd lie if I said it [social media] has no bearing when it comes to music making. At the back of your head, it's like there's always this, "I wonder how? How will the reception of fans be?" At times, while we're just in the studio, you'll think, "okay, how will I push this on TikTok?" It's always a debate that the mindset shouldn't be this way when creating music, which I do agree on. It should be that it is for art at the end of the day. It's art that's most important. But as artists within the music business, it's hard not to think about that. It's hard to not let it affect the creative process because we handle everything, including marketing. I guess it is just healthy balance. Of course, you wouldn't want to put out music that you don't personally enjoy. [22]

The respondent finds this collision in his work quite taxing and stated,

Whenever we're at the studio, it's a bit sad. Because it's like recording needs to have content there should be BTS [behind-the-scenes] content. There's a need on how we will market it. [23]

Added to these behind-the-scenes videos are what the respondent mentioned as outtakes, videos which present their band during gigs or photoshoots.

Other forms of content were also discussed in the interview such as community chats. This was viewed by the interviewee as a means of getting to know the fans. For the same purpose of fostering their community, the respondent had considered streaming games as another form of content which he had ventured on during the pandemic. And when restrictions had already been lifted, it was reported that there would be posts calling their listeners for a hangout in person.

Congruent to the formats available on social media, like video and photo, the respondent highlights the significance of considering the visual aspects. He said, "It's not just about the music. There is this visual aspect to it. I need to think about online campaigns. What are our colors? Something like that" [24].

Finally, the discussion on the subject of content was brushed on as the respondent narrated his band's run with a major label at a point in their profession as a band. He mentioned there was a change of landscape linked with the content subject, the respondent stated, "It seems like artists nowadays do not just focus on music. It's more of the overall marketing of the self, and you're the actual product and not the music anymore" [25]. This change of landscape brought a misalignment between the band and the label, altering their marketing dynamics and overall relationship.

Owen: talked about different content formats shared announcements of projects like albums to performances. Other platforms allowed *replying* and *reposting* of texts mainly with thoughts, information, or anything relating to the band by users of the platform who may be listeners, and fellow artists as an example. While another platform was discussed that was similar but allowed *resharing* of videos and photos taken by their community to be posted on the band's own profile. Discord as a platform allowed community-initiated activities which foster the community itself. It was, however, inferred to be short lived and was mostly present during the period of the pandemic. There were mentions of short-form video content which is a feature available on different social media platforms currently. Community chats were also mentioned.

The respondent shared an observation on the growing significance of the visual aspect of what is shared on these platforms. He said, "I think there is just… an added effort into visuals because it seems like before it wasn't as required. But today, it seems like the visual aspect in anything needs to be thought out well before it is released" [26].

This focus on visual aspects was exemplified by the respondent in his discussion on promoting shows. In their experience, there is an importance today in creating publicity material which features a schedule of *gigs* to be performed. He stated,

> You have to have some kind of "gig-sked" pub mat so that people can see it today. It's just for the reason that everyone's doing pub mats for gig schedules. It's like you have so much competition for your post to be seen. If it's not visually striking, when people scroll, to me, they'll just move past it. [27]

In addition to the visual aspect, the respondent shared his opinion that videos have a huge importance at present. Other insights on how videos are edited or how one is presented on the various platforms for videos were also imparted. Talking about *reels*, which refer to short-form video content in general, the respondent's sentiment was, "It's probably better if there is not much effort given onto it than if everything is too edited. It's better if you record using your phone and that's it. That's what you post" [28]. The answer seemed like a paradox in that he expressed how the videos are intentionally made to look like they were unintentional. The respondent clarified that this does not bear any pressure on them, but the idea sits in their mind. There are also other platforms that have a bigger demand for videos which are given more effort and possibly more budget. The respondent mentions YouTube as that platform where professional work is consumed better than those that can appear amateur.

The interview also recounted some of the past practices as narrated by the respondent. He shared how earlier in their career, Soundcloud was one platform where they could post demos that gave their listeners something "raw" from the band. Added, it only featured audios, in contrast to today's demand for videos, as mentioned earlier. Announcements were as easy as just posting a status or text on Facebook, for example, which is contrary to what he had mentioned about having a "gig-sked pub" or a publication material that showed the gig schedule.

To close, the respondent had mentioned that social media content focuses on the artist as the subject. Although he believes that social media has no bearing on the musician side of an artist, business would be different – a separation of the music and the business. He stated, "It is like there's a need to package yourself to be presented to the people" [29].

4.4.   Personal Versus Professional

Social media platforms facilitate the dissemination of diverse content which is thought to blur the boundaries between artists' personal and professional lives. The fourth theme delves into the implications of social media on these boundaries, examining instances where they are crossed and how meaningful connections persist despite these challenges.

The interviewees' responses were not directly towards the notion of social media's effect in blurring of boundaries. It remains unclear whether this blurring is attributed to the profession instead. Overall, the responses indicate that the users wield control over social media and what content is presented or interaction is made, regardless of whether it is personal or professional.

Benny: discusses how he creates his own profile as a singer-songwriter, while concurrently a member of his band. He emphasized his autonomy over what content is presented on his profile. He said, "What I post on there is also very curated". Notably, he shared his posting of a more personal photo like that of him with a person of significance to him, which integrated music of his own band. mentioned that the underlying purpose of promotion was made clear to the other person involved in the photo. While this post serves promotional purposes, it also reflects the sincere appreciation of the person in the photo.

He clarified further in that social media includes genuine aspects of his reality, but packaged in a way for just the audience he reaches with these public profiles. He stated, "What people see on social media, it's part of my reality, but it's not everything. [To me] … the way we do things as a band is we emphasize online certain things about us...". He attributes the blurring of boundaries to the nature of the profession, not social media. He said,

> I think what's difficult with music and with being an artist is [that] so much of the product is dependent on your authenticity and who you really are. People think when they hear your song or when they see you on social media, they think they see the real you. And maybe that's true to an extent. But what they don't know is maybe the artist is just like an iceberg, just showing 10%. Or maybe even as much as 90% of who they are, but there is a 10% that you will never see.

Lua: concurred with the notion that social media blurs the line between personal and professional boundaries. He emphasized the importance of being aware not only in online interactions but also in his actions beyond social media, as they might still be documented. He said,

> Since social media is very much entwined with our personal lives, it's hard to separate the art from the artist, and work from your personal life… Basically, all that I do is geared towards me being an artist. Just by simply posting stories of where I am, I have to be mindful of what I could be perceived as with that. It's not that I am that famous to be pictured anywhere, but you have to be wary [30].

The respondent shared an incident where they received a message on one of their platforms from a person who had recognized them while being in public just purchasing a phone. Furthermore, he mentioned that occasionally, they would receive in their inbox a message like a diary entry which he found endearing rather than bothersome. The interviewee found this interaction very different in comparison to his own as a fan of someone else before. He concludes saying, "…the lines between the professional blurs more and more" [31].

Owen: responses do not explicitly address social media affecting the blurring of personal and professional boundaries. When it comes to connecting with the audience, as what social media provides, the respondent pointed to what they aim at as a group and said, "One of our goals is to really get to know the people who are listening to our music. And as Adj [one of the members] said last gig, we are also just people" [32]. He only recognized the role of social media to connect and converse with their listeners and that the user has control in their responses or use of these platforms.

4.5.   New Income Stream Opportunities

The evolving landscape of social media presents new opportunities for musicians to generate income. In this context, the final theme explores whether this feature is perceived by artists, particularly independent artists, as advantageous.

The responses within this theme do not all point to the proactive utilization of social media as a tool to create additional revenue streams beyond their core music offerings (such as recording sales and live performances). Instead, they recognize the various potential avenues which include sponsorships, ad revenue or social media streams beyond music streams, Facebook Stars, and membership platforms. Additionally, royalties from these platforms were also mentioned, however it points back to the concept of core music offerings.

Benny: acknowledged the income potential of social media but mentioned that they have not actively pursued it. He brought up how social media income can be materialized through sponsorships. Specifically, the respondent stated, "We haven't gotten to that point yet. I know social media as an income stream comes in the form of sponsorships from big companies...". Additionally, he recognized YouTube streams as another potential income source, but currently, their band focuses on utilizing the music streams there. On using YouTube beyond music streams, he said, "We're not vloggers. But we can see it as a potential income stream". Facebook Stars, which was described as a feature of Facebook to be able to send one stars that converts into money, was also recognized.

Patreon is another platform that allows for generating income streams. The respondent explained this platform where users could donate to have access or memberships for exclusive content, like unreleased songs, by the owner.

Lua: mentioned the use of Facebook Stars as a small venture he did which was set up in his previous venture into streaming. He clarified that though it is present, it does not generate any significant income. Social media was also shared to have royalty payouts, however, since most of their catalogue is under a label, earnings are limited for the band. The

respondent briefly mentioned ad revenue and vlogs which may not contain music content under this topic as well.

Lastly, the respondent discussed his experience on sponsorships and brand partnerships. It had allowed him to present himself as an individual member of his band. He elaborated sharing his experience being sent make up to promote. He expounded discussing how social media allows to "unpackage" a group into its different members with their own personal brands. He said,

> When you have your own personal brands from your own accounts, then brands might be more interested in contacting just one person than the whole band. It's because they'll sometimes think it's cheaper. Or at times, only one brand works with the campaign… And social media does help, because in a way we all subconsciously try to market ourselves. [33]

Owen: discussed social media, like Instagram and Tiktok, having royalty payouts; different from streams on Spotify for example because platforms like those utilize short-form videos that have limited lengths of music. He confirmed however that this avenue is not in their group's focus and just recognizes its presence to be there.

The advantages and disadvantages were further elaborated. The pro was in the ability to promote the music, while the con was focusing on just one song among many released by the band. The respondent highlighted how music featured on social media could go viral but expressed reluctance about the popularity of just one song. Despite being seen as a positive effect; it was acknowledged to be misaligned with the vision of the artist. He expressed,

> Well, it's good to have a song you're recognized with; however, we want people to listen to all of our songs, not just one song. I think that is our dilemma as an indie band, because we seem to value every song we make.

4.6.   Other Findings – Label

These remarks were found to not fit in with any of the themes that were set to be answered prior to data gathering; however, it is seen as relevant for the research. This section presents a commonality with regard to the respondents and their relationship with a label, saying that they are all signed, yet still they have mentioned that they are indie bands, or independent artists. To clarify, they state that they are signed to a label for distribution.

Benny: said, "we were independent for seven years, we're working with a label now for distribution".

Lua: stated that they were signed to a major label when they released their first album. The purpose of the label was in handling their promotion and management of live performances, as he stated not having time to do "prod work", or "behind-the-scenes". As he narrated this part of their band's timeline, there was a notion of them being categorized as independent artists still. It was not clearly stated, but it appeared that they were signed to an independent label that was under a major label. Through that contract, they were able to receive funding especially during the pandemic and were given other resources to have made something productive out of the restrictions at that time. The respondent stated that they had parted ways. He said,

> Eventually, we felt like we were not aligned anymore, and we wanted to own more… not necessarily own more of the work but return to our roots that's us. Because we did set up our own shows before… Today, we are just distributed by a label, but most of the things we do, we do ourselves. So, there's no more need for approval like asking for materials for this, or marketing campaign for this. Everything comes from us [35].

Owen: attributed their band as an indie band. He clarified that this term was not about a specific sound or genre of music, but in how it is "business-wise". He said, "We are not fully signed in a major label. The management is us. So, our deal with the label is distribution only.

5.   Discussion

The primary research question addressed in this study focuses on exploring the impact of social media on today's artists, specifically those within Metro Manila's indie music scene. The investigation examined various aspects of social media, including its functions, its role in the significance of relevancy, generation of content, and its implications on personal and professional boundaries. Additionally, the study explored the potential for additional revenue channels.

The findings reveal that social media has impacted the artists greatly, particularly in terms of direct communication and interaction with their audience which enables, to some extent, their independent operation. With reduced costs and increased accessibility, indie artists in Metro Manila have the chance to gain exposure and success on their own terms, bypassing traditional gatekeepers. However, this autonomy presents opportunities and challenges for career advancement, in evolving music industry roles, in the ability to package music, and in the capability to build and foster a following online. These will be elaborated more in the succeeding sections.

Furthermore, the exploration opens more opportunities for the discussion about the Philippines and its music industry in hopes to contribute to even more studies in this setting. By understanding the current role of technology, particularly of social media, in shaping the independent operation of music artists of Metro Manila, it puts a pin on the presence of the music industry in the country. Given the limited existing publishing on this topic, there is ample room for further investigation which may extend to the past, more of the present, and potential future developments.

It also must be noted that the study aimed to interview another respondent. The prospected respondent did agree to the interview, however, during the period of gathering data, the prospect was not available due to unforeseen schedules that have arisen.

5.1.   Advancing the Independent Artist

The musician is an essential player in the music industry, without whom, there is no music – although this assertion can be debatable in subsequent years as AI finds its place in the industry. Certainly, the audience is also crucial in this matter. Nonetheless, the results show how social media has become an essential tool in advancing the music artist profession by connecting the artist to the audience directly. Considering Metro Manila's characteristics –

a bustling, and densely populated area – social media becomes a "bulletin board", facilitating connection with the listeners.

One set of evidence which supports this conclusion of advancing the profession includes social media's effect on the artist in its role in solidifying a presence at onset, propelling career advancement, promotion of the artists' music and performances, fostering artist-audience relation, and shaping the brand identity or the direction of events. These were mentioned in various examples by the respondents like starting a Facebook Page to signal a start in the music industry, to noticing a fan account whose handle suggests artists to collaborate with or mirroring a community-initiated platform for the artist's use which pulls in interaction.

Second is in the way social media enhances relevancy. It accelerates exposure, as well as extends the reach to diverse consumer groups, like super fans, casual listeners, and other potential audiences. Moreover, it ensures continued existence of the artist on the digital landscape which translates offline as well.

And thirdly, social media enables the information on music to be presented alongside other mediums like photos and videos in the digital sphere. These multimedia formats can be creatively carried out in various ways which continue to evolve. They also present an abundance of possible focus on the content which pertains to the music, the activities, or even just the musician, in this case as a group or just as an individual. For the interviewees and who they represent, social media exists to facilitate in various aspects, all of which differ in main objective for each of the user.

Although the subject of personal and professional boundaries was brought up, to the interviewees in the study, this was not regarded as significant. The respondents acknowledged the blurring of personal and professional boundaries but may more likely be attributed to the nature of the profession. It cannot be concluded whether social media contributes to the gravity of the blurring. Nonetheless, the respondents recognize their autonomy over their own profiles and did not find any hindrance with regard to this theme. Similarly, when discussing utilizing social media as a means for other sources of revenue, the responses received were more on affirming the presence of social media's feature to generate income, but they do not actively leverage this to their advantage.

5.2. The Artist Is Not Just an Artist

The respondents support well the notion that Tschmuck presented on musicians' need for strengthening both their artistic and business skills (Tschmuck, 2016). When considering

the artist and their social media platforms, each respondent presented the need for good management skills like good decision making. Take for example the response on the movement from offline to online platforms as mentioned during the time of the pandemic by one of the respondents. It had been discussed that music moved away from record selling and towards more profitable ventures like live performance (Tessler, 2016). It became an advantage to be able to translate what would usually appear as a very "in-person" endeavor into something digital.

Handling social media also calls for skills in communication. It is evident during the interviews in the discussions about being able to connect with the audience. Choice of language plays a role in being able to communicate well, whether it is with the use of a system, like English, Tagalog, or Taglish for the case of the artists interviewed, or the manner of connecting, if it is in humor, or a cultural context or relatability for that matter. The artist must have skills in understanding their audience and grasp their nuances – such as the tone and the emotions – to effectively project on their posts online.

Another skill in handling social media is with regard to the visual aspects. A skill in visual branding and direction is needed and it is seen in the way the interviewed artists take control of what they do on these platforms. There is understanding of what formats and ways of editing works for a platform, whether it is something that appears raw or more stylized. These are considered while working towards an end goal which does not steer away from their own vision of their initial focus, their music.

Adapting social media in independent music operation involves wearing multiple hats, redefining the artist's role. In a way, the musician becomes their own bosses, producing their music, while managing various responsibilities to effectively utilize social media as a tool to promulgate the music and band. In such practice, the concept of disintermediation – essentially 'cutting out the middlemen' (Gellman, 1996; as cited by Tschmuck, 2017) – is evident and resonates with Gerd Leonhard's prediction of *Music 2.0* as cited by Tschmuck (Gerd, 2008; as cited by Tschmuck, 2017). According to Tschmuck, Gerd envisioned "a music industry without major record labels and other mediators, allowing artists to connect directly with their fans by operating a do-it-yourself (DIY) approach" (Tschmuck, 2017, pp. 184–185), and it does so. However, this is met with challenges as seen in the numerous roles that must be balanced. Tschmuck also cites Bernardo and Martins (2014; as cited by Tschmuck, 2017) who says that disintermediation is temporary and occurs only in the transitional period until new intermediaries emerge. By recognizing these gaps that are faced

by artists, balancing both their music artistry and their social media management, it may pave way to new solutions and perhaps even spark the next revolution.

5.3. The Label's Role

Not only did social media redefine the role of an artist, in this investigation, the label has altered as well. Tschmuck highlights that record labels were once the main gatekeepers prior to the digital revolution. These labels were known for handling distribution, and also held had an exclusive domain over public relations (PR) and marketing for artists (Tschmuck, 2016). However, in the findings, the artists emphasize their newfound autonomy in managing their own PR and marketing, leaving distribution to the labels they would be in an agreement with. One of the respondents recounted their previous run with a major label, which initially handled their promotions, among many other responsibilities. A misalignment in the vision of promotion, between artist and label, led to the artist and his group to take full responsibility of managing their own marketing to the artist and eventual parting of ways.

Presently, the artists still do consider themselves as 'indie', emphasizing their independent PR and marketing practices, and independent management. Their labels focus on handling the distribution of their music, independent from the resources that major labels would have access to. Social media contributed to this shift, but curiosity springs with what about social media has driven this transformation. One factor could probably be attributed to the less cost and ease of access associated with this method of marketing if we are talking about having resources to fund or to power. On the other hand, some personal insights would attribute the autonomy of artist on their PR and marketing as caused by the demand for user-generated content or in this case, artist-generated content. What social media is able to provide in terms of content will be discussed in the next section.

5.4. Packaging Beyond a Song

The respondents of the interview said when using social media, there is a needed effort to collaborate with a visual aspect to posts online. At times, it could be as simple as a screenshot of a playlist, or a *reposting* of a fan-art, or a thought-out poster that shows the schedule of shows. This exemplifies how social media allows for music to be packaged beyond just the song.

The digital revolution in the music industry ushered in new revenue models. De-bundling of music albums was introduced by Apple, who negotiated successfully with major rights holders to offer songs in a single-song download model as it Launched its iTunes service in 2003. The onset of peer-to-peer file sharing should also not be overlooked as it had

greatly impacted the industry as well, since it gave access to music for free. Wikström elaborates that music business models before focused more on ownership which viewed music industry more as a product-based business. This thought was challenged by considering music as a service instead. He then notes how this transformation led to 'access-based' business models, as exemplified with streaming platforms today. These platforms, through subscriptions, provided on-demand access to a large music catalogue. It combatted the piracy that was brought by the illegal file sharing (Wikström, 2020). The transformation moved away from physical sales and emphasizes more on licensing and as an example, Rogers and Preston stated how film, tv and adverting had been linked to music use, but rather than giving only promotional value, it is also directly towards revenue generation (Rogers & Preston, 2016). Holly Tessler also discusses this aspect of music with other media. She notes how music has a 'narrative power' that is essential to understanding this convergence of the recorded industry and the creative industry (Tessler, 2016).

With social media, songs can be placed in conjunction with other content which can be in formats of a video, image, and many more. As the audience sees a connection between them and the music they heard, this can be used to create some kind of output to be posted online. These posts could be in reference to a personal experience, a trend or a fad that describes a generation, and so on. It does pose some negative implications as mentioned by one of the artists whose vision, along with his band, is to not only have the attention and focus on just one song but that value can be on the songs that they make as a totality.

5.5. Artist as a Brand

After the respondents voiced different types of content, from screenshots of playlists, to live streaming, to reposts of fan's sharing their works. There is a link that can be traced from these responses to the mentions of how social media was more about 'ourselves', or how 'you're the actual product', and focusing on how to 'package yourself'. It is then thought that social media, as it evolves, changes the focus from being able to promote music to merely promoting the artist as a brand.

This finding could be linked to Holly Tessler's elaboration of a 'musician to a cultural brand', but rather than endorsements and sponsorships of companies, it is of users on these social media platforms. Tessler mentions that 'brands emerge as various "authors" tell stories that involve the brand' (Tessler, 2016, p. 46). In this thought, as behind-the-scenes footage, teasers, and the like are used by bands to present themselves, the artist as a brand somehow

intensifies. And while the audience is able to use their music because of its 'narrative power', it further solidifies the musician as a brand.

It is in how these independent artists make use of this characteristic that could make it something of substance to them. Social media aids in keeping their presence strong and keeps their audience engaged. It could be a means of revenue stream and grow the business if incorporated, however, it could also be beyond the vision of the artist as a musician.

5.6. Building and Fostering a Community

A common thread in the findings of this study that I want to highlight as the researcher is the capability of social media to build and foster a community. It is inferred that the ease in using social media for this purpose in this country setting stems from the culture of the Filipino people.

As stated previously, Metro Manila is described to exhibit a stark socio-economic contrast. Across the region are bustling commercial districts with offices and skyscrapers, affluent neighborhoods, juxtaposed dense slums, and heavy traffic. Economic disparity is clearly evident. In mentioning this, life would still be challenging for a significant amount of people, however the digital revolution in music provided access to lower costs of resources. Social media is one of those opportunities the revolution has provided. It gave access for artists to operate independently, especially for the purpose of communicating directly with their audience.

Returning to the initial statement of this section, social media for the respondents of the research provided the artists with a platform to build and foster a community online, and this is considered significant by the researcher. My personal take is that Philippine culture has a background of having a strong sense of community. We were since introduced to the Filipino concept of 'Bayanihan'—often associated with an illustration of a volunteers transporting a house to help a family by carrying it together. 'Bayanihan' is based on the root word 'bayani' which means community or town, and the added syllable changes it to mean 'being a town' or 'being a community'. Though not explicitly thought of when it comes to music and social media today, it is that piece of culture that makes working with social media this way a possibility. From being able to interact in person like gather in live shows, there is now an avenue to do so as well online.

Additionally, since social media use is becoming more and more of a common action with the people of Metro Manila, these kinds of interactions are not too foreign for the users or the audience and the artists to incorporate in their own way. This familiarity with the use

of platforms is thought as a reason to the utilization of social media in fostering a community. Social media becomes an online extension of culture in the 'real world'.

6.   Conclusion and Recommendation

This research aimed to explore the implications of social media on artists and open the floor to more discussions and studies on the Philippine popular music industry and landscape. The topic emerged due to the ongoing evolution of social media platforms and the shifting dynamics between artists and their audience. Additionally, a gap was identified in existing literature, particularly in research specific to the Philippines. Based on interviews with individuals who are members of independent bands from Metro Manila, it is concluded that social media has transformed the music industry in various aspects. The findings indicate that artists, who operate independently and leverage social media to directly engage with their audience would need to enhance their business skills, including management, communication, and even visual direction. Second, social media disrupts the traditional approach of labels leaving artists to have overall domain on their public relations and marketing. Yet, labels remain essential in the distribution of music. Following this is the packaging of music beyond a single song. Where music products once were promoted with albums, continuous digital revolution has now enabled songs to be packaged with other media like video, and image through social media. The findings also show how music products have moved away from the music and into the artist as a brand because of narrativity which social media as a tool is able to provide. Lastly, social media could be a means of community building and fostering, as well as a mirror of an existing culture as seen in the Philippines. The updates on platforms and constant change of features have allowed for more community interaction.

Reflecting on the research methods taken for this study, challenges started to appear at the stage of analysis. During the interview, although all respondents were presented with the same themes, the approach to answering was varied. The responses could answer the questions or the themes but linking them to another respondent's reply could be difficult. They felt broad or spread out. Improvements with the specificity of interview questions or the presentation of the themes could be worked on better. Moreover, as the study pertains to more social aspects like human interactions, it was challenging to view the responses more objectively. Even the respondents aired an uneasiness with the discussion of the topic of social media and music business. Although these were the cases, the research is still able to fulfill its goal of discussing implications of social media on artist to open further topics. It also gave a chance to expound on the music industry spotlighting on the Philippines, whereas

literature would probably focus more on a 'western' experience and perspective. This was an opportunity made to shed light on the presence of the Philippine Music Industry.

While the study touched upon several aspects, there remain unexplored topics that could have been enriching for this research. For instance, the study could have delved into how artists share fan-made art onto their own profiles which becomes content for them. Additionally, the real-time feature of social media and its link to 'amateur' creativity and narrativity intrigued me. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of social media, its non-stop change evident in new features, and its impact on the artists also came to mind. Considering some mentions of the role of 'language' in the context of Philippine social media and music, it might be interesting for further exploration. However, due to the limited evidence provided by the findings for this study, these were not touched upon. Added, interdisciplinary insights would have enhanced the discussion for a more comprehensive examination of such topics.

Beyond the study's capacity, other research on marketing and promotions of music on other media in the Philippines is suggested as a topic to be explored. Other media include television and broadcast channels, and radio, which promotes music. There is no literature found regarding those that could have been substantial to the topic to gain insights on the move towards social media use of independent artists or what social media could have brought to these. Additionally, it could also be suggested to conduct research on Philippine popular music and the pandemic since some of the analysis in this research would base on the respondents' experiences during that period. More and more subjects emerge with the gap in existent literature, especially with the continuous change in technology, particularly social media.

Discussing the relevance of the research, focusing on the Philippines enhances the global perspective on popular music business. The study contributes a unique perspective which not much written studies have focused on. Examining present independent artists in Metro Manila, the study provides a unique current perspective from various angles of location, music practice, time, and cultural perspective. Additionally, it contributes to a broader understanding of where music, technology, and culture intersect. With the digital revolution constantly reshaping the dynamics of the music industry, what may have been researched a few years ago may call for more updating. As experienced in discussions during conferences and academic studies, music tends to stagger when it comes to legal and regulation. Through this exploration, this research aims to add to new information in the field and expound on already existing ones that could be of aid.

To close this study, music would always be said to transcend borders, and social media plays a pivotal role in amplifying its impact, creating an interconnected global network. Given that, there is a large place of uncharted territory that can still be explored. For one, this study only gave a glimpse on the Philippine music industry. Second, the continuing transformation provided by technology means there come new points of information. For research, it is a challenge to be able to speak and write about it in order to better the music industry. For other stakeholders, it is being able to navigate these tools and knowledge to better their music experience. Overall, it should not be overlooked how these studies and actions could enrich a global music landscape, both coherent and diverse.

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Appendix A

Verbatim Excerpts of Interview Transcriptions

Creation of Online Presence as A Music Artist

Interview with Benny

[1]   Even as a hobby, active na kami sa social media. We treated it like a personal page, not really caring about the branding or the marketing, whatever. We were just posting, posting, posting. And then we realized that "oh, by posting online, we got more followers". Followers that we wouldn't have gotten just by performing on stage. So, I guess the more… we treated it as a job, the more professional, quote-unquote, we presented ourselves on social media… We really had to curate our captions, our pictures. And we're at this point in our career, we're doing it full-time. Comparing it to how we used social media back then…eight years ago…

[2]   …We started looking at our analytics. Asking the question, when are our followers most active on social media? And then, we would post then for maximum reach. So, that's 2019. And then, yun! Paangat na yung band namin during that time. Because of social media, we got to reach people outside Metro Manila. I think a prime example of that would be UP Los Baños.

[3]   … Through social media, we get more ideas on what products our listeners want from us…. It was a way for our audience to tell us themselves, this is what you want. These are the products we want to see. And so, from that, lumabas yung, 'yeah, we have shirts now!'

Interview with Lua

[4]   …With all the talks na minsan nag-iinvite kami ng speakers from outside to get to know more about the industry, so doon na-build yung foundation namin in terms of how to market your music, how to put your music out there, what to watch out for in terms of music distribution and all of those. And content strategies. Yung mga ganun. Sakto kasi yung course ko. I was a graduate of communications technology management.

[5]   …We're in a weird spot na parang caught in the old indie scene roster tapos dito sa new indie scene roster nagsisilabasan.

[6]   Parang casual fan account lang siya, tapos pangalan niya is [the X account]. Parang ginroup together niya yung three. And then, andaming nakarelate na "uy! gusto ko rin

yung mga bands na yan". Tapos parang naging mini community siya. Na funny kasi, kahit hindi na siya ganun ka active, yung community that they left behind is very active pa rin. Tapos lumalaki. Tapos iyun. Because of that trend na nakita lang namin online, parang nakita namin na may market pala if magsama-sama tayong to the other bands tatlo lagi.

[7]　… ang laking tulong ng social media to know kung sino yung line up ilalagay ko and kaninong artist kami dapat dumikit kasi nakikita ko na ito din yung pinapakinggan ng fans naming.

[8]　Ako nung pandemic, I ventured into streaming para lang to keep the community active.

[9]　… Especially if you're in a group or in a band na these days, hindi naman siya required pero it helps if yung individual members have their own… personal following. It's still a way to connect to your fans kahit hindi siya officially under the band.

[10]　Social media has so much tools for us to build communities. May [Facebook] Groups. May [Instagram] Broadcast Channels. Meron nga yung community chats. And then you get to know about your fans pag may ganung interactions within the group.

[11]　Kami, nagpapamonthly or bimonthly hangouts kami with our fanbase. So meron kaming Facebook group na nagpopost kami, "Okay, let's get together!" Ganyan. So nakakadalawa pa lang kami pero halos dumoble siya nung second time.

Interview with Owen

[12]　May iba't ibang klase ng audiences per social media platform. So, parang iba rin yung attack or yung approach to each social media platform. For example, since mas maraming kaming followers sa Facebook, parang mas mabilis mag-announce ng anything big on Facebook…Yung approach naman sa Twitter or X ay mas personal yung approach… And Instagram is a platform na parang maganda siyang pang-engage with people who likes taking videos, photos of you, ganun. So, less interaction in a sense na hindi kayo nag-communicate in a way na parang through words. Pero, I let them feel na they are heard or seen by reposting their stuff, ganun.

[13]　Yung Discord, nangyari lang siya nung pandemic. So, maraming sumali. Like mga 15,000 yata… Tapos, nung mga first two weeks, sobrang active nung Discord to the point parang 24/7 merong open mic… Merong kaming open mic channel. Tapos, people just go there to listen or to do open mic.

Maintaining Online Engagement

Interview with Lua

[14] Yeah, in a way, kasi may mga ganung bands na hindi naman nila sinasabing on hiatus sila pero yung hindi na masyadong active online ba, Nasaan na ba kaya si ganito?

[15] Social media presence and, I guess, social media marketing strategy namin will heavily influence yung kinikita namin sa shows... We started posting again and pushing ourselves out there and actively putting for bookings na rin. 'I-book niyo kami!' Ganyan ganyan'. We've been getting more and more shows.

Interview with Owen

[16] The more you are exposed, mas mabilis kang makikita ng tao. So, mas mabilis silang maalala na, ah, nage-exist ka pala. So, I have to listen to you.

[17] Kung part ka ng isang independent band or isa kang independent artist, I think, parang yung workload mo during the weekdays are really directed to social media and how you will maintain that…Kailangan mo mag-isip ng quote-unquote content for your socmed.

[18] So, parang you have to think kung ano yung magiging content mo for reels, for posts, Facebook posts, Facebook reels, Instagram reels. Tapos may YouTube shorts pa. Tapos may TikTok pa. So, ang dami. So, yung pag-iisip pa lang yung parang… sobrang exhausting.

Content Creation and Production

Interview with Lua

[19] I think our best post, in terms of numbers, was nag share lang ako ng screenshot ng playlist na kasama yung song namin. Parang Yung pangalan ng playlist was "bagnet yung hiningi pero confession yung pinili" yung parang ganun

[20] People will find it relatable. Pero, it doesn't really get us as much streams that we want. Minsan may ganun kapag may directing sa kanta. Maliit na bump lang. It's more on mas may social media mileage ka lang.

[21] Mas gusto nila mas relatable… hindi lang nagsstop sa music. Eh diba ganun yung strategy nila, ng kpop for example... May mga reality content, vlogs and all. And then even outside the traditional social media… forgot mga tawag doon. Yung parang kachat mo yung mga idol, for example. Na parang nabuhay. Ginamit ng IG broadcast channel yun.

[22] I'd lie if I said na wala siyang bearing when it comes to music making. At the back of your heads, parang nan doon lagi yung "shet paano kaya? Ano kaya magiging reception nung fans dito". Minsan pag na sa studio pa lang, minsan iisipin mo na "okay, Paano ko ito ipupush sa TikTok?" … It's always a debate na hindi dapat ganun yung mindset when creating music which I agree naman. Dapat kasi yung art at the end of the day. it's the art yung pinaka importante… Pero as artists within this music business, ang hirap niyang hindi isipin. And ang hirap to not let it affect the creative process kasi hawak na namin lahat, pati yung marketing… I guess healthy balance pa rin. Of course, you wouldn't want to like put out music na you don't personally enjoy.

[23] Whenever we, we're at the studio. Medyo sad, kasi like ayun nga. Okay recording kailangan may content, may BTS content. Kailangan kung paano natin to imarket

[24] Hindi lang music. Like may mga visual ano pa… Kailangan ko isipin yung online campaigns. Ano yung colors natin. Yung mga ganun.

[25] Kasi parang artists today, hindi na lang music yung focus. It's more of yung overall marketing ng sarili mo and you're the actual product, not the music anymore.

Interview with Owen

[26] I think, meron lang … added effort into visuals kasi parang dati, hindi naman siya gano'n ka-required. Pero ngayon, parang your visuals in anything should be parang sobrang pinag-iisipan mo bago mo sya i-release.

[27] You have to have a gig-sked pub mat para makita ngayong tao… just for the reason na parang everyone's doing pub mats for gig-skeds. So ang dami mong kalaban para makita yung post mo. Pag hindi siya visually striking, pagka-scroll nung tao, for me, parang dadaanan lang.

[28] …Mas maganda na hindi mo sya gano'n ka-ine-effortan kaysa parang sobrang edited ng everything. Parang mas maganda na kung ano lang yung na-record mo on your phone, parang yun na yun. Tapos ipopost mo lang.

[29] Parang kailangan mo i-package yung sarili mo para i-present sa tao.

Personal Versus Professional

Interview with Lua

[30] …dahil sobrang entwined na ng social media sa personal lives natin" "It's hard to separate the art from the artist and work from. yung personal life… Basically, lahat ng ginagawa ko Is viewed towards me being an artist. Simpleng pagpost ko lang ng stories kung na saan ako, I have to be mindful ano iyung iisipin nila if I post a

particular story… Hindi naman ako sikat para mapicturan kung saan saan. But you have to be wary.

[31] … pa blur nang pa blur yung lines between the professional.

Interview with Owen

[32] Isa sa mga goal namin is to really know the people who are listening to our music. Kasi, yun nga, parang nung last gig, parang sinabi ni Adj, parang we're also people.

New Income Stream Opportunities

Interview with Lua

[33] Kung may kanya kanya kayong personal brands from your own accounts and then brands might be more interested in contacting just one person than the whole band kasi minsan iisipin nila it's cheaper. Or minsan yung isang brand parang mas pasok doon sa campaign… And social media does help, kasi in a way lahat tayo kahit subconsciously we try to market ourselves.

Interview with Owen

[34] Well, it's good to have like a song na ma-recognize ka with; pero we want people to listen to all of our songs, not just one song. I think isang dilema namin as an indie band, kasi parang we as an artist value every song that we make.

Other Findings - Label

Interview with Lua

[35] Eventually, …we felt like hindi na kami aligned and then we wanted to own more of the… hindi naman own more of the work, pero like, mas bumalik kami sa roots namin na kKamiami. Kasi dati kami naman yung nagseset up nung shows… Ngayon, distributed na lang kami under a label, pero most of the things that we do, kami na. So, wala ng approval na, parang pahingi ako ng mga materials for this, pahingi ako ng marketing campaign for this. Sa amin na nanggagaling lahat

Interview with Owen

[36] "Hindi kami fully signed sa isang major label. And yung management ay kami. So, yung deal namin with the label is distribution only."