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**Practice Based Research on
Music Artist Brand Online Music Video Production**

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Abstract

As the whole Covid 19 pandemic hit the entire world, the creative industry faced numerous challenges such as constraints on activities and budget cuts. These obstacles challenged us to push our limits to produce more digital audio-visual content and leverage our artistic work into the online world. To survive the new norm after the pandemic, music artists must reinvent themselves to be hybrid and multitask. One no longer can only perform, but also it is essential to master the tools of technology and behind-the-scenes production work to survive in this industry. On the other hand, with the advancement of technology platforms, namely YouTube, music videos have always been essential for music artists to showcase their work in this digital era. Many industrial film practitioners have been conducting such industrial research in the film industry; however, not many industrial players from the music industry conduct such research. As a result, this left many gaps in the literature. Even though there were past studies, there is still a need for new updated insight with more detailed insider views as nowadays production practices have been innovated, and the cost of production has been reduced. Hence qualitative practice-based research will be conducted by dedicating the researcher's brand as an artist to produce three- different music videos with varied creativity and budgets.

Keywords: Digital audio visual, music artists, music industry, music video producer, technology, YouTube.

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1.0 Introduction

With the expansion of online platforms, the popularity of online music has grown tremendously (Yoon, Lee & Byun, 2009). Music is shared and listened to online (Hua, Lu & Zhang, 2004). In addition, music videos are being showcased for free or via monthly subscriptions; this has opened the chances to transform the music listening experiences into an audio-visual mode (Macrae, 2010). Hence, the music industry has shifted its focus on targeting online music videos as the demand has significantly increased (Foote, Cooper & Girgensohn, 2002). Currently, YouTube is the largest and most popular platform for digital video libraries (Prellwitz & Nelson, 2011). Moreover, music videos are the most-watched genre on YouTube (Brandon, 2017).

As YouTube has been one of the essential platforms for artists' music videos, it is vital to analyze and produce more high-quality and cost-efficient music videos. Hence, this doctoral research aims to develop the researcher's creative practice via conducting an exploratory investigation of the music and video production process, which affects the views on YouTube. Furthermore, some of the booming music videos on YouTube will be analyzed and used as references to create new music videos which fit the artist's direction.

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Besides, this thesis hopes to push the researcher's boundaries by experimenting and taking calculated risks for the researcher's career advancement in the industry.

The following research objectives are being proposed to achieve the objective of this study.

RO1: To evaluate the importance of audio and video technical skills for music video production.

RO2: To make it cost-affordable for artists to self-produce their music videos.

RO3: To analyze some practical music video distribution strategies for music videos to reach high visibility.

2.0 Literature Review

As the amount of MVs is explosively increasing, it has become an important task to develop new techniques for practical MV analysis, retrieval, production, and management. On the other hand, there is a need for research in these areas as the quality of music videos should be aligned to the audio to enhance its acoustical aesthetic and be created using modern editing software (Foote, Cooper & Girgensohn, 2002). It is also crucial to control the cost and budget for music video production (Peter, 2005).

2.1 DIY Popular Music

According to Ari Herstand (2016), the music industry has been through the most disruptive era due to the growth of new technologies. Popular music progressed from a huge instant fame industry to a democratic DIY business (Jones, 2021). DIY music, known as "*Do It Yourself*" music, is not a new phenomenon. It is simply an approach toward producing and distributing music that dates back over forty years. Historically, the DIY music approach is very distinctive compared to the mainstream. However, DIY today is mainstream. Social media acted as the catalyst to speed up the democratization of DIY music.

2.2 Music Videos

A music video (MV) is a short film that integrates a song with imagery and is produced for promotional or artistic purposes (Moller, 2011). Austerlitz (2007) also pointed out that music videos are "first, last, and always about commerce," as they are created to promote and support the song's sales. In modern times, music video (MV) has become an essential favourite pastime among people due to its conciseness, convenience, and ability to bring audio and visual experiences to audiences. Music videos are being made and used as a marketing tool to promote music recordings. It has also evolved as a tie-in marketing campaign for brands and products (Smith, 2004). On the other hand, the rich visual representations inside of a music video are also commonly used by artists to market hit songs (Foote, Cooper & Girgensohn, 2002). Moreover, it is also a bridge for music artists to connect their art to the world (Bleij & Cobussen, 2007). Alternatively, record labels release music videos on free-to-view media sharing sites (Rabiner & Juang, 1993). Hence the study of music video production in the current times of Covid-19 is crucial for the survival of the artist's career in this century.

2.3 Online Streaming Music Videos Platforms

With the expansion of online platforms, the popularity of online music has grown tremendously (Yoon, Lee & Byun, 2009). Music is shared and listened to online (Hua, Lu & Zhang, 2004). In addition, music videos are being showcased for free or via monthly subscriptions; this has opened the chances to transform the music listening experiences into an audio-visual mode (Macrae, 2010). Hence, the music industry has shifted its focus on targeting online music videos as the demand has significantly increased (Foote, Cooper & Girgensohn, 2002). Currently, YouTube is the largest and most popular platform for digital video libraries (Prellwitz & Nelson, 2011). Moreover, music videos are the most-watched genre on YouTube (Brandon, 2017).

3.0 Methodology

Having clear objectives would link towards more appropriate methodologies and methods that could conceptually and practically help to develop the whole structure and outcome of the research. It is therefore essential to utilize a methodology suitable for this thesis. Traditional quantitative research emphasizes the importance of objectivity and less about how knowledge is produced via research (Bryman, 2001). Hence, a qualitative approach was chosen for this study due to the methodology's suitability to test this study's hypothesis (Bryman, 2003). Moreover, Gray (2004) indicated that qualitative research is distinguished by a "highly-contextual" approach where data is gathered for some time and in natural, real-life surroundings.

3.1 Practice-Based Research

Practice-based research has given rise to new concepts and methods for generating actual knowledge (Candy, 2006). The research base of this type of research is similar to other research as a critical element deriving the understanding as a result of the research process (Niedderer & Stokes 2007). The research development may be demonstrated via the creative outcomes, which include creative artefacts such as images, music, videos, digital media, or other works such as performances and exhibitions (UCGE, 2001). Hence one can quickly identify research methods in any progression towards a performance, idea, or concept (Hockey, 2003). These stages would define the research hypothesis, literature review, and choice of methodology (Bleij & Cobussen, 2007).

4.0 Findings

4.1 Cost-Effective

The research showed that as the cost was reduced, the artist or producer needed to spend more time or skills in producing music videos. In other words, nowadays, artists must not just know how to perform but also must have technical skills to keep the cost more effective. Also, music artists do not need a huge team to produce high-quality music videos to gain viewership online.

4.2 The Need for Creativity & Concept

The concept and creativity of the music video also affect the viewership and response online. More elements being implemented inside the music video concept brought more excitement to fans online. The idea of music video must be creative to produce exciting content in the online channel. The audience nowadays craves new content instead of normal music videos.

4.3 The Need for Marketing & Distribution Strategy

This research has shown that merely uploading the music video onto YouTube is insufficient. Artists need to work with distribution streaming channels to get more viewership online. Moreover, a marketing strategy to promote the music video on social media is also a crucial success factor of a music video. Hence this showed that more strategies and elements are surrounding the production sphere.

5.0 Discussion & Conclusion

Studies showed that creativity and marketing strategy enhanced music videos' success rate. It also showed that with reduced cost, artists can still produce good views of music videos online. These findings led to the importance of research surrounding online music video production. However, the music industry has been hit by various obstacles. Since the piracy crisis issues in 2008, many companies have been reducing the number of production and cutting down on the investment finance. All of these had pushed artists to review their survival strategies in the industry (Campos, 2011). Some music executives even forced artists to sign a "360 Degree" contract that monetized not just artist recordings but also tours, merchandise, and endorsement deals (Witt, 2015). These led to a significant impact on recording artists and hence pushed all to reinvent themselves in the new era.

On the other hand, the recent Covid 19 in 2020 had hit the world and music industry tremendously (Favia & Hall, 2020). Covid 19 had pushed the industrial limits by integrating their production practices. Many filmmakers have contributed to transforming their creative practice into academic research to provide new ways of practice for the industry (Geuens 2007; Schön 1983). However, fewer practitioners in the music industry conducted these insiders' research. Also, the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the whole industrial typical approach. Hence, there is a need to explore and research new practice forms and cost-saving results.

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