

THE IMPACT OF MUSIC STREAMING PLATFORMS AND DIGITALLY CURATED
CONTENT ON MUSICIANS' CAREER DEVELOPMENT

BY

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CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

The varying concerns streaming platforms have created for artists over the past two decades guided the topic choice for the current study. Streaming platforms have impacted the way consumers and musicians' access, share and interact with music (Salo, Lankinen, & Mäntymäki, 2013). The music industry has shifted from a materialized to a dematerialized system since the digitalization of music began with the compact disc (Eiriz & Leite, 2017; Swanson, 2013). As a result, an increasing number of musicians are now responsible for producing and managing their careers (Eiriz & Leite, 2017). In general, artists have both favourable and unfavourable attitudes towards streaming, depending on several factors or whether they are fully independent or an established musician (Aly-Tovar, Bacache-Beauvallet, Bourreau & Moreau, 2019; Marshall, 2015). The way artists can connect with their listeners and recruit new ones has drastically changed with the opportunities the internet has provided, e.g., utilizing different social media platforms and engaging with online communities (Salo et al., 2013). How the success of an artist is measured has also changed both subjectively and objectively since the digitalization of music (Fisher, Pearson, Goolsby & Onken, 2010). Overall, there are many components of the music industry that a musician has to be aware of while creating music and developing their career.

The majority of research on streaming platforms has been conducted in the consumer, record label and services sectors; however, little has explored the business models used by early career musicians in a dematerialized market (Eiriz & Leite, 2017). To address this gap in the research, the current study investigated how early career musicians measure their success in the

age of streaming to uncover the challenges musicians face when establishing, expanding and maintaining their music career.

Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the proposed research was to discover the impact of streaming platforms and digitally curated content on early career and independent musicians' career development.

The objectives of this study are as follows; (1) *to determine the knowledge of early career musicians on streaming platforms*, (2) *to examine the attitudes of early musicians towards music streaming*, (3) *the level of engagement early career musicians have with social media content and streaming platforms*, and (4) *to examine how early career musicians measure their career success*.

The Importance of the Topic

Musicians have had to consistently adapt to the struggles of the changing music industry over the past century (Swanson, 2013). The digitalization and the introduction of the internet have allowed for many new features for an artist to develop their career, e.g., streaming platforms for easily sharing and listening to music (Salo et al., 2013). However, features can have both positive and negative impacts on the career of an artist; however, overall, artists earn little from streaming services and rely mainly on music touring and purchases of their physical product (Swanson, 2013; Cush, 2020). During COVID-19, the current global pandemic, streaming and merchandise transactions become the primary source of income for many artists. This income is often earning musicians a fraction of a livable wage (Cush, 2020). Therefore, the current research is vital for other artists looking to pursue or maintain their careers outside of touring while maintaining an online presence.

Thesis Structure

The review of the literature research explores the four objectives further in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents the conceptual framework used in the current study to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and engagement on the career success of early career musicians. Chapter 4 is the methodology and explains the development of the questionnaire and interview questions and the sample and procedures of the current study. Chapter 5 presents the results and discussion of the study. Finally, Chapter 6 summarizes the research, states the general conclusions and limitations, and expands on future implications.

Defined Terms in the Current Study

Early Career Musicians - Musicians who are entirely independent with managing their music career or who undergo partial independence by signing with a record label only managing specific tasks for the musician (e.g., merchandise management, tour booking, etc.).

Digitally Curated Content - Referring to any content created for the artist by or managed by the artist on platforms such as social media websites, the website of the artist, all platforms of retail for music and merchandise, and streaming service platforms. A musician will use this content to help market their music.

Musicians, Artists - This term will be used interchangeably with one another throughout the report.

Streaming - This term refers to various platforms used to display musicians' music for consumer playing purposes and as a means to generate income. Examples include, but are not limited to: Apple Music, Spotify, Pandora Internet Radio, YouTube Music, Tidal, Amazon Music, Deezer, Qobuz, iHeartRadio, and Google Play Music (Wright, 2021).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter covers various topics that connect to the knowledge of music streaming platforms: the history of streaming, digitalization of music, economic and algorithmic structures, data organization and, content versus product while also exploring the attitudes artists have towards music streaming platforms, their engagement in various digitally curated content, and how their success is measured.

Knowledge of Streaming Platforms and Social Media

Part I includes a general overview of how streaming evolved into what it is today. Part I includes: the history of streaming platforms, the music digitalization era, the transformation to a dematerialized music industry, and streaming platforms' economic structure. Part II includes: streaming platform algorithms, affordances, playlists, the ways streaming platforms categorize data and how it influences the decision-making process and, comparing the idea of music as "content" versus a "product".

I. A General Overview

History of Streaming Platforms

Music streaming services have existed since the late 2000s and have since risen in consumer popularity. There are many platforms that consumers utilize (Swanson, 2013). These platforms include Apple Music, Spotify, Pandora Internet Radio, YouTube Music, Tidal, Soundcloud, Bandcamp, and more (Eiriz & Leite, 2017). Streaming became easier to carry out following the digitalization of music and the introduction of the internet in the 90s (Swanson, 2013). There are currently several streaming platforms that dominate the industry and cater to consumer preferences. Music streaming platforms have also benefited the industry in various

ways in terms of accessibility for the consumer and artist entry. However, streaming platforms have also inherited an economic platform that existed before the digitalization of music. This economic platform has, at times, impacted artists negatively (Wlömert & Papies, 2016).

Examples of these negative impacts are the cannibalization effect on other channels in the music industry, the two-faced nature of streaming, and cold-start problems (Wlömert & Papies, 2016; Nickell, 2020; Maasø & Hagen, 2020).

Digitalization

Digitalization of music began with the creation of the Compact Disc (CD) in the late 1980s. Music was then able to be transferred digitally, and later a program called “Napster” made this music available for consumers to illegally download. Even though Napster eventually shut down due to copyright infringement, consumers continued to download music via other pirating practices. However, following the shutdown of Napster, Apple released the iPod in 2001, where music could legally be purchased through iTunes (Swanson, 2013).

Streaming in the late 2000s became favourable due to selection options, and the unlimited amount of music users’ could have in their library with potentially unlimited amounts of storage space (Swanson, 2013). For the consumer, streaming platforms have not always been convenient or accessible. It has taken platforms, such as Spotify, several years to develop better methods for drawing in consumers and establishing a long-term relationship consistently tailored towards the interest of the consumer (Swanson, 2013).

Streaming Platforms in a Dematerialized Industry

With new streaming platforms emerging and current ones have improved over time, many benefits and concerns have risen. Record labels struggled the most after the digitalization of music (Eiriz & Leite, 2017). Until digitalization, the music industry operated on a materialized

level, i.e., the industry earned revenue from records and physical sales. Whereas streaming platforms operate on a dematerialized level, revenue is generated from streams and ads. As more listeners switch from consuming music in a materialized form to a dematerialized form, record labels have had to adapt; however, they have suffered through the process of transition (Eiriz & Leite, 2017).

As for musicians, digitalization has had both a positive and negative impact on their careers. With an emphasis on streaming services, digitalization provides the musician with control over their music and how they can generate income (Eiriz & Leite, 2017). For example, if an artist/band are fully independent, they would have higher autonomy over the different components of their career; this includes, although it is not limited to: music creation, licensing, promotion, artistic creations (posters, album artwork, marketing posts, branding, and more), publishing music and, their agency (Eiriz & Leite, 2017).

This increase in autonomy shifts an artist who solely creates (traditional record label approach) to an entrepreneurial artist. This artist must balance many aspects of their artistry, as their effort within each can directly determine their economic successes and pitfalls (Eiriz & Leite, 2017). A concern for the entrepreneurial artist in the age of streaming is how these platforms prioritize the consumer, specifically consumer adoption, before the needs of the musician (Swanson, 2013).

The concern of the transition from a materialized to a dematerialized industry, in terms of streaming platforms, is that each music industry counterpart was affected differently (Wlömert & Papies, 2016). As mentioned, record labels suffered the most since most of their revenues came from artists' materialized products (Eiriz & Leite, 2017). The artist initially made money from MP3 purchases and CD purchases when first digitalized; however, once users started to switch to

streaming platforms, song plays/streams generated a significantly smaller amount of income than an MP3 download. A Spotify stream earns a musician about \$0.004US, which would take approximately 250 streams to earn \$1.00US. An MP3 purchase would earn a musician \$1.20-\$1.40 per \$10 album purchase (Swanson, 2013). This significant revenue gap between a stream and an MP3 purchase is linked to the history of music accessibility and the cannibalization effect of streaming services (Swanson, 2013; Wlömert & Papies, 2016). The cannibalization effect of streaming services is; with the increase of streaming platforms, other channels within the music industry are used less; hence a cannibalization of channels existing in the same industry occurs (Wlömert & Papies, 2016).

Economic Structure of Streaming Platforms

Consumers have found ways to avoid paying for music in the past decades, for example, using Napster to download free songs illegally (Swanson, 2013). Music does not need to be download illegally since streaming platforms can be used for free. Listening to music for free on streaming platforms does require the user to listen to occasional ads, or for a monthly fee listed by the platform, the user has access to an unlimited amount of music. In this regard, it is more cost and time effective for a consumer to utilize a streaming service rather than illegally download music. However, streaming is still not monetized at a level where artists can earn a living wage solely from streaming alone. Streaming platforms face the risk of users switching services if they raise their subscription prices, and they also have to pay out to record labels, rightsholders, maintain master agreements, and deal with rising fixed costs (Cross, 2020). Overall, streaming platforms are difficult to be profitable and have little room to shift pricing to users (Cross, 2020).

With these aspects embedded into streaming platforms' economic structure, it is challenging to see where or when artists may start to earn a living wage from streaming platforms. Wlömert and Papies (2016) explored the effects streaming platforms have on the music industry counterparts; music labels, artists, retailers, and managers in adjacent industries. For artists, the research found that as streaming platforms' usage increases, artists will eventually earn less from materialized streams of income; this is one of the cannibalization effects of streaming platforms (Wlömert & Papies, 2016). To combat this decrease in revenue, artists should be negotiating contracts that align with their current streaming data trends. For example, if artists were to establish a “blanket licence”. This is where an artist offers their entire music discography to a streaming service under the condition that they will receive proper revenue compensation, specifically outlined in a contractual relationship (Wlömert & Papies, 2016).

The economic structure of streaming services is complex and embedded into their structural foundations. Therefore, how an artist makes a living wage income in the age of streaming services is complex, and they will likely have to become an artist-entrepreneur (Eiriz & Leite, 2017). Being an artist-entrepreneur means curating content creatively with the information and platforms they have to work with, i.e., social media platforms and data from platform metrics.

II. Technical Aspects of Streaming Platforms

Affordances and Algorithms

Data is collected through various algorithmic structures. Algorithms can collect vast amounts of data and are beneficial to both the user, the music streaming service, and potential brands looking to advertise, to name a few (Maasø & Hagen, 2020; Prey, 2018).

Algorithms associated with music streaming platforms do have some defining features. They perform “datafication” and are designed to determine and organize algorithmic affordances (Maasø & Hagen, 2020). “Datafication” with regards to streaming is the process of collecting streams and usage data that can be transferred into informational data, that will help pay the rightsholders and determine where songs can be placed, e.g., if the streams or usage dramatically increases for a jazz song, it may be placed on a jazz playlist curated by the streaming platform. The specific types of data each platform collects can vary; this will be discussed further in the following paragraph. Maasø and Hagen (2020) explain algorithmic affordances as a means to “encompass the ways in which music is made available to users in music streaming services, the ways in which algorithms influence this process, and the ways in which the algorithm trigger new patterns of music consumption and data-based decisions and action, such as whether to invest part of a marketing budget on a given artist” (p. 21). This definition implies that affordances come from within the data and provides knowledge about user consumption.

Two streaming services that use algorithms to their advantage are Spotify and Pandora Internet radio. In 2014, Spotify bought ‘The Echo Nest’, an algorithmic software that will categorize each song into specific “events and features” and a single song can have a thousand of these “events and features” (Prey, 2018). Specifically, ‘The Echo Nest’ collects consumption data of their users, along with a “semantic analysis of online conversation”. This information helps Spotify organize what songs should go into a generalized mood, event and genre playlists, what ads to tailor towards a specific user, and how to predict music for the user in playlists such as ‘Discover Weekly’ (Prey, 2018). Overall, Spotify uses data in a socialized order. It considers what the peers of a user and the greater public are listening to while silently suggesting songs similar to users’ music library (Prey, 2018). Pandora Internet Radio is known for its database of

the ‘Music Genome Project’. Pandora associates each song with traits, also known as ‘genes’ within the database. These traits are defined by many different components of the song, and therefore, some genres have a significantly higher number of traits than other genres. As a user, they can discover new music through these ‘genes’. Rather than a cultural approach to recommending songs to users like Spotify utilizes, Pandora, recommends based on musical information, i.e. the ‘genes’ (Prey, 2018).

Curation and Formation of Playlists

Negus (2019) explains how playlists have been a vital factor in music consumption for decades. Playlists have been consistently engraved into music listening culture (e.g., albums, mixed tapes, and radio playlists). Playlists are a way to describe varying activities while also serving practicality to the listener, and some artists have even switched to calling their album a ‘playlist’ (Negus, 2019). The curation of playlists and how they are organized is essential for the function and delivery of music on streaming platforms.

Hagen (2015) conducted a study with six “heavy streaming service users”, observing their playlist curating habits to identify further the types of playlists created daily. Overall, the types of playlists identified by the participants were “static structures, dynamic structures, temporary playlists, random plays, standard categories, individual categories, context-sensitive playlists” and lastly, “the self and others (playlist contexts)” (Hagen, 2015 p. 631-639). Creating and determining these types of playlists depends on many factors. For a static structure, the playlist might be made to be forgotten or stay the same. A dynamic structure playlist refers to an overall increase in songs throughout some time. A temporary playlist is made to be later deleted or designed for specific events. Random plays refer to playlists made by the platform that provides the user with random new songs or comes from the user ‘shuffling’ through their music

library. Standardized categories are playlists that are organized by artists, genres, producers, and more. Individual categories are unique and personal to the user creating the playlist. Context-sensitive playlists are playlists that can change given the “immediate present feeling” of the user. The self and others (playlist contexts) refer to the individual personal feelings that can influence playlist formation (Hagen, 2015).

Both Hagen (2015) and Siles, Segura-Castillo, Sancho, Solís-Quesada (2019) note the importance that fluidity has on playlist formation. Hagen (2015) explains that playlist formation relies on fluidity, control, and curation. The platform must work to ensure that fluidity, control and curation exist for the user, and in turn, benefits the platform to help with their playlist formation. Siles et al. (2019) took this a step further by discussing playlists as genres, noting the natural ‘fluidity’ that exists between each other. This fluidity comes from the substances of a playlist; the features that connect the songs in the playlist to one another, socio-technical assemblages; the atmosphere playlists create for the listener, and sociometric practices; focusing on the mood and emotional aspects of playlists that will later entice more users to listen. These three factors indirectly help the platform by showing trends, preferences, and users’ playlist practices.

To conclude, playlists are vital to the experience of the user; they work alongside the algorithms of streaming platforms and provide a great deal of information about what the audience of an artist is ongoingly engaging in. Therefore, artists may want to look towards the users who are consuming their content and then cater their playlists and social media content to the preferences of their fans.

Decision Making and Datafication of Streaming Platforms

“Datafication” refers to the use of data monitoring and analysis practices of data associated with music streaming services. Sometimes, the kind of data associated with this process will help other strategic planning decisions of different counterparts within the music industry, for example, marketing and branded content of the artist (Maasø & Hagen, 2020). Other researchers have described this term as part of “data surveillance”, “life-mining” (Dijck, 2014) or a broad way to collect and observe the daily online patterns and actions of users (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013).

There are numerous ways to categorize data, and it can vary depending on the software a company uses and their intentions for the data collected. However, Negus (2019) classifies data associated with music streaming services into three main categories; (1) “the characteristics of listeners”, e.g., amount of listens of a song or artist, what time of day the user is listening to music, (2) “semantic analysis of online conversations about music”, e.g., description of an artist or song from multiple media realms, and (3) “the analysis of the sonic content of digital music” e.g., the musical contents of the song such as pitch, tempo, instrumentation. These kinds of data can significantly influence strategic decision-making choices with various music industry counterparts and provide a measure of predictability for future streaming patterns, and in turn, can also influence the former (Negus, 2019).

Decision making informed by data collection (datafication) in music streaming services refers to the “strategic and regional planning, communication, cooperation, and the execution of music launches, marketing, publishing, audience targeting, and approaches to new and emerging artists” (Maasø & Hagen, 2020, p. 23). Keeping this in mind, the timeliness of data collection is vital for informing decision-making practices (Maasø & Hagen, 2020). For example, an artist

who wants their song played on the New Music Friday playlist, a playlist that updates weekly to inform users of the new music released for that week, would have to be new and show recent spikes in the song streaming data. Timeliness is also crucial for identifying trends in the data in the present moment, and thus, can motivate various music industry stakeholders to act on decisions immediately (Maasø & Hagen, 2020).

If there is not enough streaming data available to reflect the importance of an artist to be promoted through popular and users' algorithmically generated playlists, that artist is faced with a "cold-start problem", i.e., they cannot be placed on playlists that have the potential to reach a larger audience and an increase in streams (Maasø & Hagen, 2020). Another factor why algorithms become increasingly more important for artists to pay attention to. The difference between one artist paying attention to algorithms and algorithmic changes can be the difference between gaining enormous success or no success at all.

Additionally, artists are forced to work with new practices and platforms that still exist in an industry utilizing an old model with small artist revenue (Haynes & Marshall, 2018; Swanson, 2013). Nickell (2020) describes this as the "two-faced nature of streaming". Streaming platforms are explained as "two-faced" due to how they operate in a hierarchical system. This system benefits the artists at the top and creates struggles for those at the bottom of the hierarchy, i.e., artists who are new to the music industry. This is "paradoxical" in a way; streaming platforms provide unlimited accessibility in terms of releasing and distributing music independently. However, platforms ultimately have control over what music gets recommended and shared to users while also making sure to benefit the artists that exist at the top of the hierarchy, i.e., the artists who have a high flow of streams (Nickell, 2020). The platforms that exist within this mode are Spotify and Soundcloud (Nickell, 2020). This hierarchical structure operates with the

help of algorithmic systems, data collection, and datafication, and hence, maintaining the “two-faced nature of streaming”.

Music as “Content” vs. “Product”

Music has transformed in many ways over the past decades. On a large scale, music has transformed from “product” distribution to “content”. Music was once distributed and sold physically as a product, and currently, music exists as accessible online “content” through various streaming services. This transition can easily be explained alongside the impact digitalization has had on the industry (Negus, 2019). With music transitioning to “content”, an artist must become an entrepreneur to manage the many platforms their content exists through, especially if they are an independent artist (Eiriz & Leite, 2017). Content then has a different meaning towards compensation and payment. It is measured and accumulated differently than an individual product listing (Negus, 2019). Branded content also becomes normalized; content intertwines with advertisement companies and is specifically labelled as ‘branded’ content on music streaming platforms (Prey, 2018). For example, playlists may be branded to a specific event or holiday, and the music content helps create and brand the playlist. This point relates to playlist formation, as discussed earlier in *Curation and Formation of Playlists*.

The transition from “product” to “content” also affects the user in terms of individuation. Streaming platforms feed the user content that is tailored towards their interests; the user controls where they take these suggestions from there even though the platform is continuing to shape and change the taste of the user by the continued suggestion of content. Prey (2018) describes the user finding their control within this process as individuation.

Artists' Attitudes Towards Streaming Platforms

Varying Attitudes

As explained in the last two sections, artists have differing reasons for their attitudes towards streaming platforms. To be completely unfavourable would represent one end of a scale, and to be fully favourable, would represent the other end of a scale. Therefore, streaming may be more beneficial for an artist at different points or for specific uses within their career; they may have once been associated with one attitude than the other and has since changed, or they may change their attitudes depending on the nature of their listeners (Aly-Tovar et al., 2019)

Favourable Attitudes

Independent artists not on a record label and are new to the music industry have varying attitudes towards streaming platforms. However, there is one reason why new artists show favourability towards them: streaming platforms provide the opportunity for sharing content to the public, both fast and accessible (Aly-Tovar et al., 2019). Artists whose majority of their income comes from touring and live performances also favour music streaming platforms. Streaming platforms have a supplementary nature to the touring industry by advertising the tour to users (Aly-Tovar et al., 2019). Furthermore, artists who have signed to a big label can also show favourability towards music streaming platforms. This favourability is from the protection of income earnings that comes with an artist being signed to a big label (Marshall, 2015).

Unfavourable Attitudes

High-paid artists, signed or not signed to a big label, generally have an unfavourable attitude towards music streaming platforms. With streaming services' current low-paying returns, high-paid artists would prefer to have a long-term establishment with music streaming platforms, and this would allow them to receive a fair compensation and platform growth over an extended

time (Aly-Tovar et al., 2019). Despite this statement, Spotify mainly supports major labels (Marshall, 2015). Independent artists are unfavourable to streaming services because of the low paid royalty rates, and an artist who just joined the music industry would require other means of supplementing their income if they were solely relying on streaming services as a means of income (Marshall, 2015).

Artist Social Media & Streaming Platform Engagement

Importance and Benefits of Social Media for Artists

Social media platforms are appealing to musicians because they allow a musician to help grow their career. This appeal aligns with how music and content are currently distributed versus how it was distributed before music digitalization, i.e., only being able to share music with the services of a record label (Eiriz & Leite, 2017). Now, an artist can share their music and gain a following, maintain the following, and sell their music, concert tickets and merchandise all through the use of the internet (Haynes & Marshall, 2018). Those three actions cover what typically would have been in control by a record label, making it easier for independent musicians to exist and grow their careers (Haynes & Marshall, 2018).

Haynes and Marshall (2018) asked musicians about the importance of social media and making connections with their audience. Musicians replied with answers reflecting that social media is thought to be the “key to survival” in the music industry. It also is a direct way to interact and form connections with their fanbase and people within the industry, along with being able to receive direct positive feedback from the users (Hayne & Marshall, 2018). Salo et al. (2013) presented a generalized list of the managerial benefits of using social media platforms: targeting a segmented group of consumers, having the ability to communicate with different virtual communities, providing the tools to interact with users, helping to facilitate word of

mouth practices, helping to de-evaluate marketing strategies, and being able to measure specific metrics of online actions.

Engagement Communities

There are many types of online communities, as originally explored by Armstrong and Hagel (1995), Salo et al. (2013) took this research further by exploring four specific “virtual communities” and the platforms that exist within them. These virtual communities are: social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), content communities (e.g., Spotify, YouTube, blogs), brand communities (e.g., artist to consumer connection) and other virtual communities (e.g., artist websites). With these communities and the platforms within them, there are multiple ways to reach a consumer, with streaming platforms being only a single way to do so. Consumers have varying intentions for different social media platforms, which therefore, reinforces the need for artists to understand and interact within the three types of virtual communities (Salo et al., 2013).

Consumer Intent in the Use of Social Media Platforms

Consumers have different intentions for utilizing social media platforms when connecting to an artist and their music. Salo et al. (2013) list the consumer intentions to interact with social media platforms based on the fulfillment of “social identity, sense of affinity, participation, interaction, and access to content”. For example, a “social identity” intention can be moderately fulfilled by engagement through musician fan pages and “access to content” can be highly fulfilled by engaging with music on streaming services. The attitude of the consumer on celebrities and their personal attachment style may be a successful predictor for a consumer utilizing different platforms to interact with a musician (Krause, North, & Heritage, 2018). Some artists may find that their user base has a specific attachment style depending on the platform that is used. For example, when a user utilizes a platform such as Facebook, they may be associated

with high attachment anxiety (Krause et al., 2018). This kind of information may be beneficial to the artist when trying to understand their fan base. Krause et al. (2018) also identified that another reason for a consumer to interact with musicians via social media platforms might be due to the intention to engage in a parasocial relationship. This is a relationship between the consumer and a musician; however, it is one-sided from the side of the consumer; the consumer believes that they have a personal relationship with the artist on some level (Krause et al., 2018).

Level of Artists' Career Success

I. Hindering Success

Social Media and Streaming Platform Drawbacks

While utilizing social media platforms can provide many valuable tools for musicians' careers, it can also hinder the career success and growth of an artist. Haynes and Marshall (2018) express the negatives of social media platforms with artist usage as: social media success may not translate into other forms of success and social media may only be used for “maintaining” rather than “establishing” or “creating” success. “Maintaining success” can be seen with musicians who already have successful social media accounts outside of their music career, then decide to use said accounts for their music career. Success measures are different for each platform and therefore are challenging to measure their impact on one another, e.g., Instagram on Spotify. The combined struggle of creating and establishing success on social media platforms and streaming services with no initial following makes it increasingly difficult for musicians, particularly musicians newly entering the music industry, to find and establish success (Haynes & Marshall, 2018).

As discussed in earlier sections, the music industry has entered a dematerialized market as more aspects of the music industry become digitalized (Eiriz & Leite, 2017). Along with that,

artists have to learn how to adapt as entrepreneurs in a dematerialized industry while also making sense of how platform success is not easily transferable to materialized success (Eiriz & Leite, 2017; Haynes & Marshall, 2018). Moreover, another level of difficulty is added if the artist also does not have an initial following on these platforms and must enter an “oversaturated” social media environment on their own (Haynes & Marshall, 2018). Further, explained in previous sections, other career risks associated with streaming platforms are the cannibalization effect of streaming platforms, the “two-faced nature of streaming”, and ‘cold start’ problems (Wlömert & Papies, 2016; Nickell, 2020; Maasø & Hagen, 2020).

II. Measures of Success

Objective Measures of Success

The success of a band or artist within the music industry has both objective and subjective forms of measurement (Fisher et al., 2010). Objective forms of success measurement are based on measurable numbers and consumer trends. Examples include: chart rankings, radio play, digital streaming popularity, concert touring, song downloads (paid and unpaid) and financial success (Gloor, 2012; Fisher et al., 2010). The term *Superstardom* is derived from the superstar phenomenon in *The Economics of Superstars* by Rosen (1981). Rosen (1981) explains this phenomenon as “relatively small numbers of people earn enormous amounts of money and dominate the activities in which they engage, seems to be increasingly important in the modern world” which aligns with some of the objective modern ways an artist and society measures their successes. Superstardom is sometimes paired with the blockbuster effect, “whereby a few winners (songs) capture a disproportionately large share of the market and go on to become blockbusters” (Ordanini & Nunes, 2016). Chart ranking over the past several decades has since changed in terms of the number of artists and the numeric length. Which gives a different

meaning to both the *Superstardom* and the *Blockbuster* effect. The two can still occur; however, considering the impact digitalization and the internet have on the music industry, objective measurements of success depend on many additional factors rather than the traditional forms of measurement such as radio airplay and record sales (Gloor, 2012).

Subjective Measures of Success

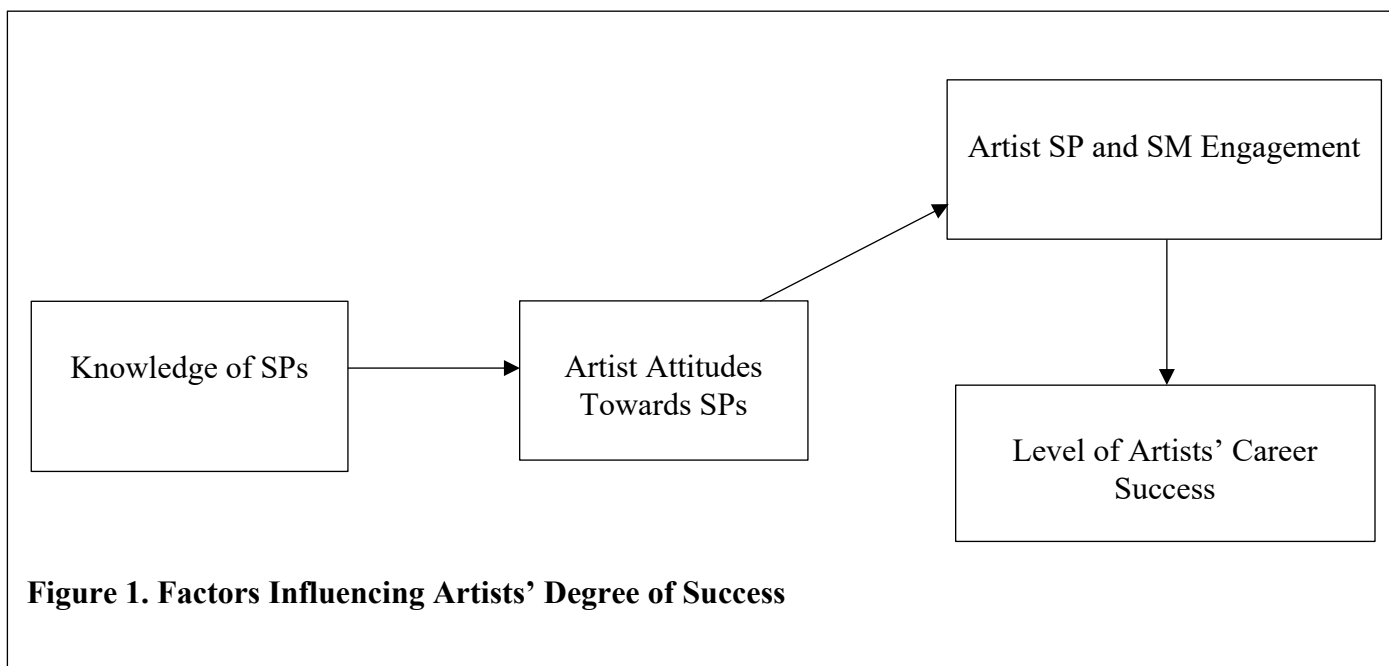
Subjective success is dependent on the artist and the consumer. The subjective measurements of success are endless, considering they are derived from a personal perspective. What one artist sees as ‘attaining success’ may differ from the next. The same can easily apply to music consumers (Gloor, 2012); however, “success” would be the personal opinion of a consumer, equating to a higher valued support than a one-time music stream, i.e., streaming a song once does not typically equate to a serious interest in an artist or band. Examples of subjective measurements of success among leaders of bands: “our group has met our objectives as a band and “our group has met my individual objectives” (Fisher et al., 2010).

Subjective measures of success can also appear within the audience of the listeners. An example of how the public can place their subjective (or qualitative) success measures onto an artist is explained by Valsesia, Nunes, and Ordanini (2016), who compared two Grammy nominees for best album of the year in 2015. Out of the two artists, one had significantly fewer yearly downloads for their nominated album. That artist won the Grammy, despite these large differences in download popularity. The artist received this award because they had produced and written their entire album, whereas the other nominee had over 20 other artists accredited to helping create their album. Both artists displayed success in different ways; however, this award was given to the artist who creatively contributed to their entire album, and in this case, that was seen as a more significant success than the number of downloads associated with the albums.

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of the proposed study is to examine how early career and independent musicians identify and measure their success, mainly focusing on the role of associated with music streaming and social media platforms while trying to maintain their musical careers. Chapter 2 uncovered three factors that influence the career successes of musicians: knowledge, attitude, and engagement. Specifically, knowledge of streaming platforms affects the attitudes of artists towards streaming platforms and, in turn, influences engagement with social media and streaming platforms. These factors are essential for identifying how artists navigate the music industry and their level of success. Figure 1 below, the conceptual framework for the study, displays how these factors influence one another. See Appendix 1 for the detailed conceptual framework.



These factors contribute to how musicians measure their success in the age of prevalent streaming service use. The knowledge and the attitudes of an artist are important influences for the engagement they will have with varying social media and streaming platforms. This level of engagement is vital for how artists measure and gain career success. Higher levels of success, both subjective and objective, would be dependent on an artist having widespread knowledge surrounding streaming platforms and social media, a more favourable attitude towards music streaming services, and a high level of engagement with streaming and social media platforms. An artist who has lower levels of success may be less knowledgeable about streaming and social media platforms, have an unfavourable attitude towards music streaming services, and engage less with streaming and social media platforms. The research conducted in Chapter 2 of the Literature Review showed consistent evidence on how an artist objectively and subjectively measures their success while handling various music industry and streaming platform barriers. Additionally, the literature identified the algorithmic complexities and unpredictability of streaming services, and therefore, emphasizing the need for artists to obtain knowledge, confront their attitudes surrounding the platforms, and consistently engage with streaming and social media platforms to experience artist career success, whether it be subjective or an objective perception of career success.

To understand how early career musicians measure their success, four research questions were examined in the current study. The first question is: *RQ1) What level of knowledge about music streaming platforms do early career musicians have?* There is a wide range of knowledge surrounding streaming and social media platforms. The digitalization of music in the 1990s, the economic structure of the music industry, and the dematerialization of music, in general, prepped

the current existence and popularity of streaming platforms today (Swanson, 2013; Eiriz & Leite, 2017). These changes have affected each counterpart of the industry differently (Wlömert & Papiés, 2016). Record labels suffered the most from these changes. In contrast, artists were the group who initially benefited from this industry shift and the digitalization of music. Currently, streaming provides low levels of income for the average artist while consumers continue to benefit from the convenience of streaming (Eiriz & Leite, 2017; Swanson, 2013; Cross, 2020). As a result, musicians, particularly independent musicians, take on an entrepreneurial role for their careers (Eiriz & Leite, 2017).

Each streaming platform has unique algorithmic structures and affordances, creating various advantages for both the musician and consumer (Maasø and Hagen, 2020). Spotify uses the data it collects from its algorithms to operate on a socialized level, whereas Pandora Internet Radio labels songs with ‘genes’ or ‘traits’, having a more informational approach (Prey, 2018). Playlists are also an essential part of the algorithmic operation of streaming platforms. There are eight types of playlists created by users and the platforms themselves, and they rely on fluidity, control, and curation (Hagen, 2015, p. 631- 639; Siles et al., 2019).

Streaming platforms ongoingly collect and categorize user data through a process called datafication, helping streaming platforms make informed decisions and strategically plan for artist deals. This process does not always benefit the musician; they may face “cold-start problems” and experience the “two-faced nature of streaming” (Maasø & Hagen, 2020; Nickell, 2020). Managed by algorithms and datafication, music was referred to as a “product”, and after the digitalization of music, it is now usually referred to as “content”, where it is managed and branded in many ways (Negus, 2019).

The second research question examined is: *RQ2) What are the attitudes that early career musicians have towards music streaming platforms?* The attitudes musicians have towards streaming platforms can vary, being either favourable, unfavourable, or both, depending on the circumstances of the musician (Aly-Tovar et al., 2019). The musicians who generally have a favourable attitude towards music streaming platforms are independent musicians who are not affiliated with a record label or new to the music industry; artists' where the majority of their income comes from touring and live performances; and artists' who have signed to a large label (Aly-Tovar et al., 2019; Marshall, 2015). High-paid artists and some independent artists can also be unfavourable towards music streaming services (Aly-Tovar et al., 2019; Marshall, 2015). As there is some overlap between the artists who are favourable and unfavourable towards music streaming services, investigating the level of knowledge of an early career musician may help us to understand their attitudes towards music streaming services and hence, how they wish to engage with and measure their career success alongside them.

The third research question examined is: *RQ3) What level of engagement do early career musicians have with creating digitally curated content and interacting with online virtual communities?* Musicians can currently share their music in numerous ways without many limitations while working between social media and streaming platform utilization. Musicians can now control their whole career, with minimally relying on record labels, if not at all (Haynes & Marshall, 2018). However, social media is necessary for a musician managing their career, maintaining connections with their audiences, and the opportunity to experience a list of managerial benefits (Haynes and Marshall, 2015; Salo et al. 2013). For a musician to experience these benefits, they must engage with online virtual communities (Salo et al. 2013). Salo et al. (2013) list these content communities as: social networks, content communities, brand

communities, and other virtual communities; however, many virtual communities exist (Armstrong & Hagel, 1995). Consumers within these online communities have different intentions for how they want to engage with a musician, wanting a fulfillment of “social identity, sense of affinity, participation, interaction, and access to content” (Salo et al., 2013). The attitude and attachment style of the consumers of a musician can also help a musician understand what online virtual communities they should exist in (Krause et al., 2018).

Engagement with various online virtual communities is essential for maintaining a public relationship and understanding what communities’ specific fans and consumers exist. How an artist chooses to engage with these online communities may help understand if engagement plays a role in the level of an artists’ career success, subjectively and objectively, while also navigating the drawbacks of social media and streaming platforms.

The final research question examined is: *RQ4) How do early career musicians measure career success?* There is a variation of drawbacks associated with social media and streaming platforms that can challenge the success and growth of a musician. Success is measured differently for each social media platform, and it can be easier for musicians that are “maintaining” their current social media success rather than spending time “establishing” or “creating” it (Haynes & Marshall, 2018). The “two-faced nature of streaming”, the digitalization of the music industry, adapting to become music entrepreneurs, lack of existence in the social media environment in an oversaturated social media, cannibalization effect of streaming platforms, and “cold-start problems” are all examples of drawback associated with attaining success (Nickell, 2020; Eiriz & Leitie, 2017; Haynes & Marshall, 2018; Wlömert & Papies, 2016; Maasø & Hagen, 2020). These can all affect how an artist views their success and how others measure their success.

Success in the music industry is objective and subjective (Fisher et al., 2010). In general, objective measures of success are numerical or based on consumer trends, such as chart rankings and song downloads. Even though objective measures have been in place for several decades, objective measures of success currently have more influence factors; some influences could be due to the superstar phenomenon and the blockbuster effect (Gloor, 2012; Ordanini & Nunes, 2016).

Subjective success is more personal to the musician, the individualized consumer, and at times, specific audiences (Fisher et al., 2010; Valsesia et al., 2016). Subjective success measures can be anything that the musician deems a success, from meeting on time for rehearsal or achieving a national award. Consumers also measure the success of a musician subjectively. Also, what is seen as a success for a musician may be seen differently for each consumer (Fisher et al., 2010). Specific audiences, such as awards shows, may use subjective measures of success depending on the award, for example; an award based on conceptualization rather than the number of downloads (Valsesia et al., 2016).

Four research questions guide the development of the questionnaire, and the interview questions as seen in Chapter 4 on Methodology.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Development of the Questionnaire

A self-response questionnaire was created for the first research question out of four: *RQ1*) *What level of knowledge about music streaming platforms do early career musicians have?* The concept associated with the question is Knowledge. The questions within this questionnaire are both self-developed and empirically influenced. A questionnaire was chosen for this research question and concept due to the quantifiable capability of the recorded data. Knowledge may be complex for the participant to explain qualitatively, assuming that knowledge on streaming platforms varies from human to human and comes from varying sources. For ease of response, a scale was developed to allow the participant to pinpoint specific areas of knowledge within music streaming platforms visually. The table on page 28 describes in greater detail what questions are associated with the knowledge construct, how each question measured the response and what empirical source influenced the formation of each question, if applicable.

Question 7 of the questionnaire measured the engagement concept, and Question 8 measured part of the success concept. These two questions were explicitly included in the questionnaire to give the artists a chance to reflect on and bullet their answers. Specifically, they are to be compared with the interview questions formed around these concepts (the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2 and the interview questions in Appendix 3).

CONCEPTS	MEASURE	Q# & I#	DERIVATION
Demographic			
Solo artist, band, group, or other	Categorical	Q (1)	Self-developed
Canadian region identified with	Categorical	Q (9)	Self-developed
Knowledge			
SPs the artist exists on	Categorical	Q (2)	Eiriz & Leite
Familiarity with digitalization history	Rating	Q (3 a.)	Swanson
Familiarity of SP's economic structures	Rating	Q (3 b.)	Swanson
Understanding of SP algorithms	Rating	Q (3 c.)	Maasø & Hagen
Understanding of SP data categorization	Rating	Q (3. d)	Negus
Different ways SPs categorize user data	Rating	Q (3. e)	Maasø & Hagen
Music revenue focus – “dematerialized”/ “materialized”	Categorical	Q (4)	Eiriz & Leite
Impact of SP playlist formation	Scale	Q (5)	- Negus - Hagen
Utilization of SP features	Categorical	Q (6)	Self-developed
SM and SP analytics to inform decision making	Descriptive	I (3)	Maasø & Hagen
Content-focused industry – the entrepreneurial role of the artist	Descriptive	I (4)	Eiriz & Leite
Attitudes			
Thoughts, feelings, and beliefs on SPs	Descriptive	I (1)	Aly-Tovar et al.
General favourability or unfavourability of SPs	Descriptive	I (2)	Aly-Tovar et al.
Engagement			
Benefits of early career musicians & SP utilization	Descriptive	Q (7)	Salo et al.
SM platforms engaged with (content communities)	Descriptive	I (5)	Salo et al.
SM platforms for varying uses / what SM platforms for what specific purpose	Descriptive	I (7)	- Armstrong & Hagel - Salo et al.
Strategies for redirecting users to SP page (Consumer intent)	Descriptive	I (6)	- Salo et al. - Krause et al.
Success			
Drawbacks of early career musicians & SP utilization	Descriptive	Q (8)	-Haynes & Marshall - Nickell - Eiriz & Leite
Subjective measure of success	Descriptive	I (8)	Fisher et al.
Barriers faced measuring career success	Descriptive	I (9)	Self-developed
Measuring success within SPs	Descriptive	I (10)	Self-developed
Already existed on SM before artistry existence	Descriptive	I (11)	Haynes & Marshall

SM = Social Media; SP = Streaming Platform

Development of the Interview Questions

A series of interview questions were created to address the remaining three research questions: *RQ2) What are the attitudes that early career musicians have towards music streaming platforms? RQ3) What level of engagement do early career musicians have with creating digitally curated content and interacting with online virtual communities? RQ4) How do early career musicians measure career success?* The constructs associated with each question are Attitude, Engagement, and Success, respectively. See Appendix 3 for the interview questions. Each of these 11 interview questions were open-ended to provide the participant with a chance to respond without influence from the researcher. Questions 3 and 4 of the interview questions were associated with the Knowledge concept.

Sampling

Sample Characteristics

This study aimed to have 5-10 Canadian early career, independent alternative musicians/artists, i.e., musicians who have majority independent control of their career. The musician was to be identified as a solo artist, or be part of a band or project.

Five defining features identified early career musician participants: their independent music industry position, number of years in the industry, streams Spotify, Canadian status, and genre. The independent industry position requirement means that they need to be fully independent in managing their music career, signed with an independent label, or have one or more independent components to managing their career. The participant had to be new to the music industry, a minimum of one year of establishing their music career. For the number of years in the industry, the participant had to have started making music <10 years prior to 2020, and had to have released an album, EP, or single in the past five years. The participant was also

to have <1,000,000 plays of their most played song on Spotify unless the recruiter had exhausted all other bands/artists for recruitment and needed to expand the range and reach of artist recruitment. The participant had to identify their band or themselves as Canadian, with at least one participant from each Canadian region: Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, The Prairies, British Columbia, and The North. There was at least one participant selected for each region before selecting additional participants for a region.

The music associated with the participant was to be from any genre. The CBC Radio 3 playlist randomly generated songs associated with artists for potential recruitment. The general genre categories in the CBC Radio 3 playlist are rock, pop, hip-hop, electronica, and alt-country; however, this playlist is not limited to these genres. These genres include many sub-genres; for example, “alternative rock” is a sub-genre of “rock”.

The study was based on early career musicians and not the genres of early career musicians. Age, gender, identity, race, ethnicity, culture, disability, or other minority factors did not exclude an artist from participating in the current study. As long as they met the criteria of an early career musician and were the first participant chosen to fill one of the six Canadian regions, they were added to the recruitment list, i.e., the recruitment process for every other participant.

Procedures

Participant Recruitment

The random selection process started by shuffle playing the CBC Radio 3 playlist on their website (CBC Radio 3, 2021). The artist or band associated with the current song playing was searched on Spotify to confirm that they met the necessary criteria to identify as an early career musician and any other outlined criteria in the sampling section. If the artist met the requirements listed in the sampling section, then that artist was added to the recruitment list to be contacted.

The artist, band, or group was disregarded if they did not meet the criteria of an early career musician or the other outlined criteria within the sampling section.

Selection Contact

The artist, band or group selected for the current study was contacted via email. If no email was publicly accessible, then contact was administered where possible; for example, through an Instagram direct message. If initial contact was through a different media other than email, the preferred email address was requested to provide further details surrounding the study. If a participant could not participate in the study or took more than three to five days to respond to the recruitment message, steps 1-4 were repeated. If by this method, a region did not fill the minimum number (1) of participants, steps 1-4 were repeated. If the playlist did not generate any artists/bands from a specific region in over 2 hours of songs being shuffle played, artists from that region were separately researched. A number generator was used to randomly select the artist, band or group (Number Generator, 2021)

Once the participant agreed to participate in the study, an interview was scheduled over the *Zoom* video communication platform. Between scheduling the interview and the day of the interview, the consent form and online questionnaire was sent to the potential participant via email. The consent form and questionnaire were to be signed and returned before the scheduled interview. If the participant did not return the consent form and complete the questionnaire at this given time, the interview was cancelled. If the participant still wished to be interviewed, the interview would not occur until the consent form was signed and returned. Before the interview, the signed consent form and a completed survey associated with this participant were verified (see Appendix 4). Once the participant completed the questionnaire, the interview proceeded.

Each question was asked chronologically and notes were taken to supplement the recorded answers. At the conclusion of the recorded *Zoom* meeting; the participants were thanked.

Following the completion of this study, a signed letter was sent via email to the participant to thank them again for their participation and contribution to the current study. It debriefed the interviewee by explaining how the questions asked about their knowledge, attitudes, engagement, and personal success measures associated with streaming and social media platforms. The letter also informed the participants how this research might help other early career musicians and new artists within the music industry. Lastly, the letter made a note of how to contact the researcher via email if they were curious about the results of the study (see the Appendix 5 for the letter of appreciation).

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I. Results and Discussion

Participant Response

A total of seven interviews and surveys were administered and collected from eight participants in this study. A total of 50 musicians meeting the criteria of an "early career musician" received a recruitment email for the current study. The survey response rate was 87.5%, and the interview response rate was 87.5%, the overall response rate was 16.0%. One participant did not complete an interview, and another did not complete a survey.

The participants associated with each of the Canadian regions were one from British Columbia, one participant from the Ontario region, two from Quebec, three from The Prairies, and two from Atlantic Canada. Zero participants were from The North, i.e., the territories of Canada. Two participants identified as a solo artist, five identified as a band, and three identified as a project from the survey results. Each participant met the requirements of an early career musician and overall reasonably represented early career Canadian musicians by region.

Results

A combination of survey and interview gave responses and insight to the research questions, except for RQ2, which included only interview response questions.

RQ1) What level of knowledge about music streaming platforms do early career musicians have?

All participants exist on the streaming platforms Apple Music, Spotify and Bandcamp. Results of the existence on other streaming platforms' can be found in Table 1.

Participants overall have an average knowledge of 5.3 on a 10-point scale of the history of streaming platforms, followed by knowledge of the economic structures of streaming

platforms at 4.9, analytics and algorithmic structures of streaming platforms at 4.0, how streaming platforms categorize and redistribute data at 2.3, and different ways users categorize their data at 1.9, as shown in Table 2. Four of 7 participants selected that the music industry currently focuses the most revenue generation from streaming platforms, downloads, ads, online following and records, merchandise, song downloads, and concert tickets; the rest of the findings are shown in Table 3. In other words, 4 out of seven participants believe we currently exist in a dematerialized and materialized music industry.

On a scale from 0-10, participants reported the average strength of streaming platforms playlist formation on increasing music streams at 8.6. As shown in Table 4, 3(42.9%) use some streaming platform features, 2(28.6%) use almost all, 1(14.3%) use all, and 1(14.3%) use almost none. Four participants responded that they do not use their streaming platform analytics to directly influence their social media posts, whereas three of the respondents reported that they do at least have some aspect of their online content. Of the participants who do not use the analytics to inform postings, they observe the analytics or have someone, e.g., a publicist, who will inform them when they need to post. The participants who use the analytics to inform their social media content and posts will mainly create content or ads targeted towards a specific population or location.

All participants agreed that musicians have to take on a more entrepreneurial approach to their career in the age of a content-focused industry. A few themes that arose around this topic were: 1) someone must be taking on this role of the entrepreneur in the band, and 2) there is concern that the pressure of taking on an entrepreneurial role will force the artists to focus more on satisfying the algorithms of the streaming platforms, and less on the creative process of their

music. On the other hand, participants believe that streaming platforms have allowed artists to be independent and control their music more than ever.

Overall, early career musicians have a varying to low level of knowledge on streaming and social media platforms while also having a fluctuating level of use in the features streaming platforms offer to artists. They used the streaming platform analytics to inform other content posting on social media pages. The participants collectively agreed that musicians have to take on an entrepreneurial role in their music career.

Discussion

Participants reported that the industry is made up of both a materialized and dematerialized industry. Some participants feel more strongly towards one or the other. Instead of the conception that we live in a fully dematerialized industry (Eiriz & Leite, 2017), artists still perceive the industry as materialized. This point aligns with the work of Negus (2019) and Hagen (2015) on the importance of playlists. The participants believe that playlists have a significant impact on increasing the music streams of a song. No participants explained the differences between playlists or a "playlist fluidity" associated with their music from the perspective of Hagen (2015) and Siles et al. (2019). Maasø and Hagen (2020) explained that artists could use streaming platform analytics to market and brand their content. The participants who reported that they use the analytics to help their content posting have found success in doing so with targeted ads and posting content specific to the demographics of their listeners, sometimes specific to the demographics associated with the social media platform itself.

All participants agreed that artists need to become entrepreneurs when managing their music career, as explained by Eiriz and Leite (2017) and Swanson (2013). Participants indicate the difficulty of maintaining every task that musicians need to do to maintain their career;

Participant 3 stated it is "an extreme office job". Overall, taking on the role of an entrepreneur is not viewed as glamorous or rewarding, from the perspectives of these participants.

RQ2) What are the attitudes that early career musicians have towards music streaming platforms?

Six participants from the interview stated they favoured streaming platforms, and one stated that they were undecided. Each participant had conditions as to why they were in favour or undecided of streaming platforms. Some participants favoured streaming platforms by necessity and stated that they are "a necessary evil" (Participant 1 & 5) and "a double-edged sword" (Participant 2 & 4). Themes for the participants who are in favour were: under the condition that they are advocating for higher pay and that streaming platforms will improve their relationships with artists. Participants overall stated that streaming platforms offer accessibility for listeners.

For content sharing, a theme from the responses was that streaming platforms allow it to be effortless to share your music with the public. Regarding attitudes towards streaming services for making money, 100% of the participants stated that they do not make money from streaming services, and a musician cannot make money from streaming services. Additional comments stated that a musician would have to be getting large amounts of streams, have pre-existing deals, or are a well-established musician (i.e., "famous") to help them each a substantial amount from streaming.

Discussion

Aly-Tovar et al. (2019) found that artists can be both unfavourable and favourable towards music streaming services, and attitudes can change over time. Independent musicians who are not signed to a label and are considered new to the industry were reported to have favourability and varying attitudes (Aly-Tovar et al., 2019). Some participants in the current

study report being signed with a label while also having independent dimensions to their career. Although these participants are favourable towards streaming platforms, they could also be considered to have a varying attitude towards streaming platforms given the conditions they stated while expressing their favourability towards streaming platforms. For example, Participant 1 stated they were “in favour by necessity”; Participant 3 stated they were in favour “because of the way it has been integrated into our culture and I will not stop pushing for better payment”; and Participant 6 stated they were “in favour as long there is a live in-person component since streaming is part of a larger component”. These statements could challenge why an artist is favourable towards streaming services, i.e., as Participant 1 stated, early career musicians might be favourable by necessity instead of personally feeling this way. Aly-Tovar et al. (2019) did not discuss this point in their study. Participants also reported that they do not make money from streaming services and need other means of income support points made by Marshall (2015) surrounding low royalty rate payment for musicians. Participants in the current study stated they could supplement their income through radio royalties, touring, other day jobs, and more.

General beliefs towards streaming platforms were not researched in previous studies; however, the participants' beliefs in the current study can provide more insight into the attitudes of a musician towards streaming platforms. Many of these beliefs are connected to advocating for an improved relationship and pay between artists and streaming platforms. As Wlömert and Papies (2016) mentioned, several different parts of the music industry besides artists benefit from the existence of streaming platforms. These responses from participants further express the need for a better relationship and increase in benefits between streaming platforms artists.

RQ3) What level of engagement do early career musicians have with creating digitally curated content and interacting with online virtual communities?

Overall, each of the participants within this study has varying levels of engagement with social media platforms. Each participant has a Facebook and Instagram page for their music and 5 (71.4%) participants have Twitter accounts. The strategies these participants use to redirect users to their streaming platforms include: a link on their page such as Linktree; connecting all of their platforms or links to new releases; self-created targeted ad postings; story posts on Instagram; picture/video posts, particularly when they have new releases; and curated playlists by the artist to draw users into their streaming platform pages. Two participants mentioned that they are sometimes required to post to specific platforms by particular performance venues, which is written into their contract. Twitter is "a thought here or there" (Participant 7) or a more personal platform that can be "controversial" (Participant 5). Two of the interviewed participants noted the rise in popularity of musicians using the platform TikTok for content sharing; however, they do not have accounts of their own. The participants also stated that they have certain platforms they use for specific reasons, i.e., engaging with particular communities.

In general, Facebook is seen as an all-encompassing platform, whereas Instagram and Twitter are seen as more open-ended and can connect more easily with users on a global level. Participants also note that having a brand is essential across each platform while also making sure to tailor content to the demographic of the platform. Other ways that participants connect with different communities is by email, both personal and through Bandcamp, providing a more personal approach.

Participants indicated the main benefit of utilizing streaming platforms as early career musicians is they provide low-cost global access to their music from the listeners' side; this access is fast while also having a large amount of content. Having this accessibility provides the chance for users to "stumble upon your catalogue" (Participant 1). The ability of the artist to pair

social media platforms with their streaming platforms also opens them up to other promoters and communities. Complete responses to these questions are seen in Table 5.

Discussion

The benefits participants reported of utilizing streaming platforms are accessibility surrounding the release of music, connecting with various communities, audience outreach and world access to music, along with low cost, and having social media bringing fans to the streaming platform pages of artists all align with the managerial benefits listed by Salo et al. (2013). Like Haynes and Marshall (2018), participants also reported that the internet provides musicians autonomy to grow their careers. Therefore, this may suggest that social media and streaming platforms have a connection that, when used together, can intensify the overall benefits for the career of an early career musician.

With Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter being the top platforms used to connect with online users, these platforms happen to fall under the social network virtual community listed by Salo et al. (2013). Salo et al. (2013) stated that an artist needs to have a presence within each virtual community to find success, given that each community serves a different purpose in connecting with users. However, participants of the current study found benefits to only using Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter because of the number of features beyond face value that they offer to the artist. Therefore, these three social media platforms could be considered to exist in more than one online virtual community. For example; Participant 3 uses Instagram to post about new content and as a photoblog, implying that Instagram could exist within both the social networking and content community. It may be more important for a musician to enter the virtual communities within the platforms they exist on, rather than maintaining an existence on many platforms, each of a specific virtual community.

RQ4) How do early career musicians measure career success?

The measures of success that were common throughout the interviewed participants were: tour success; writing music on their own or with their group; being able to observe their band and music grow over a length of time; being able to set goals and meet them; hearing fan response; joining a label; having their music appear on satellite radio while also earning royalties from them; hearing a positive response from fans, and lastly; achieving analytical success on streaming platforms.

The barriers that participants identified when measuring their career successes were as follows: grants, how to write for them and meeting the qualification requirements, e.g., a specific number of followers on Instagram; limited knowledge on how to properly collect music royalties; learning how to adequately navigate technological and entrepreneurial duties; and having un-met expectations for released music on streaming platforms, e.g., a new single earned a lower number of streams than expected after the first week of release. The career drawbacks of streaming platforms identified by the participants were: low payment from the streaming platform to the artist; music can be easily lost given the vast amount of content on these streaming platforms; streaming platforms could influence a decrease towards the physical sale of music; how streaming platforms have changed the way music is created and influenced; and how streaming platform algorithms are for the artist. The complete responses to this question can be found in Table 6.

Five participants had to create their own separate social media accounts and pages when establishing their online music presence. For the remaining two participants, one already had a separate Instagram page for all things music and the other participant had a Facebook account associated with their band. The Facebook account was then transferred over to a new Facebook

page for their band. No large success followings were transferred over from these pre-existing pages. The common themes to gain a social media following from a new page or account were: starting with following their friends and family; interacting with accounts and pages that are similar to their band/group/project; following accounts first, posting whenever possible, noting that posting can be easier on tour. One participant stressed creating a brand for their band that is consistent across all platforms while having different content on each platform.

Discussion

The participants of this study measured their career and streaming platform success through subjective and objective methods, as explained by Fisher et al. (2010). The majority of the responses to how participants measure their career success were subjective, except for: analytical success on streaming platforms, e.g., listeners that appeared in different parts of the world; existing on satellite radio, and receiving paid royalties. Conversely, most of the responses for how participants measure their success in streaming platforms are through numeric measurements and having the platform add their music to playlists. These sorts of responses are similar to objective measures of success; universal and numerical. Perhaps the new way to measure the objective success of an artist will be through the number of song streams an artist has or if their music appears on specific popular playlists.

The drawbacks participants identified while they measure their career success and career drawbacks from streaming platforms, in general, align with the artist social media and streaming platform drawbacks listed by Haynes and Marshall (2018), Eiriz & Leite (2017), along with the career risks: the "cannibalization effect", "two-faced nature of streaming", and "cold-start problems" (Wlömert & Papies, 2016; Nickell, 2020; Maasø & Hagen, 2020). The pressure of a musician learning how to become an entrepreneur in a digitalized industry explained by Eiriz and

Leite (2017) aligned with many of the drawbacks participants listed when measuring music career success. Participants expressed the difficulty of learning how to effectively write grants while also balancing a social media presence, understanding the platforms that they are expected to exist on, and understanding how to claim their radio royalties properly. Overall, artists are forced to learn and adapt to both streaming and social media platforms; however, they are not adequately compensated for their ongoing efforts and could experience the "two-faced nature of streaming" (Nickell, 2020).

Regarding career drawbacks specifically associated with streaming platforms, the responses are understood through the cannibalization effect of streaming platforms and cold-start problems (Wlömert & Papiés, 2016; Maasø & Hagen, 2020). Some participants reported that there is a high level of uncertainty of how well their music will do once it is released. There is pressure to have their music placed on a playlist, usually associated with the application; however, if an artist does not get placed on one, the song may be facing a cold-start problem. The complicated relationship that the participants explained between the creativity of their music and streaming platforms can be explained through the cannibalization effect streaming platforms have on the other counterparts of the music industry; however, in terms of the current study, the counterpart in the industry is the early career musician. Some participants feel the tug-a-war pull between wanting to stay true to their creative nature and wanting to post and create content that will satisfy the algorithms of streaming platforms. Participant 7) states the overarching complications of this point: "So many. The rise of singles over albums. The shortening of songs. The shrinking revenue share. The monopolization of power in the industry. The tension between wanting to direct people to things like Bandcamp and physical sales and away from Spotify - and needing to get your numbers to be taken seriously."

II. Further Discussion

General Discussion

The successes associated with streaming platforms are number-based, contrasted with drawbacks associated with streaming platforms and measuring career success suggests that obtaining streaming platform success in this regard is extremely difficult, and many challenges stand in the way of achieving such musical successes.

Overall, the participants who reported having a higher mean knowledge on the general topics of streaming platforms, are favourable of streaming platforms and engage with their social media pages. They consistently reported the importance of having goals or setting success goals while building off their previous successes; goals are key when measuring their successes. These participants also reported finding success in their streaming numbers and playlist achievement. Participants who reported lower mean knowledge surrounding streaming platforms had favourable or undecided attitudes towards streaming platforms. Overall, they had lower engagement, and reported more subjective successes, including a few participants who measured their successes with streaming platforms. This difference may suggest that if an artist holds more knowledge surrounding streaming platforms, engages with creating consistent social media content, and sets ongoing goals, they may find more numeric and playlist success on streaming platforms, or differences in how they subjectively measure their career successes.

Several artists reported that they find it a success to have their music on any streaming platform. This success speaks a great deal to the level of drawbacks that come along with streaming platforms and the lengths an artist must take to exist on them while at the same time pursuing career success on said platforms. This point leads into discussion connected to the knowledge, attitudes, and engagement of early career musicians.

Knowledge

A musician feeling forced to take on an entrepreneurial role with their career could also impact their ability to acquire knowledge surrounding streaming platforms. They have to manage every part of their career if they want to be fully independent, especially as a solo artist. If the goal is to get onto the streaming platforms, and create social media accounts in addition to writing music, while working a day job and taking care of everything else that comes with the needs of life, an early career independent artist may not have the time to acquire any more knowledge of streaming and social media platforms than is necessary. Having to balance all of these things could also impact the time towards the creative process of making music.

Attitudes

Despite usually earning more money from streaming services, established and late-career musicians also reported being unfavourable towards streaming services (Aly-Tover et al., 2019). An artist locked into a contract with a streaming platform may feel they can easily express their opinions without much repercussion since these streaming platforms will still want their business relationship to exist. This point could provide a reason why every participant (all early career musicians), except for one who was undecided, is in favour of streaming platforms; they have no choice but to be in favour because being against streaming platforms as an early career musician limits where they can share music that provides the chance of earning more money in the future. Notably, some participants expressed their genuine favourability for streaming platforms as listeners and the benefits they enjoy through them

Engagement

The intent and attitudes of consumers towards using specific social media platforms may help with understanding the strategies and content each participant reported using on their social

media platforms (Salo et al., 2013; Krause et al., 2018). A participant made the point that it is crucial to have a consistent brand across their social media pages and also to be posting different content on each platform to cater to the demographics of the platform. However, no participant explicitly mentioned researching the attitudes and intentions of their listeners as a way to gear their content posting. Their content posting is mainly derived from looking at general streaming platform analytics or understanding the different user demographics of their platforms.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Summary of Findings

The purpose of the current study was to explore how early career musicians measured their success in the age of streaming platforms. Four research questions guided the research of this study; they are: *RQ1) What level of knowledge about music streaming platforms do early career musicians have? RQ2) What are the attitudes that early career musicians have towards music streaming platforms? RQ3) What level of engagement do early career musicians have with creating digitally curated content and interacting with online virtual communities? RQ4) How do early career musicians measure career success?* A literature review in Chapter 2 reviewed topics associated with these research questions

The literature review shaped four concepts used in the conceptual framework; knowledge, attitudes, engagement, and career success. The conceptual framework presented a connection between early career musicians' knowledge of streaming platforms, which then influenced their attitudes towards streaming platforms, leading to their motivations to engage with digitally curated content and, finally, how early career musicians measure their career success. These three concepts helped to develop the questionnaire and interview questions. The questionnaire and the interview questions also included questions surrounding career success and drawbacks associated with streaming platforms. The sample was eight participants from regions across Canada, including; Atlantic Canada, Ontario, Quebec, The Prairies, and British Columbia.

Participants reported medium to low knowledge of topics surrounding streaming platforms. They all favoured streaming platforms, except for one undecided participant;

however, they had specific conditions that came with being in favour of streaming platforms. These conditions were that the participants would continue to advocate for better pay and compensation or that improvement in the relationship between artists and streaming platforms must occur in the future. Participants of this study have varying levels of engagement with social media content and streaming platforms. Each participant has an Instagram and Facebook account, while 5(71.4%) additionally have a Twitter account. Each participant reported different strategies they use on the social media platforms to redirect users to their streaming platform pages. Some participants reported having used social media accounts to target specific demographics, adjusting the content for different platforms. The participants from this study measure their successes in mostly a subjective (qualitative) manner, with some measuring their success in ways that could be considered more objective to the general public. Participants also reported several drawbacks while building and measuring their career successes, including career drawbacks for musicians using streaming platforms.

Limitations

The potential limitations of the current study had to do with several factors. Firstly, a larger number of participants could have expanded the representation of success in early career Canadian musicians. Increasing the number of participants could have been improved by revisiting the criteria created for early career musicians. For example, changing the maximum streams to greater than 1,000,000 plays of their Spotify page would have allowed a larger window of participants to have qualified for this study. It is not unusual for an early career musician that recently started making music, and one of their songs gains a high number of streams in a short period. Songs can significantly increase in plays for many reasons; for example, a song makes it onto a popular playlist. Having at least one more participant from The

North Canadian region would have given this study a complete representation of early career musicians from every region across Canada. An increase in participants could allow representation from each Canadian province and could be a way to represent early career musicians from everywhere across Canada.

The questionnaire could have included at least two questions about the streaming platform metrics of the musician. Specifically, questions regarding their range of plays, what playlists they had made it onto, and their monthly listeners. These questions could have provided data to supplement how the participant measures their success with streaming platforms and how their platform metrics rank with the other early career musicians in the current study.

The participants were passionate and had a lot to say about their relationship and attitudes with streaming platforms. Having more than two interview questions about attitudes, possibly related to the other concepts, might have provided a greater understanding of the development or hindrance of their music career success. For example, to have explored more questions about how the participants feel about the pressures of posting on their social media and if they feel pressure to keep up with the current trends on these platforms.

Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, the current study explored four objectives related to the purpose of the study: how early career musicians measure their success while existing in the age of streaming platforms. The knowledge, attitudes, and engagement of early career musicians may separately, or combined, impact how an early career musician measures their objective and subjective career successes.

Participants in this study had a medium to low knowledge on categories surrounding streaming platforms, such as the history of streaming platforms, their economic structures, how

data is categorized, the digitalization of music and more. Participants, in general, are favourable towards streaming platforms; however, under certain circumstances. For example, certain participants favour streaming platforms if they improve their relationship with artists in the future, specifically regarding streaming royalty pay. Participants varied in their level of engagement with digitally curated content and interaction with online virtual communities. The majority of participants exist on three social media platforms; Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, while only a minority of the participants use streaming platform analytics to inform their decision-making around digitally curated content.

Overall, the participants of this study measure their career success in the age of streaming in mostly subjective ways, such as connecting with fans and reaching a goal they set out to meet. How participants measure their success on streaming platforms is usually to do with individual song streams and being placed on streaming platform playlists. Participants expressed the difficulty of collectively managing each component of their career. This point could provide further explanation for why the participants reported having a lower to medium level of knowledge on streaming platforms, the justification of their favourable attitudes towards, and their varying levels of engagement with streaming platforms.

Implications and Direction for Future Research

Research with early career musicians and streaming platforms must be continued, specifically with early career musicians from every region in Canada. The population and governmental grant requirements may differ per province or territory; for example, Ontario has a more significant population than Manitoba; requirements to obtain a grant in Ontario could be more complex, and the pressure could be higher for musicians to reach a level of success to even

qualify to apply. As the participants in this study have mentioned, some grants can require an artist to have a minimum number of followers on Instagram to qualify to apply for a grant.

Exploring this dimension of how early career musicians measure their success in terms of Canadian grant writing would add to previous research on the pressures independent musicians face when developing their careers (Eiriz & Leite, 2017). Understanding the requirements of being an early career or independent musician in the age of streaming may give a deeper understanding of how each artist measures their career success. Topics on the subject that could be explored in relation to the current study are: writing grants, the social media requirements to obtain a grant, managerial duties, the time and resources to produce promotional content, and maintaining creativity while satisfying streaming platform algorithms.

Future research may benefit from involvement of established musicians in their sampling, specifically aiming research objectives towards how established musicians overcame any drawbacks they initially faced with streaming platforms and maintained an ongoing relationship with each one. Data collected from established musicians on this topic may provide insight on how early career musicians could overcome the career drawbacks and barriers associated with music streaming platforms identified in the current study.

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TABLES

Streaming Platforms	Response %	Response # (n=7)
Apple Music	100.0%	7
Spotify	100.0%	7
Pandora Internet Radio	57.1%	4
Google Play Music	85.7%	6
YouTube Music	85.7%	6
Tidal	71.4%	5
Amazon Music	57.1%	4
Deezer	71.4%	5
Oobuz	14.3%	1
iHeartRadio	42.9%	3
Bandcamp	100.0%	7
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0

Table 1. The music streaming platforms participants exist on.

Knowledge of...	Knowledge (0= Low; 10 = High)											Mean (n=7)
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
History of music digitalization	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	5.3
Economic structures of streaming platforms	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	4.9
Analytics and algorithmic structures of streaming platforms	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	4.0
How streaming platforms categorize and redistribute data	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2.3
Different ways streaming platforms categorize their user data	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1.9

Table 2. The general knowledge of topics associated with music streaming services.

Where the majority of revenue is earned	Responses %	Response #
Streaming platforms, downloads, ads, and online following	14.3%	1
Physical sales of records and merchandise, song downloads, and concert tickets	28.6%	2
Both	57.1%	4

Table 3. The areas that participants believe the majority of revenue is earned in the music industry.

Number of Features	Responses %	Response #
All	14.3%	1
Almost All	28.6%	2
Some	42.9%	3
Almost None	14.3%	1
None	0.0%	0

Table 4. The number of features participants utilize on the streaming platforms they exist on.

Participant	Career benefits of streaming platforms
1	It allows those that have a pre-existing knowledge of you to find you and listen to your catalogue of music - and those who don't have a pre-existing knowledge of you to perhaps stumble upon your catalogue.
2	Low-cost access to listeners. I suppose the algorithm can work in your favour upon occasion
3	Global access to listeners
4	Easy accessibility for fans to listen to and discover your music
5	Music is easy to find at a moment's notice.
6	Accessibility for music listeners, sending a link to your music to promoters/festivals/college radio etc. has never been easier. If you get Playlisted it can help increase streams. You can focus social media ads to direct potential fans to your streaming page.
7	Being able to reach new audiences and get them to check out your music pretty instantly. I think about the ways that in the iTunes downloading times, people would have to buy it to listen (or DL illegally). I think the system is seriously flawed, but the integration with social media and the social media-ization of listening to music does have the benefit of being to bring people from different communities into your music.

Table 5. The career benefits streaming platforms.

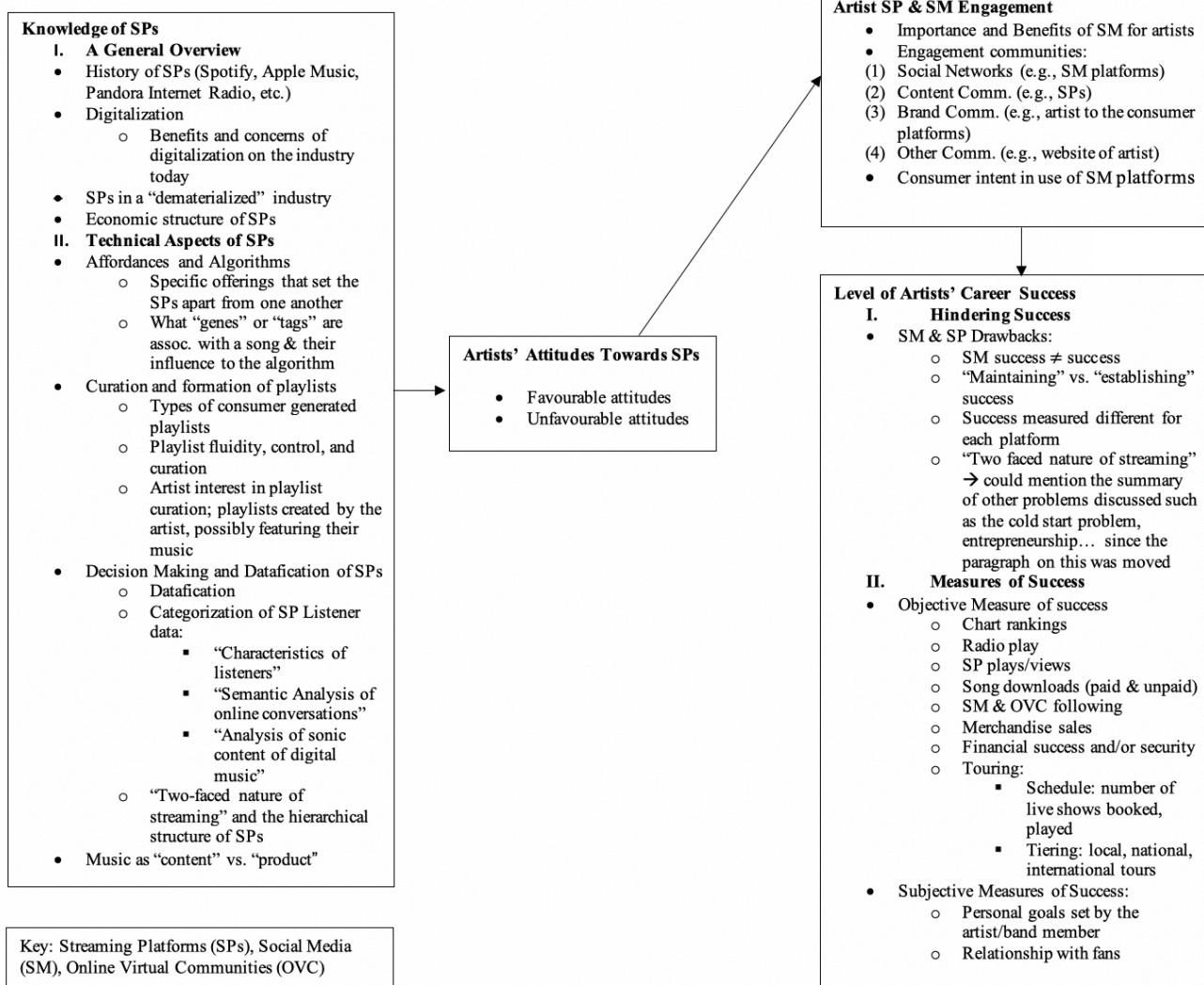
Participant	Career drawbacks associated with streaming platforms
1	Severely limits the amount of money you can make from your recorded music.
2	Extreme uncertainty in how curated placement works — Spotify, for instance, suggests that getting on their curated (and as such, high visibility) plays lists is an even playing field; however, it's clear that labels have an influence over such things.
3	Streaming platforms have completely transformed consumption behaviour, stock to flow ratio & the marginal utility of recorded works. The mass influx of usage statistics has the tendency to undermine the creative process, leading to increased production of less meaningful work, shifting the focus to trend chasing from trend setting compositions.
4	Low royalties, discourages physical sales
5	Low/no payments, no access to high-tier playlisting without a middle-person distributor, a focus on metrics as opposed to fan development
6	Too much content your music gets lost and algorithms always play the same random music after an album ends. Perhaps fans won't buy physical. You need to pay for your music to be on DSPs (for the most part). You make next to nothing for streams.
7	So many. The rise of singles over albums. The shortening of songs. The shrinking revenue share. The monopolization of power in the industry. The tension between wanting to direct people to things like Bandcamp and physical sales and away from Spotify - and needing to get your numbers to be taken seriously.

Table 6. The career drawbacks associated with using streaming platforms.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Conceptual Framework



APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire

Please share your perspectives on streaming platforms by responding to these few questions.

- 1) Are you a...
- Check all that apply
- SOLO ARTIST
 - BAND
 - PROJECT
 - Other (please specify)

The first questions ask about your overall view of streaming platforms.

- 2) What are the streaming platforms you currently exist on?

Check all that apply.

- APPLE MUSIC
- SPOTIFY
- PANDORA INTERNET RADIO
- GOOGLE PLAY MUSIC
- YOUTUBE MUSIC
- TIDAL
- AMAZON MUSIC
- DEEZER
- OOBUZ
- IHEARTRADIO
- BANDCAMP
- OTHER _____, _____, _____

- 3) On a scale from 0 – 10, with 0 being the lowest knowledge and 10 being the highest knowledge, how knowledgeable do you feel about the following? Check your answer.

	Lowest						Highest					
My knowledge about ...	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
History of music digitalization												
Economic structures of streaming platforms												
Analytics and algorithmic structures of streaming platforms												
How streaming platforms categorize and redistribute data												
Different ways streaming platforms categorize their user data												

- 4) What term **best** describes where the music industry currently focuses the most revenue generation from? Check what you think applies.

Streaming platforms, downloads, ads, and online following

Physical sales of records and merchandise, song downloads, and concert tickets

BOTH

- 5) On a scale from 0 – 10, with 0 being the lowest impact, how strong is the impact of playlist formations (from the platform, user, and artist) is on increasing music streams?

LOWEST 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 HIGHEST

- 6) Do you utilize all of the features that a streaming platform has to offer you?

ALL

ALMOST ALL

SOME

ALMOST NONE

NONE

These two questions ask about your views on the effect of streaming platforms on the career success.

- 7) What do you see as the career benefits of streaming platforms for musicians?

- 8) What do you see as the career drawbacks of streaming platforms for musicians?

Last question

- 9) What Canadian region does your project/band identify with?

Check all that apply if applicable.

ATLANTIC CANADA

ONTARIO

QUEBEC

PRAIRIES

BRITISH COLOUMBIA

THE NORTH

Other, please specify: _____

APPENDIX 3

Interview Questions

Attitudes

- 1) In general, what are your feelings about streaming platforms for sharing music content and earning money?
 - a. What are your beliefs towards them?
- 2) **Overall, are you in favour of streaming platforms or not? Why?**
 ____ FAVOUR ____ DO NOT FAVOUR ____ UNDECIDED

Knowledge

- 3) Do you use streaming platform analytics to inform your decisions about digitally curated content (music releases, social media posts, blog posts, merchandise releases, etc.) on social media? (Frequency of posts, kind of content ...).
- 4) Have you found that music being more content focused in the past two decades has pushed musicians to take on an entrepreneurial role for their music?

Engagement

- 5) What social media platforms do you engage with? Are there particular social media platforms that you use to redirect followers to the streaming platforms you are registered with?
- 6) Are there specific online and social media strategies that you use to redirect people to your streaming platform music pages?
- 7) Are there social media platforms you utilize for different reasons? i.e. to engage with particular groups or online communities associated with your music (whether they are: record labels, fans, or other artists)

Career Success

- 8) How do you measure your own music career success? What do you consider, or what are some of the successes you have experienced - anything that you consider a success
- 9) What are/have been the biggest drawbacks you face when building and measuring your music career successes?
- 10) How do you measure success within the streaming platform realm?
- 11) When integrating into social media platforms for your band/music, did you have to create a new (separate) account(s), or did you already have an account(s) that you could transfer to as your music page? ____ NEW ____ EXISTING
 - a. If you had to create a new account: what have you (ongoing) done to gain a Social Media following?
 - b. If you already had an account that you transferred over: did the pre-existing Social Media following help establish your career faster?

APPENDIX 4

Participation Consent Form

Impact of Streaming Services and Digitally Curated Content on Musicians' Career Development

Julia Dunn, BComm (Honours) student, Minor in Psychology
 Department of Commerce, The Ron Joyce Centre for Business Studies
 Mount Allison University

I am a student at Mount Allison University inviting you to participate in my study. The purpose of the study is to explore barriers encountered by early career musicians entering the music industry, with emphasis on the impact of streaming services while trying to maintain a successful career .

This study involves a one-hour interview and a short questionnaire, approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, to discuss a number of factors that may influence the way early career musicians utilize streaming services and produce digitally curated content. The interview will be conducted online through the application *Zoom*. I will audio record the interview for the sole purpose of my notes and findings from the study; the audio recording will not be encrypted. The recording will be saved on my computer. The short questionnaire and this Consent Form will be completed before the *Zoom* interview begins and returned via email attachments.

The questions will be related to the current knowledge you hold with regard to streaming services, your attitudes towards music streaming services, your engagement with digitally curated content, and how you measure your music career success. I do not anticipate any risks to you or others related to the interview.

Your contributions and those of others will help other early career musicians understand different ways they can overcome music industry entry barriers associated with music streaming services. **Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.**

Your participation as an interviewee in this study will not be made known to any other interviewee or to the general public. All information obtained in this study will be kept strictly **confidential and anonymized** unless you otherwise give explicit, written, and signed consent. With regards to being quoted, please initial next to any of the statements that you agree with:

1	I wish to review the notes, transcripts, or other data collected during the research pertaining to my participation.
2	I agree to be quoted directly (my name is used).
3	I agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published (I remain anonymous).

4	I agree to be quoted directly if a made-up name (pseudonym) is used.
5	I agree that the researchers may publish documents that contain quotations by me.

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you fully understand the above information and agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____

Band/Artist Name _____

Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Date: _____

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Rosemary Polegato (who is supervising this research) at 506-364-2322 or e-mail at rpolegato@mta.ca. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Mount Allison University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Dr. Lisa Dawn Hamilton, Chair of the Mount Allison University Research Ethics Board, at reb@mta.ca or telephone 506-364-2618.

Note: With an e-mail message agreeing to an interview (and this form attached), you are giving your consent to participate in this study and indicating that you fully understand the information above.

The privacy and security of Zoom is described at:

[https://www.google.ca/search?ei=CI88YObZJ8GQ_QaNIJqQDA&q=Zoom+security&og=Zoom+security&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyBwgAEEcQsAMyBwgAEEcQsAMyBwgAEEcQsAMyBwgAEEcQsAMyBwgAEEcQsAMyBwgAEEcQsAMyBwgAEEcQsANQ7g1Y7g1g3xBoAXABeACAAWOIAb0BkgEBMpgBAKABAaoBB2d3cy13aXrlAQjAAQE&sclient=gws-wiz&ved=0ahUKEwjm_Zbswl7vAhVBSN8KHQ2KBSIQ4dUDCA0&uact=5](https://www.google.ca/search?ei=CI88YObZJ8GQ_QaNIJqQDA&q=Zoom+security&og=Zoom+security&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyBwgAEEcQsAMyBwgAEEcQsAMyBwgAEEcQsAMyBwgAEEcQsAMyBwgAEEcQsAMyBwgAEEcQsAMyBwgAEEcQsAMyBwgAEEcQsANQ7g1Y7g1g3xBoAXABeACAAWOIAb0BkgEBMpgBAKABAaoBB2d3cy13aXrlAQjAAQE&sclient=gws-wiz&ved=0ahUKEwjm_Zbswl7vAhVBSN8KHQ2KBSIQ4dUDCA0&uact=5)

APPENDIX 5

Letter of Appreciation

Dear Participant X(name of participant)

Thank you for your contribution to my honours thesis research titled: “Impact of Streaming Services and Digitally Curated Content on Musicians’ Career Development”. In other words, I was exploring how an artist’s knowledge and attitudes of streaming platforms along with their engagement with social media and streaming platforms has an impact on their career successes.

You were asked 11 interview questions and completed a survey on these topics. The answers you provided for both the interview questions and survey were used to sort conclusions and future implications of the study. My vision moving forward is that this thesis research will exist to help other early career musicians seeking to develop their career or looking to join the music industry.

If you would like to hear more about the results and conclusions of this study, please contact me at jgdunn@mta.ca. Results will be finalized in mid-April 2021.

I wish you the best with your music career developments and experiences. Thank you again for your generous contribution to my research.

Sincerely,

Julia Dunn