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Presented by: **Soo Wincci**

Directed by: **Prof Hoyas Frontera, Gema &**
Dr. Sanmartin Cava, Josep Francesc

INWINCCIBLE 360 Z

A HYBRID RECORDING ARTIST PRODUCER (A PRACTICE BASED RESEARCH ON ARTIST PERSONAL ONLINE MUSIC VIDEO PRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT

As the COVID-19 pandemic hit the entire world, the creative industry faced numerous challenges, such as constraints on activities and budget cuts. These obstacles challenged us to push our limits to produce more digital audio-visual content and leverage our artistic work into the online world. In order to survive the new norm after the pandemic, music artists must reinvent themselves to be hybrid and multitask. One can no longer only perform, but it is also essential to master the tools of technology and behind-the-scenes production work to survive in this industry.

On the other hand, with the advancement of technology platforms, namely YouTube, music videos have always been essential for artists to showcase their work in this digital era. Many industrial film practitioners have been conducting such industrial research in the film industry; however, only a few industrial players from the music industry conduct such research. As a result, this left many gaps in literature. Even though there were past studies, there is still a need for new updated insight with more detailed insider views as, nowadays, production practices have been innovated, and the cost of production has been reduced. «Inwinccible 360 Z» is extended research from the master research titled «Inwinccible 360 Y» and «Inwinccible 360 X» in Berklee Valencia.

The word «Inwinccible» is a combination of the name of the researcher «Wincci» with the world «Invincible» signaling a self-unstoppable movement along the journey. This extended version involves integrated exploratory practice-based research for the researcher which revolves around the feminism movement along the journey. Historically, music videos often stereotype women as symbol of sex and music video production were often dominated by male. Hence this research aims to break the objectification by illustrating the researcher's journey transformation from a beauty queen artist into a music video producer. Also, five music videos will be produced by the researcher herself and will be released in real times. This aims to motivate more female artists to stand up independently while breaking the barriers in the industry.

Resumen

Cuando la pandemia de COVID-19 azotó el mundo entero, la industria creativa se enfrentó a numerosos retos, como restricciones en las actividades y recortes presupuestarios. Estos obstáculos nos obligaron a superar nuestros límites para producir más contenido audiovisual digital y aprovechar nuestro trabajo artístico en el mundo online. Para sobrevivir a la nueva normalidad tras la pandemia, los artistas musicales deben reinventarse y convertirse en profesionales híbridos y multitarea. Ya no basta con actuar, sino que también es esencial dominar las herramientas tecnológicas y el trabajo de producción entre bastidores para tener éxito en esta industria.

Por otro lado, con el avance de las plataformas tecnológicas, concretamente YouTube, los vídeos musicales siempre han sido esenciales para que los artistas muestren su trabajo en esta era digital. Muchos profesionales del cine han llevado a cabo este tipo de investigación en la industria cinematográfica; sin embargo, solo unos pocos actores industriales de la industria musical lo hacen. Como resultado, esto ha dejado muchos vacíos en la literatura. Aunque se han realizado estudios en el pasado, siguen siendo necesarios nuevos conocimientos actualizados y opiniones más detalladas de los expertos, ya que las prácticas de producción han innovado y el coste de producción se ha reducido. «Inwinccible 360 Z» es una investigación ampliada de las investigaciones de máster tituladas «Inwinccible 360 Y» e «Inwinccible 360 X» en Berklee Valencia.

La palabra «Inwinccible» es una combinación del nombre de la investigadora, «Wincci», con la palabra «Invincible» (invencible), lo que indica un movimiento imparable a lo largo del viaje. Esta versión ampliada incluye una investigación exploratoria integrada basada en la práctica de la investigadora, que gira en torno al movimiento feminista. Históricamente, los vídeos musicales han estereotipado a las mujeres como símbolos sexuales y la producción de vídeos musicales solía estar dominada por hombres. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de esta investigación es romper con la cosificación al ilustrar la transformación de la investigadora, que pasó de ser una artista reina de belleza a productora de vídeos musicales. Además, la propia investigadora

producirá cinco vídeos musicales que se publicarán en tiempo real. El objetivo es motivar a más artistas femeninas a independizarse y romper las barreras del sector.

Resum

Quan la pandèmia de la COVID-19 va colpejar el món sencer, la indústria creativa es va enfrontar a nombrosos reptes, com restriccions en les activitats i retallades pressupostàries. Aquests obstacles ens van obligar a superar els nostres límits per produir més contingut audiovisual digital i aprofitar la nostra obra artística en el món online. Per sobreviure a la nova normalitat després de la pandèmia, els artistes musicals han de reinventar-se i convertir-se en professionals híbrids i multitarea. Ja no n'hi ha prou amb actuar, sinó que també és essencial dominar les eines tecnològiques i la feina de producció darrere dels escenaris per triomfar en aquesta indústria. D'altra banda, amb l'avanç de les plataformes tecnològiques, concretament YouTube, els vídeos musicals sempre han estat essencials perquè els artistes mostren la seua obra en aquesta era digital. Molts professionals del cinema han dut a terme aquest tipus d'investigació en la indústria cinematogràfica; no obstant això, només uns pocs actors de la indústria musical ho fan. Com a resultat, això ha deixat molts buits en la literatura. Encara que s'han realitzat estudis en el passat, es necessiten nous coneixements actualitzats i opinions més detallades dels experts, ja que les pràctiques de producció s'han innovat i el cost de producció s'ha reduït. «Inwinccible 360 Z» és una investigació ampliada de les investigacions de màster titulades «Inwinccible 360 Y» i «Inwinccible 360 X» a Berklee València.

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La paraula «Inwinccible» és una combinació del nom de la investigadora, «Wincci», amb la paraula «Invincible» (invencible), que indica un moviment imparable al llarg del viatge. Aquesta versió ampliada inclou una investigació exploratòria integrada basada en la pràctica

de la investigadora, centrada en el moviment feminista. Històricament, els vídeos musicals han estereotipat les dones com a símbols sexuals i la producció de vídeos musicals solia estar dominada per homes. Per tant, l'objectiu d'aquesta investigació és trencar amb la cosificació al il·lustrar la transformació de la investigadora, que va passar de ser una artista reina de bellesa a productora de vídeos musicals. A més, la mateixa investigadora produirà cinc vídeos musicals que es publicaran en temps real. L'objectiu és motivar més artistes femenines a independitzar-se i trencar les barreres del sector.

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Lastly, I hope this research will help more artists and producers to be independent and cost independent in building your dream artistic journey.

Once again, thank you God sending me this crazy but fruitful journey. This is just the beginning for more masterpieces to come. ¡Hasta Luego la Grammy!

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0.0 INTRODUCTION

"There is a need to generate appropriate discourses to convince assessors and policymakers that within the context of studio-based research, innovation is derived from methods that cannot always be pre-determined, and outcomes of artistic research are necessarily unpredictable" (Candy & Edmonds, 2018, p. 65).

This PhD aims to produce five new music videos during Covid and post-Covid. Being an experienced recording artist for more than 15 years and a music video producer for five years, this doctoral research aims to develop my creative practice by conducting practice-based research of the music and video production process. Also, I attempt to write my thesis in autoethnography field notes manner as this could illustrate my production processes and experience in the real-world settings.

This thesis will illustrate my journey from a beauty queen towards an all-rounder 360 producer artist which will be journalized in a few chapters. On the other hand, this practice-based PhD thesis started in 2019, towards the end of my post-master studies program at Berklee Valencia. After successfully training with my post-master project, I resumed my academic study at the University of Polytechnic Valencia. This pushed me to seek further enhancement in my Music Video production skills. The name "Inwinccible" is a combination of my own name Wincci with the word invincible which means too strong to be defeated. This also signifies a strong feminist empowerment of a female artist-producer identity in this challenging artistic industry. According to a recent study on representation and equality in the music industry, up to date there are only 6.5 % of producers were female while approximately 93.5 % were male dominated (Patrick Leu, 2024).

This thesis took me a long time to complete as it involves real world production, collaboration with the media and also, I was teaching at the same time. However, with strength, determination, and hard work I decided to push it through. Before proceeding to the next section, it is crucial to explain some background about music video production and some history surrounding it.

Music video production is a series of processes integrating creative, technical, and commercial elements to bring musical compositions to life visually (Vernallis *et al.*, 2019). Music videos allow an audience to enjoy songs in an audiovisual format (JN Wilson *et al.,* 2022). They are also an essential medium for promotional or artistic purposes (Keazor & Wubbena, 2010).

Music videos' origins can be traced to the mid-20th century, with early experiments synchronizing visuals with sound. When MTV (Music Television Video) was introduced in the 1980s, it greatly impacted popular music, visual style, and culture (Jones, 2005b). MTV has influenced people to perceive music through a visual method (Slee, 2017). This evolution significantly shifted how fans engaged with music and artists by emphasizing the visual complementing the audio experience (Frith & Zagorski, 2012).

Since the 1980s, music videos have exploded on TV channels; today, almost all music videos are on YouTube. The days of MTV sped up research in several areas of academia, including the audiovisual approach to music video studies and the effect of music videos on society and culture (Korsgaard, 2019). Since the relevance of television, music videos have become the most visible and essential form of media.

With cross-media integration, music videos are often integrated with other forms of media, such as film, fashion, and advertising, which blur the lines between various artistic disciplines and lead to new opportunities for collaboration and creativity (Oham & Ejike, 2024).

Music videos have evolved tremendously, which signifies a progression or transformation of visuals, storytelling, and artistic style. As music and visual mediums evolve, music videos also grow in their production techniques, ideas, themes, and impact (Kinskey, 2014). For instance, with technological advancement, music videos have evolved from simple performance recordings into elaborate productions featuring special effects, CGI (Computer Generated Imagery), and innovative techniques (Burns & Hawkins, 2019). On the other hand, many music videos convey more profound messages that incorporate surrealism, symbolism, or even hidden meaning to engage viewers deeply (Keazor, 2018a). The narrative of the music video had indeed become much more complex.

On the other hand, with the rise of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies (Baron, 2016), music videos are now being viewed much more interactively or immersively, which allows viewers to explore virtual environments or interact with the content in innovative ways (Crofton et al., 2019).

Also, music videos have increasingly become platforms or mediums for artists to express social or political commentary that address essential issues such as inequality, injustice, and environmental concerns (Nikunen, 2018).

Besides that, there has also been a growing emphasis on diversity and inclusion in music videos, with artists using their platforms to showcase a broader range of cultures, identities, and experiences (Burgess *et al.*, 2018).

Also, while high-budget music videos still exist, there has been a rise in DIY (Do It Yourself). DIY artists are self-sufficient through the three main perspectives: artistic, managerial, and information systems (Oliver, 2010). These artists usually embark on a much more sustainable lower-budget production (*ibid).*

Music videos are significant in contemporary society, serving as artistic expression and commercial tools that shape and reflect cultural trends and influences. Their importance extends beyond entertainment, influencing how audiences experience and interact with music in the digital age. As it evolved, artists, directors, and producers must push the boundaries of creativity and innovation to provide new findings to captivate and inspire the next generation of audiences worldwide.

YouTube, the largest and most popular video streaming platform, has garnered billions of users worldwide, making videos accessible worldwide (Dasovich-Wilson *et al.,*2024). According to Global Media Insights (2024), the top 10 most viewed videos are all music videos, ranging from popular to kids' animation music videos. Undeniably, we must utilize and be aware of all these advancing platforms which new producers could distribute their music videos and hence providing more chances for female producers.

0.1 Motivations

My research is a personal artistic urge to encourage more recording artistes to push beyond performance boundaries and to step into the production in order to take charge in more sphere in the industry while being sustainable and prolonged the longevity in the creative industry. Also is a feminism empowerment in order to encourage more female artist to take up production roles.

On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant disruptions alongside ongoing economic challenges such as inflation. It is imperative for recording artists to take a more proactive role in navigating and addressing these difficult times. Increased artist-led production initiatives could serve as a valuable strategy for resilience and innovation within the industry.

0.2 Hypothesis

The main hypothesis will be creative resilience through Practice-Based Methods. In the midst of socio-economic crisis especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, a practice-based research methodology which focus on low- budget audiovisual production would foster sustainable artistic creativity while providing alternatives to traditional, high-cost music video models.

Besides the main hypothesis, it is also important to have some complimentary purpose for this thesis. This thesis incorporates some feminism ideas by engaging in artistic creation as scholarly inquiry which empowers feminism movement via sharing of knowledge through doing, feeling and sharing artistic outcome.

Furthermore, it is important to reframe the role of artists in this new era. In adopting a scholarly working method that incorporates self-reflexivity, interdisciplinary research, and socially engaged practice, artists are repositioned as both creators and critical cultural agents responding to systemic challenges in the music industry.

0.3 Objective

A scholarly working method in times of crisis is a reflective, practice-based approach that combines critical inquiry with hands-on experimentation to foster artistic creativity and innovation. This method leverages the principles of practice as research where creative production itself becomes both the subject and mode of investigation in order to respond adaptively to the challenges affecting the music industry, such as those caused by pandemics, inflation, or systemic disruption.

In this framework, artists engage in iterative cycles of creation, documentation, analysis, and theoretical contextualization. Emphasis is placed on low budget, resource-conscious audiovisual production, utilizing accessible tools and digital platforms for distribution and dissemination. By prioritizing authentic and simple storytelling, collaborative teams and experimental formats.

Crucially, this working method will central feminism values which foster collaboration over competition, inclusivity, care ethics, and the amplification of marginalized voices. Through iterative cycles of creation, critical reflection, and dissemination, artists especially women and gender-diverse creators are empowered to producer artistic artefacts to produce and share narratives that challenge patriarchal structures and offer alternative visions of cultural production.

By embracing limitation as a site of innovation, this scholarly method not only facilitates the development of artistically rich and socially engaged work but also reimagines the infrastructures of the music and audiovisual industries toward more equitable and feminist futures.

Lastly, it aims go beyond to break away traditional artist roles by reinventing into more responsibilities by artist and hence encouraging the rise of artist-led production.

0.3.1 Sub Objectives

- To analyze the role of practice-based artistic research in generating new forms of knowledge, creative strategies, and communicative aesthetics relevant to crisis contexts.

- To explore and document low-budget audiovisual production techniques that support the creation of high-impact artistic works within constrained or disrupted industry conditions.
- To foster interdisciplinary collaboration and experimentation between artists, researchers, and media in response to systemic challenges in music and media production.
- To assess the accessibility and sustainability of low-cost production tools and platforms for independent artists responding to shifting industry dynamics.
- To empower women and gender-diverse artists through accessible, low-cost creative strategies that challenge dominant industry standards and gatekeeping structures.
- To propose sustainable, feminist-driven models of artistic creation and distribution, offering ethical and resilient alternatives to commercial production frameworks in the music industry.

0.4 Theoretical Basis

A music video (MV) is a short film that integrates a song with imagery and is produced for promotional or artistic purposes (Railton, 2011). Music videos had been integrating themselves with the expansion of new social media networks such as Myspace, which was founded in 2003; Facebook, which was established in 2004; YouTube, which was launched in 2005; Twitter in 2006; and Instagram in 2010 and this was accompanied by the evolving music technology such as mp3 sound files, mp3 players, smartphones, and tablets (Hawkins & Burns, 2019).

Besides that, music videos are created to promote and support the song's sales (Lingham & Theorell, 2009). In modern times, music videos have become an essential favorite pastime due to their conciseness, convenience, and ability to bring audio and visual experiences to audiences (Thomas, 2014). Music videos are being made and used as a marketing tool to promote music recordings (Ekimov, 2021). They have also evolved as a tie-in marketing campaign for brands and products (Iliya, 2020).

On the other hand, the rich visual representations inside a music video are also commonly used by artists to market hit songs (Lamerichs, 2015). Moreover, it is also a bridge for music artists to connect their art to the world (Lee & Nguyen, 2020). Record labels release music videos on free-to-view media-sharing sites (Edmond, 2014).

The music video is a powerful medium that shapes popular culture, music consumption, and artistic expression (Shuker, 2012). Music videos often use iconography and symbolism to create visual metaphors that resonate with audiences (Arnold et al., 2017). The incorporation of symbols leads to the construction of meaning and cultural significance (Vernallis, 2004a).

Music videos have become an artifact for creative collaboration among musicians, directors, dancers, and visual artists (Cook, 2019). The evolution of audio visual also drove innovations in cinematography, in which directors could experiment with visual techniques, camera movements, and storytelling approaches, which impacted broader trends in filmmaking (Brown, 2016; Rees, 2019).

Music videos have also become important in marketing and promoting musical content (Coronel & Irimias, 2023). The visual component magnifies the artist's brand, contributing to streams (Hagen, 2020) and music royalties and shaping public perceptions (Oliveira, 2023). Also, online platforms such as YouTube have transformed music video distribution (Cayari, 2015). Artists can instantly reach global audiences, impacting the dynamics of fame and fandom (Jung, 2011).

Moreover, music videos often incorporate advertising and brand partnerships as extra revenue sources (Davtyan, 2017). Also, with the rise of streaming platforms, music videos have become an essential source of revenue for artists and labels (Bender et al., 2021).

Successful music videos will contribute to an artist's overall branding, leading to increased popularity and endorsement or product placement opportunities (Craig et al., 2017). Economic success in music videos is also influenced by industry trends, including the shift in consumer preferences (Wikstrom, 2020), technological advancements, and the evolving landscape of copyright and licensing (Peukert & Windisch, 2024). Digitalizing music videos has reshaped the industry's economic models; hence, music video production has become essential for artists (Negus, 2019; Kretschmer & Peukert, 2020).

Besides economic success, music videos have played a crucial role in reshaping and reflecting cultural narratives, lifestyles, and languages (Johannson et al., 2017). Music videos have influenced audiences throughout different generations and visually represent cultural identities (Bennet & Rogers, 2016; Bennet, 2017). The visual storytelling and cultural narratives fostered a sense of connection and representation for the country and communities (Chan, 2022). Music videos also often reflect societal norms and values (Arnorld *et al*., 2017). This has led to artists becoming cultural trendsetters or icons by shaping how audiences express themselves via clothing, hairstyles, and more (Djurić & Ornati, 2024).

On the other hand, music videos often portray female as the symbol of sex and desire. Which stereotypes a definition of women (M Gotz, 2017). From the 1980s MTV era to the early 2000s, females were often depicted via a male's perspective (*ibid*). Hence, the feminism approach had disrupted and change the trend by pushing more female artist to produce their own music video (Gwendolyn, 2017). Some successful female icons are Beyonce who is a self-proclaimed feminist who is widely idolized by young girls and women internationally and Taylor Swifts who is an all-rounder singer-song writer which empower young girls through her music videos (Lindholm.S, 2022).

0.5 Methodology

0.5.1 Practice-Based Research

Practice-based research represents an innovative methodological approach that integrates creative practice with scholarly inquiry. It fosters intercultural dialogue and community engagement, thereby bridging the traditional divide between the arts and sciences (Burnard et al., 2017). This form of artistic research not only encompasses the creative process but also critically examines the resulting artefacts, contributing to a more profound understanding of professional and artistic practices (Ross, 2022). Furthermore, practice-based research plays a pivotal role in the development of new conceptual frameworks and methodologies, thereby generating original and practice-led knowledge (Candy & Edmonds, 2018).

Selecting an appropriate methodology is essential for producing meaningful and relevant insights within contemporary research contexts. This study adopts a qualitative research design,

which is well suited to the research objectives. Qualitative research is inherently contextual, emphasizing data collection over extended periods within naturalistic settings (Fossey et al., 2002).

The practice-based methodology is particularly appropriate for this investigation, as it facilitates the integration of theory and practice while promoting critical reflection on the researcher's own professional experiences. This approach supports a nuanced exploration of music video production during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, informed by both artistic practice and academic inquiry.

0.5.2 Data Collection

This practice-based research project will involve the creation of five music videos, with the researcher serving as the primary artist. Throughout the creative process, autoethnographic field notes will be systematically documented to capture reflexive insights and personal experiences. In addition to the creative outputs, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with five industry experts to gain professional perspectives on music video production. Furthermore, each video will be observed for one-month post-release on YouTube to analyze audience engagement and reception.

0.5.3 Music Videos Selection

To determine the most appropriate music video styles for production, a SWOT analysis of the artist will be conducted. This approach is informed by the understanding that popular music videos often emphasize the artist's iconography as a central visual and narrative focus (Goodwin, 2005). In this research, the primary artist featured will be the researcher, as illustrated in Diagram 3.0. Following the SWOT analysis, five suitable music video genres will be selected from the *Top 100 Most Viewed Music Videos on YouTube* (Statista, 2020). The final selection of genres will also be influenced by the availability of resources and the budget allocated during each stage of production (Chollisni et al., 2022).

0.5.4 Artist Biography

Figure 1: Artist's Biography

As demonstrated in Figure 1, Dr. Soo Wincci is a multidisciplinary artist and academic whose career spans music, television, and higher education. She gained national recognition after being crowned Miss World Malaysia in 2008 and subsequently represented Malaysia in the Miss World pageant held in South Africa. Notably, she was a semi-finalist in both the Top Model and Talent segments of the competition. In 2009, she released her debut album, featuring songs in English, Malay, and Chinese, marking the beginning of her music career.

Soo Wincci's music garnered significant attention in Taiwan, particularly as her songs became theme music for popular dramas. This recognition earned her the title «Queen of Taiwan Drama Theme Songs». In addition to her music career, she has been active in acting, television hosting, and live performances, including incorporating aerial arts and dance into her work. Her linguistic fluency in English, Malay, and Chinese has allowed her to maintain a versatile presence across multiple markets in Asia.

Academically, Soo holds a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from the University of Reading (UK), an MBA from the University of the Sunshine Coast (Australia), and a PhD in Business

Administration from Open University Malaysia, for which she received a scholarship. She completed her PhD in 2016, successfully passing her viva voce on May 31st of that year.

In 2017, she was accepted into the Berklee College of Music in Valencia, Spain, where she pursued a Master's degree in Music Production, Innovation, and Technology. She graduated in 2018 and continued with a Post-Master's Fellowship at Berklee in 2019. That same year, she was awarded two accolades by the Malaysia Book of Records: "Beauty Queen with the Most Achieved Degrees" and "Recording Artist with the Most Achieved Degrees." Subsequently, she was accepted into the Polytechnic University of Valencia to pursue a second PhD.

Between 2008 and 2020, Dr. Soo Wincci released over 70 songs in multiple languages and participated in more than 100 television dramas, films, and entertainment programs across Malaysia and Taiwan.

0.5.5 Artist SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis which is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats—is a widely recognized strategic planning tool used in both organizational and personal contexts (Chermack & Kasshanna, 2007). It serves as a valuable framework for identifying internal and external factors that can influence decision-making and strategic development. In the context of creative industries, particularly music video production, a SWOT analysis of the artist can inform a competitive artistic strategy. By critically evaluating the artist's personal brand, iconography, and positioning within the market, more informed decisions can be made regarding the selection of appropriate music video genres, narratives, and aesthetic directions. The artist for this study who is Soo Wincci's SWOT analysis, is presented in Table 1.

Strength	**Weakness**
• Soo Wincci is highly educated • Soo Wincci is multi-talented • Soo Wincci is multi-linguistic • Soo Wincci already had track of production records. • Soo Wincci already had an existing market in Asia in terms of singing, acting and hosting.	• Soo Wincci's age is high as compared to all new artists in Asia. • Soo Wincci had left the entertainment industry for almost 5 years for her studies. • Soo Wincci dance skills are not her forte.
Opportunity	Threat
• Soo Wincci can venture into various markets. • Soo Wincci can sing in various languages. • Soo Wincci can easily get into various TV shows or performances. • Soo Wincci can act, write, compose, and produce. • Soo Wincci can self-manage.	• Strong competition from a lot of new artists. • Budget Constraint. • Limited market in back in hometown in Malaysia. • Lack of a professional team.

Table 1: Artist's SWOT Analysis

In terms of strength, Soo Wincci is highly flexible and suitable for various genres of music videos. Soo Wincci had already had existing fans and media support back in Malaysia, Taiwan and China. Her versatile figure and talent allow her to write, compose, act, or dance in her work. However, she is relatively older than majority of the young artist in Malaysia or Asia. Pop dance skill is not her forte and she already left the entertainment industry five years.

On the other hand, Soo Wincci had loads of opportunities in singing, acting and hosting back in Asia. She is also a prominent figure with available fans support and market. She can sing in various languages and can even self-compose, act, write, and produce. She also can self-manage herself and be swift in her work. In terms of threats, there is loads of strong competition from new artists. There's also budget, team and market constraint in producing music videos.

0.5.6 Music Video Genre Selection

An analysis of the 100 most-watched music videos on YouTube revealed that the most prevalent genres were dance tracks, children's songs, film theme songs, emotionally driven ballads, and narrative-based music videos (Statista, 2020). To ensure alignment with both the artist's established iconography and current trends in the global music industry, a strategic proposal was developed based on a comprehensive SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. As a result, five distinct music video genres were identified that not only reflect the artist's identity but also position them competitively within the contemporary popular music market.

The five music video genres proposed are pointed out as below.

(i) Situational Song
(ii) Dance Song
(iii) Theme Song
(iv) Emotional Song
(v) Kid's Song

0.5.7 Autoethnography Field Notes

In this study, autoethnographic field notes will be employed to document all stages of the music video production process. Autoethnography is a qualitative research method in which the researcher draws on personal experience to explore its connection to broader cultural, political, and social meanings (Handerson, 2023). This approach enables a systematic reflection on the researcher's involvement in the industry, allowing for the integration of emotional depth and multiple perspectives into the research framework (Denzin, 2018). Characteristically, autoethnographic writing adopts the first-person narrative, using «I». To foreground the researcher's subjectivity and positionality (Denzin, 2018).

Within the context of practice-based research, researchers frequently immerse themselves in artistic environments, engaging directly with creative processes to gain an embodied understanding of the artistic context (Akimenko, 2018). Reflective practice constitutes a central component of this methodology, requiring researchers to critically examine the rationale behind their creative decisions and artistic practices (Michaels, 2021). Data collection through autoethnographic field notes, including personal reflections, provides in-depth insights into the thought processes and choices underpinning creative production (Poulos, 2013). For this research, field notes will serve as a primary form of documentation, supplemented by recordings, photographs, and video materials to support and enrich the data. This documentation will track the evolution of the work and help shape the research inquiry by capturing significant events and decisions throughout the production process.

Nevertheless, concerns regarding credibility and reliability are frequently raised in autoethnographic research. To ensure academic rigor and mitigate potential bias, data must be triangulated and critically examined, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness and validity of the research outcomes (McSweeney, 2021).

0.5.8 Industry Expert Interview

Autoethnography has frequently been criticized for its subjectivity and perceived self-indulgence (Cunliffe, 2009). To address these concerns and enhance the objectivity of this study, interviews with industry experts will be conducted. Integrating dialogical and interview-

based approaches allows researchers to engage in meaningful conversations with practitioners, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of professional insights and practices (Way et al., 2015). These methods enable exploration of current industry trends, creative strategies, and ongoing challenges within the music video production context (Shneiderman & Plaisant, 2006).

Moreover, engaging in dialogue with peers and experts contributes to the validation of interpretations and the refinement of analysis, enhancing the credibility and rigor of research findings. The evaluation of creative artifacts or processes through peer interviews allows experts to assess quality, originality, and relevance ultimately contributing to improved creative outcomes and sustained growth within the artistic industry. This evaluative and iterative process is vital in legitimizing creative practices within academic frameworks.

For this thesis, five expert producers from the music industry will be interviewed. The criteria used for their selection will be outlined in the following section, providing transparency and justification for their inclusion in the study.

0.5.9 Industry Expert Interview Selection Criteria

The use of structured interviews in this study is informed by Ripamonti et al.'s (2016) exploration of advancing action research toward reflexive practice. Structured interviews facilitate consistent data collection while allowing room for reflection and depth. However, the generation of theory from qualitative data can be complex, particularly when dealing with many cases. As Eisenhardt (1989) notes, analyzing data from more than ten cases can become overwhelming due to the substantial volume of information. In line with this, Ives and Rowley (2005) recommend that an optimal number of interview participants in case study research typically falls between five and ten to ensure manageability and depth of analysis.

Consequently, five peer producers with a minimum of five years of experience in the entertainment or media research sectors were selected. These individuals were chosen based on their subject-matter expertise, availability during the data collection phase, and willingness to offer diverse and critical perspectives on the issues under investigation. The professional background of each expert participant is outlined in the following section.

a) Respondent 1 (R1): Jeffrey Chiang is a managing producer and manager in a company called MM2, where he handles film production, shootings, and concerts across Malaysia, Taiwan, China, and Singapore. He has been working closely with various artists in the entertainment field for almost 8 years. He specializes in film song production and music video shooting.

b) Respondent 2 (R2): Wensyn Lai is a line producer who handles film production, music video, and drama shoots. She has worked in the industry for almost seven years and is currently the head of production at Dreamax Sdn Bhd. She manages production and artists for various shoots and deals with TV stations and cinema distribution.

c) Respondent 3 (R3): Jocelle Koh is a female music activist and senior music distributor at Believe Music, where she handles artists and labels across Asian and Asian territories. She also has her music podcast shows and is always aware of the trends in music growth, especially in the Asian market. She has been in this industry for almost six years.

d) Respondent 4 (R4): Tamim bin Faruq is an audio and visual lecturer at a multimedia university. In addition to teaching, he actively conducts audio and visual research. He is also a guitarist. He has been actively developing audio courses for the next generation and has won numerous research awards.

e) Respondent 5 (R5): Mun Fei Lim is a senior manager in an entertainment company called Trumpet. He organizes concerts, events, and showcases. He has worked with various Asian artists and has been in this industry for almost six years.

0.5.10 Interview Methods & Protocols

The researcher will begin by reviewing the backgrounds of potential producers to ensure their relevance and suitability for participation in the study. Once appropriate candidates are identified, formal permission will be sought to conduct interviews. Upon receiving consent, the researcher will initiate each interview by clearly outlining the purpose and significance of the research. To facilitate transparency and enhance the informants' understanding of the

process, each participant will be provided with a laminated copy of the interview questions. This approach ensures that respondents are well-informed and can engage thoughtfully with the topics discussed.

0.5.11 Interview Questions (IQ)

Five open-ended interview questions were posed to the five selected industry experts in the entertainment and media field. These questions were developed by expanding upon the central Research Questions (RQs), which were themselves derived from the main Research Objectives (ROs) of the study. While the questions served as a structured guide, participants were encouraged to speak freely and share insights beyond the scope of the predefined prompts. This flexible approach allowed for the emergence of rich, nuanced perspectives. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 40 minutes.

0.5.12 One Month Online Observation on YouTube

In addition to interviews and field notes, observation plays a critical role in validating data within practice-based research frameworks (Candy, 2006). The emergence of digital technologies and online platforms has significantly enhanced the ability to share and disseminate creative processes. For this study, YouTube will serve as the primary platform for observing audience engagement, specifically by tracking view counts one month after the release of each music video. The rationale for selecting YouTube as the main platform will be detailed in the following section.

Furthermore, audience feedback both positive and negative will be collected and tabulated to capture diverse perspectives from viewers interacting with the final artistic outputs. This approach will offer valuable insights into the reception and impact of the work, contributing to a deeper understanding of its effectiveness and informing the development of future creative projects.

0.5.13 Selection of Online Video Platform for Distribution & Observation

Based on the most recent data, YouTube remains the largest and most widely used platform for music video streaming, as illustrated in Diagram 1 (Wyzowl, 2023). It enables users to upload videos that can reach a global audience while also allowing for direct viewer engagement through likes, comments, and other forms of feedback. YouTube is widely recognized for its extensive and diverse user base, as well as its broad spectrum of content, making it an ideal platform for distributing and analyzing the reception of creative works in a global context.

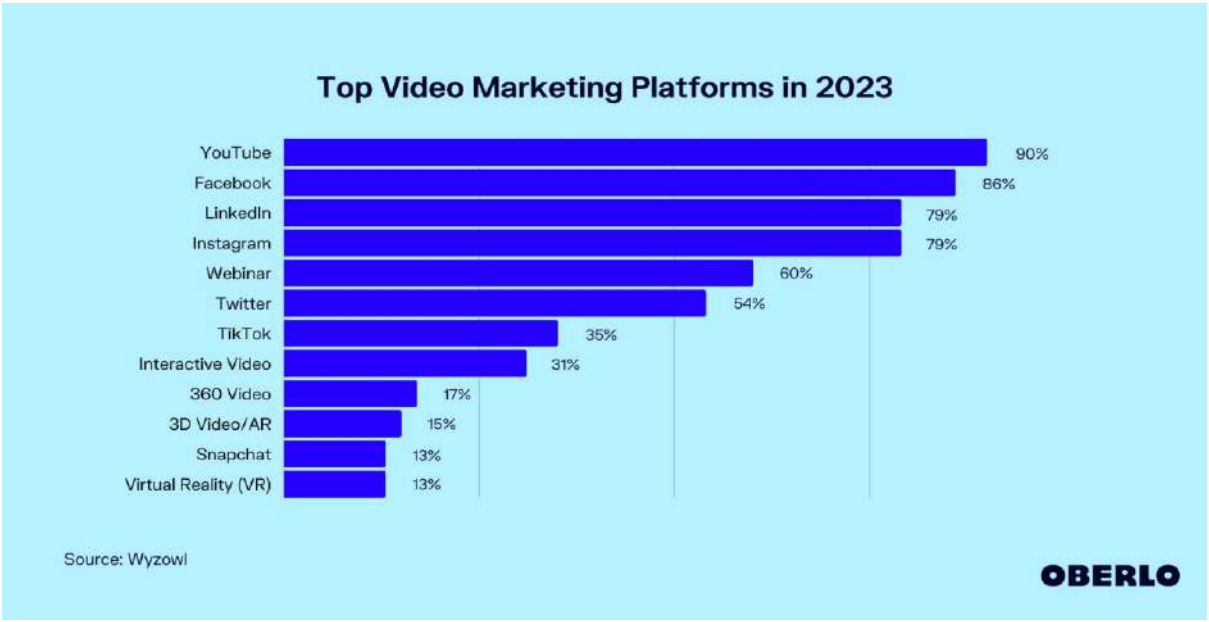

Diagram 1: Top Video Marketing Platforms in 2023

In addition, YouTube provides integrated analytical tools that are essential for measuring the performance and reach of each music video. These tools offer detailed metrics such as view counts, watch time, audience retention, engagement rates, and demographic information, all of which are valuable for assessing the success of creative content. Accordingly, each music video will be monitored for a period of one month following its release to gather meaningful insights into audience interaction and overall impact.

0.6 Structure of Content

In order to carry out the whole research, there must be a clear structure of content to demonstrate the flow of the whole study. As the researcher is from the industry, it is important to review the industry background and some previous studies. Hence Chapter I will be reviewing the industry background and analyzing some previous studies surrounding music video production.

Subsequently, Chapter II will be the methodology. This chapter illustrates the method being carried out and explains the methods. Chapter III, IV & V will be the author's autoethnography journey in order to illustrate her artistical journey in producing her music videos. Then Chapter VI will be the field notes and production of the five music videos being carried out.

Chapter VII will be the interviews of some industry experts in Malaysia as the author's main market is still in Malaysia. Also, one month of YouTube observation upon the release of each music video will be observed to collect insightful Datas. The last few chapters will illustrate all the research analysis, findings, discussion and conclusion. The structure of the whole thesis is illustrated below.

Chapter I: Industry Background Review & Previous Studies
Chapter II: Becoming Inwinccible (2008-2017)
Chapter III: Inwinccible 360 X (2017-2018)
Chapter IV: Inwinccible 360 Y (2018-2019)
Chapter V: Inwinccible 360 Z (2019-2025)
Chapter VI: Interviews & Observations
Chapter VII: Analysis
Chapter VIII: Findings
Chapter VIV: Discussion & Suggestion
Chapter X: 360 Professional Production Framework
Conclusions

Chapter I: INDUSTRY BACKGROUND REVIEW & PREVIOUS STUDIES

Music video production involves the integration of creative, technical, and commercial components to bring musical compositions to life visually (Vernallis, Herzog, & Richardson, 2019). This format allows audiences to experience songs through both auditory and visual channels and serves promotional and artistic functions (Wilson, McKinlay, & Smith, 2022; Keazor & Wubbena, 2010).

Historically, music videos can be traced back to mid-20th-century experimental audiovisual work. However, the launch of MTV in the 1980s revolutionized the medium by reshaping the cultural landscape of music and introducing a new visual-centric mode of music consumption (Jones, 2005b). As Slee (2017) argued, MTV encouraged audiences to interpret music visually, leading to an increased emphasis on aesthetic presentation. This marked a significant change in fan engagement, as visuals became a key component of how audiences interacted with artists and their work (Frith & Zagorski-Thomas, 2012).

Since the 1980s, music videos have proliferated on television and later transitioned to online platforms, most notably YouTube. This shift not only altered consumption patterns but also spurred academic inquiry into the audiovisual dynamics of music and their broader societal implications (Korsgaard, 2019). In the contemporary digital age, music videos remain one of the most accessible and influential forms of media.

Music videos are now deeply integrated with other creative fields, including cinema, fashion, and advertising. This cross-media integration facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration and fosters innovative storytelling approaches (Oham & Ejike, 2024). Technological advancements have elevated music videos from simple performance captures to complex productions featuring special effects, CGI, and conceptual narratives (Burns & Hawkins, 2019). These innovations have enabled artists to experiment with symbolism and surrealism, offering deeper interpretive experiences for viewers (Keazor, 2018).

Furthermore, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are introducing new dimensions to the format. These technologies enable interactive and immersive viewing, expanding the boundaries of audience engagement (Baron, 2016; Crofton, Pethrick, & Hughes, 2019). Beyond entertainment, music videos have also become platforms for sociopolitical commentary, tackling issues such as inequality, climate change, and systemic injustice (Nikunen, 2018). Increasingly, artists leverage the medium to champion diversity and inclusion by representing a wide range of cultures, identities, and lived experiences (Burgess, Green, Jenkins, & Hartley, 2018).

In tandem with high-budget productions, the rise of DIY (Do-It-Yourself) music videos has democratized the industry. Independent artists now manage creative, managerial, and technical elements of their content, often embracing cost-effective approaches that prioritize sustainability without sacrificing quality (Oliver, 2010).

Music videos are thus integral to modern cultural production, serving both expressive and commercial roles. They shape contemporary discourse, influence audience behaviors, and redefine music engagement in the digital era. Artists and producers are consistently challenged to push creative boundaries in order to resonate with evolving global audiences.

YouTube, as the world's largest video streaming platform, plays a pivotal role in this ecosystem. With billions of global users, it has become the principal venue for music video consumption. Recent data from Global Media Insights (2024) reveal that the top ten most-viewed videos on YouTube are all music-related, ranging from mainstream pop hits to animated children's songs (Dasovich-Wilson et al., 2024).

1.1 The Evolution and Cultural Significance of Music Videos

Before the rise of music videos (MVs) as an independent art form, the medium of music television played a foundational role in shaping the industry. Music Television (MTV), introduced in the United States in 1981, revolutionized the relationship between music and visual media, becoming a significant cultural and commercial force (Jones, 2005a). The expansion of digital media and technological innovations prompted a shift from traditional MTV-style programming to the more diversified and accessible format of music videos (Baron,

2016). Today, major institutions such as the Grammy Awards have adopted the term "music video" (MV) to represent this multifaceted artistic form (Zhang & Cui, 2023).

A music video is typically defined as a short film that combines music with visual imagery for promotional or artistic purposes (Railton, 2011). The growth of social media platforms—such as Myspace (2003), Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005), Twitter (2006), and Instagram (2010) alongside technological innovations such as MP3 players, smartphones, and tablets, played a pivotal role in the widespread dissemination and evolution of music videos (Hawkins & Burns, 2019).

Music videos have traditionally served to promote songs and support their commercial success (Lingham & Theorell, 2009). In contemporary contexts, they are widely regarded as a popular form of entertainment due to their brevity, visual appeal, and the fusion of audio-visual storytelling (Thomas, 2014). Beyond entertainment, music videos function as powerful marketing tools that contribute to the promotion of recordings and musical content (Ekimov, 2021). Furthermore, they have evolved into platforms for brand integration and product placement through strategic marketing partnerships (Iliya, 2020).

The visually rich nature of music videos enhances the promotion of hit songs by creating compelling narratives and branding opportunities (Lamerichs, 2015). MVs provide artists with a medium to connect their artistic identity to a global audience (Lee & Nguyen, 2020). Record labels often distribute MVs through free-to-view online platforms like YouTube to maximize visibility and accessibility (Edmond, 2014).

As a visual medium, music videos exert a significant influence on popular culture, shaping modes of consumption and artistic expression (Shuker, 2012). Iconography and symbolism are frequently employed in MVs to construct layered meanings and engage audiences on both emotional and intellectual levels (Arnold, Garcia, & Thompson, 2017; Vernallis, 2004b).

Collaboration is a core element of music video production, bringing together musicians, directors, choreographers, and visual artists to create unified artistic outputs (Cook, 2019). Advances in cinematography such as novel camera movements, editing styles, and visual

effects that have allowed directors to push creative boundaries, influencing trends across other visual media such as film and advertising (Brown, 2016; Rees, 2019).

The strategic use of visuals in MVs enhances artist branding and drives listener engagement through streaming platforms, which now play a crucial role in content distribution (Coronel & Irimias, 2023; Hagen, 2020). Platforms such as YouTube have enabled artists to achieve immediate global reach, altering the dynamics of celebrity, audience interaction, and fan culture (Cayari, 2015; Jung, 2011).

In addition to promoting music, MVs have emerged as monetized content through brand collaborations and advertisements (Davtyan, 2017). Streaming platforms further contribute to their commercial viability by generating revenue for artists and labels (Bender, Myers, & Cole, 2021).

Successful music videos reinforce artist branding and increase opportunities for endorsements and product placements (Craig, Liu, & Singh, 2017). Their economic impact is shaped by shifting industry trends, evolving audience preferences, and advancements in technology and licensing structures (Wikström, 2020; Peukert & Windisch, 2024). Digitalization has redefined the economic models of the music industry, with music videos becoming an essential component of artist promotion and revenue generation (Negus, 2019; Kretschmer & Peukert, 2020).

Beyond their economic significance, music videos contribute to cultural representation by reflecting and reshaping societal narratives, lifestyles, and identities (Johannson, Lee, & Ng, 2017). Through visual storytelling, MVs provide a sense of cultural belonging and visibility, connecting communities to national and global identities (Bennett & Rogers, 2016; Bennett, 2017; Chan, 2022). They often serve as visual reflections of social values, helping to shape trends in fashion, language, and behavior (Arnold et al., 2017; Djurić & Ornati, 2024).

Music videos also play a vital role in the globalization of music and cultural exchange (Kist & Verboord, 2018). The digital nature of MVs allows them to transcend geographical boundaries and engage audiences worldwide, thus facilitating cultural hybridity and cross-

cultural collaboration (Carr, 2021; Walzer, 2017). Global accessibility enables emerging artists to gain recognition regardless of their geographical origins (Kim, Y., & Suk, H., 2021).

The influence of MTV has led to extensive academic discourse on the visual and commercial aspects of music videos. Scholars have explored diverse topics such as the commercial imagery of MTV-era videos (Jones, 2005), postmodern stylistic analysis (Kaplan, 2016), representations of race and gender (Gow, 1996), and portrayals of violence (Walker, 1987).

One of the most influential theoretical frameworks for understanding music video production was proposed by Andrew Goodwin in his seminal work *Dancing in the Distraction Factory: Music Television and Popular Culture* (1992). Goodwin offered an interdisciplinary approach that combines musicological and sociological perspectives to analyze the structure and meaning of music videos. According to Goodwin (1992, pp. 98–130), there are several key components that characterize popular music video production:

a) **Relationship between music and visuals** – Music videos often exhibit a direct correlation between the lyrics and the visual content, either through literal illustration, amplification, or disjuncture.
b) **Genre characteristics** – Music videos tend to reflect the conventions of the genre they represent, such as performance-based visuals for rock or dance routines in pop.
c) **Visual and narrative style** – The visuals often follow a fragmented, non-linear narrative structure, emphasizing style, movement, and spectacle over traditional storytelling.
d) **Intertextuality** – Many music videos reference other texts, including films, television, or other music videos, creating layers of meaning through cultural allusions.
e) **Notions of the star image** – Music videos play a key role in constructing and reinforcing the persona of the music artist as a brand.
f) **Voyeurism and the gaze** – The use of close-ups, objectification, and voyeuristic perspectives is particularly notable, especially in the representation of gender and sexuality.

Goodwin's theory continues to serve as a foundational lens for critically analyzing the interplay of music, image, and identity in contemporary music video culture.

Goodwin's (1992) foundational research significantly influenced subsequent generations of scholars, encouraging them to further investigate the musical and visual codes embedded in specific musical genres, as well as the subjectivities portrayed in music videos. Following this, academic discourse evolved to explore the interconnections among various media layers within music videos (Cook, 1998).

Entering the new millennium, rapid technological developments transformed the music industry, prompting a shift in scholarly focus toward the implications of these changes on music video production, distribution, and consumption (Kellner & Durham, 2001). These inquiries often employed qualitative methodologies, including observation, interviews, and participatory creative practices (Kellner & Durham, 2001).

Carol Vernallis (2004) introduced a novel analytical framework for music videos, employing an empirical approach that synthesized lyrical, musical, and visual aesthetics to reveal expressive dimensions in popular music videos. Similarly, Watson (2016) examined how rural and urban contexts shaped the identity construction of country songwriters, with a particular focus on the persona of Dolly Parton.

Collectively, these studies have laid an essential foundation for contemporary research, underscoring the necessity of ongoing scholarly inquiry into music video aesthetics and industry practices. As the media landscape continues to evolve, new investigations are required to offer updated theoretical and empirical insights into this dynamic field.

1.2 Covid 19 & Social Media Acceleration in Music Video

The COVID-19 pandemic, in conjunction with the advancement of social media, has precipitated substantial shifts in the entertainment industry, directly influencing music video production, consumption, and financial aspects (Chollisni et al., 2022). Among the most impacted sectors is traditional music production and orchestration, which has been considered

a crisis of spatial materiality (Hurwitz & Krumhansl, 2021). The enforcement of social distancing measures further accelerated the trend of virtual collaborations and remote music video production (Hansen et al., 2021). Moreover, artists and production teams utilized social media platforms to foster cross-border collaborations, ushering in a new era of creative interaction (Ajiva et al., 2024).

The pandemic-induced lockdowns led to a surge in social media consumption, with platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok seeing increased user engagement (Woźniak, 2021). This shift in consumer behavior prompted artists to tailor content specifically for these platforms (Encheva, 2022). Despite the challenges, the pandemic also spurred innovation in visual storytelling, with artists incorporating technologies such as animation, augmented reality (AR), and interactive elements to boost engagement across online platforms (O'Meara & Szita, 2021).

Conversely, the surge in social media consumption facilitated the virality of music videos, making social media an indispensable tool for artists and producers (Radovanovic, 2022). The pandemic further highlighted the necessity for artists to master digital monetization strategies, moving away from traditional platforms and exploring revenue streams through ad partnerships, virtual concerts, and fan subscriptions (Ernst, 2024). As a result, social media became a crucial promotional tool and revenue source (Nur et al., 2022).

The pandemic's impact extended beyond immediate challenges to catalyze technological advancements in music video production (Hansen & Fuhrmann, 2022). Innovations in filming and editing techniques modernized the process, offering greater flexibility in adapting to the constraints of the post-pandemic world (Jiang & Wang, 2024).

However, the economic ramifications of COVID-19 also had a significant impact on the music industry. Budget reductions and declining revenue forced artists, producers, and directors to rethink their financial strategies (Naseer et al., 2023). The economic climate led to the emergence of new models for production, where many artists adopted dual roles as producers

or directors to reduce costs, while downsizing production scales to accommodate post-pandemic inflation (Umar et al., 2021).

The post-COVID era has also emphasized virtual experiences and digital engagement across sectors (Zhang, 2023), which has reshaped the music video landscape. In response to the overwhelming amount of online content, artists and creators have become increasingly innovative in their efforts to capture audience attention. This has led to the emergence of visual albums and new cost-saving approaches, such as producing music videos directly for YouTube (Lufiana & An Adzhani, 2023). In sum, the pandemic has prompted a transformation in music video production, with cost-effective strategies, digital-first models, and creative approaches defining the new industry landscape.

1.3 YouTube the Most Popular Video Sharing Platform

According to statistics, YouTube is the most popular video-sharing platform globally, with 2.6 billion users worldwide (Statista, 2024). The phenomenon of music videos garnered billions of views on YouTube and has become an influencing aspect of contemporary digital culture (Burgess & Green, 2018). According to Statista (2024), the Top 10 of the most viewed videos on YouTube are all music videos, as shown in Diagram 2.

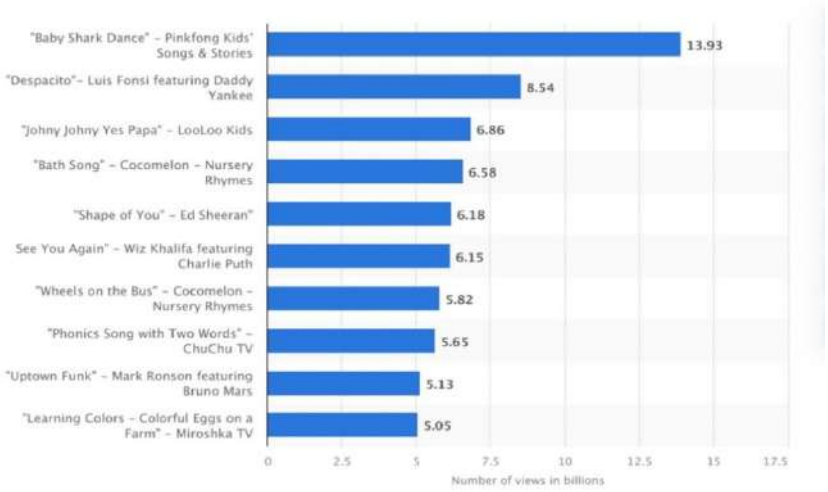

Diagram 2: Top 10 of the most viewed videos on YouTube

The music video, as a visual medium, has a unique capacity to transcend linguistic and cultural barriers, positioning it as a universal form of communication compared to traditional film (Chaume, 2016). This global accessibility is further enhanced by platforms like YouTube, which enable music videos to reach a wide and diverse audience, contributing to astronomical view counts and broadening the video's impact across different cultural contexts (Jirsa & Korsgaard, 2019).

Successful music videos often owe their prominence to strategic release and promotion strategies. These include premieres, artist collaborations, and cross-platform promotion, all of which serve to maximize initial viewership and sustain long-term visibility (Meier, 2017). Such strategies are vital for creating buzz around the video's release, ensuring that the content remains relevant and continuously viewed.

In addition to professional promotion strategies, fan engagement on social media platforms plays a significant role in maximizing the reach of music videos. Social media's interactive nature fosters direct communication between artists and fans, encouraging sharing, comments, and discussions that increase the visibility and viewership of videos on platforms such as YouTube (Khan, 2017; Tribulski, 2020). The viral potential of these interactions is crucial, as it allows fans to amplify the music video's reach beyond the immediate circle of followers.

The importance of cinematic visual storytelling in attracting viewers cannot be overstated. Music videos that feature high production values and innovative storytelling techniques are more likely to engage audiences, prompting repeated views and increased word-of-mouth promotion (Alexander, 2020; McErlean, 2018). High-quality, visually captivating music videos tend to garner a larger and more dedicated following, further solidifying their success.

Understanding YouTube's algorithmic recommendations is another critical factor in maximizing the visibility of music videos. The platform algorithms suggest content based on individual user preferences, and music videos that align with these preferences are more likely to appear in recommended feeds. Consequently, a comprehensive understanding of how these algorithms work is essential for artists and producers seeking to optimize their content for discoverability (Alvarado et al., 2020; Bonini & Gandini, 2019). Artists who effectively

navigate these algorithmic mechanisms can significantly enhance their chances of reaching broader audiences.

Collaborations between artists serve as another key element in enhancing music video viewership. By partnering with other musicians, artists can tap into each other's fan bases, creating a cross-promotional effect that expands the video audience. Such collaborations also introduce an element of surprise and excitement, which can further engage viewers (Michel & Willing, 2020). This dynamic often leads to the sharing of views and increased fan interaction across platforms, thereby fostering a culture of collective viewership.

The virality of a music video, particularly its inclusion in YouTube's "Trending" section, can dramatically increase its view count. Videos that resonate with users and gain traction on social media are more likely to become viral, receiving widespread attention (Cui et al., 2024). Additionally, user-generated content, such as fan remixes or covers, can amplify the video's reach and contribute to its viral status (Jatain & Dahiya, 2022). Understanding the dynamics of viral trends and leveraging user-generated content are essential strategies for maximizing viewership.

The concept of views serves as a critical metric for assessing the popularity and success of a music video. YouTube uses view counts to gauge the level of engagement with a video. While repeated views contribute to this count, the platform imposes a limit of 4 to 5 views per account within a 24-hour period to ensure that the data reflects genuine user engagement (Onrec, 2023). These data points are invaluable for testing the popularity and long-term appeal of a music video.

In conclusion, the reach and success of music videos are influenced by a combination of strategic promotion, fan engagement, production quality, algorithmic recommendations, and viral dynamics. Understanding how these factors interact is crucial for artists and producers who aim to maximize the visibility and viewership of their content in an increasingly digital and competitive media landscape.

1.4 Music Video Concepts

The concept of music videos has undergone significant evolution, with diverse styles, formats, and narrative approaches emerging over time. The transformation of music videos is indicative of an ongoing interplay between technological advancement, artistic expression, and audience engagement (Vernallis, 2013a).

Traditional narrative music videos typically follow a linear storytelling format that complements the song's lyrics. This approach often incorporates characters, storylines, and cinematic techniques designed to enhance the audience's understanding of the music (Harrison, 2014; Vernallis, 2004a). In these videos, the narrative structure directly reflects the themes and messages conveyed by the song, creating a more immersive viewing experience.

In contrast, conceptual or abstract music videos prioritize visual aesthetics and artistic expression rather than relying solely on a narrative (Wingstedt, 2005). These videos often include surreal or avant-garde elements, inviting the audience to interpret the visuals subjectively. The emphasis here is on creating an experience that is open to personal interpretation, with the visuals serving as an extension of the song's emotional or thematic content (Jirsa & Korsgaard, 2023).

Interactive music videos, an emerging form of the medium, utilize technology to engage viewers more actively and directly (Martin & Martin, 2015). These videos may incorporate branching storylines, clickable elements, or immersive experiences that allow the audience to influence the narrative. This form of music video fosters a unique sense of agency and interaction, allowing viewers to shape the content they are engaging with (Auslander, 2019).

Another key form of music video is the animated music video, which employs animation techniques such as 2D, 3D, stop motion, or mixed media to convey the visual message (Perrott, 2020). Animation provides an opportunity for creative exploration beyond the limitations of live action videos and often complements the thematic elements of the song in a visually striking manner (Osgood, 2024).

Live performance and concert videos capture the energy and atmosphere of live musical performances, typically featuring footage from concerts, music festivals, or specially recorded

live sessions (Jirsa & Korsgaard, 2019b; Glitsos, 2018). These videos offer a window into the live experience, allowing audiences to feel as though they are attending the event in person, thus emphasizing the power of live music as an integral part of the music video landscape.

Lyrics music videos, which display the song's lyrics on screen, often incorporate creative typography, animations, or visualizations (Schindler, 2020; Vernallis et al., 2022). These videos enable the audience to connect more intimately with the song's lyrics, providing an additional layer of engagement. Lyrics videos have also become an important promotional tool for artists and are often used to boost the reach of the song in digital spaces (Moran et al., 2020).

One-shot or single-take music videos are another notable form, filmed without cuts or edits (Frierson, 2018). These videos often showcase technical precision and require skilled production choreography to create a seamless narrative or visual experience in one continuous shot (Tepina, 2015). The one-take format emphasizes the performance and coordination involved in creating complex, visually stunning sequences.

Mashup or remix videos combine visual elements from multiple sources to create a new narrative or visual experience (Cardillo et al., 2011). These videos may incorporate clips from other films, music videos, or cultural references, often using collage-like techniques to reinterpret the original content (Knobel et al., 2010). The mashup format allows for a playful, creative reimagining of existing media.

Slideshows, as a form of music video, typically consist of a series of images or photos set to music, often with creative transitions and special effects (Faulkner, 2006; Horak, 2014). While simple, this format can still provide an emotional connection to the music, especially when paired with visually striking images or personal content.

Dance music videos, which use dance and choreography to tell a story or convey a concept, are particularly popular among younger audiences (McPherson, 2018; Tsuchiad et al., 2019). These videos often emphasize movement and rhythm as an extension of the music, celebrating dance as a form of artistic expression.

Finally, VR (Virtual Reality) and AR (Augmented Reality) music videos represent the cutting edge of music video technology, providing immersive 360-degree or augmented visual experiences (Juul, 2018; Shafi et al., 2020). These videos aim to immerse the audience in a virtual environment that aligns with the music, creating a multisensory experience that goes beyond traditional music video formats (Turchet et al., 2021).

The diverse forms and concepts of contemporary music videos illustrate a dynamic intersection between artistic innovation, technological adaptation, and audience interaction. The ongoing evolution of these videos reflects broader shifts in how music is experienced in the digital age, particularly in terms of accessibility, creativity, and engagement. Multilingual pop songs, as a new development in music videos, will be explored in the next section to further understand the global trends shaping music video production and consumption.

1.5 Multilingual Pop Song

With the advancement of society, many individuals have become multilingual, a phenomenon referred to as multilingualism (Kennison, 2013). This development has had a profound impact on the global pop music industry, influencing the evolution of the genre and reshaping its dynamics over time.

One notable example of multilingual pop songs is «Macarena» which was performed in both Spanish and English and became a global sensation in the 1990s. Initially released by Los Del Rio in 1994 (Paredez, 2009), the song gained significant popularity within Spanish-speaking communities before transcending language barriers to achieve worldwide success. Its viral spread exemplifies the power of multilingual pop music to connect diverse audiences and create a universal cultural moment (Paredez, 2009).

Another prominent example is «Gangnam Style» by Psy, which combined Korean and English lyrics. The song's massive success, particularly on YouTube, marked a turning point in the global music scene (Lee & Kuwahara, 2014). Its viral success propelled it to become one of the most-viewed videos for several years, signaling the global potential of multilingual music in contemporary pop culture (Yum & Shim, 2016).

Multilingual pop songs and their accompanying music videos have become significant cultural phenomena, reflecting the increasingly globalized nature of contemporary popular music (Buschfedl et al., 2023). These songs often seamlessly incorporate multiple languages, with artists strategically choosing when and how to switch between languages to enhance both lyrical meaning and aesthetic appeal (Sarraeva, 2019). This blending of languages not only enriches the musical experience but also serves to connect listeners from various linguistic backgrounds (Nguyen, 2024).

The fusion of different languages in pop music can also reflect the hybrid identities of artists, which resonates with a broader, more diverse global audience (Jansen & Westphal, 2017). Furthermore, multilingual pop songs contribute to cultural exchange by blending elements from diverse linguistic and musical traditions, fostering a sense of shared global identity (Berger, 2014). This cultural fusion has become a hallmark of the modern pop music industry, with artists using language as a tool for expressing their unique identity while appealing to a global fanbase.

In addition to its cultural significance, multilingualism in pop music can also serve as a vehicle for social commentary. Many multilingual songs address global or social issues, reflecting the diversity of the world's experiences and promoting cultural awareness (Androutsopoulos, 2010). Music videos accompanying these songs often further emphasize the themes of diversity and cultural exchange, underscoring the importance of linguistic and cultural hybridity in the global music landscape (Dovchin, 2018). Multilingualism has also proven to be a strategic marketing tool, positioning songs for international success and broadening their appeal (Liadi, 2012).

Thus, multilingual pop songs represent a dynamic intersection of linguistic diversity, cultural expression, and global connectivity, reflecting the ways in which the music industry has adapted to a more interconnected world (Dovchin, 2018). Understanding the production process behind these music videos is essential for grasping the complexity of this genre and its significance in the contemporary cultural landscape.

1.6 Music Video Production

Music video production is an extensive process which transforms music into a visual story (Hawkins & Burns, 2019). It typically involves several distinct phases, including pre-production, production, and post-production, each contributing to the overall narrative and aesthetic of the final product.

The pre-production phase begins with conceptualizing the music video and estimating the budget (Gander, 2011). During this phase, artists, producers, directors, and creative teams collaborate to develop ideas that align with the song's meaning (Cook, 2018). This is followed by scriptwriting and storyboarding, which help formalize the production process (Hawkins & Burns, 2019). Directors or artists outline the scenes, camera angles, and transitions that guide the production team during the shoot (Rae & Irving, 2015). Additionally, artists undergo styling, training, or fitting for the shoot, while the producer organizes the budget, sponsorships, and other necessary elements for production (Karhumaa, 2021).

The production phase involves capturing the visual elements as outlined in the script (Burgess, 2013). The director works closely with artists, producers, cinematographers, and specialists to create the visual representation of the music (Burgess, 2014). Cinematographers utilize camera movements and framing techniques to visualize storytelling (Wert et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the producer ensures the process is executed according to the schedule (Jirsa & Korsgaard, 2019), and art directors and production designers collaborate to create the video's visual aesthetic, which includes designing sets, selecting locations, and aligning the visual elements with the overall concept (LoBrutto, 2002).

On set, the artists, cast, and dancers work together to create the music video concept (Dixon, 2015b). Artists often participate in the creative process to ensure their vision aligns with the direction and their personal branding (Meier, 2017). The dynamics of collaboration between these teams shape the final music video (Vernallis, 2013a).

Once all the footage is captured**,** post-production begins. Editors play a vital role in assembling the footage and shaping the final product (Vernallis, 2001b). In this stage, visual effects are added to enhance the visual appeal and reinforce storytelling (Higgin et al., 2016). Additionally,

color grading is employed to adjust the colors and contrast, setting the mood and tone of the video to achieve a cohesive visual style (Kim & Suk, 2016).

After the video is finalized, it is uploaded to distribution platforms like YouTube, where it premiered on a selected date. To build anticipation, teasers and promotional videos are often uploaded on social media before the official release (Simon, 2019). These platforms provide metrics, such as views, shares, and comments, which help measure audience engagement (Airoldi, 2021). Audience interaction plays a crucial role in the virality and success of a music video (Karpasitis, 2017).

However, in the post-COVID-19 era, many aspects of music video production have shifted, with increased reliance on virtual collaboration and remote production. Therefore, understanding how the production process has evolved in the context of the pandemic is crucial for analyzing current trends in music video production.

1.7 Strategies for Mitigating High Costs in Music Video Production

The high cost of music video production has long been a challenge for artists and the entertainment industry, a challenge that has been particularly exacerbated in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (Khlystova et al., 2022). Identifying the key factors contributing to these high costs is crucial for mitigating financial burdens (Brennan & Devine, 2020). Key factors often include hiring high-profile directors, creative teams, elaborate set designs, location expenses, special effects, and the rental of expensive equipment such as cameras (Hollander-Shabtai & Tzofi, 2022).

One solution to these challenges is the adoption of virtual production technologies, which include virtual sets and real-time rendering. These technologies provide a cost-effective alternative to traditional set designs, allowing for the creation of visually captivating environments without the need for extensive physical construction (Lama, 2024). Incorporating augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) elements in music videos can also reduce costs while providing immersive experiences that would otherwise require elaborate physical sets (Papadopoulos et al., 2021).

Collaboration between artists and production companies can further reduce individual costs (Schnugg & Song, 2020). Through joint ventures and co-productions, multiple parties can share resources, thereby reducing the financial burden on any one entity while still producing high-quality content (Bista, 2024).

In addition, embracing minimalism in storytelling can help reduce production costs by focusing on simple, yet impactful narratives (Suzuki, 2016). This approach can effectively convey emotion or meaning with minimal resources, offering a more cost-effective option for music video production (Shaviro, 2017). Similarly, a performance-focused approach, which emphasizes the artist's performance as the core element of the video (Assis, 2018), can help eliminate the need for elaborate sets, making it more affordable while still maintaining strong artistic content.

Leveraging online platforms like YouTube and social media for distribution has become a critical cost-saving measure, reducing the need for expensive traditional promotional methods while still reaching a global audience (Schwemmer & Ziewiecki, 2018). Moreover, the use of consumer-grade equipment and accessible tools (Mcdougal, 2020) fosters creativity and reduces reliance on costly production gear. Affordable or open-source video editing software further supports cost-effective post-production (Kostyukovskaya, 2017), allowing for creative, high-quality editing on a budget.

Set and costume designers can also reduce costs by employing innovative and resourceful methods, such as recycling props or designing minimalist sets (Vernallis, 2008). Strategic selection of affordable and accessible locations contributes further to lowering overall production costs. Additionally, efficient resource utilization, including the careful sourcing of props and costumes, can maximize visual impact while reducing expenses (Kanecki, 2024).

Another cost-effective strategy involves collaborating with emerging directors or students who may be willing to work for lower costs in exchange for experience (Toynbee, 2016). Additionally, artists and producers could make use of open-source equipment, software, and tutorials, empowering artists to self-produce music videos at a fraction of traditional costs (Boeva & Troxler, 2020).

Addressing the high cost of music video production has become even more crucial after COVID. A multifaceted approach that combines technological innovation**,** collaboration, and strategic use of digital platforms is necessary to meet the challenges faced by the industry (Viter, 2021). In the ever-changing landscape of the music industry, adopting low-cost production strategies has become a critical way for artists to create visually compelling content within budget constraints (Viter, 2021).

Low-cost production strategies not only help control budgets but can also enhance audience perception of authenticity, especially as DIY aesthetics resonate with viewers seeking genuine and relatable content (Jones, 2020). Despite challenges in visibility for low-budget music videos, strategic promotion can help ensure wider exposure, particularly for independent artists (Heliades & Lazakis, 2017). Furthermore, these low-cost approaches have proven to be a sustainable economic model in a post-pandemic world, allowing artists to continue producing creative visuals within budgetary limitations (Daniel, 2023).

Amid major policy changes**,** budget cuts, and unforeseen financial changes, revenues in the creative industry have significantly declined. As such, future research should focus on addressing these financial challenges to ensure that artists and production teams can thrive (Skaggs, 2023). Lastly, adopting DIY approaches and artist-led production models presents an innovative way to significantly reduce costs while maintaining creative autonomy. The following section of this literature review will explore further.

1.8 Artist Led Production

Traditionally, artists have to sign with labels for slavery contracts, which buy off their rights. In K-pop, the artist has the lowest status level in the money chain (Pratamasari, 2017), as shown in Diagram 3.

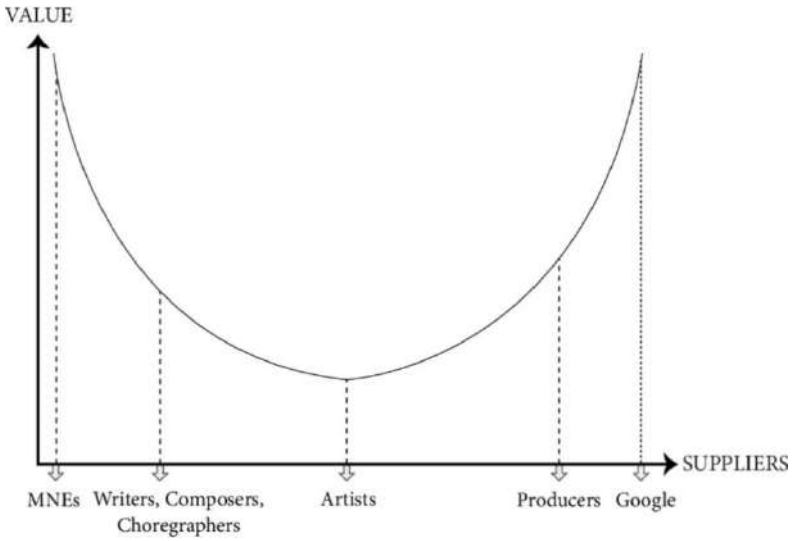

Diagram 3:K Pop Money Chain

The music industry has undergone a significant transformation, especially with the advent of new technologies and the rapid expansion of social media, which has disrupted the traditional structure of the industry (Herstand, 2023). One of the most notable shifts is the rise of the DIY (Do-It-Yourself) approach in music production, which, while not new, has become more prominent in recent years. DIY music production has been around for over forty years, but it stands in stark contrast to the mainstream music production model (Wincci et al., 2022). This shift reflects the democratization of the music industry, where artists can bypass traditional gatekeepers like record labels, and produce and distribute their music independently.

The COVID-19 lockdown played a critical role in accelerating this shift. With traditional music production systems disrupted and recording studios closed, artists were forced to embrace more active roles in the production process (Hylland, 2022). Remote collaboration became the norm, even post-pandemic, with artists communicating with producers, engineers, and fellow musicians from a distance (Leshem, 2023). The forced closure of physical recording studios led many artists to set up home studios, further embracing the DIY ethos (Quader, 2021). This shift gave artists unprecedented control over their creative process, enabling them to play a more hands-on role in the production of their work (Bishop, 2023).

A new wave of artist-led production emerged from this disruption, often described as the rise of multi-hybrid artists. These artists are not confined by traditional artistic boundaries and often

navigate multiple creative domains simultaneously (Oliver, 2024). Their work is characterized by its emotional and intellectual depth, and they push beyond the established norms of the industry (Guerra & Lamontagne, 2023). The flexibility of home studio setups and the accessibility of digital tools have enabled these artists to redefine what it means to create and distribute music.

Moreover, the global COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the rise of artist-led production strategies (Tulke, 2023). These strategies, paired with the growth of social media, allowed artists to regain independence from traditional labels and the power structures of the mainstream music industry (Kirui, 2024). Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok provided new, direct channels to fans, enabling direct-to-fan models where artists can interact personally with their audiences (Threadgold, 2018). This shift not only empowered artists to connect with fans but also provided them with more transparency and control over monetization strategies, even amidst debates around pro-rata rates on streaming platforms (Hesmondhalgh, 2021).

The rise of social media further redefined the traditional artist-fan relationship, creating more intimate, personalized engagement (Reponen, 2020). Artists are now able to use free platforms to promote their content, share updates, and build stronger brand relationships with their followers, all without the need for traditional media outlets or intermediaries. This direct-to-fan model has also opened new revenue streams for artists, including subscription-based models and patronage systems, which have become more sustainable in the long term (Lotz, 2021).

Furthermore, the growth of blockchain technology and intelligent contracts has introduced new methods for decentralizing music distribution and managing copyrights, ensuring that artists retain more control over their intellectual property and earnings (Kim & Kim, 2020). The digital revolution in music has dramatically shifted the power dynamics of the industry, giving artists more independence and autonomy than ever before. These changes have reshaped industry revenue structures, as well as the way artists engage with their fans and monetize their work. This well illustrates in Table 2.

Player	Conventional Value Flows	Digital Music Value Flows	Power Change
Artist	Music composition (creativity) Recording of music Performances and appearances	Composition, performance (creativity) Recordings, performances, appearances Production and distribution arrangements	More control of production, distr. Potential increase in profits Decreased copyright protection
Label and Production Company	Copyright enforcement Produce, mfg. of recorded music Distribution, mktg., promotion	Copyright enforcement Marketing, promotion, advertising	Loss of control over production and distribution Potential decrease in profits
IP Rights Enforcement Body	Limited intellectual property rights enforcement	Intellectual property rights enforcement Piracy prevention Prosecution of music piracy cases	Increase control over the legal distribution of digital music
Traditional Retailer	Distribution to customer Advertising	None	Loss of customers/sales Decrease in profits
Digital Music Retailer	None	Distribution to customer Advertising Services (recommendations, search, etc.)	Growth of digital music market Potential increase in profits Increased competition
Consumer	Purchase music in physical format	Choice: purchase physical format or digital format, or pirate digital format	New supply channel More product choices More power over prices

Table 2:Power Shifts Among Recorded

These technologies ensure transparency, fair compensation, and traceability, offering potential solutions to long-standing issues regarding trust and equitable remuneration within the music industry. While technological advancements have shifted power toward artists, some face challenges in adapting to new tools and software (Cai et al., 2021). This is largely because many artists are primarily skilled in performance and may lack technical expertise, which underscores the need for comprehensive technical support and training (Haynes & Marshall, 2018). The artist's evolving role in music video production involves a balance between creative expression and technical proficiency (Walzer, 2023). Furthermore, the financial constraints exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic have made this artist-led production model a strategic approach to sustainability and cost reduction (Khlystova et al., 2022).

1.9 Technological Advancement & Future Trends

The advancement of software and editing tools has significantly empowered artists and producers to utilize music videos as a powerful medium for storytelling (Podara et al., 2021). Every component, including shooting techniques, editing, narrative development, and visual effects, contributes to the overall creative expression conveyed through the music video.

Furthermore, innovations in virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) have opened new avenues for enhancing the artistic experience within music videos (Caldeira, 2023). Artists have increasingly turned to these immersive technologies, pushing the boundaries of traditional live performances (Dixon, 2015a). By transforming music videos into fully immersive

environments, these technologies allow audiences to engage with content in ways previously unimagined (ibid).

The integration of mobile phones has also accelerated the consumption of music videos, driving significant changes in the entertainment industry (De Beukelaer & Eisenberg, 2020). Mobile phones often possess camera features that rival traditional video production equipment (Zhuo & Guofeng, 2021). Moreover, the availability of powerful video editing apps on mobile devices enables creators to edit and enhance music videos directly from their phones (ibid). Additionally, mobile phones serve as the primary devices for accessing social media platforms, where music videos are widely shared (Zhang & Negus, 2021). Mobile devices have also facilitated real-time streaming of music performances, a trend that became particularly popular during the COVID-19 pandemic (Fan & Wei, 2020). However, with the rise of streaming, music videos have adapted to shorter attention spans, becoming more concise in nature (Wellink, 2021).

The future of music videos is increasingly shaped by technological advancements, shifting consumer behaviors, and evolving creative organizations (Saintilan & Schreiber, 2023). Artificial intelligence (AI) and deep learning algorithms are beginning to play a crucial role in generating music video visuals (Anantrasirichai, 2022). While AI and automation present both opportunities and challenges, they are likely to reshape the production process and open up new possibilities for artistic expression (Cetinic & She, 2022).

Looking ahead, music videos may experiment with new forms of audio, creating more immersive and spatially dynamic sonic environments (Serafin et al., 2018). The integration of music videos with other media formats could lead to the development of cross-media experiences, redefining the boundaries of music video representation. As a result, artists from diverse cultural backgrounds may collaborate to create short-form videos that reflect a more interconnected and globalized world (Kaye et al., 2022).

Moreover, the integration of visual production techniques and computer-generated imagery (CGI) has revolutionized the visual possibilities in film (Sun, 2023). Directors and artists can leverage CGI to create fantastical landscapes, stunning visual effects, and immersive storytelling experiences (Lama, 2024). Extended realities, including immersive landscapes,

have further deepened viewer engagement by offering more expansive and inclusive narratives (Sanchez-Acedo et al., 2023). This innovation allows music videos to appeal to a wider, more diverse audience.

As music videos increasingly align with the trend of short-form content on social media platforms, integration with platforms like Instagram and TikTok has led to the creation of visually impactful, easily consumable videos designed for viral success (Kaye et al., 2022). Additionally, virtual collaboration platforms are offering new opportunities for artists and directors to collaborate remotely, expanding the potential for global creative partnerships (Tandberg, 2022). Given these ongoing technological developments, the future of music videos will continue to evolve, driving further innovation in both form and content.

1.10 Transmedia in Music Distribution

Before the rise of social media, Stuart Sanders Smith (1975) introduced the concept of transmedia music, which referred to musical compositions that integrated diverse musical instruments and genres. Over time, this idea has evolved and been reinterpreted under various frameworks (Atarama-Rojas, Lopez, & Sanchez, 2018).

With the advent of social media platforms, the distribution of music has undergone significant transformation. The concept of transmedia music now extends to the dissemination of music videos across multiple digital platforms (Vizcaíno-Verdú, Gómez, & González, 2021). This practice has emerged as a sustainable phenomenon within the cultural industry, driven by fan engagement and participation on social media, both in the consumption and creation of music (ibid.).

Transmedia music has thus introduced new sustainable practices by utilizing audio-visual strategies to distribute music across multiple platforms (Scolari, 2018). These strategies often involve combining narrative content across diverse media, which in turn attracts a wide variety of audiences (Nuttall, 2020). Furthermore, it has been suggested that transmedia music extends across various online platforms such as Spotify, Instagram, and Facebook, expanding the reach and impact of music in a digital landscape (Zuhadmono, 2021).

1.11 Feminism Creation

With the author of this thesis being a female, it is considering a female creation and amid the global upheaval brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, feminist artists turned to music video creation as a means of reclaiming visibility, voice, and agency in a time marked by isolation and systemic inequality (Kahlert, 2021). While the mainstream music industry faced production halts and budgetary constraints, many feminist creators responded by embracing low-budget, DIY approaches that emphasized autonomy, collaboration, and community care (Sophie Swoffer, 2022).

According to statistics, more female had become artists nowadays however female who stepped into audio visual production is somehow still low (Statistica, 2024). Also, the feminism movement had been increasingly important in shaping the narratives and representation of music videos. Feminism in creation embodies the value of care, equality and equity through their production process and hence empowering more female to reshape the industry.

Historically, music technology ranging from studio engineering and production to electronic and digital composition has been a male-dominated field, where women have often been marginalized as vocalists, muses, or performers rather than as producers, programmers, or sound designers. This gendered division of labor reflects broader structures of technological gatekeeping, which associate technical mastery and authorship with masculinity (Faulkner, 2007; Born & Devine, 2015).

Drawing on feminist technoscience and sound studies, scholars such as Tara Rodgers (2010) have critically examined how the figure of the sound engineer or producer is often masculinized, and how women's work in sonic experimentation especially in electronic music that has been historically erased or underacknowledged. In *Pink Noises*, Rodgers not only documents the contributions of women in electronic music and sound art but also challenges the assumptions that tether technology to objectivity and male control. She advocates for a reconceptualization of technical expertise that includes embodied, affective, and collaborative modes of working with sound.

Similarly, Georgina Born and Kyle Devine (2015) discuss how gender operates structurally in studio and institutional contexts, arguing that women in music technology often face what they term structural silencing which is a combination of exclusionary networks, cultural myths about genius and creativity, and the underrepresentation of women in technical roles. Their work emphasizes the need to analyze not only who makes music but also how technological practices are embedded in gendered systems of value.

Contemporary feminist musicians and collectives have taken up these critiques in practice. Online platforms, workshops, and communities such as female pressure**,** Girls Rock Camp, and Women's Audio Mission have created spaces for women, trans, and non-binary people to access tools, training, and mentorship in music tech. These spaces challenge dominant narratives by democratizing access to production tools and fostering collaborative, non-hierarchical modes of making sound. Yet, scholars such as Nina Sun Eidsheim (2019) warn against framing these interventions as simply a matter of inclusion or representation; instead, she pushes for a deeper interrogation of the aesthetic and epistemological assumptions that shape how we hear and value sound; who is heard, and how.

In digital music production and DIY recording cultures, feminist scholars have also emphasized the politics of voice, authorship, and interface design**,** arguing that even software and gear can reproduce gender biases through their design and marketing (Hawkins, 2017). As more women gain access to DAWs (digital audio workstations) and production tools, new feminist modes of sonic authorship are emerging ones that reject dominant industry aesthetics in favor of experimentation, vulnerability, and affective listening.

1.12 Gaps & Opportunities

Following a comprehensive review of the existing literature, several critical gaps have been identified. Firstly, a significant proportion of current research on music video production remains largely statistical or observational in nature, offering limited engagement with the complexities of actual production processes. Secondly, while theoretical frameworks are frequently employed, many lack the depth and contextual grounding required to adequately reflect the realities of contemporary music video production, particularly in the wake of global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. These disruptions have challenged and, in some

cases, rendered obsolete traditional production models, necessitating a re-evaluation of existing theoretical approaches.

Furthermore, much of the literature emphasizes conventional production strategies without offering detailed insights into the practical and creative intricacies of the production process. Notably, there is a scarcity of practice-based research undertaken by music artists themselves, which would offer valuable insider perspectives on the evolving dynamics of the industry.

To address these gaps, this study adopts a practice-based research methodology, focusing on the period spanning the COVID-19 pandemic through to the post-pandemic era. This temporal framing enables a critical examination of the shifts and transformations in music video production practices, while simultaneously documenting the researcher's lived experiences and insights as an artist-producer actively navigating this changing landscape.

Chapter II: INWINCCIBLE (2008-2017): A FEMINISM TRANSFORMATION

The term feminism had further transformed the creative industry by emphasizing that gender cannot be disentangled from race, class, sexuality and ability (Bell Hooks, 1994; Kimberle Crenshaw, 1998). Bell hooks' work, particularly *Outlaw Culture* (1994), explores how cultural production can be both a site of domination and a space for radical critique and transformation. Feminist collectives, especially in marginalized communities, have used zines, independent publishing, textile arts, digital media, and performance to reclaim authorship and agency.

Whereas, in the digital era, feminist creators have harnessed technology to challenge exclusionary systems and broaden access to the tools of cultural production. Johanna Drucker (1994) discusses how feminist visuality resists linear, logocentric models of meaning-making, offering instead layered, polyvocal forms of expression. This has been echoed in contemporary feminist design and architecture practices, where emphasis is placed on care, accessibility, and participatory design rather than aesthetic hierarchy or commercial value (Bardzell, 2010).

Nevertheless, feminist scholars caution against the neoliberal co-optation of feminism within the creative industries. Sarah Banet-Weiser (2018) critiques the emergence of popular feminism, which often privileges branding, visibility, and individual empowerment over collective resistance and structural critique. She argues that the commodification of feminism in art, media, and design can dilute its political edge unless grounded in critical practice and intersectional solidarity.

This chapter illustrates the personal journey of becoming «Inwinccible» that is the experiences in the creative industry which pushes me to incorporate intersectional feminism in my production due to all the inequality and under-representation in the industry.

In Asia, studying art is often being discouraged due to its instability. I had no choice I was studying law in the daytime and only do music part time in the night. Besides that, due to the

lack of social media back then, I have to participate in various singing or beauty pageant competition in order to gain my path into the entertainment industry.

After 6 years of non-stop studying and participating in various competitions, I finally won the prestige title of Miss World Malaysia 2008 (Figure 2). At that moment I thought everything will be smooth. However, after gotten the title, I fell into a sudden depression. The expectation in reality was somehow bitter as beauty queen was being just treated as an empty doll. Also, I fell into a sudden depression and even locked myself in my room for almost a month.

Figure 2: Miss World Malaysia 2008 Crowning

On the other hand, one day a company Chief Operating Director approached me. I remembered I asked my manager to accompany me to the meeting. In that meeting, I was surrounded by four high ranking rich social figures. They offered me Ringgit Malaysia 1million per year to become their private public relation officer. In my heart, I felt disgraced as I know that these men wanted to use my title and education as a weapon for the elites for the wrong reasons. I felt disrespected as a woman and thus I walked away. I told myself even at the point

of starvation or depression I would have not been used by men nor using a short-sighted way to start my journey.

At that time, I was at the crossroad of either going back to practice my law or head inside the entertainment industry. Looking at all odds, there were so already so many female lawyers in Malaysia, whereas the entertainment industry at that time was underrepresented by powerful woman. Being determined and strong headed, I decided to let go my law career and venture into the entertainment industry with a hope to make a change. To be honest, I had no clue to start my entertainment career even after winning the title. There was almost zero job offer for me after winning the title. Also, due to the huge Miss Malaysia World title, there was no organizations which dare to hire me to do any job as they were fearful that my price was too high or I was just an empty beauty queen. My parents kept asking me to go back to law or help in their family business. That point of moment, I told myself if I want to make changes in the entertainment industry, there was no turning back. The price of this decision was to let go all the financial support from my parents. With no one to help, I decided to approach the media by myself to get interviews. Also knocking doors to all the casting agencies and distributing my name cards and new profile.

I was surviving merely on Ringgit Malaysia 50 per week in order to survive inside the ever-changing entertainment industry. I remember I started my first job as a commercial extra talent and the payment was only Ringgit Malaysia 300. Also, in my reigning year as Miss World Malaysia in 2008, I attended any available events for free in order to gain connection or visibility into the industry. I had no choice to restart from low. At that time, I engage a project basis manager in order to assist me in the industry. With my manager, we went to visit a few recording companies to ask for chances. However, recording companies kept telling us that they had no idea how to produce or manage a beauty queen. We were rejected for almost half a year with no answer. Then, we came out with an idea of producing a mini album with our very minimal budget.

Approach the end of my reining year as Miss World Malaysia, I was much more desperate by then as I clearly knew that each year there will be a new queen to be crowned. Hence, time was crucial for me to transform myself from a beauty queen to a recording artist. Without any

second thought, my manager and I kick started by searching for producers and songs. While I was in the midst of the search of songs and producers, someone texted me on Facebook and telling me that he was from a huge brand company who wanted to sponsor my album. Initially I thought that it was just a scam, but I still gave him my manager's contact. To my huge surprise, he was legit and was from Samsung company. The company was interested in sponsoring my whole album production. Hence from a DIY (Do it Yourself) album it becomes a mini commercial album. However, after the financial part came in other obstacles came as it was so difficult to find the right songs and not many song writers were willing to write for me for one reason as I was not popular. This pushed me to compose them myself with my producer. I sat in my room every day to compose songs then after compiling all the compositions, I pass it to my producer to alter and sent for arrangements. Meanwhile, my music producer suggested me to take up some vocal classes in order to smoothen my recording. The technique used for studio recording were totally different from my previous stage performance as it requires technique in handling vocal recording in the studio. The music producers were absolutely right as the real problem came when I started to hit the studio for recording. Never would I have thought that my vocal training for stage is different for what was required in the recording studio. We were trained to performed on stage with a bigger vocal voice in order to be able to hold the whole crowd down stage. However, studio recording was totally different as it requires different vocal skills to suit the enhanced audio technology. It was so hard for me to adjust and control my vocals inside the studio (Figure 3). At the end, I spent almost one whole month to complete just one song recording. Hence, in total I spent almost four months for recording just four songs. Even then, the results were not really good. However, we carried on with the production.

Figure 3: First Album Recording

After all the recording were done, we shot our first music video. We only have budget for one music video at that point of time and the quality was shot in High definition as it was supposed to be a brand song for our sponsor, Samsung. Again, having no experience in music video production, we hire a music video director. I sat down almost a month with the director in planning and discussing the music video then we developed a story board which suits the song. The song was titled Beauty with A Purpose. The storyline revolved around a story of two sisters who were orphans who then reunited again in the future. We shot the music video within one day inside a rented house and we had a professional crew for camera, lighting, make up and directing (Figure 4). It was being published via the link below:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7XKFA_ix6M&list=RDz7XKFA_ix6M&start_radio=1

Figure 4: First Music Video Shooting

Then in conjunction of my one-year Miss World Malaysia anniversary, I had my first album launching in August 2009 (Figure 5). Thinking that it would be a huge success, the turnout for the press conference was totally despair. There were just two to three reporters who came and the albums which was sent to all the radio stations was not being played at all. In addition to this, the sales of the album were really bad, and we even needed to beg the fans to buy CDs.

Figure 5: First Album Launching Press Conference

Also, many fans were more willing to support male artist compared to female artist. I remembered during my first promotional tour for my album; there were only three audience downstage. Feeling disappointed, I continued with my performance. I did not dare to ask any

of my friends or family members to come in fear to ashamed myself. Also at that year, I did not even make it for any new artist award nomination and was being scolded by my manager. Having no bargaining power and felling hopeless, I had to kept within my heart and faced it all by myself. On top of that, there was once, after I ended my performance, I was being offered Ringgit Malaysia 30,000 to offer sexual service to a rich elite businessman. This incident really ignited my anger towards the disrespect towards women in this industry and I vowed even harder to stay firmed in my vision to make a change for women in this industry by leading an example.

Since the first album did not do well, I need to think of other alternatives. At that time, TV was the most popular media, so I tried acting. However, being an actress at that time was 10 times harder than being a recording artist especially in Malaysia. The pay was not just very low; the environment was stressful for someone who had no experience. To my surprise, I started to gain more fans after acting and then I use these fans base to launch my album while acting on the side. Hence, I launched my second album titled, The Light. Again, due to budget constraint, I chose some of the song from my album to shoot some simple music videos. This time, my manager and I planned for collaboration with directors and just some simple shots of lip-synching music video (Figure 6: Lip Synching Music Video) and not much preparation needed and with just minimum crew on set. The music video was being published via the link below:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktDRdwyIA_s&list=RDktDRdwyIA_s&start_radio=1

Figure 6: Lip Synching Music Video

I started to have more job offer after gaining more fans from my acting project and also had more singing job offer from the market. However, I still need more fans and media attention to grow my singing career.

In 2012, as I was driving, I came across a billboard advertising Master Chef Celebrity Malaysia. Without a second thought, I asked my manager to try to seek ways for me to enter into this competition. We managed to get the contact and offered ourselves to the TV station. However, we were just placed as a backup. At the same time, I was being offered as the main lead for a drama. Again, at the crossroad, I need to decide on whether to take the confirmed lead role or decide to wait for an unconfirmed competition. Just a few days before the start of the cooking reality show, I received a call and was being asked to head inside the production immediately. Many doubted my decision and said I should have stayed in acting rather than joining a cooking competition. In my heart, I know I needed a new breakthrough to gain more new fans in order for me to produce my next album. To my surprise the cooking reality show was a huge success in Malaysia. This time, my fan base grew throughout the whole country. After the huge success of Master Chef Celebrity (Figure 7), which was a huge phenomenon in Malaysia.

Figure 7: MasterChef Celebrity Malaysia 2012

With the success of the reality cooking show, I quickly launch another album titled, Soo Wincci. This time, due to my rising popularity, I had more sponsors and budget for my music video. This time I decided to not just hire a music video director but also to hire artist for collaboration. This time, there was not just beauty shot, lip synching but also story line which involves intercultural love relationship. I was so honoured to be able to collaborate with a hip-hop legend from Malaysia, Joe Flizzow and the music video was a huge success (Figure 8). It was also being published via the link below:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5PsgzbfVBM&list=RDj5PsgzbfVBM&start_radio=1

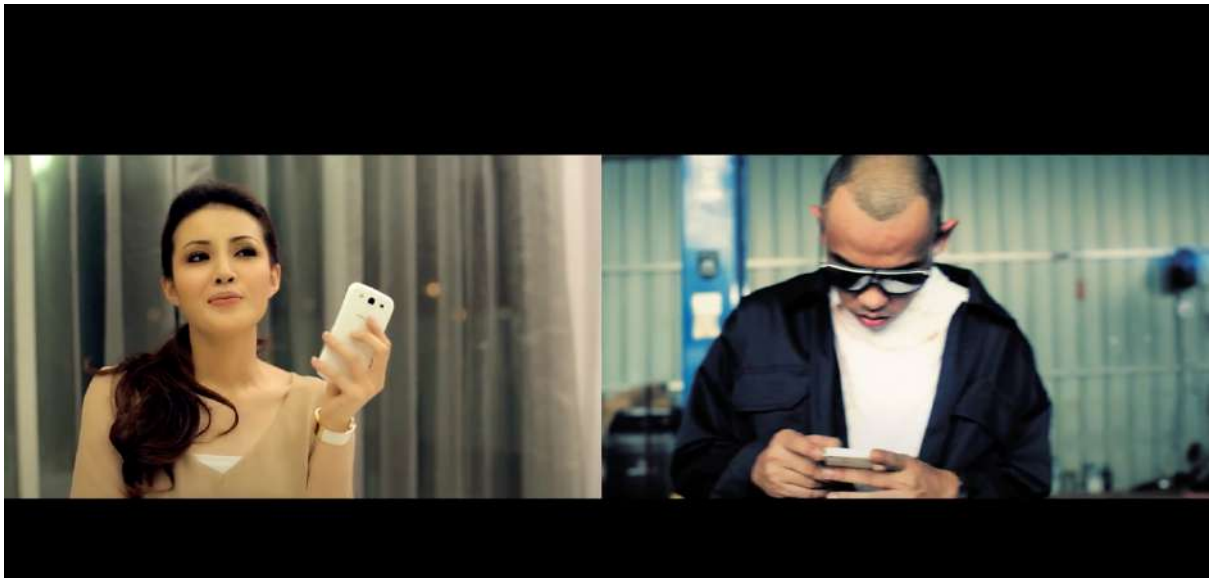

Figure 8: Music Video with Joe Flizzow

My schedule was jam-packed with shows, performances and media interviews. However, I know that the expiry date for female artist in the industry is short and hance I decided to pursue my PhD despite my busy schedule.

While everything was finally on track, something would definitely pop out. This time my manager asked me whether I wanted to expand my singing career to Taiwan. Taiwan is always a dream place for all Chinese recording artists as it was the Mandarin Pop Market which produces great popular artists. Once again, my manager and I started knocking on a few Taiwan

companies, but none was interested. Some even openly ask me whether do I provide sexual services. Once again, these experiences ignite the feminism movement inside me.

Finally, there was a China investor who wanted to invest 3-million-ringgit Malaysia in my Taiwan Chinese Album. However, I smelt something fishy, and my six-sense kept telling me that there was something wrong. The so-called investor created so much politics between my manager and me. Also, he demanded me to leave my manager if I wanted him to invest in my album. All these caused my manager and also my company members to distance me. The investor was very cunning as kept using me in creating fake news that might interest the public. In my heart, I rethink back the worth and also the fight of my journey. I recalled the initial motives when I stepped into the industry that is to make a change and to lead by example to empower more females to standup by themselves without giving into these men. Hence, I let go the contract deal and decided to self-fund my own album in Taiwan by taking a loan. However, I cut down the production budget and using my parents as guarantors, I loaned a sum from the bank and started my Taiwan Chinese album production. With limited budget, I only hire project basis team. Once again, starting from fresh in Taiwan, my projects were often ignored or pushed away as I was not well-known yet in Taiwan. With more stress and a total strange environment in Taiwan, every cent and step had to be taken into account. This time instead of just being an artist, I volunteered myself into every production meeting and hence learning how to do proposal and preparation for my music videos in Taiwan.

Music video production in Taiwan was really advance and detailed as it involves months of planning and preparation to produce high quality and high budget music video. The cost of producing one internation music video in Taiwan was Ringgit Malaysia 100 thousand which was five times the costing in Malaysia. The process involves sitting down with director and the artist management advisor. Also, the artist direction and image is tailored towards the suitability of the Taiwan market. Then the music video storyline surrounds the artist's story. Basically, the whole production process surrounds the artist as the main object. The preparation of one music video took us almost three months to prepare. Then the shooting took us almost a week and editing and colour grading took almost a few weeks for the final outcome to be out. The first music video was being tiled "I will be alright" which tells a breakup story of a couple

with beautiful colour grading and loads of different scenes which involves acting, dancing, lip synching and piano playing which make the whole music video looks good and also attractive for audience (Figure 9). It was also being published via: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jI8p2P1Pl9U&list=RDjI8p2P1Pl9U&start_radio=1

Figure 9: First Taiwan Music Video

As the song was being posted on YouTube, it garnered almost 1 million views within the first month. This was the first most viral music video I had ever had. The response was overwhelming, and it went up various chart in Taiwan by itself. This time after the success of this music video, my schedule was 10 times more packed and faster as compared in Malaysia.

As my music career gotten massive attention and success in Taiwan, I suddenly received a sudden sad news about my boss in Malaysia passed away due to cancer and the investor whom I let go was indeed just a scam. I was informed by my manager that my whole Malaysia team would lose their job as there was nobody guiding them. My manager told me to stay in Taiwan to continue my career there. All information was somehow traumatizing to me. My tears welled up and I knew that it would be selfish of me if I just let go of my Malaysia team. Recalling back my initial motive of leading by example, I decided to take over the Malayia company. Still bearing my album loam, there was no choice but to reinvest all that was made in Taiwan back to my Malaysia company and, I decided to fly back each weekend to take any available shows in order to feed my team in Malaysia.

While I was back in Malaysia to sort all the company taking over process, the situation in Taiwan unravelled. The company in Taiwan sacked the whole team within a week. At that moment, I was completely inexperienced at this, but it was normal in Taiwan especially due to the every-changing pace to the music industry. Honestly, there were just too many things happening in tandem. While I was trying to manage the situation in Malaysia, there was no body in Taiwan to help me to manage my work there. Therefore, a lot was left unchecked or unmanaged. Media or business could not get in touch with me for jobs engagement or media interviews. It was quite a weird phenomenon for me where the general population in Taiwan knew my songs but don't know who the singer was.

Not giving up, I continued to fly back and forth between Taiwan and Malaysia in order to self-manage both markets. Shows, performance and acting jobs kept pouring in. Everything was enough just to cover my company expenses and my loan. I was being nicknamed as the "Iron Lady" as I was non-stop working and also self-sustaining.

After releasing my 1st album in Taiwan, the second album was on the way. That time, a new management team was being formed. Feeling energized, I thought this would be a great time for me to rebuild my career in Taiwan. Assuming smooth sails ahead, the oars hit the rocks. The new General Manager in Taiwan had no idea about the international music industry. We were diverted to varied unrelated topics at every crucial meeting. A few of the topics of interest were the number of artistes that he was going to sign without even having a plan on how to do so. Some artistes called stating that the General Manager has a budget to develop new artistes and were excited to join the bandwagon. It was only then I knew why the team wanted to keep low the fact that investment was my personal loan. I was used as a bait for other artistes to come in.

Knowing that there were artistes who had the same prior experience with the General Manager, I knew something had to be done. A move that should be strategic to protect new artistes. Then there was a golden chance, I flew my team from Malaysia and arranged a local reporter for an interview. In a Taiwanese variety show, I revealed the truth about my own investment loan. The news went huge, and it was a wake-up call for all the artistes. To the General Manager, I

was just a client rather than an artiste. Confident that he will not last long in his unscrupulous tactics, I left Taiwan to concentrate on my Malaysia market.

The company in Taiwan contacted me again after Beyond Artistes was sorted out. They apologized and mentioned that the General Manager was fired. The Taiwanese company offered to co-invest in my 2nd album. After a lengthy discussion with the Malaysian team, it was decided that I should be based in Taiwan to concentrate on the 2nd album. Without such a move, jobs in Malaysia would have overwhelmed me, giving me no chance to focus on my 2nd. Taiwanese album.

Therefore in 2014, I decided to base in Taiwan as there was a chance for me to join every single meeting. It was my chance to learn their technique of artiste branding and also to be able to analyse the international music scene. I told myself that I wanted to contribute what I have discovered in Taiwan to the Malaysia entertainment scene, hence this was the reason I switched my PhD's direction to focus on celebrity personal branding strategy, so that this could benefit many celebrities in the future. Schedules were really hectic whereby I will be at TV stations or radio stations for interviews from morning until afternoon, then I would be rushing to the office to be an intern, spend my dinner time with my Taiwanese team to build relationship, go to the gym every day after dinner to stay really slim as in Taiwan they love skinny girls, and then I would spend my midnight on my thesis in a 24- hour café. I practically slept just 3 hours per day, and my housemate thought that I was crazy.

In 2015, my Malaysian team decided to organize my 1st solo concert. At the same time, I was offered a main lead in a Chinese drama. Overall, a mad and busy year with continuous shooting for the Chinese drama and rehearsing for my concert. Everything went on smoothly until I made a controversial statement online. I ended up with no sponsor for my concert, thus I ended up bearing it all by myself again. The concert was named «Simply Inwinccible» (Figure 10), that was when the concept of «Inwinccible» was being developed. «Inwinccible» signified an unstoppable feminist movement.

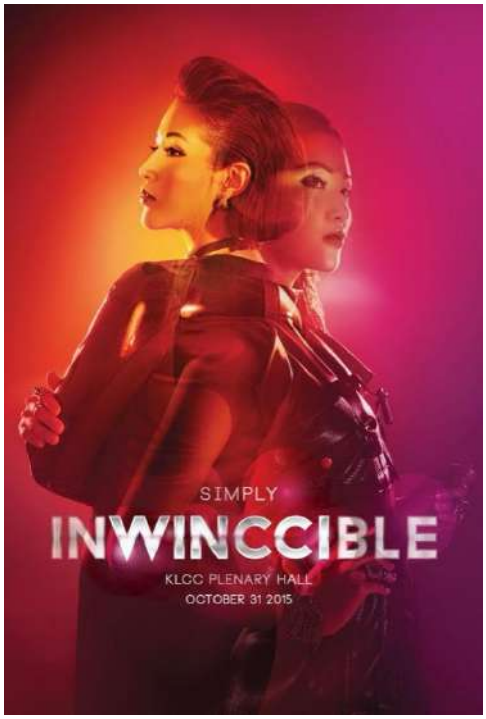

Figure 10: Simply Inwinccible Concert

Honestly, it was a roller coaster experience, not only with the concert debts but also with the rejection of my first PhD in business thesis and some family problems. A lot of my team members left and the remaining few where those who really wanted to help me out. It was a reality to settle into. In order to settle the debts, I shifted my base from Taiwan back to Malaysia. I told myself I would only go back after I settle all the debts. This pushed me to face my problems braver and coming down for the first time to face all the debtors. I told myself no more blaming or looking back, I just need to proceed straight on. Also, I remember that after the concert and the controversial statement, not many local companies dared to hire me. This pushed me to take on more overseas singing jobs. For the whole year, I kept on singing nonstop and would take in any jobs to pay back all my debts.

A year later, I graduated from my PhD and once again the news flooded the whole internet and once again this had brought me back again into the limelight. I was suddenly being offered so many contracts and at the same time I did not forget my initial motive of stepping into the industry. Quietly, I applied to my dream music school which was Berklee and this time I

applied for music production and technology major as I wanted to keep on pushing boundaries for women in the industry.

In 2017, I was finally being accepted, and I had to once again made a drastic decision to shut my company and flew to Valencia for my 2nd Master in Music Production. Once again, I needed to restart from zero again as a production student.

Chapter III: INWINCCIBLE 360 X (2017-2018): WOMAN IN MUSIC TECHNOLOGY

In 2017, after being accepted into Berklee Valencia Master course which focuses on Music Production, Technology and Innovation, I decided to shut my company in Asia in order to reinvent myself as a Music Producer (Figure 11). This huge transformation was really hard as my background was revolving around performance, acting, and business on stage or in front of the camera. This move was a drastic one as moving into technology meant that I needed to change totally in order to be able to adapt to this technological world. Moreover, knowing the statistic of the ratio of woman in technology is really scare.

Figure 11: Berklee Student Card

The first month of the training was overwhelming for me and I pushed myself to be in university for almost 12 hours per day and seven days a week. I equipped myself with learning all Digital Workstation for recording and sound design. Many back homes looked down on my dreams and due to the hectic schedule, I could not return back and forth for work. Hence, my savings were going low and there were a lot of disruption back in Asia and hence I needed to think of alternative to continue my Master journey. With a limited budget and also surviving on flour and spaghetti, I pushed myself to interview for any jobs inside Berklee Valencia.

After a few months, I finally got a graduate studio position where I work as a studio girl cleaning and also guarding the recording studio. Apart from that I was also developing my final

Master project titled Inwinccible 360 X which is an innovation project to innovate myself into an all-rounder 360-degree producer despite all the hurdles I was going through.

I was being nicknamed as the studio girl who always stays late inside Berklee Valencia (Figure 12). That was because not only was I pushing my technology projects but also, I was spending time with my job cleaning and tidying the studio. I needed to let go of everything and started patching, cleaning wires and also arranging studio times for all the students. It was exhausting and I was working almost 16 hours per day and 7 days a week without any rest.

Figure 12: Working In the Studio

I was practically working more than any students as I felt that I needed more practice and also training and hence I took a lot of shifts even until 2.30am in the morning. I also had to wake up early to do my master's research and also to attend various classes. At times, I would also spend time in the library writing my master thesis. It was indeed a challenge for me. However, due to such extremes, I was able to improve tremendously.

The master project involves me producing one brand new innovative music video. It incorporated culture, music technology, visual technology, and some light mapping technology into the whole project. Apart from that I was able to compose and arrange the song in Ableton (Figure 13) then mix in Protools (Figure 14). The song is titled “I Am Inwinccible” (Berklee,

2018). The song was actually combination of four languages (Malay, Chinese, English & Spanish). It was a simple song as more focused was being placed in developing the technical side of the production as all the audio and visual software were new towards me. The concept of the song basically resembled a music super hero trying to go through the darkness by reinventing herself in order to save the industry.

Figure 13: Song Arrangement with Ableton

Figure 14: Recording, Mixing & Mastering in Pro Tools

Then I light mapped onto the traditional Chinese Mask Changing Outfit (Figure 15) using RESOLUME (Figure 16) and then I also added some aerial hoop dancing element into my video. I shot everything in Video then I stitched it all inside AFTER EFFECT and lastly, I incorporated some metadata to make it look like a 360-music video on mobile device (Figure 17).

Figure 15: Light Mapping on Chinese Mask Changing

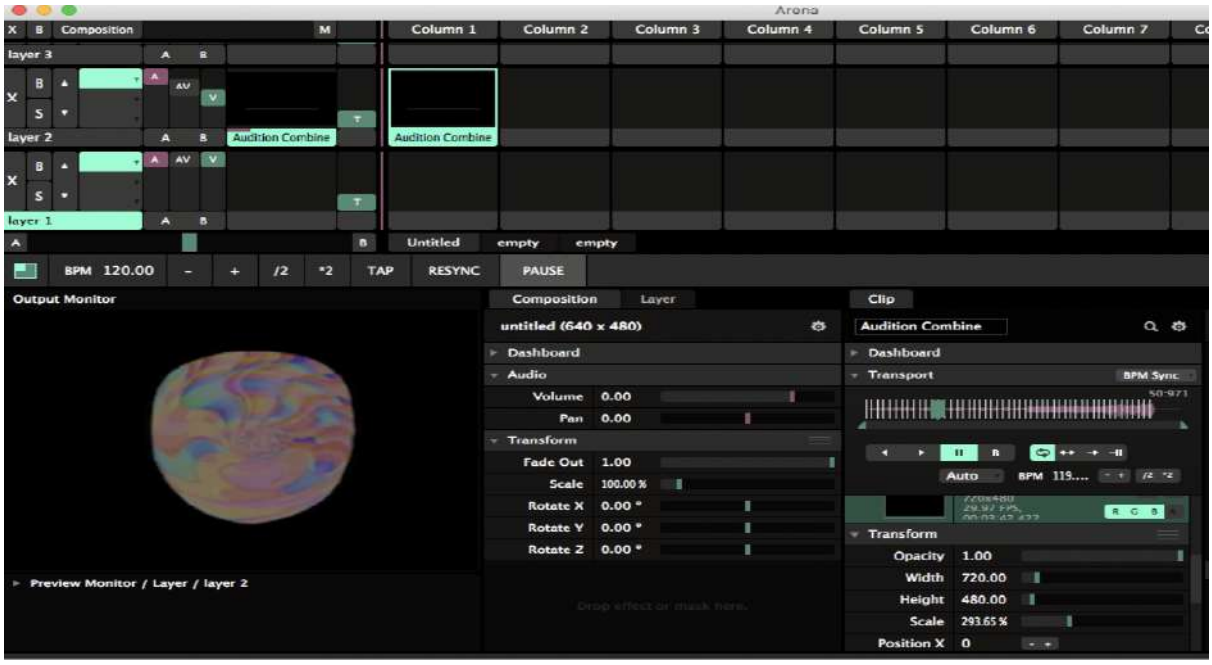

Figure 16: Light Mapping Using Resolume

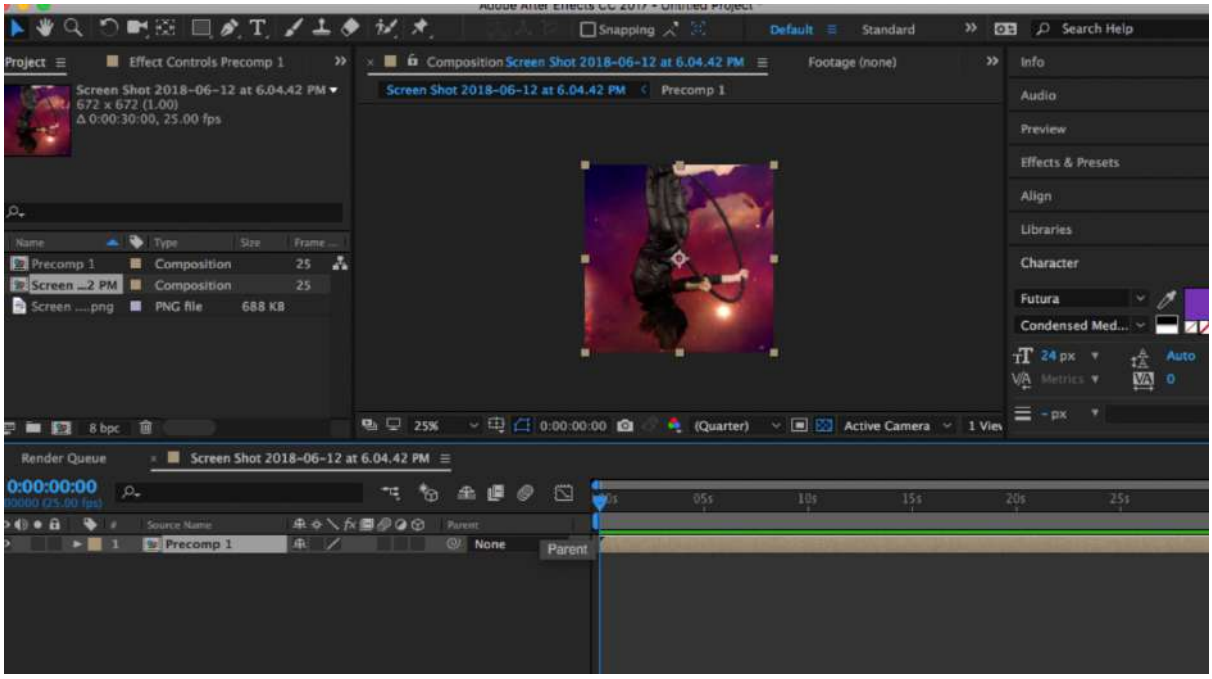

Figure 17: Video Editing with After Effects

After 9 months of non-stop giving up I finally graduated and even won my postmaster scholarship to continue to grow my master thesis into the next stage while also being assigned to serve the live concert department under Berklee Valencia (Figure 3.7). I was overwhelmed as I thought I would not survive. With strength, determination, and hard work, anything is possible.

Figure 18: 2nd Master Graduation

Chapter IV: INWINCCIBLE 360 Y (2018-2019): WOMEN IN AUDIO-VISUAL PRODUCTION

Vered (2000) discusses how women's participation in behind-the-scenes production, particularly in television, is often associated with "supportive" or "emotional labor" rather than technological authorship. This resonates with broader feminist critiques, such as those by Judy Wajcman (2004), who argues that technology itself is socially constructed in masculinist terms, reinforcing gender hierarchies in professional and creative environments. The "glass ceiling" of tech-based roles in media production thus persists, often masked by narratives of meritocracy or creative neutrality.

Digital feminism has emerged as a crucial area of resistance and innovation, using digital audio-visual tools to challenge dominant representations and democratize production. Feminist filmmakers, media artists, and collectives have increasingly leveraged platforms like YouTube, TikTok, Vimeo, and independent streaming services to create, circulate, and theorize alternative visual cultures. These interventions not only subvert hegemonic gender narratives but also reimagine the technological apparatus itself as a site of political and aesthetic experimentation (Balsom, 2017). Scholars such as Alexandra Juhasz (2001, 2011) have advocated for "feminist video praxis," emphasizing the importance of low-budget, DIY, and community-based video as tools for empowerment and feminist pedagogy. Juhasz's work reveals how access to the tools of production and distribution reshapes the potential for women's agency in audio-visual storytelling.

The integration of feminist theory into media practice, then, is not just about increasing representation or access; it is about fundamentally redefining the epistemologies and aesthetics of audio-visual media**.**

This chapter illustrates the postmaster year inside Berklee Valencia. After graduating from my master's degree and winning my postmaster scholarship, I earned another year developing my postmaster thesis while also having chances to serve at the audio-visual department team serving student seminars and also concerts. I was the only girl inside the production team.

This year it was better than the previous year as I got used to the schedule and also operating more audio and visual equipment. I was being supervised under John Gibbe who was a Latin Grammy award mixing engineer (Figure 19). I started by setting up for student seminar and also workshop each week.

Figure 19: With my Live Production Supervisor John Gibbe

Then slowly I was assigned to various showcases out of the university. I was also being shared with loads of production list, and I was also under the guidance of Lucas in editing video, shooting video and also projecting video (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Video Rig Operation

There were meetings each week about assigning workload, budget and also scheduling. I was assigned as the production girl to set up from low and also arranging schedule and run list for the students for each of the showcase and concert. Apart from that, I was also developing my postmaster thesis which was Inwinccible 360 Y. This is an integrated practice-based research extended from my Master research. After working in the live production team, I realized the need to grow skills into not just music technology but also into audio visual as this field is much wider and more needed in the actual industry.

This extended version involves practice-based research in all aspect ranging from the creative process of the song creation, production of the song and music video, innovation of the remix version into remix and 360 audio visual experience, distribution and promotion strategy. Lastly, a conceptual framework of all rounded 360 degrees of production, distribution and promotion would be developed.

A diverse remote project basis production team was formed with artists, musicians, engineers, sound designers and music producers from various backgrounds and diversity based in different places. This gave different colors and perspectives to the whole production, creating a world dimension to the song and music video. Also, forming a remote project basis team with the help of technology nowadays would save money while gathering the best talents from the world (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Diverse Production Team

After all the creative activities were completed, technical activities such as pre-production preparation were organized. For the song production part, these involved studio bookings, equipment bookings, schedule planning, music video location shooting confirmation, music video props, wardrobe and styling preparation. In terms of the song production part, the technological activities involved recording engineering, recording, mixing, 360 mixing, and mastering. Whereas for the music video production part, technological activities such as shooting, editing, 360 editing and grading were being performed.

The title of the song is titled, Cut Away (Figure 22). This song is composed by the artist herself. It is a multi-lingual song which consists of four languages which are English, Malay, Chinese and Spanish. It is being produced into an electronic pop rock ballad genre.

Figure 22: Cut Away Lyrics

Lastly, after the song and music videos were done, ISRC code would be embedded onto the song and music video, and they were then sent for distribution. Whereas for the 360-music video and 360 metadata was injected (Figure 23) and the link to the YouTube is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_Wo755Z-eQ&list=RDl_Wo755Z-eQ&start_radio=1.

Figure 23: 360 Videos with 360 Audio Metadata

After the completion of the song and music video production, the songs and music video were registered and embedded with ISRC code before they were distributed to all online and offline platforms as listed as below. This time, online platforms were being distributed by labels due to strategic and demographic promotional reasons where the deals included larger visibility on their websites and also popularity of different local platforms in Asia. Whereas offline platforms were personally being negotiated to maximize the distribution of the music video in order to maximize audience reach (Figure 24).

Figure 24: Offline & Online Distribution

Chapter V: INWINCCIBLE 360Z (2019-2025): COVID, POST PANDEMIC BUDGET CONSTRAINTS & NEW PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH IN THE NEW NORM

The Covid-19 pandemic profoundly disrupted global media production, including the music video industry, forcing artists, directors, and production teams to radically adapt their practices in the face of lockdowns, budget cuts, and health restrictions. While these constraints posed significant challenges, they also catalyzed a wave of innovation, decentralization, and collaborative restructuring in music video production. The result has been a shift not just in aesthetic approaches, but in the labor models, authorship dynamics, and technological practices that underlie the industry.

During the height of the pandemic, limitations on location, crew size, and access to high-end equipment led many creators to adopt aesthetic minimalism and DIY production values. These constraints echoed what David Hesmondhalgh (2013) describes as the precarious labor conditions of cultural workers, where resource scarcity becomes a normalized condition. Independent artists and low-budget productions often relied on home-shot footage, green screens, phone cameras, and animation techniques that had previously been considered supplemental or niche. As budget cuts continued into the post-pandemic recovery, these methods evolved from temporary solutions into stylistic and economic strategies, reshaping the formal conventions of music video aesthetics.

With travel bans and social distancing measures in place, music video production moved online, accelerating the use of remote collaboration tools and virtual production pipelines. Platforms like Frame.io, Zoom, and Adobe Creative Cloud enable teams to edit, review, and direct remotely, decentralizing traditional hierarchies and geographies of production. This shift reflects what Mark Deuze (2007) terms "liquid labor" which is a flexible, networked mode of creative work that often blurs the boundaries between professional and amateur, local and global.

Interestingly, the necessity of remote production fostered more inclusive and transnational collaborations, allowing emerging creatives from underrepresented regions to contribute to major projects. Music videos like Dua Lipa's Break My Heart (2020) or Arca's *Kick* series exemplify these new hybridized workflows, often combining in-person shoots with remotely created CGI, animation, and user-generated content.

Post-pandemic recovery has not reversed these trends but instead cemented them into the economic fabric of the industry. The rise of "microbudget production cultures" (see Lobato, 2012) has enabled a proliferation of small, agile teams working across disciplines. This decentralization supports experimental forms and emerging voices but also risks reinforcing the gig economy's exploitative tendencies. Feminist media theorists have been especially vocal in critiquing how these shifts affect women, queer, and racialized creatives, whose work is often undervalued or misattributed in collaborative settings (Bishop, 2012).

Ultimately, the Covid era revealed both the vulnerabilities and the potential of music video production systems. While financial and logistical constraints exposed the fragility of traditional models, they also opened up space for radical collaboration, stylistic innovation, and inclusive authorship, reshaping the visual language of music in lasting ways.

On the other hand, Transmedia storytelling (Jenkins, 2007) has reshaped music video distribution into a dynamic, participatory form of feminist activism. By leveraging the power of multiple media platforms, artists like Beyoncé (Durham *et al*., 2013), Janelle Monáe (Keeling, 2019), and Lady Gaga (Click & Scott, 2018) have not only entertained but also educated, inspired, and mobilized. This fusion of artistry, technology, and activism signals a transformative shift in how feminism is communicated via various social media platforms in the digital age.

Practice-based research (PBR), also referred to as practice-as-research (PaR)**,** has gained significant prominence in the fields of film, video, sound, digital media, and other audio-visual arts. Rooted in the arts and humanities but increasingly recognized within interdisciplinary research frameworks, PBR positions creative practice itself as a form of inquiry which is a mode of generating, articulating, and interrogating knowledge that may not be accessible through traditional textual methods (Candy & Edmonds, 2018; Nelson, 2013).

Barrett and Bolt (2007) argue that creative practice in this context is epistemologically rich, producing experiential knowledge or tacit knowledge which are forms of understanding that emerge through doing, making, and iteration. This is particularly relevant in audio-visual production, where intuitive, affective, and embodied processes are central to creative decision-making. Sound design, for instance, often involves non-verbal, sensory exploration that resists straightforward analytical description but can be communicated and critically reflected on through the production itself.

PBR in audio-visual production typically combines creative outputs with critical reflection**,** which may take the form of a written exegesis, video essay, production diary, or annotated script. This documentation serves to contextualize the practice within theoretical and methodological frameworks, allowing the practitioner-researcher to articulate insights, problematics, and innovations derived from the creative process (Nelson, 2013; Smith & Dean, 2009).

Brad Haseman (2006) introduces the notion of performative research to emphasize forms of inquiry that are embodied, intuitive, and generative rather than strictly analytical. This is especially resonant for audio-visual practitioners, who may experiment with form, genre, medium, or collaboration as ways to interrogate questions of identity, politics, narrative, or technology. Feminist, decolonial, and queer theory have all contributed significantly to shaping PBR in audio-visual fields by emphasizing positionality, embodied knowledge, and alternative epistemologies (Trinh, 1991; hooks, 1994).

Hence for this chapter, the creative artifact will be music videos. There will be five different concepts of music videos with different production team being carried out during covid, after Covid and Post Covid. Artworks offer different perspectives; hence, this practice-based research thesis is key in guiding this experience. This chapter includes the writing part of the process of the music video production autoethnography fieldnotes. Each part of the music video creation comes with the music creative process, combining the music video and the distribution creative process.

5.1 Music Video 1: Concept & Genre Overview

As I was planning the first music video, COVID-19 happened suddenly; all venues were closed, and shooting was prohibited. I was trapped for almost a few months but knew I had to plan something out. As the death toll was rising, everyone was in a devastated mood, and I was back in Malaysia. All communication was shifted online. Suddenly, a producer friend from Taiwan named Dixon texted me, asking whether I would be interested in collaborating to produce a situational song to encourage the people in Malaysia. My friend told me they already had a Chinese version in Taiwan and would like me to translate and produce it in Malay for the people in Malaysia. Without any second thoughts, I agreed to it. The song's concept is situational to encourage people to stay strong during this darkest period. Also, there was no budget for this music video as it was for charity.

5.1.1 Melody & Lyrics & Recording Creative Process

The song was initially composed in Taiwan by a composer named Zhen Ru and was originally made in Mandarin. The melody was in a ballad and accompanied by a Piano played by Malaysia's famous producer, David Khoon. After reading all the news about people's lives during COVID-19, I started to write the lyrics in Malay. I incorporated the current situational mood of people into the song but with a positive direction. It took me a day to complete the lyrics, which are shown below and titled «Dalam Detik Ini», which means «In This Moment» in English translation.

5.1.2 Original Lyrics

<u>Dalam Detik Ini</u>

Dalam Detik Ini, Masihkah Kau Biasa?
Dalam Detik Ini, Ada Kau Duka Juga?
Dalam Detik Ini, Kita Jatuh Dalam Gelap
Detik Ini, Kita Menghadapi Ketakutan
Hujan Turun Lebat, Pokok Bergoyang
Langgit Tukar Warna, Hatiku Memanggil
Detik Kita Hidup, Semua Susah Dan Takut

Tapi Dalam Hati, Kita Bersama
Dalam Detik Ini, Kita Perlu Kuat Menempuhi
Walau Hujan Turun, Matahari Akan Terbit
Tak Kira Susah, Kita Pasti Bersatu Padu
Bila Angin Berhenti, Hujan Berhenti
Bunga bermerkah, Marilah Dengar Suara Lagu
Hari Jadi Terang, Bintang Sinari Semua
Lepas Hujan Turun, Kita Nikmati Udara
Agar Kita Terus Bernafas
Dalam Detik Ini, Sila Usah Takut
Dalam Detik Ini, Cinta Bersamamu
Dalam Detik Ini, Sinaran Dari Semua
Detik Ini, Segala Duka Pasti Berlalu
Bila Angin Berhenti, Hujan Berhenti
Bunga Bermerkah, Marilah Dengar Suara Lagu
Hari Jadi Terang, Bintang Sinari Semua
Lepas Hujan Turun, Kita Nikmati Udara
Agar Kita Terus Bernafas

5.1.3 Translation Lyrics

<u>In This Moment</u>

In This Moment, Are You Still Normal?
In This Moment, Are You Still Sad?
In This Moment, We Fall Into Darkness
In This Moment, We Face Fear
Heavy Rain, Tress Swayed
The Sky Changes Color, My Heart Recalls
The Moment We Live, Evething Is Difficuly And Scary
But In Our Hearts, We Are Together
In This Moment, We Need To Be Strong To Get Through

Even If It Rains, The Sun Will Rise
No Matter How Hard, We Will Be United
When The Wind Stops, The Rain Stops
Blessed Flowers, Let's Listen To The Sound of The Song
Bright Day, All The Star Starts Shinning
After The Rain Falls, We Will Enjoy The Air
So That We Can Keep Breathing
In This Moment, Please Don't Be Afraid
In This Moment, Love Is With You
In This Moment, The Rays Of Everything
In This Moment, All Sorrows Will Pass
When The Wind Stops, The Rains Stops Too
Blessed Flowers, Let's Listen To The Sound Of The Song
Bright Day, All The Stars Shine
After The Rain, We Enjoy The Air
So We Can Keep Breathing

The lyrics started by asking about everyone's situation it that moment. Then, I illustrate the fear of the current grim situation where everyone is afraid. Then, I use the rain as a metaphor to symbolize the turmoil that came and shook the trees of life and the change of color in clouds to represent the current dark situation. I then add hope to the lyrics by writing that after the rain stops, the sun will appear to symbolize hope and a new beginning. I further write that despite this complex situation, please do not be scared; everything is temporary, and better beginnings are coming. Lastly, I wrote metaphorically that as the rain stops, the flow will blossom, and we will all breathe again.

After the lyrics were done, I had to figure out a way to record the song, as due to all social distancing, we were not allowed to leave the house, and all studios were closed. I quickly took out my only SM58 Mic, which I often use for my practices, opened my recording software, Ableton, and started to test the recordings. As the recording was recorded at home, I was very cautious as it was not a professional studio. I went to a quiet place and sat down to record

(Figure 25). After a few hours of recording, I sent some samples to my producer friend in Taiwan to listen to. He asked me to try to record it again, but this time with more emotion.

Figure 25: Self-Recording At Home During Covid

The recording took place almost a week, as communication was challenging compared to direct recording in the studio. I recorded nearly 2000 times to get it right. Then, after getting the right vocals, they were sent online for mixing by Li Zhi Qing in Malaysia. During the mixing period, my producer friend Dixon, the mixer Li Zhi Qing, and I gave in many ideas. The mixing process was long as we could not listen in the studios, so all communication was made via phone calls. Finally, after mixing for three days, it was finalized.

5.1.4 Video Production Creative Process

After the music was done, I had to think of ways to produce music videos with limited resources. Due to social distancing during the pandemic, there were no ways to shoot music videos. After discussing with my producer friend Dixon, we devised an idea to ask fans online to send us a picture of themselves during COVID-19. I quickly posted on my Facebook fan page and Instagram. Within hours, almost a few hundred photos flooded in from my fans. It was touching. I slowly compiled them individually, then arranged them onto my editing software, Adobe Premier (Figure 26).

I then slowly edited myself into a slideshow music video. However, due to the vast number of pictures, my software crashed a few times, and I restarted it a few times. The color grading took place after all the images were arranged according to the melody. Since the beginning of the lyrics symbolized fear and darkness, I graded the few minutes of the slide shows into grey color tone, then on the middle part, I slowly added in a bit of color to show changes, and lastly, all the slide show during the last few minutes were back in standard color. The color changes show the changes in the situation from fear to hope. The whole editing and color grading process took almost 3 days in total. Then, after the video clip was done, I added the lyrics on top.

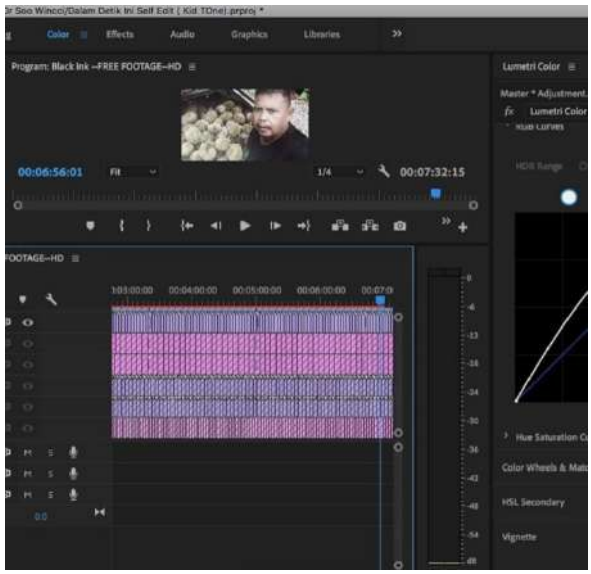

Figure 26: Editing in Adobe Premier

5.1.5 Transmedia Distribution Process

After the music video was ready, some footage was edited from the music video as teaser online before the launch. There was a 15sec teaser, 30 sec teaser and 1 minute teaser and it was released on Facebook and Instagram to tease all the audience. The song was officially published on YouTube on 25th July 2021 at 8pm (Figure 27). The music video link being published is: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaR9ESQ6xdI

Subsequently, media picked up the news online due to the meaning of the songs for Covid and it was published under the news (Figure 28)

Figure 27: Dalam Detik Ini Distributed on YouTube

Figure 28: News by Sin Chew Daily

5.2 Music Video 2: Concept & Genre Overview

The second music video was produced three months after the pandemic. Even though some restrictions were lifted, some distance measures were still being imposed. Hence, the planning of the music video must be strategic, considering all the limitations and restrictions. This music video was being produced at a music festival with university students. This song had a small budget of RM1200; hence, this song production had a team of strategic partners to collaborate with. This song is being produced as the theme song of the music festival titled «Muzikas» whose central concept is a circus theme. Therefore, the idea of the song is electronic dance music incorporated with circus movement.

5.2.1 Music & Lyrics & Recording Creative Process

As I got the direction for the theme song, I quickly went back to compose the music. I wrote piano music in the University of Uitm practice room. After listening to some references on YouTube, I came up with the chorus; only I added the body of the song. Then, I mixed some languages into the main chorus for the lyrics part. It was a mixture of Malay, Mandarin, and a bit of Spanish to give some new surprises to the audience while also representing the audience back in Malaysia, where the majority speak Malay and Mandarin. I added a bit of Spanish as the previous 4 years I was living in Spain. The lyrics are as shown in below.

5.2.2 Original Lyrics

<u>Como Esta</u>

Como Esta Apa Khabar, Como Esta Ni Hai Hao Ma
Como Esta Apa Khabar Como Esta Ni Hai Hao Ma
Usah Tanya Lagi Bila Aku Nak Khawin
Itu Hal Pasal Aku Sendiri
Walaupun Aku Belum Khawin Lagi
Tapi Aku Bukan Sisa

Como Esta Apa Khabar ,Como Esta Ni Hai Hao Ma
Como Esta Apa Khabar ,Como Esta Ni Hai Hao Ma
Usah Tanya Lagi Kenapa Aku Puasa
Itulah Janji Aku Sendiri
Walaupun Aku Masih Belajar Lagi
Tapi Aku Bukan Gila

Como Esta Apa Khabar ,Como Esta Ni Hai Hao Ma
Como Esta Apa Khabar ,Como Esta Ni Hai Hao Ma
Usah Bandingkan Diri Dengan Orang Lain
Itu Hal Peribadi Sendiri
Setiap Orang Ada Impian Tersendiri
Teruskanlah Sampai Akhir

Como Esta Apa Khabar
Como Esta Ni Hai Hao Ma
Como Esta Apa Khabar

5.2.3 Translated Lyrics

How Are You?
Hi How Are You? Hi How Are You?
Hi How Are You? Hi How Are You?
Don't Ask Me If I Want to Get Married
That's My Own Business
Even Though I Haven't Married Yet
But I'm Not A Remnant
Hi How Are You? Hi How Are You?
Hi How Are You? Hi How Are You?

Don't Ask Why I'm Fasting,

That's My Own Promise
Eventhough I'm still learning
Hi How Are You? Hi How Are You?
Hi How Are You? Hi How Are You?

Don't Compare Yourself With Others
That's a Personal Thing
Everyone Has Their Own Dreams
Keep Going Until The End

Hi How Are You?
Hi How Are You?
Hi How Are You?

The chorus was a repetition of melody and lyrics to get it hooked in the listener's head, as most electronic dance songs focus on repeating the chorus more than once. The lyrics are about the current situation of single ladies in Asia and serve as a message for the mass audience. It started by asking the audience, «How are you? » In Malay, Mandarin, and Spanish. Then the verse message is about not getting married nowadays and focusing on your journey until you succeed. It also signifies that one should not pay too much attention to the noises and focus back on one's path. Due to the song's concept, it must have fast electronic beats. I decided to find a suitable arranger at an affordable cost. The song was then sent to David Shivatt in Colombia, who specializes in electronic arrangements, and agreed to experiment with my idea within my budget.

As David sent me back the half arrangement, I self-recorded the song inside the Malaysia University studio using Stellar Microphone, which I bought and was recorded using Pro Tools (Figure 29). Recording was high-speed as there was a proper studio set up, and the song was composed by myself; therefore, I was familiar with the melody. Recording took almost 40 minutes. After recording the music, I had an online meeting with the arranger, David Shivatt.

We added the last touch-up for the arrangements by adding more layers to the song, and then after finalizing and mixing, it was sent to Denmark for mastering by Connor Dalton.

Figure 29: Self Engineering inside Studio

5.2.4 Video Production Creative Process

The shooting time was just three months after COVID-19 and limited restrictions were still imposed. Hence, the shooting team could not be too tremendous. Due to the theme and song genre, some dance moves needed to be incorporated this time. Before the shoot, I went for one month of dance choreography and Aerial arts training at Viva Circus Academy. The teacher choreographed suitable dance moves for music video shooting.

After getting the dance training, I created a rough concept board. There will be a few shooting parts: one on the green, one on the aerial hoop, and some lip-synch and beauty shots. More was planned so that there would be more materials to choose from.

After 1 month of aerial circus training, we started our music video shoot, spread over a few days. I shot the music video with a videographer friend, as the shooting period was limited and social distancing was still imposed. Due to budget constraints, cheap lighting was bought, and the music video was shot using the phone. On set, I had to reinvent myself as a crew member

to help with the camera settings and lighting. Before the actual shoot, some test shots were tested to get the proper lighting and movement shots. The actual shooting was shot in two days inside the academy. One day, I was focused on shooting the dance moves (Figure 30); the other day, I shot all lip-synching and beauty shots. The green shots were canceled as they were unsuitable for the whole editing process.

Figure 30: Aerial Hoop Shooting

After gathering all the footage, I watched all the videos and edited myself on Adobe Premier. Some special effects were added to super-lapse the footage to create swift transitions. After editing, layers of colors and swift editing were adjusted to follow the beat of the music. Lastly, the concert sponsor Logo was added. The whole editing took almost seven days in total.

5.2.5 Transmedia Distribution Process

After the music video was ready, the whole music video was sent to the University for approval. Then, again, some footage was edited from the music video as a teaser online before the launch. There was a 15-second teaser, a 30-second teaser, and a 1-minute teaser. The song was officially published on YouTube on July 5th, 2022 (Figure 31). Subsequently, the music video was used as a teaser for the University Showcase titled "Muzikas" (Figure 32). It was then cross-shared with the University platforms. An opening of the showcase was performed

in the student concert to promote this song. Then, news releases were sent to media for news outlets to hype the music video. The link for the music video is:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTaiQaiTB30&list=RDqTaiQaiTB30&start_radio=1

Figure 31: Como Esta being Published on YouTube

Figure 32: Muzikas Concert

5.3 Music Video 3: Concept & Genre Overview

The third music video was being produced specially for the TV station for the drama I acted in. This will be the theme song for my drama on Astro TV in Malaysia. The direction of the

song was given by the director, who said it must be orchestral with intensity to bring out the intensity of the drama.

5.3.1 Music & Lyrics & Recording Creative Process

As I was still acting in the drama, I started composing the melody. Since it is the drama's theme song, it must sound huge. Hence, I listened to various Korean drama and film theme songs on YouTube before writing. I noticed that the melody for all these types of songs had a very significant «Hook» or style closely linked to the story of the drama or film. I composed the song on piano in D major, and after the music was done, I started to search for a lyricist. Due to the price constraint, I decided to write for myself. Since the drama is in Chinese, I wrote everything in Chinese and titled, Lies.

5.3.2 Original Lyrics

诈

故弄玄虚 全都是诈

喜新厌旧 全都是渣

我的心已经 被你剖碎

我已经 无法回到過去

这一切 都是一场骗局

又何必 这么认真面對 该醒了吧！

无法捉摸 全都被迷惑

烟消云散 都无影无踪

原来，你就是 不断在 欺骗 我的 感受

:放下一切 的爱恨纠缠

一切变得 更海阔天空

原谅，这一切 放开所有的過去 从新开始

5.3.3 Translated Lyrics

Lies

Mystery is all fraud
Love the new and hate the old, all scum
My heart has been broken by you
I can no longer go back to the past
It's all a scam
Why take it so seriously? It's time to wake up!
Unpredictable, all confused
Disappeared without a trace
It turns out that you are constantly deceiving my feelings
Let go of all the love and hate entanglements
Everything becomes more open
Forgive, all of this, let go of all the past and start over

Since I was acting in the drama, I understood the whole story more deeply. This drama was about a single mother who was poor and had been set up a trap to fall into scamming others to gain her wealth in society. At first, she did it for her daughter, but then the money blinded her, all her close friends betrayed her, and she was punished in jail. The lyrics start by describing the lies that try to blur the vision of people, and also, those who have been lied to are broken. Then, I continued to illustrate that since we know it is a ploy, one should be awake. However, it is hard to get up or to continue if one falls into a giant trap, and it is painful to deal with. Lastly, I ended the lyrics positively, whereby one should let go of everything and restart fresh.

After the music and lyrics were done, I sent the demo to Mexico to be arranged by Lalo Marine. I gave him some instructions, which required loads of orchestration layers, and gave him room to play. When he sent back the music, he used piano, strings, electric guitars, drums, and a cello. I also discovered some parts he arranged with a fantastic interlude, which gave me space to add on some opera singing. Also, for this time, I invite my co-star Yise to duet with me and another of my colleagues, Yi Ling, to back my Opera and add some Backing Vocals. Before the recording, I briefed each singer about the feel and story to make the recording process smooth.

I have booked a high-quality commercial recording studio named Bosh Studio in Malaysia for the recording. I booked for 4 hours to record all the vocals and opera parts. I went in for recording for the first hour to get the main vocals (Figure 33). Then, my duet partner, Yise, headed inside to record her vocal parts. Lastly, Yiling went in to record the Opera and added some backing vocals to the tracks (Figure 34). Since all were professional singers, not much alteration was given, and just some tiny suggestions were given for some improvisation.

Figure 33: Main Vocals Recording

Figure 34: With The Backing Vocalist

After all the vocals were recorded, everything was compiled and sent to India to the mixing engineer, Srikar. Once again, I gave him the song's direction and the freedom to mix. Srikar then sent me back the mixes after three days of mixing. Subsequently, the three of us, Srikar, Lalo, and I, met online to listen and discuss the mix. We added all the notes and parts to be added or the frequency to boost. After Srikar said everything, we sent the mix to Spain to be mastered by Pable Schuller. Once again, after the mastered version was sent back, three of us had another meeting online to comment on the mastered version. After getting all the feedback we sent, ask the mastering engineer to make the last changes. Then, it was sent to the TV station for the previous approval. Once the music was approved, I started my music video production. The whole music production cost almost RM4000.

5.3.4 Video Production Creative Process

Since the music took up much of the budget, I left with a limited budget for the video production part. Initially, I wanted to shoot some new footage, but then, due to all the actors' and actresses' schedules, I had to use whatever drama footage was given by the TV station. Besides that, the footage shown was quite limited due to all the strict rights and policies of the

TV station. Before I started editing, I called the drama producer to get some directions. The drama producer told me to edit the music video in a grey tone to portray the grey zone area in terms of the mood of the drama.

After getting the footage for the drama, I started my editing process. This time, I used some effects on After Effects to create some effects for the transition and some visual effects that could enhance the quality of the footage. The whole editing process took me 7 days due to the unique visual rendering effects on After Effects. Then, I stitched all the parts individually in Adobe Premier (Figure 35). Lastly, the color was adjusted.

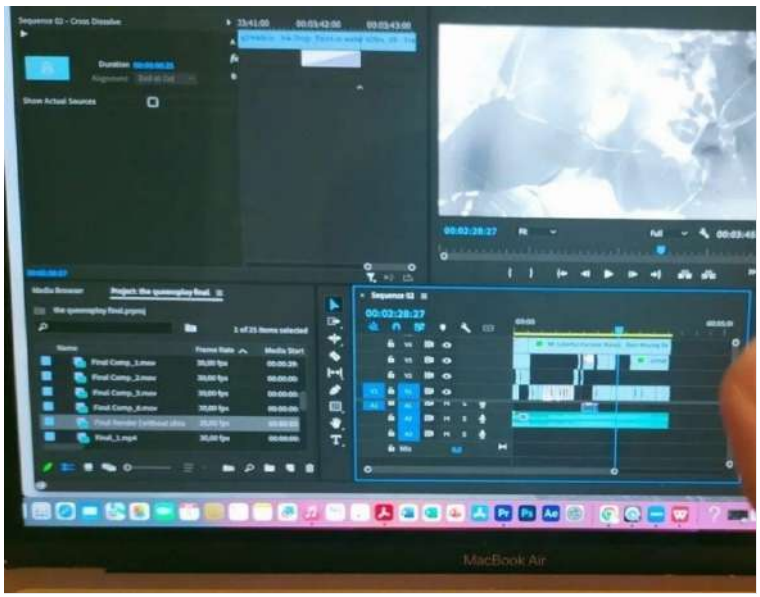

Figure 35: Editing Music Video in Adobe Premier

After the music video was done, it was sent to the TV station for approval. After rounds of last amendments, my drama producer helped me to add on the Chinese lyrics.

5.3.5 Transmedia Distribution Process

After the music video was done, it was sent to the TV and Radio stations. A Main TV poster was created (Figure 36). Due to the collaboration, Spotify pre-hyped it this time, and then the

TV and radio stations hyped the teaser. The song was played inside the drama as the main soundtrack. Due to the drama ratings and hype, the song went viral on Spotify and the radio. The link for the music video is:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xrOXfJ2e8o&list=RD8xrOXfJ2e8o&start_radio=1

Figure 36: Official Drama Poster

The final music video was being released on 8th October 2023 and via YouTube (Figure 37).

Figure 37: Lies On YouTube

5.4 Music Video 4: Concept & Genre Overview

The fourth music video was being produced for the drama as an insert song. Due to the previous collaboration, this song's production time was faster, as permission and approval went

smoothly. Hence, the production timeline and release dates were all on time. The budget was only Rm100 for the whole production. The direction of the song was ballad and emotional.

5.4.1 Music & Lyrics & Recording Creative Process

The song was specially composed for the TV drama as a drama insert song (Figure 38). This time, the TV station requested a ballad and an emotional song. I went to my piano and started composing the melody. I wrote the song in D Minor 7. The music composition was speedy as this type of song was my forte, and I had created various versions of this type of song when I worked in Taiwan seven years ago.

Figure 38: Composing on Piano

After the melody, I again started composing the lyrics myself. I added other social issues into the lyrics besides the drama's theme this time. The lyrics were written in Chinese as the drama is a Chinese drama. However, I added just one Spanish word inside, "Felicidad," and the song's title was "Happiness, Really?".

5.4.2 Original Lyrics

幸福真的還好

幸福真的還好 沒什麼大不了
你所謂的承諾 都已變化了
你說你和她會有多好 根本就騙不了
你說過的幸福 真的還好
Felicidad 不再幸福就好
複雜糾纏 多一個灰了天
你的永遠 都是謊言
Felicidad 不再幸福就好
重複抱歉 全都是藉口
幸福真的還好 沒什麼大不了
幸福真的還好 願你幸福就好
你所謂的幸福 都變成祝福
Felicidad 不再幸福就好
不斷的原諒 多一個傷了心
你的未來 都是傷害
Felicidad 不再幸福就好
不停的付出 全都是傷口
幸福真的還好 沒什麼大不了
又一次的傷害 多一次灰了天
Felicidad 不再幸福就好
重複的情节 變成一種習慣
你的諾言 都是虛偽
Felicidad 不再幸福就好
重複地原諒 全都是一樣
幸福真的還好 沒什麼大不了
幸福真的還好 要真的勇敢離開

5.4.3 Translated Lyrics

Happiness, Really?

Happiness is really okay
Happiness is really okay, it's no big deal
The so-called promises you made have all changed
You said how good you and her would be, you couldn't lie
The happiness you said is really okay
Felicidad, it's okay if you're no longer happy
Complex entanglements, one more gray sky
Your forever is all lies
Felicidad, it's okay if you're no longer happy
Repeated apologies are all excuses
Happiness is really okay, it's no big deal
Happiness is really okay, I wish you happiness
The so-called happiness you made has all turned into blessings
Felicidad, it's okay if you're no longer happy
Continuous forgiveness, one more heartbreak
Your future is all hurt
Felicidad, it's okay if you're no longer happy
Continuous efforts are all wounds
Happiness is really okay, it's no big deal
Another hurt, another gray sky

Felicidad, it's okay if you're no longer happy
The repeated plot becomes a habit
Your promises are all false
Felicidad, it's okay if you're no longer happy
Repeated forgiveness, all the same
Happiness is really okay, it's no big deal
Happiness is really okay; you have to be brave enough to leave

Due to the number of divorce cases, I was writing the song and added many questions about happiness in life. The lyrics started with a question asking listeners whether marriage is necessary. Then, it illustrated all the lies inside the relationship, which aligns with the drama theme. The lyrics became more emotional when I wrote that happiness was a scam. I added the Spanish word "Felicidad" to give some different vibes to the lyrics. Lastly, I wrote that many tried to achieve happiness by hurting others, so one must let go and stick to fake happiness.

After the music and lyrics were ready, I sent the song to my arrangement student, Kili. I told him that I needed a ballad arrangement with emotion. He then returned to me with a fantastic piano, electric guitar, and drums arrangement. After that, I headed once again back to Bosh studio to record the vocals (Figure 39). The recording was fast this time, and it was just my vocals. It took about 45 minutes for my vocal recordings. Then, it was mixed by Ucop and mastered by Billy Ong at the same studio.

The artist composed and wrote the song, and then her student Kili arranged it. The studio was booked to record the song. The recording was high-speed, then sent for mixing by Ucop and mastering by Billy. Lastly, the song was sent to the TV station, and it was swift for the approval process.

Figure 39: Vocal Recording

5.4.4 Video Production Creative Process

Due to my previous experience editing theme song music videos, this music video was even smoother and faster. This time, the TV station gave me more footage from the drama, which was already ready to be used.

Since the whole song's direction was emotional, I preselected all the crying and fighting scenes of the drama. Then, I arranged it according to the lyrics. I decided to take one part of my crying acting from the drama to kick start at the beginning of the music video. Then, it continued with all the other emotional footage from the drama. I used simple transitions this time and let the drama-acting footage be the main focus. The editing this time was speedy as it was my forte for producing sad, emotional songs. After all the editing, I added one layer of moving colors behind to blend all the footage. This time, the approval was even quicker, and the lyrics were added to the music video.

5.4.5 Transmedia Distribution Process

The music video was then sent to TV stations, Radio Stations, and Music Streaming Platforms. This time, it was hyped on Spotify and other social media before the TV and Radio stations pluck the song on air. The final music video was released on November 13th, 2023, via YouTube (Figure 40). The music video link is:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkD4qy-gCLc&list=RDnkD4qy-gCLc&start_radio=1

Figure 40: Happiness Really on YouTube

The song was played inside the drama as an insert song starting from Episode 5, which was in the middle of the drama. Also, due to the drama ratings and the hype from the previous songs

and drama, the song was very popular on Spotify (Figure 41), went up to the top playlists, and subsequently affected the music video traction on YouTube.

Figure 41: Song Being on Spotify Chart

5.5 Music Video 5: Concept & Genre Overview

The fifth music video was being produced in conjunction with the TV station for a reality show titled, The Masked Singer Malaysia Season 4» which I took part in straight after the drama. Due to the show's franchise, seeking permission was even more challenging. The collaboration was initially rejected, but then some conditions were agreed upon. After a few months of negotiation, permission was granted, and it was decided that the territory of the music video would only be viewable to Malaysian audiences. Hence, the production timeline and release dates were delayed due to all approval and negotiation. This time, the genre of the music will be kids' music, and the video will experiment with animation.

5.5.1 Music & Lyrics & Recording Creative Process

The song was being produced in conjunction with the reality show I was involved in. In The Masked Singer Malaysia Season 4, I was disguised as «Kak Cat». This is a franchise show from Korea, but it was being produced in a Malaysian version. Since I was a cat figure in the show, I crafted a song titled «Meow Meow» and targeted the kids.

Before starting the composition, I decided to listen to various kids' songs on YouTube, such as «Baby Shark», «Bath Songs» and «Saya Si Kuching». I noticed that the melody must be simple, and there must be loads of repetition for the kids to remember easily. Then, I headed to the studio for my composition (Figure 42).

Figure 42: Self Recording in Studio

I composed the song in C Major, the most basic chord. Then, I created one verse and repeated the melody throughout the song. I wrote the lyrics in Malay as it was the primary language of the show in Malaysia.

5.5.2 Original Lyrics

Meow Meow Meow

Meow Meow Meow Meow

Meow Meow Meow Meow

Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow

Aku Lah Si Kuching

Aku Lah Si Putih

Aku Lah Si Comel

Aku Lah Kak Cat Meow

Meow Meow Meow Meow

Meow Meow Meow Meow

Meow Meow Meow Meow

Aku Suka Masak

Aku Suka Makan

Aku Suka Baca

Aku Lah Kak Cat

Meow Meow Meow Meow

Meow Meow Meow Meow

Meow Meow Meow Meow

Walaupun Tersingkir Kena Bangkit Juga

Teruskan Belajar Sampai Berjaya

Meow Meow Meow Meow

Meow Meow Meow Meow

Meow Meow Meow Meow

Walaupun terjatuh kena berdikari

Teruskan impian sampai ke akhir

Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow

5.5.3 Translated Lyrics

Meow Meow Meow
Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow
Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow
Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow
I'm Kuching
I'm White
I'm Cute
I'm Kak Cat Meow

Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow
Meow Meow Meow Meow
Meow Meow Meow Meow
I Like to Cook
I Like to Eat
I Like to Read
I'm Kak Cat

Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow
Meow Meow Meow Meow
Meow Meow Meow Meow
Meow Meow Meow Meow
Even If You Get Knocked Out, You Have to Get Up Again
Continue Learning Until You Succeed

Meow Meow Meow Meow
Meow Meow Meow Meow
Meow Meow Meow Meow
Even If You Fall, You Have to Be Independent
Continue Dreaming Until the End

Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow Meow

The lyrics were about a cat, starting with «Meow Meow Meow» in every paragraph. The first verse introduces my character in the show. Then, I describe that I like cooking, reading, and learning. As I was eliminated from the show, I also wrote that even though I fell, I needed to stand up and walk until the end. This has a positive impact on the kids.

After the music and lyrics were done, I sent the song for arrangement by Sofeyan. This time, I told him that since it was a kid's song, I needed repetition of beats, and it was being arranged in Ableton as an electronic song with simple beats. This time, for the arrangement, I sat down with the arranger to arrange the song together. We added synth, drums, beats, and bass layers to the music. Then, I recorded my vocals at the studio booth inside MMU University. After that, Sofeyan and I mixed the song. This time, we tweaked the vocals to sound like a cat by pitching my vocals. Lastly, we did some simple mixing and mastering.

5.5.4 Video Production Creative Process

For the video production process, I had to become the director of the whole animated music video. I had to foster all the production and make the collaboration possible. This time, I sought collaboration on music video production with animation students named Alyah from another faculty, and the whole process took almost one month.

Alyah first designed the 2D graphic for the animation (Figure 43). Then, she drafted all the scenes in detail before animation for almost one week. Lastly, it took her two weeks to edit and make all her drawings in 2D animated form. The whole process took nearly one month from draft to production. We sat down together and went through the entire process together. I also told her it must be simple and easy for the kids to understand. After all the drawings were done, she animated the whole music video.

Figure 43: Figure Design

5.5.5 Transmedia Distribution Process

Figure 44: The Mask Singer Malaysia

After the music video was ready, it was kept, and the song was launched in conjunction with the reality show finale (Figure 44). It was also pre-hyped on Spotify and other social media platforms. Due to the new concept of 2D animation and the reality show for kids, the views on YouTube were high, as it attracted a new young audience to the channel. Some TikTok videos were also being shot to pre-hype the whole music video. The final music video was released

on February 16th, 2024, and via YouTube (Figure 45). The music video link being published is:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfUNC6qJnHw&list=RDdfUNC6qJnHw&start_radio=1

Figure 45: Meow Meow Meow on YouTube

Chapter VI: INTERVIEWS & OBSERVATIONS

6.1 Interview Direction

5 industry experts who have more than five years of experience in the production world had been selected due to credibility and suitability. These five experts are basing in Malaysia which suits the studies as the researcher main market is in Malaysia. Six questions were crafted in order to gain some industrial perception. Subsequently, all the same questions were being asked by all the respondents. During the interview less interruption was incurred in order to ensure accuracy and also objectivity of the answer. Permission was sought before each interview. After interview, all the interview were transcribed and being presented as below.

6.1.1 Respondent 1 (R1): Jeffrey Chiang, Managing Producer & Manager MM2

Q1: Does costing affect the quality of music videos?

It is not entirely similar to the film; it depends on the vision & creativity of the director or writer to play with their imagination; indeed, both the director & producer would prefer to have more resources to ensure quality. Still, the limitations challenge the team to step out of their comfort zone while thinking outside of the box.

Q2: What are the ways to decrease the cost of production of music videos?

Reduction of the production scale in terms of no. of personnel, no. of days, talents involved, locations, production design, and equipment usage, but with the condition that it fulfills the director's vision & creative execution to ensure the director's creativity is not heavily restrained.

Q3: How have music videos evolved nowadays?

Similar to commercials, the emergence of various types of social media platforms as well as independent musicians or influencers has made the entire music industry more competitive; despite significant labels efforts to produce high-quality music videos featuring major actors in the hope of creating tractions, independent musicians could quickly produce eye-catching music videos with similar approach due to "piggy-backing" effects that other influencers or even established celebrity find attracting as it can help expand their influence. Therefore, these

independent musicians can do it for a much cheaper cost. With globalization via the internet, their outreach is pretty much even, with the only difference being how much each is willing to spend on platforms to boost the coverage.

Q4: What type of music video does the audience prefer nowadays?

Compared to the cinematic view with an emotional storyline that reflects the lyrics or melody, the audience nowadays prefers a highly rhythmic tempo both in melody and visual that requires no narrative structure, no time for buildup, and straight to the action. They like action-packed and impactful visuals in terms of the high volume of dance choreography that is in sync with the melody and tempo or extravagant background designs that somehow draw them away from ordinary life.

Q5: Does team diversity affect the final outcome of music videos?

It depends. Diversity provides perspectives that help in creativity and sensitivity so that specific details are not overlooked.

Q6: Does team collaboration in music production affect the quality of music videos?

As mentioned previously, the producer's role is to utilize whatever resources are available, while the director's role is to execute the creative vision to its highest quality; both of them, as well as the rest of the team, need to come to an agreement and work together without undermining each other's roles and strengths to carry out the primary goal.

6.1.2 Respondent 2 (R2): Wensyn Lai, Head of Production of Dreamax Sdn Bhd

RQ1: Does costing affect the quality of music videos?

Any cost can affect content. But we can work within the budget to make product values.

RQ2: What are the ways to decrease cost of production of music videos?

Plant in sponsor then it makes content suitable to the cost.

RQ3: How have music videos evolved nowadays?

It's much more cinematic. For example, we can see the generation of CNY music videos, and 3P's CNY MV is much more cinematic than the previous one. They did several shots using a robot cam for visual improvement.

RQ4: What type of music video does the audience prefer nowadays?

The audience will only follow trendy singers or worldwide productions, like Coldplay or Mayday. The gimmick of the music video brings thought and memorable moments to the audience. Bonding with the audience is a must. Marketing strategy needs to keep growing after planting the seeds.

RQ5: Does team diversity affect the final outcome of music videos?

Nothing affects us because we are multiple message receivers. The important thing might be the messages we need to spread out or share. Content is the king.

RQ6: Does team collaboration in music production affect the quality of music videos?

Sometimes, yes. But that must be several thousand times to get the discussion going and perspectives aligned. Music, multiple languages, and materials/vibe to plant in are very important to create a visual. For music videos, we need music to impact and kickstart visual creativity.

6.1.3 Respondent 3 (R3): Jocelle Koh, Head of Music Distributor of Believe Music

Q1: Does costing affect the quality of music videos?

To an extent, yes. Obviously, the more money spent on creating music videos, the higher the guarantee of an objectively good-quality video, but art is subjective and not black and white. Great videos can be made by talented people on budgets, too!

Q2: What are the ways to decrease the cost of production of music videos?

In-house resources are the primary way to reduce costs. If you already have the equipment needed and a workforce willing to help as part of the team, all you will need is the venue, hair/makeup, etc.

Q3: How have music videos evolved nowadays?

From a digital perspective, the consumption of music visuals has changed significantly. This also means that the music video format can be less relevant in some sense than previously, as people do not always go out of their way to consume the MV as they might have before due to social media and the multitude of content artists are creating.

Q4: What type of music video does the audience prefer nowadays?

Following on from my reply above, audiences prefer to consume music videos that natively fit into their viewing experience. In terms of type, it depends on the artist's audience. Why do they like that artist, and what other kinds of content do they consume? This will inform the type of music video the audience prefers; it needs to be very targeted to their tastes, and there will no longer be a direct relationship between preference and the budget spent.

Q5: Does team diversity affect the final outcome of music videos?

While it's not very measurable, diversity affects the outcome as it incorporates many different types of people's creative and functional perspectives. This makes the final product more relevant for various audiences and can contribute more to its potential for success.

Q6: Does team collaboration in music production affects the quality of music

Production is a logistically challenging process that requires high-level coordination. Miscommunication or a lack of effective collaboration might ultimately impact the final product.

6.1.4 Respondent 4 (R4): Tamim Bin Faruq, Multimedia University Audio Visual Researcher

Q1: Does costing affect the quality of music videos?

I believe so. The budget allocated to a music video can significantly impact on its quality. At the same time, high production costs may afford luxurious sets and advanced visual effects. Some artists may prioritize creativity and resourcefulness within a more modest budget, striving to maintain quality through innovative ideas and careful production execution.

Q2: What are the ways to decrease the cost of production of music videos?

Artists can explore collaborations with talented students and emerging media artists, leveraging their creativity and enthusiasm. By doing so, they can maintain quality while optimizing expenses, ensuring that innovative ideas and skilled execution remain at the forefront of the music video production process.

Q3: How have music videos evolved nowadays?

Some artists utilize cutting-edge technologies and visual effects and prefer to emphasize storytelling and more straightforward creative concepts.

Q4: What type of music video does the audience prefer nowadays?

K-pop dance styles have become some of the most popular recently. The stunning cinematography makes MTV look like a cinematic film. It is narrative-driven and focuses on storytelling.

Q5: Does team diversity affect the final outcome of music videos?

Yes. Working with individuals from different backgrounds and skill sets can bring many perspectives and ideas, resulting in a more innovative and dynamic end product.

Q6: Does team collaboration in music production affect the quality of music videos?

Collaborations with various talents can produce unique ideas, enhancing overall production quality.

6.1.5 Respondent 5 (R5): Mun Fei Lim, Senior Manager of Trumpet Entertainment

Q1: Does costing affect the quality of music videos?

Yes, indeed. Varying costs will determine the quality of the instruments, production expertise, and equipment used. Therefore, the price will directly affect the quality of music videos.

Q2: What are the ways to decrease the cost of production of music videos?

In the long run, Artificial Intelligence (AI) will help decrease the cost of production by replacing the need for manual work on multiple instruments. It may also contribute to shortening production times and increasing cost-effectiveness. However, currently, AI technology is still in an immature stage and requires additional resources for development.

Q3: How have music videos evolved nowadays?

Nowadays, music videos require excitement from music (quality of sound) and visual effects (3D, Virtual, Interactive).

Q4: What type of music video does the audience prefer nowadays?

Nowadays, audiences prefer eye-catching music videos that initially capture their attention. With music videos readily available on various platforms, it has become crucial to incorporate visually engaging elements to attract viewers. For example, virtual music videos are gaining popularity to captivate audiences.

Q5: Does team diversity affect the final outcome of music videos?

Yes, it does. Globalization is an unavoidable trend, and audience acceptance is also increasing. People appreciate seeing collaborations that bring together different cultural or musical elements. However, it can be detrimental if the team's diversity results in cultural shock, making it challenging to reach mutual agreements and potentially leading to a lack of clarity or coherence.

Q6: Does team collaboration in music production affect the quality of music videos?

Definitely. I believe that not only in producing music videos but team collaboration is essential and crucial for success in any project. Constant discussion and brainstorming sessions will ensure the highest quality of music video.

6.2 One Month YouTube Observation

Whereas, each of the music video was being observed one month after release where number of views, likes and comments is being collected and analyzed using YouTube analytic tools. Then, it is being presented as observation data.

6.2.1 MV 1

MV 1 was being released during Covid Time. In the first week, it went up to 3k views, peaked at 6k views in the second week, and, lastly, it went up to 7k views in the third week. Whereas in the last week, it went up to 7.8k views. The watch time was 245% compared to usual, as shown in Diagram 4.

There was a total of 126 positive comments in the comment box. Most comments were positive, with 496 likes and zero dislikes. The views and comments were high then; everyone was practically home and online. Moreover, the song was about Covid, which expressed everyone's feelings.

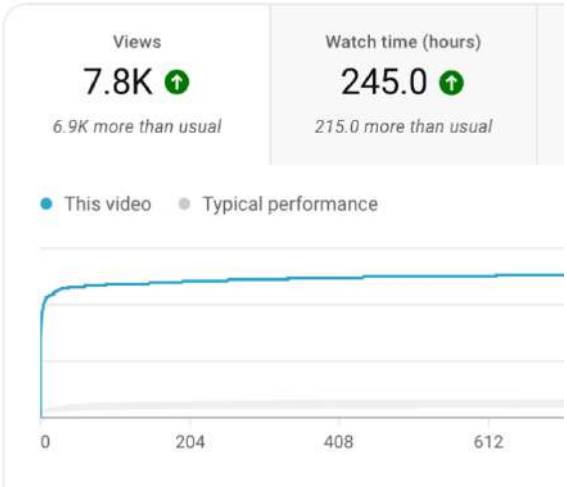

Diagram 4: MV1 One Month YouTube Statistics

6.2.2 MV 2

MV 2 was released right after COVID-19. In the first week, it went up to 200 views, and then it peaked at 500 views in the second week. In the third week, it went up to 800 views. In the

last week, it went up to 1.8k views. The watch time was just 39.3% compared to usual, as shown in Diagram 5.

There were 26 positive comments in the comment box. Most of the comments were positive, with 70 likes and zero dislikes. This time, the traction was low. It could have been after COVID-19 and loads of people returned to work. Moreover, the dancing song was not the artist's forte.

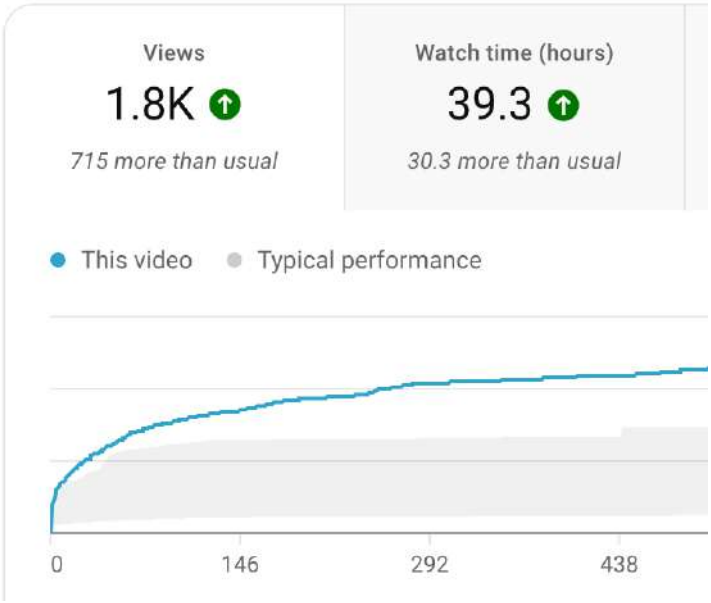

Diagram 5: MV2 One Month YouTube Statistics

6.2.3 MV 3

MV 3 was released in conjunction with the drama. It went up to 10k views in the first week and peaked at 25k views in the second week. In the third week, it went up to 38k views, and in the last week, it went up to 53k views. The views were high due to the traction from the drama (Diagram 6).

The comment box had 51 positive comments and two negative comments, 443 likes, and zero dislikes. The traction was high this time, as the drama was widespread and the music production was terrific. The reaction from the audience was overwhelming.

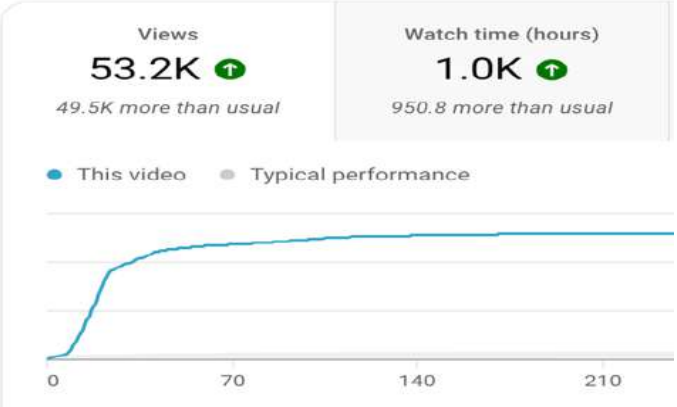

Diagram 6: MV3 One Month YouTube Statistics

6.2.4 MV 4

MV 4 was released a few months after the drama. It went up to 10k views in the first week, then peaked at 15k views in the second week. In the third week, it went up to 22k views. In the last week, it went up to 24.5k views. The watch time was high, and it was 1.2k more than usual (Diagram 7)

There were 16 positive comments in the comment box, with 174 likes and zero dislikes. This time, the traction was also high, as emotional songs were the artist's forte and were being pushed on TV, Radio, and streaming platforms.

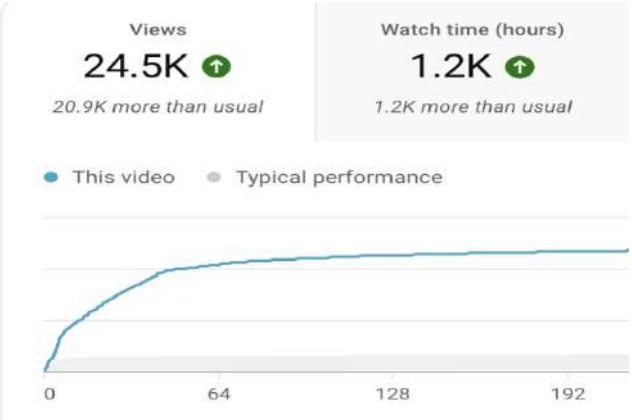

Diagram 7: MV4 One Month YouTube Statistics

6.2.5 MV 5

MV 5 was released in conjunction with the TV reality show. It went up to 25k views in the first week and peaked at 52k in the second week. In the third week, it went up to 61k views. In the last week, it went up to 73.9k views. The watch time was almost 1.8k more than usual (Diagram 8).

There were 36 positive comments in the comment box, with 571 likes and zero dislikes. The traction was high this time, as kids' songs usually attract high attention. Also, the song was cute and easy to remember.

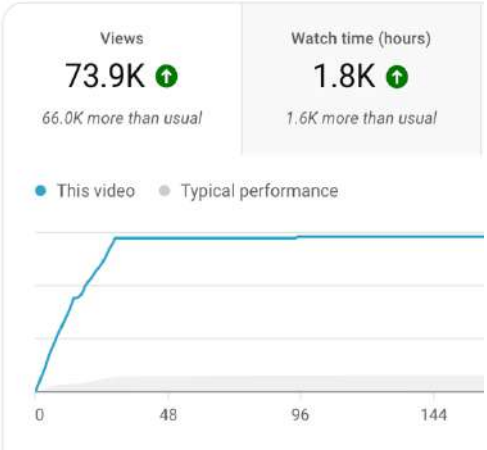

Diagram 8: MV5 One Month YouTube Statistics

CHAPTER VII ANALYSIS

This chapter will portray all the analysis result which represent this study of the thesis. Music videos will be shot revolving around a researcher as the main artist and producer. Analysis will be presented from the production of the music videos. This chapter will start with the analysis of autoethnography field notes, industry expert interviews and observations on YouTube.

7.1 Field Notes Analysis MV1

This section analyzes the creative and production processes behind the situational charity music video *Dalam Detik Ini* developed during the COVID-19 pandemic. It explores the contextual background, lyrical composition, recording constraints, post-production challenges, and the eventual release and reception of the work. The analysis highlights how artistic innovation can flourish under restrictive conditions and how media production can foster collective solidarity in times of crisis. The global COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented disruption to creative industries, particularly music and video production. Artists worldwide were compelled to adapt to new working environments, often with limited resources and physical isolation. *Dalam Detik Ini*, a Malay adaptation of a Taiwanese song created to offer hope during the pandemic, analyzing its formation within a highly constrained yet emotionally charged context.

7.1.1 Creative and Technical Analysis

At the onset of the pandemic, all public venues and studios were shut down due to government-imposed restrictions. The artist, having returned to Malaysia, found themselves isolated and creatively stifled. It was under these circumstances that a Taiwanese producer, Dixon, proposed a cross-border collaboration to produce a Malay version of an existing Chinese-language song originally composed by Zhen Ru.

This collaboration was initiated entirely via digital communication, underscoring the increasing relevance of remote creative workflows during the pandemic. The project had no financial backing and was produced pro bono, as a form of social contribution.

7.1.2 Lyrical and Musical Composition

The original melody, composed in Mandarin and structured as a ballad accompanied by piano (played by Malaysian producer David Khoon), was retained. The lyricist adapted the content to reflect the emotional landscape of Malaysians during the pandemic, titling the song *Dalam Detik Ini*, or *In This Moment*.

The lyrics followed a thematic arc that transitioned from despair to hope, employing metaphoric language to communicate emotional states:

- Fear and Uncertainty: Introduced through rhetorical questions and imagery of grim weather.
- Turmoil: Represented by rain shaking the trees of life and the darkening of clouds.
- Hope and Resilience: Symbolized by the appearance of the sun and the blossoming of flowers post-storm.

This metaphorical structure served to mirror the collective emotional trajectory experienced during the pandemic.

7.1.3 Production Under Constraint

The recording process took place under significant limitations. With professional studios inaccessible, the artist utilized a basic SM58 microphone and home recording software (Ableton). Numerous takes, approximately 2000 takes, were recorded to achieve an emotively authentic performance. All feedback and revisions were conducted through online exchanges, demonstrating the reliance on digital communication tools for real-time collaboration.

The final vocal recordings were sent to Malaysian mixer Li Zhi Qing, who, along with Dixon and the artist, contributed to an iterative mixing process conducted via phone calls and remote file sharing. This further illustrates the adaptive measures taken by creative professionals during periods of physical distancing.

7.1.4 Visual Production and Editing

In the absence of the possibility to shoot a traditional music video, the team adopted a participatory strategy by soliciting images from fans online. This approach not only solved logistical constraints but also introduced a communal element to the project. Hundreds of photos were compiled and edited into slideshow format using Adobe Premiere.

The video's visual narrative was carefully crafted to parallel the emotional content of the song:

- The initial grayscale tone of the slideshow aligned with themes of fear and despair.
- Progressive coloration in the middle represents shifting emotions and a sense of collective awakening.
- Full color in the final scenes symbolized renewed hope and emotional recovery.

These editorial choices offered a visual representation of the psychological transformation described in the lyrics.

7.1.5 Promotion and Reception

Prior to the full release, teasers of various lengths (15, 30, and 60 seconds) were distributed on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. These efforts helped generate anticipation and online engagement. The song premiered on YouTube on July 25, 2021, at 8:00 PM, and subsequently gained attention from online media due to its timely and socially resonant message.

7.1.6 Analysis

The production of *Dalam Detik Ini* serves as a compelling case study in creative adaptation under crisis conditions. Through limited technical resources, remote collaboration, and emotionally driven content, the project was able to deliver a meaningful artistic statement. This analysis demonstrates how digital tools and community participation can be effectively leveraged to sustain artistic expression and social solidarity during times of global disruption.

7.2 Field Notes Analysis MV2

The second music video project was conceptualized and produced in the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately three months following the relaxation of national lockdown restrictions. Although public gatherings were allowed with limitations, some social distancing protocols remained in effect. As a result, the production strategy for this video required careful logistical planning to navigate the ongoing health mandates.

This music video was developed as part of a university music festival titled *Muzikas*, with the overarching theme of a circus. The song functioned as the official festival theme, and its concept was shaped by the event's playful and performative aesthetic. Due to a modest production budget of RM1200, a collaborative model was adopted, relying on partnerships with strategic contributors and leveraging available university resources. The genre of the song was rooted in electronic dance music (EDM), fused with circus-themed physicality and visuals to align with the event's performance.

7.2.1 Creative and Technical Analysis

The creative direction of *Music Video 2* was strongly influenced by both contextual constraints and thematic intentions. Set against the backdrop of a post-pandemic recovery period, the video explored themes of female independence and resilience, aligning with feminist values embedded within the lyrical content. The central aesthetic was guided by the concept of a circus which is a metaphor for performance, spectacle, and transformation which mirrored the social and personal reinvention necessitated by the pandemic.

Drawing on the sonic language of electronic dance music (EDM), the composition embodied repetition, energy, and rhythmic intensity, all of which translated into the visual domain through movement, color, and pacing. The use of multilingual lyrics in Malay, Mandarin, and Spanish. It was not only a symbolic gesture of cultural inclusion but also a disruption of linguistic homogeneity, positioning the work within transnational feminist discourse. The creative decision to emphasize empowerment over romantic fulfillment was a deliberate intervention into prevailing narratives about Asian womanhood.

7.2.2. Lyrical and Musical Composition

The composition of the *Muzikas* theme song draws heavily from the conventions of electronic dance music (EDM)**,** a genre characterized by repetitive structures, energetic tempos, and a focus on rhythmic propulsion over lyrical density. Structurally, the song follows a standard EDM format: intro, build-up, chorus drop, breakdown, and outro. The chorus is repeated multiple times to function as the central hook, consistent with EDM's purpose of generating bodily movement and emotional uplift in live or club settings.

What distinguishes this composition is the deliberate hybridization of EDM with performative elements tied to the festival's circus theme. Though not a formal subgenre like "circus EDM," the integration of rhythm-driven musical gestures designed to synchronize with aerial and dance movements. It creates a kinetic feedback loop between music and the body. This synergy is particularly significant in a post-pandemic context where embodied expression has been socially restricted.

The lyrics employ a multilingual approach by incorporating Malay, Mandarin, and Spanish, as both an artistic and political strategy. The opening line, which greets the audience in all three languages *How are you?* acts as an inclusive gesture to the multilingual demographics of Malaysia, while simultaneously acknowledging the artist's diasporic experience in Spain. This trilingual disrupts the angiocentric normativity often found in global pop and EDM genres and resonates with postcolonial and transnational feminist discourse, asserting linguistic diversity as a mode of resistance and cultural visibility.

The core lyrical message is a feminist declaration of autonomy, speaking directly to contemporary issues faced by young women in Asia. Rejecting marriage as a default social trajectory, the lyrics promote self-realization, perseverance, and rejection of external societal noise. Rather than presenting romantic fulfillment as aspirational, the song centers on individual agenda which portrays a theme often marginalized in commercial pop-EDM which typically prioritizes heteronormative narratives. The song's message thus aligns with fourth-wave feminist ideals, which emphasize intersectionality, personal empowerment, and the politics of choice.

The compositional process was grounded in intuitive and resourceful creativity, shaped by both artistic vision and material constraints. Initial piano sketches were developed in the university's rehearsal space, where melodic ideas were drafted in response to visual and thematic references. Online platforms such as YouTube served as aural reference points, reinforcing the inherently digital and intertextual nature of contemporary composition.

Once the musical skeleton was established, the track was sent to Colombian producer David Shivatt for electronic arrangement. This cross-border collaboration reflects the glocalization of music production, wherein local artistic identities are shaped and expanded through global networks. Shivatt's experimental approach allowed the foundational melody to be reinterpreted through layered electronic textures, aligning with the festival's high-energy atmosphere.

Melodically, the chorus is designed to be earworm-like, leveraging repetition and simplicity to ensure memorability. The phrasing follows a call-and-response logic, with alternating vocal textures creating momentum and contrast. The verses contain slightly more variation, both rhythmically and harmonically, providing narrative tension that resolves in the drop.

Rhythmically, the track maintains a driving four-on-the-floor beat, typical of EDM, but incorporates syncopated percussive elements during the build-up to mimic the unpredictability and dynamism of circus performance. These rhythmic choices are not merely aesthetic but semiotic, gesturing toward chaos, play, and transformation themes commonly associated with the circus.

Vocal recording was conducted at UiTM's university studio using a Stellar microphone and Pro Tools. The choice to self-record allowed for close control over vocal delivery and ensured that emotional tone and phrasing aligned precisely with the conceptual intent. The familiarity with the composition also allowed for a natural and confident performance, which contributed to the clarity and conviction of the final vocal track.

Post-recording, the vocals were collaboratively re-contextualized during the mixing process with the arranger, where final decisions about layering and dynamic balance were made. This hands-on involvement in multiple stages of production reflects a holistic, feminist approach to

authorship, wherein the artist maintains creative control across traditionally segmented technical domains.

7.2.3 Visual Production and Editing

The technical production of the music video was marked by its low-budget, DIY approach, which became both a limitation and a catalyst for inventive problem-solving. With a budget of RM1200, the project demanded an agile and multifaceted production model. The role of producer, director, performer, and editor was self-assumed, demonstrating a highly autonomous mode of authorship which a defining trait of feminist autoethnographic practice.

Recording was executed using professional-grade tools within the university setting, including a Stellar microphone and Pro Tools, enabling high-quality vocal tracking despite limited resources. The transnational collaboration with Colombian arranger David Shivatt and Danish mastering engineer Connor Dalton demonstrates the project's global production network, facilitated by digital platforms and online communication. This layered collaboration allowed for the fusion of local and global sound aesthetics, emblematic of post-pandemic, borderless music-making.

On the video side, resource limitations necessitated the use of a smartphone camera and minimal lighting equipment. Nevertheless, these constraints led to a focus on composition, choreography, and editing to generate visual dynamism. The decision to undertake a month of aerial and dance training at Viva Circus Academy was both a creative and physical investment, enabling the embodiment of circus aesthetics through actual movement practice. This physical training also reflects the performative labor underpinning feminist creative work and labor that is often invisible in traditional music video production discourse.

7.2.4 Production Under Constraint

The editing process was designed to mirror the fast-paced, beat-driven structure of the music. Adobe Premiere was used to apply super-lapse effects, rhythmic cuts, and color grading that matched the tonal shifts in the audio. Visual continuity was achieved through deliberate synchronization between movement and music, with transitions guided by the song's tempo and narrative arc.

The rejection of initial green screen shots reflects a critical awareness of visual coherence. This decision not only indicates technical discernment but also reveals a sensitivity to aesthetic unity. This is a vital aspect of independent production where every element must serve the overall concept. The editing timeline of seven days demonstrates intensive immersion in post-production, a phase where the video's identity was refined and finalized.

7.2.5 Promotion and Reception

The strategic release of multiple teaser videos (15s, 30s, and 1 minute) prior to the main video premiere reflects an understanding of transmedia distribution, where content is tailored for various platforms and attention spans. These teasers functioned not merely as promotional tools, but as narrative fragments designed to generate anticipation and engage diverse audiences across digital networks.

The final release on YouTube was supplemented by integration into the *Muzikas* university showcase, where the video functioned both as entertainment and institutional branding. The live performance of the song during the showcase further blurred the line between recorded media and live art, enhancing the song's multi-platform reach. Subsequent cross-sharing by university-affiliated channels and outreach to media outlets positioned the project within a broader communicative ecology, transforming the video from a self-contained artifact into a participatory cultural event.

7.2.6 Discernment

Music Video 2 stands as a testament to resilient, independent, and feminist artistic practice. It illustrates how creative agencies can flourish even under restrictive conditions, and how limitations can catalyze innovation. The work challenges dominant production paradigms by foregrounding autoethnographic labor, multilingual representation, and transmedia thinking. Through its creative and technical execution, the project asserts not only an artistic voice, but a methodological one in demonstrating that the personal is not only political, but also profoundly productive in contemporary music video-making.

7.3 Field Notes Analysis MV3

Music Video 3 represents a convergence of music production, acting, and post-production within a high-stakes broadcast environment. Created as the theme song for a televised drama on Astro TV Malaysia, the creative direction was externally driven by the show's director, who requested an orchestral composition to reflect the show's emotional gravity. Responding to this brief, the artist adopted a cinematic, Korean drama-inspired orchestral EDM ballad, marked by intense builds, sweeping melodic gestures, and hybrid genre instrumentation.

7.3.1 Creative and Technical Analysis

Technically, the song was built through global collaboration with arrangement in Mexico, mixing in India, and mastering in Spain. This underscores a transnational production model, where creative decisions are carried out through virtual meetings, coordinated feedback, and culturally diverse expertise. The artist assumed a producer-director role**,** making critical decisions in arrangement, vocal performance, recording logistics, and final post-production supervision. The budget of RM4000 was strategically allocated to prioritize professional vocal recording and high-quality mastering to meet broadcast standards.

7.3.2 Lyrical and Musical Composition

The song, titled *Lies*, is written in Mandarin and directly reflects the narrative arc of the TV drama which centers on betrayal, self-destruction, and eventual redemption. The composition was written in D Major, a key often associated with triumph and emotional clarity, which subtly counterpoints the thematic darkness of the story. This key choice supports the song's concluding message of hope and renewal.

The lyrical narrative mirrors the protagonist's journey from deception to self-awareness, with lines exploring psychological entrapment, societal manipulation, and emotional resilience. The lyrics are structured to follow the drama's emotional peaks and valleys, moving from accusatory declarations lies that blur vision to introspective reflections and a final resolve to restart fresh. This progression not only complements the drama but also reflects a feminist reading of agency, trauma, and transformation in centering a female protagonist who reclaims her narrative.

Musically, the song integrates orchestral strings, piano, electric guitar, and cello**,** with a bridge featuring operatic vocals. The opera-inflected section elevates the emotional register, invoking grandeur and tragedy, while the duet format enhances dramatic tension. The layering of textures, vocal harmonies, and instrumentation all aim to reflect the psychological complexity of the storyline.

7.3.3 Visual Production and Editing

Due to actor scheduling and rights limitations, the music video was constructed from existing drama footage rather than newly shot visuals. While this posed creative limitations, the artist turned the constraint into a stylistic choice by embracing a grey tone aesthetic, which is a metaphorical palette that visually echoes the "moral grey areas" explored in the drama.

Editing was done using Adobe After Effects and Adobe Premiere, with added transitions and visual effects designed to enhance emotional pacing and visual rhythm. The editing was carefully timed to musical cues, and emphasis was placed on syncing lyrical themes with key visual moments from the drama (e.g., betrayal, imprisonment, and solitude). This approach reflects a music-video-as-narrative-extension model, where the visual language of the show and the song are in dialogue, enhancing transmedia storytelling.

The use of professional-grade software indicates a high technical competency, and a post-production workflow aligned with broadcast standards, crucial for aligning independent music practice with mainstream media platforms.

7.3.4 Production Under Constraint

Production was shaped by multiple constraints: limited budget post-music production, restricted access to actors, and footage release limitations due to TV rights policies. These factors significantly impacted the video's production design.

However, instead of resisting these limits, the artist embraced them as creative boundaries which working within the framework of institutional collaboration and using pre-shot footage

to construct a compelling visual narrative. The decision to use drama footage also reinforced the song's status as a diegetic extension of the drama, blurring boundaries between music video and in-show soundtrack.

Moreover, the artist's multirole as actor, songwriter, singer, and editor who demonstrates a feminist ethos of self-sufficiency and resilience. By navigating industrial systems with limited resources, the production reflects the ethos of independent and feminist media practice**.**

7.3.5 Promotion and Reception

Promotion for the video followed a transmedia marketing strategy, integrated with the drama's release cycle. Once completed, the music video was sent to the TV and radio stations, while a poster campaign and Spotify pre-hype campaign were launched concurrently.

The song gained traction due to its inclusion in the drama and the high viewership ratings, suggesting that embedded music marketing within television drama structures can create stronger audience emotional attachment and enhance virality. Its reception across radio and Spotify signals successful cross-platform integration, validating the strategic use of transmedia pathways in music distribution.

The song's success is therefore not only artistic but logistical and is achieved through synergistic timing, collaborative marketing, and alignment with broader narrative ecosystems.

7.3.6 Discernment

Music Video 3 stands as a case study in multi-platform, interdisciplinary media production, shaped by institutional collaboration, narrative fidelity, and creative resilience. The project exemplifies how practice-based artists must navigate shifting roles across performer, producer, editor, and promoter which particularly in contexts where gender, economics, and platform politics intersect.

Creatively, the work illustrates how music can deepen narrative engagement within audiovisual storytelling. Technically, it highlights the importance of distributed production networks and self-directed artistry. Under constraint, it reaffirms the ethos of adaptive creativity. In its promotional journey, the music video demonstrates how emotional resonance, and narrative alignment can catalyze viral success, offering valuable insight into contemporary strategies for artist-led media in a post-pandemic cultural economy.

7.4 Field Notes Analysis MV4

Music Video 4, titled *Happiness, Really?* was developed as an insert song for a Chinese-language drama on Astro TV Malaysia, following a successful prior collaboration. Unlike a theme song, this insert track was designed to underscore emotional narrative peaks in the mid-section of the drama. It engages deeply with both the drama's story and wider social commentary, notably relationships and disillusionment. The production was completed on an ultra-low budget of RM100, demanding creative economy and reliance on the artist's prior experience and existing networks.

7.4.1 Creative and Technical Analysis

The creative and technical process of this music video was streamlined by the artist's prior experience with similar workflows and professional relationships. The production timeline was compressed, yet efficient, due to existing trust and procedural familiarity with the TV station, which allowed for rapid approval.

Musically, the song was composed in D minor 7, giving it a melancholic, introspective tone fitting for emotionally complex scenes. The entire production team (composer, arranger, engineer, and mastering technician) were individuals either trained by or already familiar with the artist's work. This relational economy of trust allowed for smooth delegation and communication.

From a technical standpoint, production relied on in-studio efficiency and minimalist recording techniques with just a single vocal line recorded within 45 minutes. The speed of this workflow reflects both the artist's mastery of emotional ballad vocal performance and the functional, industrial nature of insert song production in television.

7.4.2 Lyrical and Musical Composition

The lyrics of *Happiness, Really?* Take a philosophical and critical approach to the social institution of marriage, tying into the drama's themes while also engaging broader discourses. Written in Mandarin with the inclusion of the Spanish word *Felicidad* (happiness), the lyrics reflect a globalized cultural sensibility, hinting at the universality of emotional struggle.

Structurally, the lyrics progress from existential questioning to emotional disillusionment, ultimately settling in ambiguity rather than resolution. Lines that suggest that happiness is a scam and imply that people hurt others to feel happy. This reflects a stark critique of performative or superficial societal norms. These themes align closely with feminist and autoethnographic modes of inquiry, exploring emotional labor and the often-invisible toll of gendered expectations in relationships.

Musically, the arrangement (piano, electric guitar, and drums) maintains emotional restraint to allow the lyrics and vocal performance to take center stage. The sonic minimalism is in service of emotional clarity, rather than musical complexity.

7.4.3 Visual Production and Editing

The music video production leaned heavily on existing drama footage, a pragmatic choice driven by budget and timeline. Unlike the earlier theme song video, this one had greater access to dramatic scenes, allowing for a more layered visual narrative.

The editing process was guided by emotional logic rather than chronological or plot-driven logic. The artist hand-selected key crying and fighting scenes, foregrounding the emotional realism of the drama. The use of the artist's own crying scene at the beginning creates an autoethnographic resonance as the performer is both character and author, evoking a deeper sense of personal investment.

Stylistically, the video avoided overuse of transitions or effects. Instead, a single-color grading layer was used to visually unify the footage. The restrained aesthetic allows the raw emotion of the actors' performances to remain central. This is consistent with the emotional vulnerability embedded in the lyrics and melody.

7.4.4 Production Under Constraint

With only RM100 allocated to the entire production, this music video epitomizes resourceful creativity under constraint**.** The artist drew upon a sustainable network of collaborators, including a student arranger and a local studio with existing professional relationships.

Time constraints also shaped the workflow. However, the artist's existing expertise in emotional song editing allowed for a highly efficient editing process. The use of previously shot drama footage reduced the need for a location to shoot, actors, or elaborate planning. These conditions mirror post-COVID production strategies**,** where adaptability and efficiency are essential.

The project's success despite its micro-budget highlights the role of accumulated cultural capital, skills, relationships, and experiences that allow independent artists to create work at broadcast quality without extensive financial backing.

7.4.5 Promotion and Reception

The music video followed a transmedia promotion strategy. Uniquely, this time the hype began on Spotify and social media prior to traditional broadcast distribution. The staggered release allowed for momentum building, and the song integration into Episode 5 of the drama contributed to emotional attachment among viewers.

The release on November 13, 2023, aligned with narrative developments in the drama, creating a synergy between storytelling and song. On Spotify, the song entered top playlists, showing that music tied to popular TV content can cross over into mainstream music consumption spaces. The YouTube traction was also notable, driven by drama fandom and social media shares, demonstrating the emotional stickiness of insert songs when strategically timed.

7.4.6 Discernment

Music Video 4 is an example of emotion-driven micro-budget media production that succeeds due to the artist's command of both creative and technical aspects of songwriting, performance,

and post-production. It shows how insert songs function not just as background music, but as emotional amplifiers that deepen character arcs and viewer engagement.

Creatively, the video blends personal insight, social critique, and media storytelling. Technically, it reflects an efficient and sustainable model of production. Under constraint, it showcases the power of networked collaboration and learned expertise. In promotion, it affirms the value of cross-platform timing and emotional resonance.

This work exemplifies feminist, practice-based media making that resists spectacle and celebrates depth by producing meaning, affect, and reach not through capital, but through voice, labor, and intimate knowing.

7.5 Field Notes Analysis MV5

Music Video 5, titled *Meow Meow,* marks a significant departure from the artist's previous emotionally driven ballads. This piece was created in conjunction with The Masked Singer Malaysia Season 4, a high-profile reality TV show, where the artist performed under the character *Kak Cat*. As a response to this new performance identity and to engage a younger audience, the song and video were conceptualized as a children's music and animation project. The production was shaped by franchise constraints, extended negotiation timelines, and territorial restrictions, with final approval allowing the content to be viewable only within Malaysia.

7.5.1 Creative and Technical Analysis

The creative process for *Meow Meow* was informed by both market analysis (listening to hit children's songs) and conceptual alignment with the show's branding. The artist responded to the playful aesthetics of *Kak Cat* by crafting a song that was accessible, repetitive, and thematically light-hearted yet subtly motivational.

Technically, the production adopted a hands-on, collaborative model with student participation, reflecting a feminist ethos of knowledge-sharing and mentorship. Unlike prior music videos that used live footage, this one was fully animated, demanding different

directorial and post-production approaches. The artist assumed the role of creative producer and director, guiding the animation from storyboard to execution.

This shift in genre and visual medium demonstrated the artist's adaptability and awareness of audience segmentation and specifically targeting children and family viewers within a mainstream media ecosystem.

7.5.2 Lyrical and Musical Composition

The song is composed in C major, reinforcing its musical simplicity and accessibility for children. Structurally, it is built around heavy melodic repetition, with phrases like "Meow Meow Meow" recurring at the start of every stanza to provide a sonic anchor for young listeners.

The lyrics written in Malay cater to the local audience position "Kak Cat" as a relatable and aspirational character. They reflect positive traits such as reading, learning, and perseverance, making the song not just entertaining, but pedagogically resonant. Notably, the lyrics about falling but walking till the end subtly address failure and resilience concepts often avoided in children's media but presented here in an empowering and digestible form.

The inclusion of pitched and modified vocals to mimic a cat's voice added a layer of playfulness, aligning with genre conventions of children's music while showcasing technical creativity.

7.5.3 Visual Production and Editing

The music video's animated format was the first in the artist's video portfolio, requiring a shift from live action editing to animation direction. The collaboration with animation student Alyah from another faculty represents an interdisciplinary and intergenerational knowledge exchange by underscoring a feminist, practice-based methodology rooted in co-creation and mentorship.

The video was designed using 2D hand-drawn animation, with Alyah developing character graphics and visual narratives under the artist's direction. The aesthetic choices emphasized

clarity and visual appeal for children, favoring bold colors, simplified scenes, and character-driven animation. The storyboard process was iterative, with close involvement from the artist to ensure that the visuals aligned with the lyrical narrative.

Editing was done over two weeks, with a focus on fluid movement, lip-sync alignment, and simple transitions, making the content cognitively accessible for younger audiences.

7.5.4 Production Under Constraint

This production encountered bureaucratic and territorial constraints due to the franchise nature of The Masked Singer. Initial rejections and the requirement that the video be limited to Malaysian audiences highlight the legal and institutional barriers independent artists face when intersecting with global formats.

Time constraints were also intensified by the need to release the video in conjunction with the show's season finale, reducing flexibility in scheduling. However, the artist's prioritization of collaboration over control, and her capacity to coordinate a production team within academic settings, allowed her to meet deadlines despite the delays in initial approvals.

Material resources were limited, but creative capital particularly in the form of student labor, university facilities, and personal oversight enabled completion of a high-quality animated product.

7.5.5 Promotion and Reception

The promotion strategy leveraged transmedia logic, integrating the music video's release with the reality show's finale. The artist also employed pre-release hype tactics on platforms like Spotify and TikTok, targeting younger demographics and parents alike.

By releasing the video on YouTube on February 16th, 2024, and riding the momentum of the show's popularity, the project gained substantial traction. The novelty of 2D animation and the Kak Cat persona helped attract a new segment of viewership, especially children and families, who had not been the primary target of previous music videos.

The video's success on social platforms and streaming reveals how children's content can expand an artist's audience base when executed with sensitivity to both genre and media platform trends.

7.5.6 Discernment

Meow Meow represents a strategic and creative expansion of the artist's practice into children's music and animated visual storytelling. It is a project that foregrounds collaboration, adaptability, and educational values, while navigating the institutional challenges of working within an international franchise.

The song and music video demonstrate that under significant constraint legal, territorial, and temporal which an artist can still produce meaningful, genre-shifting work by leveraging creative networks, institutional affiliations, and an acute awareness of audience and platform.

In doing so, the artist not only reaches new listeners but also contributes to the cultural landscape of children's media in Malaysia**,** positioning independent creative voices within mainstream media spaces. This case also highlights the capacity for feminist, practice-based inquiry to extend into commercial and popular cultural domains, challenging hierarchies between art and entertainment, adult and child audiences, and independent versus institutional production.

7.6 Field Notes Discernment

Across the span of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, five distinct music video productions were undertaken, each representing a unique approach to concept development, team formation, budgeting, and transmedia music distribution. These projects encompassed the full spectrum of the production cycle: pre-production, music and video production, and final distribution. Despite sharing a common creator, the music videos varied significantly in terms of genre, aesthetic, logistical demands, and institutional involvement.

The pre-production phase proved to be critical to the success and efficiency of each project. Thorough planning during this stage facilitated smoother production processes, minimized

costs, and allowed for clearer direction across the project timeline. Importantly, genre selection emerged as a strategic decision rooted not only in artistic identity but also in market responsiveness. Popular and accessible genres were prioritized to enhance relevance, aligning with industry expectations while also allowing the artist to remain true to her evolving identity.

As both producer and performer, the artist assumed a central mediating role, coordinating between production teams, collaborators, and institutional stakeholders. Each production team was selected based on alignment with the artistic direction and logistical feasibility. However, contrary to idealized models of production, the reality of pandemic-era constraints has introduced significant complications. The challenges posed by COVID-19, ranging from lockdowns and movement restrictions to changing health protocols, altered every aspect of the production landscape. Projects involving larger crews or institutional partnerships typically incurred longer timelines and increased financial pressures, in part due to protracted approval processes.

The songwriting process remained relatively efficient across all five productions, owing to the artist's substantial experience of over 15 years in composition and performance. Music and lyrics were composed swiftly, particularly when the thematic direction was already defined. However, the artist outsourced arrangement, mixing, and mastering tasks to professional collaborators, acknowledging her own limitations in these technical areas. Each production was completed within a strict budgetary framework, often under RM4000 per video, underscoring a commitment to cost-efficiency while preserving quality through strategic delegation.

The music video production process was significantly shaped by pandemic-related constraints. During the first video production, conventional filming was nearly impossible; the artist innovatively invited fans to contribute personal images, which were compiled into a slideshow-style video. This collaborative format not only resolved the logistical challenge of on-site filming but also deepened fan engagement. In subsequent videos, particularly the second, movement restrictions and social distancing protocols required filming to be conducted indoors with minimal personnel. The artist assumed multiple technical roles, including self-recording and camera setup, illustrating an emergent form of DIY production culture born from necessity.

For the third and fourth music videos, institutional collaboration with television stations introduced a new layer of complexity. These productions required multiple rounds of approval and compliance with broadcasting regulations, resulting in protracted timelines. However, prior experience facilitated smoother negotiations in later collaborations, demonstrating a learning curve in navigating institutional frameworks.

The fifth music video marked the most logistically and legally complex undertaking, as it involved co-production with a franchised international reality show**.** This project required inter-country permissions, extensive legal consultation, and strict adherence to franchise guidelines. The risk of production shutdown or legal disputes remained high until final permissions were granted. Furthermore, working across different cultural and institutional systems introduced additional demands in terms of coordination, communication, and production design.

Distribution strategies also evolved across the five projects. While all videos were ultimately disseminated via YouTube, each adopted a distinct transmedia strategy, extending reach through complementary platforms and channels. Distribution efforts were no longer confined to digital uploads; instead, they were integrated into broader ecosystems that included fan engagement initiatives, media coverage, live performances, television broadcasts, radio airplay, and streaming platforms such as Spotify. These multifaceted approaches were necessary in an era where digital saturation demanded strategic visibility across multiple nodes of media consumption. This is as shown in Table 3.

Music Video (MV)	Concept	Music Video Costing In RM (Malaysia Currency)	Production Period	Total Production Duration	Members of Collaboration Production Teams Involved	Transmedia Music Distribution
MV 1	**Situational**	**RM100**	**During Pandemic) (25th July 2021**	**2 Weeks**	**3**	**Collaboration With Fans Online**
MV 2	**Dance Electronic**	**RM1200**	**3 Months Post Pandemic) (5th July 2022)**	**2 Weeks**	**4**	**Collaboration With University Showcase**
MV 3	**Ballad Orchestral**	**RM4000**	**1 Year 3 Months Post Pandemic) (8th Oct 2023)**	**3 Weeks**	**12**	**Collaboration With TV Dramas**
MV 4	**Ballad Emotional**	**RM100**	**(1 Year 4 Months Post Pandemic) (13th Nov 2023)**	**1 Day**	**1**	**Collaboration With TV, Radio & Streaming Platforms**
MV 5	**Kids Song**	**RM3600**	**1 Year 6 Months Post Pandemic) (16st Feb 2024)**	**1 Month**	**3**	**Collaboration With TV Reality Show**

Table 3: MV Production

7.7 Industry Expert Interview Analysis

The analysis of expert interviews provides key insights into the practical realities of music video production, particularly in the context of cost management, creative evolution, audience preferences, team diversity, and collaboration. Five industry professionals were interviewed, and their responses have been synthesized below.

To contextualize the production of music videos during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, interviews were conducted with five industry professionals, each offering insights into

budgeting, audience preferences, evolving formats, and collaborative practices. Their responses collectively illuminate the tension between creativity and constraints in contemporary music video production.

7.7.1 Costing and Production Quality

Three out of five respondents concurred that the cost of a music video significantly influences its quality. Higher budgets allow for longer production times, luxurious sets, advanced visual effects, and access to high-caliber production expertise and equipment. However, respondents also emphasized that financial limitations could inspire innovative solutions. According to Jeffrey(R1), creative vision can supersede financial constraints, forcing directors and producers to think beyond conventional methods. Jocelyn (R3) echoed this sentiment, suggesting that skilled individuals can deliver high-quality results even with minimal budgets.

Strategies to reduce production costs were diverse and practical. Jeffrey (R1) proposed reducing the production scale by minimizing crew size, shoot days, and logistical requirements while maintaining the integrity of the director's vision. Wensyn (R2) advocated seeking sponsorships to subsidize costs. Jocelyn (R3) emphasized the value of utilizing in-house resources, including existing equipment and team members. R4 recommended collaborations with students and emerging creatives to balance cost-efficiency with artistic merit. R5 offered a forward-looking suggestion, noting that artificial intelligence (AI), although still developing, may soon reduce manual labor and overall production costs.

All five respondents agreed that budget does influence the quality of music video outputs, but to varying extents. Respondent 1 and Respondent 4 emphasized that while higher budgets allow for better equipment, sets, and post-production tools, creativity often thrives under constraint, encouraging innovation. Respondents 3 and 5 reiterated that high-quality videos can still emerge from low-budget productions if artists possess strong in-house resources and a collaborative team. Respondent 2 also pointed out that strategic sponsorships can effectively offset costs, while Mun Fei (R5) proposed future cost reductions through the integration of AI technologies, though acknowledging its current limitations.

7.7.2 Strategies for Cost Reduction

Experts commonly recommended minimizing production scale through fewer locations, reduced personnel, and shorter shoot durations as articulated by Jeffrey (R1) and Jocelyn (R3). Collaboration with students or emerging talents was suggested by Tamim (R4) as a creative, low-cost solution. Meanwhile, Wensyn (R2) and Mun Fei (R5) highlighted external solutions such as sponsorship and future reliance on automation and AI to reduce labor costs and speed up production.

7.7.3 Evolution of Music Videos

All respondents acknowledged that music videos have undergone significant evolution. Jeffrey (R1) and Jocelyn (R3) highlighted the transformative impact of social media, which has intensified competition and empowered independent artists to reach wide audiences through influencer networks and digital virality. Wensyn (R2) described a shift towards more cinematic aesthetics, including the adoption of advanced filming technologies such as robotic cameras. Tamim (R4) noted a bifurcation between technologically advanced productions and more minimalist, story-driven approaches. Meanwhile, Mun Fei (R5) underscored the increasing demand for immersive experiences, citing the integration of 3D, virtual, and interactive visual elements as key trends in current music video production.

The interviews indicate a significant evolution in music video formats and distribution, driven by digital platforms and changing audience behavior. Respondent 3 observed a diminished focus on traditional music videos, with more emphasis on content tailored for social media consumption. Others noted a shift towards cinematic visuals (R2, R4), integration of high-end technology such as robot cams (R2), and the rise of interactive or virtual content (R5). Respondents agreed that music videos now serve as immersive, multi-platform visual experiences rather than standalone narrative artifacts.

7.7.4 Audience Preferences

A majority of respondents (4 out of 5) observed a clear shift in audience preferences toward visually captivating content with strong rhythmic elements. Tamim (R4) remarked on the

popularity of K-pop-style dance videos, which combine synchronized choreography with high-definition, cinematic visuals. Jeffrey (R1) and Wensyn (R2) emphasized the importance of creating an emotional bond with the audience through storytelling, while Mun Fei (R5) stressed the need for impactful and engaging elements that maintain viewer attention from beginning to end. The collective insight suggests that audiences favor immediacy and spectacle, aligning with broader shifts in digital content consumption.

Audience preferences have shifted toward more visually impactful, rhythm-driven content, as suggested by Jeffrey (R1) and Tamim (R4). Fast-paced, dance-heavy visuals with minimal narrative are favored for their instant appeal. Respondents 2 and 5 emphasized that emotional connection and visual gimmickry are critical for engagement, particularly in global or K-pop-inspired formats. Jocelyn (R3) underscored that preferences vary based on artist's identity and fan expectations, suggesting a move toward more personalized and targeted video experiences.

7.7.5 Team Diversity and Collaboration

Diversity and team collaboration were seen as both assets and challenges. Most respondents agreed that diversity contributes positively to creativity and innovation (R1, R4, R5), particularly when managed effectively. However, Mun Fei (R5) cautioned that cultural differences could hinder coherence if not navigated carefully. Strong team collaboration, clear communication, and mutual respect were consistently identified as essential for successful music video production (R1, R3, R6), with collaboration being a critical driver of quality and creative synergy.

Four of the five experts agreed that team diversity positively influences music video outcomes. Jeffrey (R1) highlighted the role of diverse perspectives in enhancing creativity and attention to detail. Jocelyn (R3) and Tamim (R4) suggested that working with individuals from varied cultural and professional backgrounds fosters innovation and broader audience appeal. R5 added that diversity contributes to creative richness but also warned of potential challenges, such as cultural misunderstandings that may impede cohesion and clarity in the production process.

Team collaboration was similarly identified as a key determinant of production quality. Four respondents agreed that effective collaboration is essential, particularly when roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and respected. Jeffrey (R1) stressed the need for mutual understanding and goal alignment between producers and directors. Jocelyn (R3) noted that miscommunication can hinder final outputs, reinforcing the importance of efficient coordination. Mun Fei (R5) emphasized brainstorming and shared vision as drivers of quality. However, Wensyn (R2) presented a more critical view, acknowledging the value of collaboration but suggesting that the process is often laborious, requiring extensive discussions and alignment of perspectives.

7.8 Analysis of YouTube One Month Observation (OB)

This section presents the results of a four-week observation of five music videos (MV 1–5) on YouTube, analyzing patterns in viewership, engagement, and contextual factors such as timing, content relevance, and production format. The data offers insights into the relationship between content strategy and audience reception in the post-COVID digital media landscape.

7.8.1 MV 1: Released During COVID-19

MV 1 demonstrated steady growth over the one-month period, beginning with 3,000 views in the first week and reaching 7,800 views by the fourth week. Notably, the watch time increased to 245% compared to the usual benchmark (see Diagram 7.0). Viewer engagement was high, with 126 positive comments, 496 likes, and no dislikes. The video resonated with viewers due to its timely theme related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which contributed to its emotional relevance during a period when audiences were predominantly confined to their homes.

7.8.2 MV 2: Released Post-COVID-19

MV 2 experienced relatively low traction, starting with 200 views and peaking at 1,800 views by the fourth week. The watch time was significantly lower than usual at just 39.3% (Diagram 7.1). The video received 26 positive comments, 70 likes, and no dislikes. Contributing factors to the lower engagement include a decrease in digital consumption post-lockdown and a mismatch between the upbeat dance theme and the artist's established musical identity.

7.8.3 MV 3: Released Alongside a Drama

MV 3 saw rapid and consistent growth, beginning with 10,000 views in week one and rising to 53,000 views by week four (Diagram 7.2). It received 51 positive comments, two negative comments, 443 likes, and no dislikes. The video benefited significantly from its release in conjunction with a popular television drama, suggesting that transmedia integration and cross-platform promotion can strongly influence viewership.

7.8.4 MV 4: Released After the Drama

MV 4, released a few months post-drama, began with 10,000 views and reached 24,500 views by week four. The watch time exceeded expectations by 1.2k minutes (Diagram 7.3). It garnered 16 positive comments, 174 likes, and no dislikes. The emotional nature of the song, aligned with the artist's musical strengths, and consistent promotion across TV, radio, and streaming platforms contributed to its strong performance.

7.8.5 MV 5: Released with a TV Reality Show

MV 5 achieved the highest engagement, starting at 25,000 views and reaching 73,900 views within a month. Watch time was 1.8k minutes higher than average (Diagram 7.4). With 36 positive comments, 571 likes, and no dislikes, the video's success is attributed to its appeal to younger audiences, integration with a reality TV show, and accessible, catchy content. The child-friendly genre played a central role in its viral potential.

7.9 Thematic Analysis and Observations

7.9.1 Conceptual Innovation and Integration

The data suggests that music videos with strong conceptual relevance and media integration tend to attract higher viewership. MV 1's emotional alignment with a global crisis, MV 3 and MV 5's transmedia connections, and MV 4's emotional resonance all support this assertion. In contrast, MV 2's lower engagement highlights the importance of thematic relevance and timing in video releases.

7.9.2 Production Scale and Collaboration

Videos involving larger, more diverse teams and extended production durations tended to perform better. MVs with higher budgets and collaborative efforts especially those tied to broader media projects which achieved greater visibility and engagement. This supports the notion that creative collaboration and investment in production values contribute significantly to digital success.

7.9.3 Genre and Audience Preferences

Emotional, situational, and children's songs consistently outperformed dance-oriented content, particularly within the Malaysian context. This contrasts with global trends but aligns with localized audience preferences. MV 2's underperformance illustrates the disconnect that can occur when content does not align with the artist's brand or cultural expectations.

7.9.4 Transmedia and Participatory Culture

Transmedia synergy is seen in MVs linked to TV dramas and reality shows which played a critical role in boosting visibility. Additionally, participatory elements, such as relatable content or viewer-driven promotion, increased audience investment. Conversely, traditional performance-based approaches did not translate effectively into online engagement, indicating a shift towards digitally integrated and audience-focused strategies.

Chapter VIII: FINDINGS

Thematic analysis of the interviews was employed to extract insights into the perceptions and practices surrounding music video production, while the observational data offered empirical evidence regarding audience engagement, trends, and viewership patterns. This chapter presents the synthesized findings from all sources of data which is autoethnography field notes, semi-structured interviews with five industry experts, and a one-month observational analysis of five self-produced music videos published on YouTube.

8.1 Findings 1 (F1): Independent Artist Role Reinvention After Covid-19

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted conventional music video production workflows, particularly for independent artists. As lockdowns and social distancing protocols rendered traditional shoots impossible, artists were compelled to take on multiple roles in the production process, including directing, editing, and post-production. This shift led to a redefinition of the artist's role, from a performer to a multi-skilled content creator.

Findings indicate that many independent artists began to self-produce and self-edit their music videos during the pandemic, effectively becoming the entire production crew. Online collaborations, especially international ones, emerged as viable alternatives, leading artists to assume roles typically occupied by producers or creative directors. Even after restrictions were lifted, the legacy of this role fluidity persisted, as artists continued to operate independently due to ongoing budget constraints, privacy concerns, and the complexity of institutional approvals, particularly for collaborations involving TV stations.

One respondent, Jeffrey (R1) affirmed that independent musicians can produce compelling music videos at significantly lower costs by leveraging creativity and self-sufficiency. The necessity to multitask became a recurring theme across interviews, underscoring a broader trend of role reinvention catalyzed by the pandemic.

Overall, the findings highlight a significant post-pandemic transformation in independent music video production, wherein artists have adapted by acquiring technical and managerial

skills that allow them to sustain creative output in the face of economic and logistical challenges.

8.2 Findings 2 (F2): Post Pandemic Cost-saving Strategies for Music Video Production Without Affecting Quality

During Covid 19, shooting was challenging due to all distance restrictions, and the budget was slashed. During the pandemic, the artist decided to ask fans online to send pictures of them during the lockdown, and it was then edited into a slide show video. However, after the pandemic, the world economy went into recession and inflation, leading to decreased revenue or budget for the creative industry. However, as observed, the higher the budget and longer time spent on production by higher experts attract more of an audience. Hence, various post-pandemic cost-saving music video production strategies were proposed, observed, and experimented with without affecting the quality.

Three of the five expert participants expressed a consensus that the production budget significantly impacts the perceived quality of a music video. Higher financial investment was linked to the ability to afford extended production timelines, superior technical equipment, advanced post-production effects, and experienced personnel. These elements were perceived to contribute directly to the enhancement of visual and auditory quality.

However, several respondents also highlighted that creativity and innovation could mitigate budgetary limitations. In particular, it was argued that a strong artistic vision and efficient execution can compensate for financial constraints. One participant suggested that "talent can subsidize the budget," indicating that skilled creative professionals can achieve high production values even with limited resources.

After the pandemic, the artist collaborated with TV stations and streaming platforms such as Spotify to sponsor her song as a drama soundtrack. In return, the song was played inside the drama and pushed on Spotify. Also, the researcher did not need to shoot an extra music video but used footage from the drama to edit the music video.

On the other hand, other peer producers gave valuable insights from similar fields like film to save cost. As pointed out by Jeffrey (R1), "Similar to film as it depends on the vision and

creativity of the director or writer to play with their imagination, indeed both director and producer would prefer to have more resources to ensure quality, but it's the limitations that test and challenge the team to step out of their comfort zone while thinking out of the box production execution." This signifies that, at times, pushing one's limits or being out of the box with a lower budget could ignite more new horizons or creativity. Budgets will always comfort them, but they might also be a dangerous zone for creativity. Besides that, R1 also pointed out that reducing the scale of production in terms of crew involved, number of days, talent involved, location, production design, and equipment usage could save cost but with the condition that it still fit into the director's vision and creativity.

Wensyn (R2) also agreed with Jeffrey (R1) that working within the budget would make the product more valuable. On the other hand, Wensyn (R2) suggested that one can also seek a sponsor first and then make suitable content that fits the cost. Jocelyn (R3) supported this, saying talented people can create great videos on a budget. This signifies that the quality of the video depends on the talent and expertise of the doers and not just on the budget. Jocelyn (R3) also pointed out that using in-house resources is the primary way to reduce costs. For example, if one already has the equipment needed, one only needs to hire a project-based crew and rent the venue and hair and make-up on set (R3). This means investing in equipment with no need to keep a full-time crew but hiring on a project basis.

This was also echoed by Tamim (R4), who stated that artists might learn to achieve creativity and resourcefulness within a more modest budget by maintaining quality via innovative ideas and careful production execution. Another effective way suggested by Tamim (R4) is that artists can collaborate with talented students and emerging media artists by leveraging their creativity and enthusiasm. This could not only maintain quality while optimizing all the expenses, but it could ensure innovative ideas and skilled execution during the music video production process.

Besides that, Mun Fei (R5) predicted that in the long run, Artificial Intelligence (AI) will help decrease production costs by replacing the need for manual work on multiple instruments. This could not just speed up production time but also be cost-effective. However, as Mun Fei (R5)

mentions, AI technology is still immature and requires additional development resources. This signifies that we still need to test all these AI tools and whether this could attract audience attention in the long run and not just for the short term.

In summary, various new cost-saving strategies were pointed out. To succeed in the long run in music video production, multiple steps must be taken to address the industry's current budget-slashing situation.

8.3 Findings 3 (F3): Innovative Current Forms of Music Videos

Apart from understanding the cost-saving methods, it is essential to understand the current innovative forms of music videos that will gain high audience traction. The five music videos were produced during and after the pandemic, giving fruitful insights into the changes in preferences due to current circumstances.

The data indicated that contemporary audiences tend to favor music videos that are visually arresting and rhythmically compelling. Four out of five interviewees agreed that engaging visuals are a primary driver of viewer retention. For instance, Tamim (R4) referenced recent trends in dance-based videos that resemble cinematic art in their execution, while Jeffrey (R1) and Wensyn (R2) emphasized the importance of narrative and emotional connection as mechanisms for fostering audience engagement.

Additionally, Mun Fei (R5) stressed the role of multi-sensory engagement in sustaining viewer attention, suggesting that the integration of narrative, rhythm, and visual intrigue is critical for optimizing viewer retention from the start to the end of the video.

Pictures collected from fans were transformed into a beautiful slideshow during COVID-19; using simple images with innovative editing effects could produce a high-quality slideshow. Extracting acting footage with some visual effects creates attractive, creative music videos with limited footage. The new concept of 2D animation attracts new audiences and increases YouTube video views. This was supported by online observation, where the most viewed videos involved animation and human-acting footage.

R1 stated that the audience prefers a highly rhythmic tempo in melodies and visuals, requiring no narrative structure. Due to audience attention spent nowadays, there's no time for attention buildup and straight jump into action. However, the views for the dancing music videos were the lowest, as observed in OB2. Hence, it also depends on the artist involved or whether more practice is needed for the artist before heading for the shoot. Also, it was pointed out that in terms of the visuals, audience-like action-packed and impactful visuals in terms of the high volume of dance choreography that is in sync with the melody and tempo or extravagant background designs, which somehow draw them away from ordinary life. Tamim (R4) echoes Jeffrey (R1) by agreeing that the K-pop dance style is the most popular one, as its stunning cinematography makes music videos look like cinematic films. These dance music videos innovate by adding narrative storytelling to their dance moves. This means there is a need to innovate dance music videos by adding a storyline and meaning behind the music video, which could bond with the audience.

Music videos with situational and emotional storytelling attract the most views and comments as they create a sense of belonging to the audience. Wensyn (R2) said there needs to be some gimmick for the music video, like bringing back memories with the audience or bonding with the audience, combined with an excellent marketing strategy to keep the audience growing in the long term. Mun Fei (R5) said that audiences nowadays prefer eye-catching music videos that must capture their attention from the start. With the flooding of music videos nowadays on YouTube, it has become crucial to incorporate visually engaging elements to attract viewers. For example, Virtual Reality (VR) music videos are gaining massive popularity to captivate audiences.

In short, music videos needed to innovate to attract an audience and find a spot in the music video market on YouTube. Various innovations and details must be executed to keep up with the trend of attracting an audience as attention spending decreases.

8.4 Findings 4 (F4): Diversity Team & Inter-Collaboration with Condition

Although the pandemic caused a great deal of inconvenience to the world, during COVID-19, a lot of international collaboration was made possible when everyone stayed home and used many online communication platforms. The few years during the pandemic were when everyone began fostering new connections and new collaboration skills online, making collaboration go beyond borders at a much cheaper cost.

A strong consensus emerged regarding the positive influence of diversity and collaboration within production teams. Four out of five respondents noted that the inclusion of individuals from diverse cultural, creative, and professional backgrounds enhances the overall quality and originality of the final product.

According to Jeffrey (R1), diversity fosters increased sensitivity to detail, while Jocelyn (R3) and Tamim (R4) suggested that exposure to varied perspectives expands creative possibilities and broadens the appeal to diverse audience segments. Collaborative approaches were also seen as central to the creative process, with R1 emphasizing the importance of mutual respect and the role of clarity in achieving a cohesive production.

However, Wensyn (R2) offered a contrasting perspective, describing collaboration as potentially cumbersome due to the need for prolonged negotiations and consensus-building. This view underscores the necessity of effective communication and project management in creative collaborations.

After the pandemic, the music production, which involved five countries of people who were all art schoolmates and teachers of the artist, was smooth. However, it took longer, and collaborating with different parties created a brand-new listening perspective. However, inter-collaboration with TV stations was tedious, and there were many laws, regulations, and permissions to seek and obey. Inter-collaboration of music video production with another department of animation students also took almost one whole month compared to standard music video production. Although all these collaborations were enquiring longer, all these collaboration music videos indeed attracted higher audiences online.

Jeffrey (R1) agrees that diversity provides perspective, which may ease creativity and sensitivity so that specific details are not overlooked. This signifies that the diversity of talents and backgrounds of people could produce something beyond our imagination with more information.

However, Wensyn (R2) disagreed with collaboration as it is tedious and needs to go through rounds of discussion and perspective alignment. Whereas R3 pointed out that even though it is not very measurable, Jocelyn (R3) strongly believes that diversity affects the outcome as it incorporates many different types of people's creative and functional perspectives, which make the final result more relevant for a variety of audiences and therefore can contribute towards its potential for success. Tamim (R4) agreed that diversity is essential as working with individuals from different backgrounds and skill sets can bring many perspectives and ideas to the table, resulting in a much more innovative and dynamic end product.

In summary, diversity is important in music video production as it brings different details, perspectives, and talents to produce innovative music videos. However, it needs to be executed carefully at a smaller scale or level to test the reality, as it might not work, resulting in a waste of talent, time, and money. Hence, a diverse team with good conditions is strongly recommended.

8.5 Findings 5 (F5): The Trend of Situational Issues Tailored Towards Audience in Modern Music Video

Modern Music videos without audience traction are just like having no commercial value nowadays. Hence, we need to know what direction of music video could attract the current audience.

During COVID-19, the media picked up the songs online because the music video was related to the current issue. Whereas after COVID-19, another music video was made to produce a theme song for a student showcase. On the other hand, the song was crafted for the drama with the current social issues and was being played inside the trending drama as the soundtrack. The song was not just specially crafted for the drama but also touching on the rising issue of divorce

in Asia. The song became so popular on Spotify that it went up to the top playlists, subsequently affecting the music video traction. Another song was crafted with the popular reality show "The Mask Singer 4" and subsequently helped the online traction. This was supported by online observation where all music videos involving current social issues or trends gained more traction than regular music videos.

Jocelyn (R3) echoes all this by stating that audiences nowadays prefer to consume music videos that natively fit into their viewing experience. Jocelyn (R3) also emphasizes that audiences will choose artists who produce great content, customize it to their taste, and know how to voice the current issues using their art.

The YouTube performance data for five self-produced music videos revealed several trends in audience engagement and viewership growth. The findings are presented below according to key influencing factors.

Music videos released in alignment with significant socio-cultural moments exhibited higher engagement. For instance, **MV 1**, released during the COVID-19 pandemic and thematically centered on collective emotional experiences, recorded a marked increase in views (7.8k) and a 245% increase in watch time. Conversely, **MV 2**, released shortly after the pandemic, achieved substantially lower engagement (1.8k views), potentially due to a shift in audience attention and a mismatch between the genre and the artist's perceived identity.

Genre emerged as a key determinant of audience response. Emotional, situational, and child-focused music videos outperformed dance-themed content, indicating a strong cultural preference in the Malaysian context. Dance-based **MV 2** performed least successfully, reinforcing the notion that genre appropriateness is crucial to audience resonance.

Higher-budget productions with longer timelines and more collaborative teams consistently garnered greater audience engagement. This observation aligns with interview findings that link production value with viewership metrics. For example, **MV 3** and **MV 5**, both high-investment and team-based productions, yielded the highest view counts.

In conclusion, modern music videos must be tailored to the current audience and concurrent with current social issues and trends to attract more views. They no longer serve just as pieces of art but as masterpieces that capture a specific period or some social issues.

8.6 Findings 6 (F6): Importance of Transmedia Promotion for the success of Music Video

Social media has revolutionized the whole world, especially the creative industry. During the pandemic, various social media platforms were the only solution. Hence, music videos were released onto YouTube, then promoted and shared on multiple social media platforms. However, many cross-media promotions, with offline events or media, were highly involved after the pandemic. Hence, this gave rise to the importance of transmedia storytelling to hype the Music Video's success.

Various teasers were shared on multiple platforms to build the hype for the music video launch. Subsequently, cross-promotion with radio and TV was conducted to hype and prolong the promotional campaign. Some songs were even pre-hyped on streaming platforms such as Spotify. Apart from that, songs were also being played in different dramas or showcases, which made it seem like the song was everywhere.

At times, due to the different functionality of each media platform, it helps boost visibility, reaching various audiences and subsequently becoming popular everywhere. Hence, some songs are produced in conjunction with the reality show to ride the initial wave of the show's ratings.

Music videos associated with transmedia campaigns, such as television dramas (**MV 3**, **MV 4**) and reality shows (**MV 5**), demonstrated the highest levels of engagement. **MV 5**, a children's song released alongside a television reality program, achieved the highest overall views (73.9k), suggesting that media convergence significantly enhances visibility and viewer traction.

Jeffrey (R1) also agreed that, similar to commercials, the emergence of various social media platforms makes the whole industry much more competitive. Jocelyn (R3) pointed out that,

from a digital perspective, the method of consumption for music visuals had changed significantly. This signifies that transmedia music distribution is crucial to making current music videos successful rather than just putting them on one platform.

Videos that encouraged participatory engagement or embedded within broader digital ecosystems exhibited stronger performance. The findings suggest that content designed with cross-platform visibility, social media integration, and audience interaction in mind is more likely to succeed in the current media landscape. Traditional performance recordings, by contrast, demonstrated limited online reach.

Chapter IX: DISCUSSION & SUGGESTION

This chapter presents a critical discussion of the key findings from this research on independent music video production during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing upon the thematic insights derived from practice-based autoethnography, expert interviews, and previous study analyses, this chapter interprets the significance of these findings within broader theoretical, industrial, and socio-cultural contexts. The discussion considers how the pandemic catalyzed shifts in creative labor, production strategies, aesthetic approaches, and distribution methods, and how these changes intersect with existing literature in media studies, creative industries research, and feminist production theory.

In responding to the central research questions of this thesis, this chapter aims to unpack the implications of independent artists' adaptive strategies, with particular attention to how they negotiated resource limitations, technological access, audience engagement, and cross-platform storytelling. The analysis not only reflects how these strategies were deployed in practice but also examines their longer-term viability and relevance in a post-pandemic media landscape.

Following the discussion, this chapter offers a set of practical and policy-oriented suggestions for artists, educators, cultural institutions, and media stakeholders. These recommendations are informed by both empirical findings and theoretical insights and aim to support more sustainable, inclusive, and innovative music video production practices moving forward.

9.1 Discussion 1 (D1): Post Pandemic Artist-Led Production & Production Innovation Cost Saving Strategies

The first major discussion is that independent artists have increasingly assumed multiple roles beyond performance, taking on responsibilities such as directing, editing, producing, and managing distribution. This reinvention of creative labor reflects broader shifts in the gig economy and the digitalization of creative industries (Deuze, 2007; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011). The pandemic intensified these shifts, compelling artists to adapt to remote production contexts and reduced access to traditional production infrastructure.

Jenkins' (2006) concept of the prosumer is particularly pertinent here, as independent musicians often function simultaneously as producers and consumers of their own content. This blurring boundaries between artistic and technical labor has become not only a necessity but also a strategic advantage. Artists who are able to control multiple facets of production gain greater autonomy and creative agency, particularly in an era where digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram have democratized access to audiences (Burgess & Green, 2018).

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the creative industry, pushing all to change. Moreover, after the pandemic, the inflation and economic crisis forced the creative production line into cutting budgets; this was agreed by Khlystova *et al* (2022) when all production needed to innovate their costs and survive in the new world. As stated by Viter (2021), all artists, producers, and directors must reinvent their budgets to stay in this industry. This was echoed by Finding 1, where artists must stay as artists and self-edit, produce, direct, and even be crew on set due to all social restrictions during COVID-19.

Even after the social distancing restriction was lifted, the inflation pushed the production scale to be lower, and the budgets were slashed tremendously as the effect of the post-pandemic and hence lead to the rise of independent artists (Heliades & Lazakis, 2017). Besides the budget slashed, due to all the laws and regulations with TV station collaboration, artists must self-negotiate due to privacy issues. Artists also needed to be directors in some situations due to uncertainties. It was supported by Jeffrey (R1), stating that nowadays, it gives power back to the artist to produce high-attention music videos, which cost much cheaper by themselves. These findings supported Herstand (2023), leading to artist-led production with the expansion of social media. Artists must reinvent themselves in various multi-tasking roles to be relevant or resistant in this new world. Also, the advancement of technologies and social media has made it much easier for artists to connect directly to fans, pushing them to produce more artistic work with high fan engagement (Tulke, 2023).

Various post-pandemic cost-saving strategies for music video production have been identified. Even before the pandemic, Tonybee (2016) pointed out multiple collaboration in production had been tried in order to mitigate the high cost. This was supported by Findings 2, whereby

the production team opts for various methods to save production costs without affecting the quality. Many respondents (R1, R2 & R3) agreed that production that works around the budget could push creativity and innovation. Wensyn (R2) added that sponsors could be sought, while Jocelyn (R3) pointed out that using available in-house resources could reduce the cost of production without affecting the quality. This also supports the statement by Kanecki (2024) that making everything simplified could create compelling music videos with minimal resources that are minimalist (Vernallis, 2008).

Schnugg and Song (2020) pointed out that artists and production companies can collaborate to share resources. This was echoed by Tamim (R4), suggesting that artists can collaborate with emerging artists to ride on their rising talents and enthusiasm to produce high-quality music videos at a lower cost. Besides that, embracing minimalism in storytelling could also reduce the cost (Shaviro, 2017).

Arts education institutions should incorporate interdisciplinary training into their curricula, including modules on video editing, storytelling for digital media, and platform analytics. Professional development workshops for artists could also include training in budgeting, lighting, and sound, enabling greater self-sufficiency. Industry bodies and arts councils might consider funding initiatives that support upskilling independent creators, especially those disproportionately impacted by the post-pandemic economic downturn.

9.2 Discussion 2 (D2): Integrated Innovative Music Videos with High Traction

Understanding current integrated innovative forms of music videos with high audience traction is extremely important to produce successful music videos. Viewers increasingly favor music videos that combine immediate visual spectacle with emotionally compelling narratives. This aligns with broader audience trends towards short-form, affective media experiences driven by platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels (Leaver, Highfield & Abidin, 2020). The study found that hybrid formats like mixing documentary footage, choreography, and animation resonated particularly well, suggesting a shift away from conventional performance-only videos.

Such innovation reflects the liquid modernity of cultural forms (Bauman, 2000), where content must adapt quickly to aesthetic trends and algorithmic logics. Scholars such as Vernallis (2013) have long noted the experimental, hybrid nature of the music video as a form, and the pandemic appears to have accelerated this aesthetic openness. Videos that communicate storylines quickly and viscerally, especially those that resonate with collective emotional experiences, are more likely to be shared, remembered, and engaged across platforms.

From the study of this research, it pointed out that innovative music video forms attract a high volume of viewers. The meaning of innovation is vast; hence, these are supported by all the observations and field notes on set. During the pandemic, pictures from fans were collected and innovated into touching slide shows, which attracted audiences to the platforms; besides, footage of acting garnered high views on YouTube. This echoed Vernallis (2013), stating that the concept of music videos had gone beyond traditional concepts (Harrison, 2014). This supports Auslander (2019) studies, which agreed that music videos with audience participatory elements will always have high engagement.

Among all the music videos which garnered high views, each has an emotional story telling plot as this echoes with Harrison (2014) whereby narrative story follows a linear story format which complements the lyrics.

On the contrary, pointed out that dance music videos with fast tempos and dance moves are viral nowadays. However, this study found that the music video with dance choreography had the lowest views. This result was against McPherson (2018) studies as not all dancing music videos are popular in all countries. On the other hand, Music Video 5, which was an animated video, gained the most views and this supports the studies of Perrott (2020). Hence, this proves that not all popular forms of music videos are suitable for all artists, and a lot of experimental or training is needed to test the outcomes.

In conclusion, innovative story telling of music videos could attract a larger audience for the researcher. However, only some popular concepts will work for each artist, as an artist is a human subject with subjective outcomes. There is still a need to experiment stage by stage before mass-producing for maximum results. Music video producers should adopt a “first-five-seconds” rule to ensure attention capture in digital ecosystems. Investing in strong visual hooks

through motion graphics, striking mise-en-scène, or emotionally loaded vignettes can increase engagement. Creative collaborations with choreographers, animators, and theatre practitioners could also enrich narrative innovation. Festivals and competitions might consider adding categories that recognize innovation in form, encouraging risk-taking among emerging artists.

9.3 Discussion 3 (D3): Diversity Collaboration with a Purpose & Direction

Tremendous local and international collaborations were made possible during the pandemic, which fosters new collaborations for future production. As Chollisni *et al* (2022) pointed out, music videos contribute to the globalization of culture. These lead to international cultural products with economic values (Dovchin, 2018). Hence, it is essential to have diverse team collaboration, and both Jeffrey (R1) and Jocelyn (R3) agreed that diversity provides a perspective that enhances creativity, sensitivity, and innovation.

Participants noted that multicultural and cross-professional collaborations led to richer creative outcomes and enhanced relatability for global audiences. This reflects the broader media studies discourse on diversity as a driver of innovation (Flew, 2012; Cunningham & Craig, 2019), especially in the context of globalized digital platforms that reward culturally hybrid content.

However, the study also uncovered tensions inherent in such collaborations, especially when involving institutional partners such as broadcasters or universities. These included challenges in aligning goals, managing bureaucratic constraints, and resolving conflicts over authorship and intellectual property. These findings mirror those of Petridis and Noonan (2020), who argue that while diversity is celebrated rhetorically in creative industries, structural inequalities and coordination difficulties often hinder its realization in practice.

Although diverse team collaboration is very sought, collaboration with a bigger team requires more extended time and complex procedures that must be considered. Collaboration with different teams needs a good direction; otherwise, the whole team will be heading in the wrong direction, and much patience is required to deal with other talents. This was echoed by Wensyn (R2), stating that massive team collaboration needs to go through rounds of discussion, which may prolong the process, and if it is not conducted well, it will ruin the whole project. Even

though it requires more work for collaboration, having great direction and team leader makes the entire process easier. Practicing it a few times will make communicating much easier and garner high audience traction on YouTube.

On the other hand, Findings 4 also pointed out that there needs to be a purpose for collaboration and not just merely conducting production as the success of K-pop using hybridity of teams was planted for globalization of culture and economic value (Kim et al., 2021). R4 also pointed out that diversity of talent is a wealth in production.

In conclusion, diverse team collaboration positively affects the view of music videos on YouTube. Despite the diversity, team collaboration is essential; however, strong leadership, patience, direction, and purpose will be needed to achieve global success. Music video producers should establish clear collaborative frameworks, including written agreements outlining roles, credits, and rights ownership. Pilot projects with new teams can serve as testbeds before committing to larger productions. Institutions seeking to support interdisciplinary work should invest in professional facilitators or project managers to navigate logistical and administrative barriers. Funding agencies might prioritize proposals that demonstrate equitable and transparent collaboration strategies.

9.4 Discussion 4 (D4): Audience-centric and Situational Content Creation

A significant finding from this research was the effectiveness of situational content that music videos are thematically aligned with social issues, current events, or community experiences. Videos addressing topics such as pandemic lockdowns, domestic issues, or childhood trauma appeared to resonate more strongly with audiences, generating higher emotional engagement and shareability.

It was discovered that music videos incorporating current issues into their creative process could attract audiences easily. This was supported by all findings where music videos were produced in conjunction with the pandemic, concerts, drama shows, reality shows, and social issues. This was proved by observation, where all the music videos involving these current issues gained the highest views on YouTube. This signifies that successful music videos are creative artifacts that sing out the hearts and emotions of the audience while also addressing

current issues. R3 also echoed this by stating that artists customized to the audience's taste buds will always be sought after.

Moreover, this audience-centric approach reflects a departure from traditional artist-driven narratives toward a more dialogic model of cultural production, where creators respond to audience experiences and values. This finding also underscores the importance of emotional authenticity in music videos, which is a trait often cited as essential to digital virality (Nahon & Hemsley, 2013).

Independent artists and production teams should build mechanisms for audience listening during the pre-production stage such as monitoring social media sentiment or conducting informal audience surveys. Themes should be chosen not only for artistic value but for relevance to audience contexts and lived experiences. Collaborative story development with fan communities or social issue advocates can also deepen resonance. Producers might consider releasing behind-the-scenes or testimonial content to amplify the affective connection.

9.5 Discussion 5 (D5): Transmedia Strategies for Music Video Promotion

The final major discussion concerns the growing importance of transmedia storytelling and cross-platform promotion in extending a music video lifespan. Artists increasingly integrated their videos with other forms of media such as TV dramas, social media campaigns, and reality shows to reach broader audiences. This reflects Jenkins' (2007) concept of transmedia storytelling, in which elements of a narrative are dispersed across multiple platforms, each contributing to a richer overall experience.

Apart from customizing current issues in the creative process of music videos, transmedia promotion also acts as a practical element to speed up the success of music videos. With the explosion of social media, it echoed with Scolari (2018) which one media has to distribute across various platforms with multi audio-visual strategies. The artist no longer uploads onto one social media platform but to multiple media platforms to push the Song's success which can attract different audience (Nuttall, 2020). The field notes in MV4 also supported this analysis, where after the artist released the music video on YouTube, the artist quickly promoted the Song via various online media. Subsequently, the media picked it up as news.

Participants noted that collaboration with existing fanbases (e.g., those of a TV drama) increased visibility and shareability. Transmedia strategies also allowed artists to build multi-touchpoint engagement, maintaining audience interest through teasers, making-of documentaries, interactive Q&A sessions, and serialized social media storytelling. This approach is particularly valuable in an attention economy where content longevity is often limited (Goldhaber, 1997; Davenport & Beck, 2001).

Besides transmedia, it is essential to incorporate a storytelling element into the transmedia promotion strategy. This echoed Vernallis (2013), who stated that artists utilize social media platforms by sharing their stories about the production process to build a connection toward releasing music videos. Besides the artist telling their stories and sharing the process, the artists could also ask fans to share their stories to encourage fans' participation. This was supported by field notes, where the artist asked fans to share pictures of them during the pandemic, and it was edited into a music video slideshow.

In conclusion, music videos are no longer just for entertainment but also as a medium to express various issues. Promotional content on one social media platform is no longer sufficient; one must incorporate transmedia storytelling to prolong the promotional period and engage with the audience to achieve maximum reach for the music video. This proves that transmedia engagement positively affects the views of music videos on YouTube.

Music video campaigns should be designed as part of a broader content ecosystem. Artists and producers should identify narrative and promotional synergies with other media properties early in the planning stage. Content calendars that stagger releases across platforms and media types can extend a project's relevance. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok should be used not merely for promotion but for storytelling themselves. Policymakers and arts organizations could fund research and toolkits for independent creators seeking to adopt transmedia practices.

Chapter X: 360 PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTION FRAMEWORK & CREATIVE PROCESS

The 360° Professional Music Video Framework is a conceptual and practical model developed to encapsulate the complex, multi-phased, and interdisciplinary nature of professional music video production in the post-pandemic digital era. It responds to the evolving landscape of music video creation, where artists, especially independents, must operate across multiple domains of creative, technical, promotional, and analytical to effectively reach and engage their audiences.

This circular framework reflects non-linear, iterative production cycle, foregrounding how each stage is interconnected and potentially recursive. It draws from practice-based insights, expert interviews, and autoethnographic observations gathered during this research, and reflects the hybridized roles and strategies emerging in a post-COVID-19 creative economy. The framework is particularly relevant to understanding feminist, independent, and digital-native production practices.

To critically synthesize the findings of this research and my own production experiences, I propose the 360° Professional Music Video Framework. This model encapsulates the comprehensive and interdependent processes that constitute contemporary professional music video production. It is derived from both expert interviews and autoethnographic reflection on the making of my own music videos during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The framework aims to guide practitioners, especially independent and emerging artists, through the holistic coordination of creative, logistical, technological, and promotional dimensions of music video work.

10.1 Creative Vision & Concept Development

Creative conceptualization forms the heart of the music video process. It is at this stage that artistic identity, song composition, thematic coherence, and visual narrative direction are established. This includes:

- Song Crafting: Song's direction, language and style of composition is being determined
- Ideation: Music video is being brainstormed in accordance to themes, aesthetics, and moods inspired by the song's lyrics, tone, and genre.
- Visual Strategy: Developing mood boards, storyboards, and lookbooks to visualize tone and setting.
- Narrative and Symbolism: Establishing symbolic or narrative threads (linear or abstract) to align with the song's emotional and cultural messaging.
- Artist-Audience Alignment: Ensuring that the visuals resonate with the artist's brand and intended audience, while exploring innovative or disruptive aesthetics.

This phase is crucial in establishing a vision-led approach, often shaped by the artist's subjectivity, personal politics, and lived experiences especially in feminist and autoethnographic practice.

At the core of the 360° framework lies the creative vision the artistic nucleus from which all decisions radiate. This involves defining the narrative, aesthetic style, mood, and message of the video, often in close collaboration with the artist.

After getting in the right direction, the song is being composed in determined languages and suitable style. In my case study of **MV3** produced for a Malaysian TV drama, the concept emerged from the emotional tone of the narrative. Working within a melodramatic aesthetic, I aimed to visualize the emotional highs and lows of the drama through symbolic imagery and slow-motion choreography. The concept aligned with the lyrical content, making it a narrative-driven production.

In contrast, **MV1** used a minimalistic and DIY aesthetic, reflecting my personal struggle for autonomy during the lockdown. Here, the visual concept was developed with feminist autoethnography in mind, engaging directly with my positionality as a female artist navigating both production constraints and identity representation.

10.2 Pre-Production Planning

Pre-production is where creative ideas are translated into actionable plans. It is both a logistical and strategic phase that ensures the production process is achievable within budget, safe, and aligned with the intended outcome.

- Budgeting: Estimating costs related to recording, equipment, crew, locations, talent, and post-production. Independent creators often develop cost-saving strategies, such as DIY sets or minimal crew teams.
- Crew Assembly: Assembling a team that aligns with the creative vision and shares collaborative values. Attention to gender diversity, inclusivity, and trust is vital in many independent and feminist contexts.
- Scheduling**:** Creating shooting schedules and contingency plans. Time efficiency is especially critical when working with limited resources.
- Casting & Location Scouting: Selecting performers and spaces that suit the narrative, mood, and logistical constraints.
- Technical Preparation: Determining camera setups, lighting schemes, and any rehearsals or choreography required.

This stage reflects the intersection of creativity and pragmatism, where vision must negotiate with real-world limitations. This involves recording, scripting, storyboarding, budgeting, scheduling, team assembly, and location scouting. It ensures that the creative vision is realistically achievable.

For **MV1**, pre-production planning had to accommodate pandemic-era restrictions. I used my home as the primary set, crafted a storyboard based on available props, and redefined crew roles by multitasking as director, performer, and editor. This aligns with one of the expert findings that independent artists frequently take on multiple roles to reduce costs.

In contrast, **MV3** had a larger crew and budget due to its affiliation with broadcast dramas, allowing for location shoots, costume design, and choreographed sequences. However, this required intensive coordination, contracts, and client approvals and underscoring the complexity of professional-level pre-production.

10.3 Production Execution

The production phase marks the realization of the conceptual vision. It involves recording and filming the planned scenes, capturing performances, and adapting to the music composed.

- Music Production: The producer (often the artists themselves) needs to record and produce composed songs in the recording studio.
- Music Video Direction: The director (often the artists themselves in independent contexts) guides performers, framing, and emotional tone.
- Performance**:** The artist's physical embodiment of the song becomes a key expressive component especially in feminist work, where the body is often a site of both resistance and narrative.
- Technical Execution: Camera operation, lighting, and sound are coordinated to ensure aesthetic consistency.
- Team Collaboration & Role Distribution
- Improvisation and Problem-Solving: Flexibility is critical, as creative or technical challenges may require on-the-spot adaptation.

The framework emphasizes dynamic team collaboration and clarity in role distribution, whether in large or small-scale productions. Key roles typically include the director, producer, cinematographer, editor, and stylist, though independent productions often necessitate hybrid roles.

In **MV2**, I played multiple roles and outsourced only song arrangement to a collaborator. The video is an example of lean, yet effective collaboration driven by trust, skill-sharing, and remote communication.

Conversely, **MV 4** involved a conventional crew structure including a director of photography and a stylist, reflecting the importance of defined responsibilities and communication in larger productions. However, even in this setting, there was significant overlap in decision-making, particularly between me and the artist, affirming the value of horizontal collaboration over hierarchical models.

10.4 Post-Production

Post-production is a craft-intensive phase that determines the final rhythm, tone, and clarity of the visual message. It includes:

- Mixing and Mastering: Music technology in order to mix and master the song in appropriate frequency and balance.
- Editing: Cutting footage to the song's tempo, emotional arcs, and narrative logic. Montage, jump cuts, and rhythmic editing techniques are used to engage the viewer.
- Color Grading: Enhancing the mood and consistency of the visual palette to match the intended aesthetic.
- Visual Effects (VFX): Incorporating digital elements, transitions, or motion graphics as needed.
- Audio Syncing: Ensuring precise alignment between performance visuals and audio tracks, especially lip-sync.

Post-production is where much of the aesthetic authorship takes shape, and where actual song and storytelling is solidified. For independent creators, this stage often involves self-handing the mixing and self-editing or collaborating with trusted editors under tight constraints.

The filming process involves executing the storyboard and adapting on set to real-time variables like light, performance energy, and technical constraints.

The editing of **MV1** was a highly personal process. With limited resources, I used free editing software and relied on symbolic visual motifs (mirrors, reflections, repetitive gestures) to evoke psychological complexity. My editing choices were informed by feminist visual theory, avoiding objectification and instead fostering a subject-oriented gaze.

In **MV2,** the production was constrained yet creatively liberating. Filming over several days in a single indoor location allowed experimentation with lighting and performance styles. Direction was informed by a feminist ethics of care, where the body on screen (my own) was both subject and agent, allowing for intimate and embodied storytelling.

By contrast, **MV 3** went through multiple rounds of editing to satisfy client feedback, which included changes to pacing, visual filters, and logo placement. This reveals how post-production in professional contexts is not only technical but also political, shaped by multiple gatekeepers.

MV3, on the other hand, the production schedule was tightly controlled, and direction had to meet broadcaster expectations by demonstrating how external stakeholders influence creative decisions.

MV5 relied on animation experts and in order to reduce cost students from animation department was utilized but a lot of direction was given due to student's inexperience in the industry.

Editing brings the narrative and aesthetic together, enhancing rhythm, emotion, and meaning through sequencing, transitions, and effects.

10.5 Audience Engagement and Personalization

Rather than being a postscript, audience engagement is embedded throughout the production process. This phase highlights audience-responsive strategies that tailor the content for consumption and interaction:

- Demographic Awareness: Customizing content to resonate with specific audience groups (age, language, cultural background).
- Format Adaptation: Releasing content in multiple formats (vertical for mobile, widescreen for YouTube, teaser clips for Instagram Reels).
- Participatory Elements: Inviting audience interaction, such as fan edits, dance challenges, or feedback loops.
- Representation and Relatability: Ensuring that characters, settings, and storylines reflect and speak to the lived realities of the target audience.

This stage ties into feminist strategies of care, inclusion, and intersubjectivity, recognizing the audience not as a market, but as a community.

This component encompasses strategies for releasing, promoting, and measuring the impact of music videos. It includes social media campaigns, press releases, influencer outreach, and audience analytics.

MV4 was shared through grassroots platforms such as feminist art collectives, YouTube, and Instagram. Its engagement was modest but deeply meaningful, generating dialogue within niche communities about creative labor, identity, and resilience.

MV 5, however, benefited from Astro's wide distribution channels, television broadcasts, and promotional tie-ins with the reality show. While the reach was exponentially greater, the authorization process was tedious.

10.6 Distribution and Transmedia Promotion

In the digital era, successful music videos require strategic visibility across platforms. Distribution and promotion involve:

- Platform Strategy: Releasing content on multiple channels (YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Spotify canvas, etc.).
- Supplementary Content: Creating behind-the-scenes footage, making-of documentaries, teaser trailers, and visualizers.
- Cross-Promotion: Coordinating releases with press coverage, interviews, live performances, and merchandise drops.
- Hashtag and Trend Usage: Leveraging algorithms and viral trends for discoverability.

This phase is especially critical for independent artists, as it involves DIY marketing and transmedia storytelling to build and maintain public presence. As compared, **MV1** had less reach compared to **MV3** which involves more platforms of transmedia promotion.

10.7 Feedback Integration, Sustainability, Ethics & Reflexivity

A key feature of the 360° model is its cyclical nature. Audience feedback, platform analytics, and critical self-reflection inform future projects. This stage includes:

- Performance Analysis: Reviewing view counts, engagement metrics, and audience comments to gauge impact.
- Reflexivity: Incorporating lessons learned into the next project's conceptual, logistical, or promotional strategies.
- Community Dialogue: Engaging with audiences and collaborators to understand evolving expectations and cultural shifts.
- Iterative Experimentation: Using each production as a learning opportunity to experiment further with style, format, or message.

This reflects the ethos of continuous creative development, essential for long-term sustainability and artistic evolution in a rapidly shifting media environment.

A distinctive feature of the 360° framework is its ethical and sustainable approach. It encourages ongoing reflexivity about the economic, environmental, social, and emotional implications of production practices.

Through autoethnography, I have critically reflected on the physical and emotional labor behind both videos. The solo production of **MV2** prompted burnout but also offered empowerment, while the professional environment of **MV4** provided support yet often sidelined the artist's voice. These reflections affirm the need for more inclusive and emotionally sustainable practices in music video production.

10.8 Discernment

The 360° Professional Music Video Framework (Diagram 9) provides a robust, adaptive structure that mirrors the lived experiences and creative journeys of contemporary music video makers. It reflects the interdisciplinary, affective, and entrepreneurial nature of video production today; particularly in feminist, independent, and post-pandemic contexts.

Diagram 9: 360 Professional Music Video Production Framework

By integrating creative ideation, technical execution, promotional strategy, and audience dialogue into a single coherent model, the framework advances our understanding of music videos as a holistic and dialogic practice. It challenges traditional linear production models and advocates for a fluid; reflexive approach grounded in practice-based knowledge.

The 360° Professional Music Video Framework provides a comprehensive, adaptable model that encapsulates the full life cycle of music video creation. It situates production within a broader cultural, economic, and ethical context, and integrates lessons from both high-budget and DIY practices. By cross-referencing this framework with my own video case studies, I have demonstrated how creative agency, production constraints, and collaborative strategies intersect to shape contemporary music video practices especially in the wake of COVID-19 and amidst the evolving digital landscape. This framework not only informs scholarly understanding but also serves as a practical guide for independent artists, producers, and researchers navigating the shifting terrain of audiovisual storytelling.

CONCLUSION

This research has illuminated the evolving landscape of music video production in the post-pandemic era, particularly from the perspective of independent and artist-led initiatives. Five key themes emerged from the analysis as each contributing to a deeper understanding of how music video production practices, aesthetics, and promotional strategies are adapting in response to socio-economic and technological shifts. In response to the hypothesis of this research, a 360-degree professional production framework was being produced and also a few main discussions were being raised which leads to the conclusion of these 6 years of practice-based study. The timing of this research was really unique as it falls during Covid and after.

The 360° Professional Music Video Framework offers more than a procedural guide it constitutes a paradigmatic shift in how we understand the evolving ontology of music video production in the digital age. In particular, it reimagines audiovisual creation as an integrated, circular ecosystem rather than a linear, siloed pipeline. This reconfiguration is vital in today's convergent media landscape, where artistic expression, technological mediation, and audience interactivity are increasingly enmeshed in recursive loops of production, dissemination, and reception. This also signifies that the importance of interdiscplinary practice rather than just specialization in one in the creative field.

At its core, the framework foregrounds reflexive, interdisciplinary practice which is a necessity rather than an option for contemporary creators navigating the fragmented terrain of post-pandemic cultural production. The convergence of creative ideation, technical execution, promotional strategy, and audience feedback into a singular, iterative system reflects the collapsing of boundaries between artist, technician, marketer, and critic. This fusion mirrors broader trends in platform capitalism, where creators are not only expected to produce content but to strategically brand, distribute, and continually optimize it within algorithmically driven ecosystems. At its foundation, wherein artists must operate simultaneously as creators, promoters, strategists, and analysts which was demonstrated in MV1, MV2, MV3, MV4 & MV5. Particularly post-pandemic, these multiple roles are no longer exceptional but structurally necessary, especially for independent and feminist creators who navigate and

experiment the various cross media platforms in an oversaturated digital environment. The framework's emphasis on hybridization of roles where practitioners are constantly theorizing their own positions and adapting labor practices in response to broader shifts in media infrastructures and cultural demands.

What emerges from this holistic approach is a redefinition of professionalism in music video production is not as adherence to industrial standards, but as an ability to operate fluidly across disciplines, scales, and value systems. Particularly in feminist and independent contexts, professionalism becomes synonymous with ethical adaptability, sustainability of labor, and critical authorship. The autoethnographic insights offered within this framework reveal how emotional labor, identity politics, and creative autonomy intersect to produce unique aesthetic and narrative languages that resist commodification while engaging with wider publics. Moreover, the framework's integration of autoethnographic and feminist methodologies positions it as a counter-discursive model to hegemonic media practices. By emphasizing embodied labor, subjectivity, and ethical collaboration, the framework creates a critical tool for challenging dominant representations and centering marginalized voices. The creative decisions in MV1 and MV2, for example, exemplify how video production becomes a site of feminist resistance and autonomy, where the body is not merely objectified but actively re-signified as a purpose of creation.

Crucially, the 360° model reframes audience engagement not as the terminus of production, but as a relational axis that feeds back into the creative process. In doing so, it aligns with feminist and decolonial media theories that advocate for intersubjective creation and community co-authorship. The framework's emphasis on care, inclusivity, and horizontal collaboration challenges conventional hierarchies within production crews and opens space for marginalized voices to shape the audiovisual discourse on their own terms. In contrast, the 360° model embodies the term convergence culture, where boundaries between production, consumption, and promotion blur and content becomes modular, participatory, and transmedia by design. Music videos, particularly in digital-native contexts, are no longer singular cultural products but part of transmedia narrative ecosystems.

From a strategic standpoint, the framework articulates a post-broadcast logic of content circulation. Through transmedia promotion, platform diversification, and demographic tailoring, it recognizes that visibility today is not merely achieved through exposure but through contextual relevance and participatory resonance. This resonates particularly with current digital-native audiences, who seek cultural products that reflect their lived realities and ideological commitments.

By integrating reflexivity, ethics, and burnout awareness into its core, the 360° model resists the neoliberal narrative of constant productivity and instead calls for emotionally sustainable and inclusive production ecologies. The juxtaposition between the constrained yet intimate MV2 and the more resource-rich but bureaucratically rigid MV4 highlights how different production models yield different affective experiences and creative outcomes. The differential reach and impact between independently distributed works (e.g., MV1, MV4) and those embedded in institutional circuits (e.g., MV3, MV5) demonstrates the uneven terrain of visibility and access. The 360° model, in response, demands not only media literacy but also strategic dexterity.

Furthermore, the inclusion of feedback integration and reflexivity as core phases emphasizes that professional video production in the 21st century is inherently non-final. Each project becomes a discursive artifact as a provisional node in a larger, ongoing conversation between creators, communities, technologies, and ideologies. This recursive dynamic is especially salient in the aftermath of COVID-19, where resilience, experimentation, and affective labor have become defining features of survival within the creative industries.

In sum, the 360° Professional Music Video Framework contributes a critical epistemology and practical methodology to the field of music and video production. It maps the contemporary production environment as an interconnected web of creative decisions, logistical negotiations, social commitments, and digital strategies. As such, it serves not only as a reflective tool for practitioners and scholars, but also as a blueprint for sustainable, inclusive, and ethically grounded audiovisual practices in an age where storytelling is as much about method as it is about message.

Future Research

First, the rise of artist-led production (D1) reflects a broader trend of creative labor reinvention, where artists now operate as multifaceted producers, editors, and distributors. This shift, intensified by the pandemic and subsequent economic inflation, has pushed artists toward self-sufficiency and digital innovation. As artists now produce compelling content with minimal resources, future research should explore the long-term sustainability of these practices and how they intersect with labor precarity and mental health in the gig economy.

Second, the discussion underscores the increasing importance of innovative and hybrid music video forms (D2) in capturing audience attention. The integration of storytelling, documentary footage, animation, and fan participation signal a departure from traditional formats. Yet, results also show that not all popular formats (e.g., dance videos) are universally effective. Future research should undertake cross-cultural comparative studies to examine how regional tastes and platform logics shape music video success and aesthetic experimentation.

Third, the study highlighted the value of diverse, purposeful collaborations (D3) across disciplines and cultures. While diversity is a recognized driver of innovation, this study also found that effective direction, communication, and shared purpose are essential to overcoming structural and logistical barriers. Future inquiries could evaluate best practices in collaborative governance, especially in decentralized or transnational creative teams.

Fourth, audience-centric and situational storytelling (D4) emerged as a powerful tool in enhancing engagement. Music videos that address current social issues or resonate with collective emotions tend to achieve higher viewership. This aligns with the shift from creator-centric to dialogic, participatory content production. Future research should investigate the ethical implications and emotional labor involved in producing affect-driven content and its long-term impact on audience trust and artist identity.

Fifth, the study confirmed the critical role of transmedia strategies (D5) in amplifying reach and prolonging audience engagement. Music videos are no longer standalone artefacts, but components of larger narrative ecosystems. Social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok serve not only as promotional tools but as storytelling extensions. This gave rise to

transmedia in music where music needs to be shared in multiple platforms in order to maximized the reach. Future research might focus on the algorithmic interplay between platforms, examining how cross-platform storytelling influences music video virality and cultural circulation.

In sum, this research affirms that post-pandemic music video production is increasingly characterized by resourceful, emotionally resonant, cross-disciplinary, and platform-integrated practices. Moving forward, future scholarship could explore the implications of these shifts for creative agency, aesthetic diversity, and cultural equity in digital media production. Additionally, practice-based studies and longitudinal research would further illuminate the evolving strategies of independent artists navigating a fluid and competitive media landscape.

The post-pandemic era has ushered in a profound reconfiguration of music and video production practices, marked by the intensification of artist-led, resource-conscious, and technologically empowered approaches. This research underscores how the convergence of economic constraints, technological evolution, and changing audience behaviors has reshaped both the processes and aesthetics of music video creation. Central to these transformations is the rise of independent, multi-skilled artist-producers who are increasingly navigating creative labor as both expressive and entrepreneurial acts. Hence, one has to have a 360 degree of strategy covering all fields in order to excel in the industry.

The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated pre-existing shifts toward decentralization and digitalization in creative industries. With traditional infrastructures such as studios, production crews, and funding pipelines destabilized, artists were compelled to become more self-reliant, assuming roles in editing, directing, lighting, and distribution. In the post-pandemic landscape, such multifaceted artists are not only surviving but, in many cases, thriving, due to their adaptability, autonomy, and direct-to-audience strategies.

Moreover, the economic aftermath of the pandemic characterized by inflation, budget cuts, and reduced institutional support has necessitated a turn toward cost-saving innovations and lean production models. Findings show that artists and small teams are successfully leveraging minimalist aesthetics, in-house resources, and local collaborations to produce emotionally and visually compelling content. These practices often stimulate creative problem-solving and

aesthetic innovation, reinforcing the idea that constraints can, paradoxically, become catalysts for artistic excellence and to train artist to become resilience.

The nature of the music video itself is also evolving. Today's audiences favor narrative-rich, emotionally resonant, and aesthetically hybrid content. Music videos that incorporate real-life elements such as documentary footage, fan-submitted materials, or animated sequences which demonstrate higher audience traction, reflecting broader cultural preferences for authenticity, relatability, and affective storytelling. These trends signal a departure from conventional performance-centric videos toward content that reflects lived experiences and taps into collective memory or social realities which involves emotional creativity.

Diversity in collaboration emerged as another critical theme. Cross-cultural and interdisciplinary teams not only diversify the creative process but also enhance the global resonance of music videos. However, challenges related to communication, project direction, and bureaucratic friction remain, especially when institutional partners such as broadcasters or universities are involved. The research supports the notion that diverse team collaboration enhances creativity, but only when guided by clear direction, strong leadership, and shared purpose. Also, one has to keep on updating and reinventing to withstand the ever-disrupting industry.

Equally significant is the shift toward audience-centric and situational content creation. Music videos that thematically engage with current events, social issues, or community stories resonate more deeply with viewers, leading to higher emotional engagement and shareability. The move from artist-centric narratives to co-constructed, emotionally responsive storytelling aligns with new media theories of dialogic cultural production and user-generated resonance.

Lastly, the research highlights the growing role of transmedia strategies in promoting music videos. Artists are no longer reliant on single-platform releases. Instead, successful campaigns are designed as holistic content ecosystems that include social media storytelling, cross-promotions with TV and digital series, behind-the-scenes content, and fan participation initiatives where each platform contributes uniquely to the overall narrative experience, enhancing reach, retention, and virality.

Collectively, these findings suggest that the post-pandemic environment has catalyzed a paradigm shift toward independent, agile, emotionally intelligent, and audience-responsive production. While the challenges are considerable, ranging from budgetary limitations to collaborative frictions, so too are the opportunities for rethinking how music and videos are made, distributed, and experienced in a digital, globalized cultural economy.

Whereas there are some suggestions for future research. Future research could explore how independent music video strategies differ across global regions and cultural contexts. For instance, how do post-pandemic reinventions manifest in Southeast Asia compared to Western or African music industries? Comparative studies may reveal divergent constraints, strategies, or aesthetic norms.

As global collaborations become more common, research should explore the power dynamics, equity concerns, and cultural tensions in such partnerships. How do funding disparities, language barriers, and cultural hierarchies affect collaborative outcomes? What leadership and governance models support more equitable creative processes? Ethnographic studies or comparative case studies of international music video collaborations could shed light on these issues.

Building on the importance of audience-centric storytelling, future research should investigate how emotional analytics and real-time audience feedback can inform content creation. Can tools like sentiment analysis, biometric feedback, or fan polls be ethically and effectively integrated into the creative process? How do artists balance emotional authenticity with data-driven decision-making?

Further research is needed to assess the long-term sustainability and career outcomes of artists who adopt multifaceted roles in their production processes. How do this labor practices affect income, artistic development, mental health, and career longevity? Comparative studies between artist-led projects and traditionally funded productions could reveal whether autonomy leads to creative freedom or burnout, and under what conditions.

It should have more focused studies on how algorithms shape the production and success of music videos on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube would deepen our

understanding of content optimization. Research explores how artists tailor content to align with algorithmic trends and what trade-offs this may involve for artistic authenticity. With platforms like TikTok and Instagram shaping content consumption through opaque algorithms, future studies should explore how platform-specific logics influence music video form and content. How do creators optimize videos for algorithmic success rather than focus on one platform? Are there aesthetic compromises being made to satisfy discoverability? Mixed-method studies combining content analysis with platform data and creator interviews could unpack these dynamics.

On the other hand, a long-term ethnographic study of independent artists navigating post-pandemic challenges over several years could illuminate evolving strategies, emotional tolls, and career sustainability. This would enrich existing literature on creative labor and precarity.

Moreover, it is crucial in Investigating how arts councils, educational institutions, and funding bodies can better support independent artists post-COVID would have practical implications. This includes research on curriculum reform, funding equity, and the infrastructural needs of multi-skilled creators. While minimalism and low-budget techniques have become necessary strategies, future studies should examine their artistic impact and audience perception. Do minimalist videos convey authenticity or amateurism? How do different demographics respond to these formats? Experimental designs that test viewer engagement across different production value levels could offer practical insights for creators and founders alike.

There is a need to create accessible frameworks or toolkits for transmedia storytelling tailored specifically to independent artists and small teams. How can creators with limited budgets effectively plan cross-platform strategies? What low-cost tools or platforms are most impactful for extending engagement? Participatory design research involving creators could yield practical, scalable resources for the wider industry.

Future research could examine how fan-driven reshapes the artist-audience dynamic and the creative authority of the artist. This may involve applying participatory culture theory to new case studies involving fan engagement and grassroots promotion.

As creative roles diversify, future research should examine how arts education institutions and professional development programs can adapt. What interdisciplinary skills are most needed? How can curricula evolve to support holistic creator development? Comparative studies of education models across regions or institutions could help identify best practices.

Finally, future studies should explore the role of policy, funding, and institutional support in enabling the next generation of digital-native creators. What types of grants, tax incentives, or infrastructure support best serve artist-led and transmedia projects? How can public institutions and arts councils support marginalized creators and communities in this changing landscape?

In conclusion, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digital creative industries, offering empirical evidence and theoretical insight into the adaptive practices of independent music video producers. As the global media environment continues to evolve, ongoing research will be vital in understanding how artists can sustain creativity, collaboration, and connection in uncertain times. The findings of this study reflect not only a moment of crisis-induced innovation but a structural redefinition of how music and video are made and experienced. The convergence of technological accessibility, economic necessity, and shifting audience behaviors is producing a new generation of hybrid artists who are simultaneously creators, strategists, and entrepreneurs. Future research should aim not only to document these shifts but to actively support and co-design the evolving ecosystems of creative production, ensuring that they remain inclusive, sustainable, and artistically vibrant in the years to come. What does that kill the artist will always be stronger and whoever who innovate will always survive in the long run!

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