Social Media Marketing Strategies of Music Artists and the Impact on Follower
Activity

by

Eric R. Garner

December 2019

Presented to the

Department of Music, Music Business

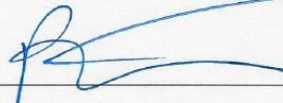Radford University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of
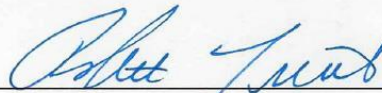
Master of Arts

Approved by: _____

[Dr. Timothy Channell, Thesis Advisor]

_____

[Dr. Patricia Winter, Committee Member]

_____

[Dr. Robert Trent, Committee Member]

Abstract

Music artists, both independent and those signed to major labels, use social media to create awareness and to connect with their target market. The research presented looks at how these two types of artist use their social media platforms to interact with followers, with the hopes of showing that more frequent and consistent posting will lead to higher follower interaction. This evaluation was conducted by collecting a sample of both independent and major label artists and comparing the posting habits of both, as well as the follower activity in the form of likes, comments, and shares. Results showed that major label artists are able to achieve more interaction than those of independent artists, but may be able to because of the size and budgeting that they have. Results also showed that independent artists had more significance with more personal forms of interaction, such as commenting on individual user's posts. By comparing the two types of artist, the author suggests ways for independent artists to use budgeting and consistency to better interact with followers.

Eric R. Garner, M.A.
Department of Music, 2019
Radford University

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

As music artists have become increasingly aware of the need for social media presence, they have also had to learn how to sustain a following that allows them to continue to create music. Music artists' social media habits can determine how their fans can interact with them, which in turn can lead to a more marketable and profitable presence. The research presented in this study serves to measure and compare the social media presence of different types of artists, independent label and major label. By conducting this study, more information about how frequently artists use social media to inform and connect with followers will be shown, which will then help those artists – particularly independent artists – see how they may be able to present themselves on these platforms.

Independent record labels and artists have historically been smaller and different than major labels. In order to understand how independent artists can maintain and grow their social media presence and connect with followers more consistently, there needs to be an understanding of how they currently operate, as well as how major label artists currently operate. By understanding both sides of the music industry and how they currently handle social media, independent artists and future researchers can find new ways to create a more consistent and frequent plan for social media usage. The main purpose of this study was to compare social media habits and follower interaction in order to put together a larger picture of social media usage so that artists can learn and employ techniques that would allow them to optimize their fan interaction.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Research on record label marketing, and in particular independent, or "indie,"

record labels and marketing, is lacking in the music and business fields. There has been

even less research conducted regarding social media marketing strategies of independent

record labels. A record label in the music industry is an entity that handles such things as

distribution, marketing, and artist promotion of an artist's recorded album releases.

Furthermore, the term "record label" is derived from a company that puts its label on

recorded music releases (Klein, 2003). Much of the recording industry's releases are

handled by three of the largest, or major, record companies who collectively budgeted

and spent $1.7 billion on marketing and promotion in 2016 (International Federation of

the Phonographic Industry, 2016). White (2007) wrote that "these companies are multi-

billion-dollar companies with multi-million-dollar budgets for marketing, product

promotion, and distribution for any or all of their artists" (p. 1), and include Sony Music

Entertainment, Universal Music Group, and Warner Music Group (Macy, Rolston, Allen,

& Hutchison, 2016).

Independent labels, on the other hand, are comparable to other small businesses in

the sense that "independent record labels cannot compete with the huge budgets

employed by major labels to market, promote, and distribute their products" (White,

2007, p. 1). As opposed to independent labels, major labels are not only able to buy other

smaller labels to integrate into their company, but they are also able to buy channels of

distribution as well (Macy et al., 2016). Independent labels are not able to do this because

they have smaller budgets and lower profit margins (Arditi, 2012). Independent labels

also cater to more specific genres of music than the mainstream artists of major labels

(Macy et al., 2016). Altogether, the music industry contributed $143 billion to the economy in 2016, and according to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (2016), independent labels made up 29.88% of the recording industry in 2017 .

Research exists concerning business marketing plans and social media incorporation that deal with various types of businesses from small businesses to larger corporations (Kamara, 2018; Morgan, 2018; Syrdal, 2016). Social media refers to online networking sites that allow users to share information and connect digitally. Social media marketing refers to the use of marketing strategies that are carried out on these social media sites. In 2016, $32.3 billion was spent on social media advertising, both desktop and mobile (Alalwan, 2018). Marketing through social media has become an important part of music industry business strategies, and more so for independent record labels (Collard, 2012). Although the usefulness of social media marketing has been documented (Chen, 2012; Harris, 2010; Kamara, 2018), there has been research to suggest that small businesses do not take full advantage of social media (Cox, 2012; Morgan, 2018). Some common themes are found in much of the research on small businesses and independent record labels and artists.

<u>Historical context of independent and major labels</u>

Both major and indie labels came into prominence with the invention of the phonograph, which provided greater access for personal interaction with recorded music. In the 1950s, technological advancements reduced the cost of producing vinyl records, allowing multiple companies to attain prominence, thereby creating a competitive marketplace. As a result, many companies entered the marketplace, ultimately expanding market sales, and leading to business mergers that eventually become the major record

labels (Bielas, 2013). Independent record labels generally began after World War II in order to satisfy niche markets (Gilooly, 2010). A niche market in the music industry can be described as "a kind of music that has a smaller market [segment] of intrigued shoppers" (Kamara, 2018, p. 6). Blues, jazz, and rock and roll music are all examples of early niche markets (Gilooly, 2010). Other examples of niche markets are the punk rock movement of the late 1970s and the grunge movement during the 1990s (Gilooly, 2010). Consequently, there have been periods of time, notably the late 1960s and early 1990s with the folk movement and grunge music respectively, when major labels realized the appeal of niche markets and capitalized on the idea by purchasing and taking ownership of indie labels. Major labels have consistently remained at the top of the market by capitalizing on trends found within the indie music scene (Gilooly, 2010; Konsor, 2017). According to Gilooly (2010), both Bob Dylan and the Beatles were major label artists that satisfied the "counterculture" movement that first started in indie music. In this sense, major labels often followed the trends set by independent music and sought to purchase indie record labels that became successful.

During the late 1970s and 1980s, a large number of indie labels began as a part of vinyl record stores, which allowed for the rise of the punk rock and hip-hop movements (Gilooly, 2010). These record stores often catered to small, local scenes and were run by owners who tried to distance themselves from major label business activities, such as large distribution companies. The small size and locality of these stores created mutual trust between owners and consumers, which eventually led to the stores recording and distributing local artists' music through their own distribution channels (Gilooly, 2010). Another characteristic of these small stores was they allowed certain political or

counterculture ideations to thrive because of the established trust and extreme niche aspect of the stores. The hip-hop and punk rock movements paved the way for more personal or creative outlets that were not being offered by major labels at the time (Gilooly, 2010). These genres basically avoided major labels and their influence in order to gain more independence, which contributed to the creation of a large number of indie labels and a "do-it-yourself" ethic.

Grunge music in the 1990s allowed major labels to once again capitalize on the success from a certain independent music sector (Gilooly, 2010). Major labels predicted this trend of an independent and niche market gaining prominence and proceeded to purchase indie labels in the late 1980s in order to capitalize on the popularity of this genre (Arditi, 2012). After the success of Nirvana's Nevermind album, a major release in the grunge music genre, major labels and indie labels created partnerships in which indie labels could operate with the same business practices as before, but were owned partially or wholly by a major label (Gilooly, 2010).

The 2000s saw the rise of digital music and social media because of technological advances and the internet (Gilooly, 2010). According to Arditi (2012), since there have been new ways to release media, record labels and artists needed to adapt. Digital music reduces cost for major labels by cutting out intermediaries such as record stores, and the ability to sell singles individually instead of with an album. Because of this, major labels are able to remain large entities who have adapted easily to the technological transition of the industry (Arditi, 2012). Because indie labels can face problems such as budget constraints, lack of marketing knowledge, and lack of access to more professional

recording technology, these labels are not able to maintain the size of major labels

(Arditi, 2012).

Social media and other technology, such as personal recording software, allow

artists to share music without necessarily being signed to any label (Pikes, 2015). These

technological advances created the need for adaptation for both major and indie labels,

and because of the growth of technology as well as the ability to reach larger audiences,

indie labels have been seeing an increase in recognition on music charts (Konsor, 2017).

Social media in marketing plans

Social media has become part of many businesses' marketing plans and appears

successful because of the ability to develop a two-way relationship between consumer

and business. A marketing plan is a "specific plan that describes activities selected to

achieve specific marketing objectives for that product, within a set period of time" (Macy

et al., 2016, p. 107). The free aspect of social media allows small businesses to connect to

consumers, but paid advertisement options are available that would create brand

awareness to the target market (Morgan, 2018).

Lupo (2018) and Kamara (2018) have noted the positive uses and implications of

using social media marketing, but also found that it is more effective when incorporated

into a larger marketing plan along with traditional marketing tactics, such as radio,

television ads, and email lists. One benefit to social media platforms is the opportunity

for businesses to obtain analytics on the way the user interacts with the platform.

Analytics are defined as "the use of data collected from a web site and its visitors to

assess and improve the effectiveness of the website" (Macy et al., 2016, p. 61). Social

media marketing is simply another tool that needs to have a strategy behind it in order to

work (Alameddine, 2013; John et al., 2017). "Artists use social media as a tool to better understand their consumer base" (Pikes, 2015, p. 74). By doing this, they implement social media as a marketing research tool in order to better understand their consumers (Pikes, 2015). Wendlandt (2012) suggested that businesses include social media in all parts of the overall marketing plan, not just sales, in order to see a greater return on investment on social media marketing campaigns. Lupo (2018) noted that incorporation of social media marketing into an overall marketing plan was found to be beneficial, but many small businesses did not take advantage of social media to an adequate extent. Contrarily, according to Kamara (2018), "small business music artists have utilized social media as a marketing tool to promote and brand themselves on the Internet" (p. 44). Capodilupo (2015) suggested that the use of data and analytics from social media platforms allows music companies and artists to adjust and expand their marketing plans, and Jones (2016) confirmed that creating a clear strategy for social media marketing within a marketing plan is usually the most beneficial course of action. In contrast, Venciute (2018) suggested that social media not be used merely as a tool within a marketing plan, but its own standalone marketing strategy, as it can encompass multiple platforms and bring in more consumer engagement.

According to John et al., (2017), marketers may be more interested in social media marketing than traditional marketing, meaning they put more emphasis on their attempts to gather "likes" on social media in order to reach a wider audience. Facebook's official page defines a "like" as "a way to let people know that you enjoy [something] without leaving a comment" (Facebook, 2019). John et al. (2017) found no positive correlation between a consumer liking a brand on social media and sales. Because of this,

the research suggested that businesses focus on traditional media as well, and like other research, use social media as a supplemental tool and when there is strategic basis to using social media for advertising (John et al., 2017), thereby confirming other research that concludes that social media is best when used in conjunction with traditional media (Kamara, 2018; Lupo, 2018).

Alalwan (2018) and Yadav (2017) have noted aspects of marketing that lead to higher sales when used on social media, including interactivity, informativeness, and relevance. Interactivity can be defined as creating a two-way dialogue between business and consumer, informativeness means that the business provides information that will keep the consumer up to date, and relevance refers to information that the consumer would like to know about (Alalwan, 2018; Chen, 2012; Yadav, 2017). Like any other business outside the music industry, record labels and artists are more sustainable if the target market and audience are informed (Brown, 2014). Marketers can use this information to create a social media strategy that fits in with a larger marketing plan in order to maximize consumer engagement and retention. Along with this, social media marketing may be used in conjunction with other marketing strategies, such as email marketing and television advertisements (Kumar et al., 2016). Most large businesses are able to integrate social media marketing into an overall marketing plan. According to Kumar et al. (2016), social media marketing and advertising may be limited to consumers who are able to navigate the technology required to access social media, which can create problems when trying to reach the entire target market and outlines the need for traditional marketing along with social media marketing.

Pikes (2015) asserted that the use of social media gives more independence to small businesses and artists because an independent artist would be able to create a social media account, find an audience, and release music directly to that audience. By doing this and bypassing the need for a label, an artist maintains complete artistic control and freedom. Artists and businesses are able to use social media, whether free or with paid advertisements, to promote themselves, and by doing this they are able to retain complete freedom on how to conduct business (Pikes, 2015).

<u>Small businesses and social media usage</u>

Research has addressed the concerns that face small businesses, indicating "as many as 54% of small businesses, businesses that have 500 or less employees, fail within five years of startup, with marketing being cited as a key factor of success or failure" (Atanassova & Clark, 2015; Lupo, 2018, p. 75). Morgan (2018) noted that for small businesses, word-of-mouth marketing is an important way to grow the target market. Word-of-mouth marketing is "simply someone you know whose opinion you trust saying to you, 'you gotta try this'" (Macy et al., 2016, p. 412). Word-of-mouth marketing can be promoted through a positive image, understanding of social media marketing tactics, and frequent social media postings, which have been described as online word-of-mouth marketing (Hefter, 2012; Morgan, 2018). Word-of-mouth marketing is one of the most effective marketing tactics because people are more likely to trust the opinions of friends and family (Macy et al., 2016).

Morgan (2018) and Lupo (2018) asserted that small businesses may have a lack of understanding of the impact of social media or may not be technologically literate enough to create an entire social media marketing strategy. "While an effective business practice

might be to adopt social media marketing, the obstacles might be insurmountable to some who lack computer literacy or other resources to adequately create and maintain a social media presence" (Lupo, 2018, p. 69). Cox (2012) concluded that for some small businesses, learning how to maintain a social media presence might become overwhelming, but social media can provide many opportunities to reach consumers. Some small businesses may not even understand basic marketing concepts or strategies; however, a basic understanding of marketing concepts along with the use of social media to reach consumers can create growth for small businesses (Morgan, 2018). Kumar et al. (2016) noted that content created and posted by the firm or business itself had a positive effect on customer spending, with results being even greater for those businesses (and customers) who were familiar with technology and social media platforms.

Audience engagement

Social media engagement leads to positive word of mouth and brand attachment or loyalty (Pikes, 2015). Social media engagement is "a psychological state of mind experienced when consuming social media content in which an individual is highly absorbed in the content and experiences a sense of excitement" (Syrdal, 2016, p. 67). This definition is applied to a consumer perspective, but Syrdal also described engagement from a marketing perspective as liking, commenting, or sharing social media posts. Both Pikes (2015) and Syrdal (2016) discussed positive relationships between social media marketing and increased consumer engagement, with this relationship leading to a more positive consumer experience (Pikes, 2015). Major social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter provide analytics to measure and gauge audience reactions or participation, providing access to marketers who can easily reach audiences

and create relatable marketing campaigns (Capidilupo, 2015; Maksimow, 2016). As well as providing insights that enable marketers to improve operational decisions or create relevant marketing campaigns, analytics can also show the effectiveness of particular marketing strategies or campaigns (Macy et al., 2016). These analytics are available for business profiles in order to measure audience trends in order for marketers to create more relevant content for those that interact with the page (Facebook, 2017; Twitter, 2019). Understanding analytics will provide the business or artist an understanding on how to target future consumers (Capodilupo, 2015). As many as 90% of marketers now use social media as a way to connect and engage with their target audiences; therefore, analytics should be used to conduct market research, leading to the creation of a successful marketing campaign (Paswan, 2018). Understanding analytics in order to better engage customers can create repeat purchases and consumer loyalty (Capodilupo, 2015).

Pikes (2015) suggested that audience engagement is the most valuable aspect of an artist's marketing plans and that social media should be used to first foster relationships with a prospective market. Creating a relationship with the consumers leads to sustainability and market growth. Fan loyalty is created through connection and interaction and there needs to be a strong social media presence in order to stay relevant with the target market (Garcia, 2016). Fan loyalty, or customer loyalty, is denoted by repeat purchases (Syrdal, 2016), and social media is a way for artists to directly build a relationship with their audience. This relationship building is referred to as relationship marketing, which deals with creating strong and sustaining loyalty among consumers and is viewed as one of the most important aspects of social media (Garcia, 2016; Pikes,

2015; Potts, 2012). Harris (2010) stated that music artists can use social media to directly connect with fans in order to foster consumer loyalty.

Even though online engagement is the most important aspect to marketers, Syrdal (2016) noted that issues can arise when measuring the engagement of followers on social media. Not every person physically interacts by commenting, liking, or sharing a social media post, but can still be engaged, and further notes that because not every interaction on social media is physical, it can create difficulties in marketing efforts that rely mostly on measuring engagement. Consumer engagement and marketer engagement are different. Syrdal (2016) noted that marketers view engagement from a physical standpoint through liking, commenting, and sharing, while consumer engagement may extend beyond this and can include reading or thinking about posts (not physically interacting). This can be overlooked by marketing teams and firms who look to measure engagement through analytics.

Jones (2016) and Cox (2012) noted the importance of engagement when marketing to consumers whether they belonged to the target market or not. This connection and engagement is not solely limited to the audience and target market, but also extends to other artists as well through networking (Pikes, 2015; Ramaprasad, 2009). Social media allows an artist to easily maintain or create a following that will lead to opportunities to reach more consumers within their target market through the understanding of analytics and creating a marketing strategy based on those analytics (Capodilupo, 2015).

Business strategies within the music industry overlap in many ways with other industries. Engagement is one of the top priorities of music artists, and in the music

industry there is a larger need to connect directly, in some way, with the audience than in

other industries (Garcia, 2016; Kamara, 2018; Pikes, 2015;). Musicians need to create

and interact with a loyal fan base in order to maintain longevity and a sustainable career

(Brown, 2014; Pikes, 2015). This can happen through pathways that lead to more

informed consumers who tend to be more sustainable, or loyal (Brown, 2014).

Ramaprasad (2009) noted a positive correlation between online word of mouth and

engagement, specifically the posting of relevant music blogs with increased music sales.

This is more relevant to independent music, as blogs and other websites that allow for

consumer-to-consumer interaction can be found within niche markets. One common

theme found in multiple research articles on indie labels and artists is the need for

engagement and consistency (Collard, 2012; Kamara, 2018; Schultz, 2009). Frequent

and consistent social media presence and updates lead to more active engagement and a

loyal following through word-of-mouth marketing and informed consumers (Brown,

2014; Jones, 2016).

<u>Branding</u>

Consistency in both brand image and social media presence is a vital part of the

success within the music business (Kamara, 2018). A brand in a broad sense is defined as

"a name, term, design, symbol, or any other mark that uniquely identifies a seller" (Macy

et al., 2016). The music industry, record labels, and artists create a more specific kind of

branding called a personal brand. A personal brand is "the branding and self-positioning

of the individual person. A personal brand involves all of the attributes and characteristics

associated with an artist including their style, demeanor, and reputation" (Macy et al.,

2016, p. 104). Having a brand image, such as a logo or stage persona, is important for

distinguishing an independent artist from other artists (Kamara, 2018). Social media is an important way to establish brand identity: "[W]hen small business music artists use entertainment marketing and brand placement as a strategy, consumers buy into a lifestyle and experience associated with a name to express themselves and affiliate with a particular music artist" (Kamara, 2018, p. 31). Collard (2012) provided a slightly different definition of branding as it relates to artists: "[B]randing is simply the process to build awareness of a product or service and extend customer loyalty" (p. 8). Social media plays a large part in artist branding because of the large number of users of the multiple platforms (Collard, 2012). Collard also noted that consistent brand image and interaction with the target market will allow artists to grow their consumer base. Kamara (2018) took this a step further and stated that establishing brand identity on social media will ultimately generate revenue.

Another aspect of social media usage in the music industry, especially for independent artists, is maintaining a consistent voice across all platforms (Collard, 2012). A voice refers to the way an artist, band, or even business writes or presents themselves on social media - whether it be formal or informal. For instance, if an artist types informally, then he or she must maintain this across all platforms. This is important because it creates a sense of authenticity and creates more trust and transparency among the audience and potential market (Collard, 2012). The voice that an artist or business uses has to align with the brand image that is chosen by the label or artist (Collard, 2012). For major label artists, sponsorships, political affiliations, or even social affiliations must reflect the brand image and remain consistent (Collard, 2012). Such things as branding and consistency are all part of a determined strategy for that musical artist. Both Collard

(2012) and Kamara (2018) discussed the importance of public relations or a publicist in regard to branding. A publicist or public relations practitioner for an artist is a hired specialist that works with the artist to make sure public interactions and appearance align with that artists' brand identity (Macy et al., 2016). Major label artists usually have a publicist provided to them, while independent artists usually have to hire one themselves (Macy et al., 2016). According to Kamara (2018) and Collard (2012), a publicist is an important part of an artist's marketing strategy because the publicist helps maintain a consistent brand image, which could in turn generate revenue.

Budgeting

Because social media representation is a critical component of a well-constructed marketing plan, indie labels should create a budget that includes the use of paid advertisements on social media platforms, in order to increase engagement and retain their audience (Schultz, 2009; Wendlendt, 2012). While the majority of social media platforms are indeed free to use, there is an option to promote paid advertisements and many businesses have adapted and embraced this as a viable and reliable way to reach audiences, creating entire budgets to allow for maximum potential (Schultz, 2009; Wendlandt, 2012). This can become a challenge for small businesses and labels because, according to Harris (2010), there may not be a large enough budget to fully promote the business. In contrast, Collard (2012) noted that many indie artists and labels have begun setting aside a budget to allow for social media advertising. Meanwhile, Paswan (2018) and John et al. (2017) indicated that larger businesses and labels already develop a budget for social media marketing, and Morgan (2018) stated that when larger businesses create

a budget for social media marketing, it is a more cost-effective marketing strategy compared to traditional marketing strategies.

Even though social media should be used as a marketing tool and should be a part of a marketing plan, it does not guarantee that the platform will result in reliable income for the artist or label (Alameddine, 2013; Lupo, 2018). This challenge, along with the need to establish a marketing budget, can create financial distress for those who are not quite established (Haynes & Marshall, 2017). Relationships on social media can be emotionally rewarding, but the interactions cannot be monetized: "[T]here is no necessary correlation between social media 'success' and real-world financial sustainability" (Haynes & Marshall, 2017, p. 1983). A possible reason for this is that independent artists make greater income when selling to consumers in their locality, and not as much from consumers that can only be reached by extensive travelling. Another possible reason is the idea of oversaturation of the market. "There is simply so much music available online that it is extremely difficult to attract recognition" (Haynes & Marshall, 2017, p. 1984). Because of new technologies and the ability for an artist to create music from a convenient location, there has been a surplus of artists vying for attention, due to oversaturation of the market. Because of this, social media can be more beneficial for artists who already have an established following. These ideas all tie into the difficulty that independent artists face when creating budgets. Business success is based upon a marketing budget and budgeting for marketing can increase brand awareness. Budgeting for social media is more cost effective than traditional media (radio, paper, television), and more small businesses should dedicate more of their marketing budget to advertise on social media (Morgan, 2018).

<u>Live performance</u>

An area of benefit within the realm of social media is the ability to promote live performances (Brown, 2014; Kamara, 2018). Some artists have found success using their social media platforms to promote live performances, then using the live performance to promote social media (Pikes, 2015). Harris (2010) argued that while social media marketing has become an important aspect of marketing strategies, traditional marketing techniques have declined, leading to increased emphasis on live performances as a way for the artists to promote themselves (Harris, 2010). Interaction on social media can boost interaction at live performances and vice versa. According to Garcia (2016), "for many artists, one of the most exciting moments of their career is the live interaction they experience with the spectators" (p. 39). Garcia suggested that hosting live videos on social media will further strengthen consumer loyalty as this is a "new form of backstage access but in a virtual setting" (p. 52). This type of live performance creates a convenience for both consumer and artist. Pikes (2015) concurred by suggesting that face-to-face interaction at live performances builds relationships between fans, and between fans and the artist. Independent artists may be more successful during live performances because they not only allow for immediate consumption (by promoting digital and social media), but they also develop relationships and promote word-of-mouth marketing. Pikes (2015) argued that live performances are a better media than social media marketing because an artist can use live performances as a marketing tool in order to learn more about the market segments, as well as promote and build his or her artist brand. Collard (2012) suggested using live performances as a tool to point potential consumers to artists' social media platforms, which will then create interest and loyalty.

Kamara (2018) discussed the idea of using live performances as both a marketing promotion tool and a way to generate revenue. Live performances and social media are often both used as marketing supplements in creating a brand image and generating revenue (Kamara, 2018).

<u>Conclusion and research questions</u>

Social media has been adopted by many businesses, small and large. The use of social media can be a focal point in marketing plans as it is so ubiquitous to today's society (Collard, 2012). Social media can be used in conjunction with many other aspects of a marketing plan, as well as on its own. Social media usage by both major and independent artists can play a large role in the success or sustainability of that artist. Major labels often are able to budget larger amounts for social media marketing, but independent artists can find success through strong branding and consistent usage and engagement (Macy et al., 2016).

Based on the literature review and the nature of the study, the following questions were created to guide the research and generate a clear idea of what the ultimate goal of the research will be:

How do the social media habits of independent and major label artists, and their followers, compare?

Will posting more frequently on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter lead to more follower interaction or higher follower count?

Does follower count have any effect on the amount of interaction for the different types of artist?

What types of interaction have the most response?

By answering these questions, the researcher intends to contribute to the field of study on independent and major label artists, social media usage, and follower interaction within the music industry.

Chapter 3: Methods

Purpose statement

Social media usage for music artists, both major label artists and independent, can be a large part of a marketing strategy. Frequent and consistent posting on social media platforms allow for more engagement with followers, which can have an impact on the number of followers and fans an artist may have. The purpose of this research is to determine if posting frequent and engaging content on social media has any effect on the interaction with followers for independent and major label artists. The research then will consider any difference, if any, between the two types of artist. Could an independent artist post more frequently and have a more engaged following compared to major label artists, regardless of the size of the following? Knowing social media habits and trends can be beneficial to independent artists and labels and allow them to create a marketing plan accordingly.

Design of study

This study is correlational research seeking to compare numbers of followers, frequency of posts, and number of interactions on posts between independent and major label artists. Correlation was chosen because this data is widely available and the research question did not require an experimental design in order to locate relationships amongst the data sets. Using correlation research also allowed for a larger number of artists to be studied. The social media platforms that were chosen for this study consisted of Facebook and Twitter. These social media sites were chosen because they allowed for more two-way interaction (between artist and fan base) than other social media sites such as MySpace or Soundcloud, which are sites for posting music. Facebook and Twitter also

allow for direct advertisement and product promotion to followers, as well as likes, comments, and shares. Allowing all three types of interaction showed a more complete image of engagement on social media. The interaction aspects–the likes, comments, and shares–were tested against the number of posts during the test week.

Data set

  The data of this study consisted of independent and major label artists. Ninety-five of both independent and major label artists were gathered from various charts and playlists to create the data set. One of the leading music streaming services, Spotify (Kamara, 2018), defines a playlist as "simply a collection of songs" (Spotify, 2019). Spotify creates playlists of songs based on the top artists for any number of criteria, such as genre and most plays/streams. Using Spotify's premade playlists to gather the artists for data collection allowed the collection to be random. The playlist used to gather the major label artists was titled "Top 100 Tracks Currently on Spotify." The playlists used to gather the independent artists were titled "Top 100 Indie Tracks on Spotify" and "Indie Top Tracks." Two lists were used to gather the independent artists because Spotify listed multiple artists on its indie artist playlists that were in fact signed to major labels, meaning they were not actually independent artists. Out of the 95 artists gathered, 25 were used in statistics tests to represent a cross-section of the data pool and to clearly show relationships and correlations.

Data collection

  Data was obtained from each artist's Facebook and Twitter page, both of which are public. The number of followers for each social media site is displayed on the artist's landing page. A randomly chosen week from the year 2018 provided the number of posts,

likes, comments, and shares for each artist within the week. The week was chosen at

random by using Microsoft Excel's random number generator. This is achieved by typing

=RANDBETWEEN(1,52) into Excel (1 and 52 representing weeks in a year). The

number generated was 39. Week 39 of the year 2018 consisted of the dates of September

24 to September 30. Once the week was chosen, the researcher found the dates listed on

each of the social media sites and recorded how many times the artist posted in a day as

well as the comments, likes, and shares on each post. Each post is marked with a date and

time of posting, which allowed the researcher to easily find each post. The use of

Twitter's advanced search option allowed for the entry of specific dates, which led to the

gathering of posts for the week. Facebook does not allow an advanced search, so the

researcher scrolled through posts until the dates needed were found. The sum of the week

was compiled to include an overview of the entire week. In order to determine whether

each artist was truly a major or independent label artist, the record label each artist was

signed to was collected to provide additional precaution.

<u>Data analysis</u>

The statistical test used to analyze the collected data was a MANOVA test, or

multivariate analysis of variance. The difference between an ANOVA, or analysis of

variance, test and MANOVA test is that a MANOVA tests multiple dependent variables

against one or more independent variables. In the case of this study, the independent

variables are the number of posts on each social media platform. The dependent variables

are the likes, comments, and shares on each platform. By testing these variables, there

can be statistical evidence for the correlation between post frequency and follower

interaction. Once the MANOVA tests for both major and independent artists were

conducted separately, the results were then compared in order to determine if there was a

significant difference between the two types of artist. Four separate MANOVA tests were

conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS): one for the Facebook

data for both major and indie artists, and one for the Twitter data for both lists of artists.

Chapter 4: Results

Data was gathered for 95 artists in each category, representing the data set. The selection was narrowed down to 25 to represent a cross-section of the data pool, and to more accurately show the numbers from the results. The main criteria for choosing artists was whether they belonged to a major or independent record label. Follower count was not considered in order to give a range that represented the population. The two groups were compared by assessing frequency of posts and the follower interactions on those posts. Inferences could be made about follower interaction based on post frequency and also by overall follower count.

The data was gathered by visiting each artist's social media page, all of which are public. The number of posts, as well as the number of likes, comments, and shares, were added up to create the number for the overall week. Because artists were gathered at random, some artists posted more frequently than others, which could have caused some change in the data. Some artists posted zero times on both platforms during the week studied, while others posted much more frequently. A study of the raw data indicated that indie artists posted far less frequently than the major label artists.

The primary tool for analysis was SPSS. This program provided the statistical tests and quick output needed for the large numbers included in the data. A multivariate analysis of variance, or MANOVA, was used as the primary statistical test. Using this particular test enabled all variables to be considered in the output. The numbers of likes, comments, and shares were dependent upon the number of posts during the week. The covariate was the number of followers on the page because that number was considered an extension of the independent variable, as well as being continuous (as the follower

count constantly changes). As such, the numbers of likes, comments, and shares were the

dependent variables; the number of posts in a week for each artist was the independent

variable; and the total number of followers on each platform was the continuous variable,

or the covariate. The test was run four times: once for indie artists on Facebook, once for

indie artists on Twitter, once for major artists on Facebook, and once for major artists on

Twitter. Keeping each platform and artist type separate created a clearer and more

understandable reading of the data. Each test could then be compared to each other; for

example, the test for Facebook for both major and indie artists was compared to assess

any similarities or differences. Frequency tests in SPSS were used to conduct and show

frequencies in each group, such as the number of times posted on Facebook and Twitter

for both types of artist.

<u>Results</u>

Initial data analysis served to gauge and measure frequency and percentages of

postings, as well as the likes, comments, and shares for each type of artist. Indie artists on

Facebook had a 60% post rate, with 10 out of 25 artists posting 0 times, accounting for

40% of the total sum; 8 artists posted 1 time, and 3 artists posted 2 times (Table 1). On

Twitter, indie artists also had a 60% post rate, with 10 artists posting 0 times, 3 artists

posting 1 time, and 5 artists posting 2 times (Table 1). Looking at follower interaction on

Facebook, indie artists had a 60% response rate of likes on all posts, 44% response rate

from comments, and 52% response rate from shares (Tables 2-4). On Twitter, indie artists

had a 60% rate for likes on all posts, 48% response rate for comments, and 56% rate for

shares (Tables 5-7).

Table 1. Frequency of indie artist posts on Facebook and Twitter

Posts on Facebook in a week for indie artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	10	40.0	40.0	40.0
	1	8	32.0	32.0	72.0
	2	3	12.0	12.0	84.0
	4	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	5	2	8.0	8.0	96.0
	15	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Posts on Twitter in a week for indie artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	10	40.0	40.0	40.0
	1	3	12.0	12.0	52.0
	2	5	20.0	20.0	72.0
	3	1	4.0	4.0	76.0
	4	1	4.0	4.0	80.0
	5	3	12.0	12.0	92.0
	15	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	49	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. Likes on Facebook in a week for indie artists

Likes on Facebook in a week for indie artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	10	40.0	40.0	40.0
	4	1	4.0	4.0	44.0
	24	1	4.0	4.0	48.0
	36	1	4.0	4.0	52.0
	41	1	4.0	4.0	56.0
	47	1	4.0	4.0	60.0
	56	1	4.0	4.0	64.0
	61	1	4.0	4.0	68.0
	104	1	4.0	4.0	72.0
	142	1	4.0	4.0	76.0
	190	1	4.0	4.0	80.0
	542	1	4.0	4.0	84.0
	1318	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	1698	1	4.0	4.0	92.0
	2613	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	2882	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Table 3. Comments on Facebook in a week for indie artists

Comments on Facebook in a week for indie artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	14	56.0	56.0	56.0
	3	1	4.0	4.0	60.0
	4	1	4.0	4.0	64.0
	5	3	12.0	12.0	76.0
	18	1	4.0	4.0	80.0
	27	1	4.0	4.0	84.0
	147	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	198	1	4.0	4.0	92.0
	405	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	682	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. Shares on Facebook in a week for indie artists

Shares on Facebook in a week for indie artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	12	48.0	48.0	48.0
	2	3	12.0	12.0	60.0
	3	1	4.0	4.0	64.0
	4	1	4.0	4.0	68.0
	7	1	4.0	4.0	72.0
	8	1	4.0	4.0	76.0
	11	1	4.0	4.0	80.0
	40	1	4.0	4.0	84.0
	51	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	89	1	4.0	4.0	92.0
	111	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	493	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Table 5. Likes on Twitter in a week for indie artists

Likes on Twitter in a week for indie artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	10	40.0	40.0	40.0
	7	1	4.0	4.0	44.0
	12	1	4.0	4.0	48.0
	20	1	4.0	4.0	52.0
	25	1	4.0	4.0	56.0
	41	1	4.0	4.0	60.0
	48	2	8.0	8.0	68.0
	115	2	8.0	8.0	76.0
	195	1	4.0	4.0	80.0
	253	1	4.0	4.0	84.0
	263	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	2135	1	4.0	4.0	92.0
	4567	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	10911	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Table 6. Comments on Twitter in a week for indie artists

Comments on Twitter in a week for indie artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	13	52.0	52.0	52.0
	1	3	12.0	12.0	64.0
	2	2	8.0	8.0	72.0
	3	2	8.0	8.0	80.0
	4	1	4.0	4.0	84.0
	20	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	121	1	4.0	4.0	92.0
	129	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	480	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Table 7. Shares on Twitter in a week for indie artists

Shares on Twitter in a week for indie artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	11	44.0	44.0	44.0
	1	1	4.0	4.0	48.0
	2	1	4.0	4.0	52.0
	3	1	4.0	4.0	56.0
	7	1	4.0	4.0	60.0
	8	2	8.0	8.0	68.0
	9	1	4.0	4.0	72.0
	11	1	4.0	4.0	76.0
	21	1	4.0	4.0	80.0
	31	1	4.0	4.0	84.0
	33	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	220	1	4.0	4.0	92.0
	352	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	2576	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Major label artists on Facebook had a 64% post rate, with 9 artists posting 0 times, 5 posting 1 time, and 2 posting 2 times. On Twitter, major label artists had a 52% post rate, with 12 artists posting 0 times, 2 posting once, and 1 posting 2 times (Table 8). Looking at follower interaction on Facebook, likes, comments, and shares all had a 64% response rate, the same percentage as the post rate percentage (Tables 9-11). The same principle applied to follower interaction on Twitter. Likes, comments, and shares on Twitter had a 52% response rate, which was the same percentage as the post rate (Tables 12-14).

Table 8. Frequency of major artist posts on Facebook and Twitter

Posts on Facebook in a week for major artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	9	36.0	36.0	36.0
	1	5	20.0	20.0	56.0
	2	2	8.0	8.0	64.0
	3	1	4.0	4.0	68.0
	5	4	16.0	16.0	84.0
	6	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	7	1	4.0	4.0	92.0
	9	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	12	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Posts on Twitter in a week for major artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	12	48.0	48.0	48.0
	1	2	8.0	8.0	56.0
	2	1	4.0	4.0	60.0
	3	1	4.0	4.0	64.0
	10	1	4.0	4.0	68.0
	11	1	4.0	4.0	72.0
	12	1	4.0	4.0	76.0
	17	1	4.0	4.0	80.0
	23	1	4.0	4.0	84.0
	33	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	39	1	4.0	4.0	92.0
	45	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	72	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Table 9. Likes on Facebook in a week for major label artists

Likes on Facebook in a week for major artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	9	36.0	36.0	36.0
	1000	1	4.0	4.0	40.0
	3000	1	4.0	4.0	44.0
	3600	1	4.0	4.0	48.0
	3800	1	4.0	4.0	52.0
	4700	1	4.0	4.0	56.0
	7900	1	4.0	4.0	60.0
	8455	1	4.0	4.0	64.0
	8700	1	4.0	4.0	68.0
	12000	1	4.0	4.0	72.0
	15300	1	4.0	4.0	76.0
	15900	1	4.0	4.0	80.0
	40000	1	4.0	4.0	84.0
	64000	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	69300	1	4.0	4.0	92.0
	69600	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	220600	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Table 10. Comments on Facebook in a week for major label artists

Comments on Facebook in a week for major artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	9	36.0	36.0	36.0
	55	1	4.0	4.0	40.0
	67	1	4.0	4.0	44.0
	71	1	4.0	4.0	48.0
	103	1	4.0	4.0	52.0
	166	1	4.0	4.0	56.0
	292	1	4.0	4.0	60.0
	304	1	4.0	4.0	64.0
	324	1	4.0	4.0	68.0
	338	1	4.0	4.0	72.0
	527	1	4.0	4.0	76.0
	655	1	4.0	4.0	80.0
	1035	1	4.0	4.0	84.0
	2004	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	4427	1	4.0	4.0	92.0
	5046	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	13510	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Table 11. Shares on Facebook in a week for major label artists

Shares on Facebook in a week

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	9	36.0	36.0	36.0
	49	1	4.0	4.0	40.0
	65	1	4.0	4.0	44.0
	82	1	4.0	4.0	48.0
	197	1	4.0	4.0	52.0
	218	1	4.0	4.0	56.0
	250	1	4.0	4.0	60.0
	397	1	4.0	4.0	64.0
	471	1	4.0	4.0	68.0
	616	1	4.0	4.0	72.0
	785	1	4.0	4.0	76.0
	1367	1	4.0	4.0	80.0
	2142	1	4.0	4.0	84.0
	3762	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	8243	1	4.0	4.0	92.0
	8527	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	9314	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Table 12. Likes on Twitter in a week for major label artists

Likes in Twitter in a week for major artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	12	48.0	48.0	48.0
	2100	1	4.0	4.0	52.0
	2900	1	4.0	4.0	56.0
	9636	1	4.0	4.0	60.0
	27024	1	4.0	4.0	64.0
	30000	1	4.0	4.0	68.0
	41438	1	4.0	4.0	72.0
	43791	1	4.0	4.0	76.0
	51787	1	4.0	4.0	80.0
	72900	1	4.0	4.0	84.0
	159200	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	187562	1	4.0	4.0	92.0
	1000000	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	3080000	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Table 13. Comments on Twitter in a week for major label artists

Comments on Twitter in a week for major artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	12	48.0	48.0	48.0
	71	1	4.0	4.0	52.0
	92	1	4.0	4.0	56.0
	332	1	4.0	4.0	60.0
	409	1	4.0	4.0	64.0
	765	1	4.0	4.0	68.0
	824	1	4.0	4.0	72.0
	845	1	4.0	4.0	76.0
	1142	1	4.0	4.0	80.0
	1286	1	4.0	4.0	84.0
	3875	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	9359	1	4.0	4.0	92.0
	58800	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	104870	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Table 14. Shares on Twitter in a week for major label artists
Shares on Twitter in a week for major artists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	12	48.0	48.0	48.0
	330	1	4.0	4.0	52.0
	446	1	4.0	4.0	56.0
	963	1	4.0	4.0	60.0
	1634	1	4.0	4.0	64.0
	6332	1	4.0	4.0	68.0
	6700	1	4.0	4.0	72.0
	11256	1	4.0	4.0	76.0
	14233	1	4.0	4.0	80.0
	15773	1	4.0	4.0	84.0
	26211	1	4.0	4.0	88.0
	35786	1	4.0	4.0	92.0
	194200	1	4.0	4.0	96.0
	525148	1	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

Once the initial tests for frequency and percentages were run and the data gathered, the MANOVA tests were run to measure and correlate the significance of follower activity (likes, comments, shares) against artist activity (posts) and overall follower count.

Table 15. MANOVA results for indie label artists on Facebook

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
FBlikestotal	Likes on Facebook in a week	2777129.305	1	2777129.305	31.814	.000
	Comments on Facebook in a week	213963.987	1	213963.987	30.127	.000
	Shares on Facebook in a week	96163.289	1	96163.289	27.007	.000
FBposts	Likes on Facebook in a week	6777321.623	5	1355464.325	15.528	.000
	Comments on Facebook in a week	167317.364	5	33463.473	4.712	.006
	Shares on Facebook in a week	26526.342	5	5305.268	1.490	.242

Looking at the indie artist activity on Facebook (Table 15), the dependent variables

measured against the covariate, total likes on Facebook, all categories are significant.

There was a significant effect of Total Facebook likes on likes on Facebook in a week

(F_1= 31.8, p < .05). There was also significant effect of Total Facebook likes on

comments on Facebook in a week and shares on Facebook in a week: (F_1= 30.1, p < .05)

and (F_1= 27, p < .05), respectively. When looking at number of posts in a week, likes and

comments were significant, while shares were not. The effect of total number of posts on

Facebook in a week on likes was significant with (F_5= 15.5, p < .05). Comments

compared against posts was also significant with (F_5= 4.7, p < .05). There was no

significant effect of total number of Facebook posts for indie artists on shares, (F_5= 1.5, p

> .05).

Table 16. MANOVA results for indie label artists on Twitter

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Twitlikestotal	Likes on Twitter in a week	13244.554	1	13244.554	4.653	.047
	Comments on Twitter in a week	3.840	1	3.840	7.409	.015
	Shares on Twitter in a week	202.242	1	202.242	7.207	.016
Twitposts	Likes on Twitter in a week	118577643.700	7	16939663.380	5950.669	.000
	Comments on Twitter in a week	212134.518	7	30304.931	58467.256	.000
	Shares on Twitter in a week	5770921.787	7	824417.398	29380.621	.000

Indie artist activity and follower response on Twitter were all statistically significant (Table 16). When compared to total Twitter followers for each artist, likes, comments, and shares were all significant. The effect of total followers to likes was (F_1= 4.7, $p < .05$), on comments (F_1= 7.4, $p < .05$), and shares (F_1= 7.2, $p < .05$). When likes, comments, and shares were compared to the total number of posts during the week, all three dependent variables were significant. Likes compared to number of posts was significant with (F_7= 5950.7, $p < .05$), comments (F_7= 58467.3, $p < .05$), and shares (F_7= 29380.6, $p < .05$).

Table 17. MANOVA results of major label artists on Facebook

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
FBlikestotal	Likes on Facebook in a week	3622529.852	1	3622529.852	.013	.911
	Comments on Facebook in a week	49560.061	1	49560.061	.008	.928
	Shares on Facebook in a week	9109.331	1	9109.331	.003	.958
FBposts	Likes on Facebook in a week	47043758410.000	8	5880469801.000	20.837	.000
	Comments on Facebook in a week	112088471.400	8	14011058.920	2.401	.068
	Shares on Facebook in a week	137023223.800	8	17127902.970	5.322	.003

Major artist activity and follower interaction on Facebook (Table 17) show that the effect of total follower size has no significance on likes, comments, or shares for the test week, with likes (F_7= 0.012, $p > .05$), comments (F_7= 0.008, $p > .05$), and shares (F_7= 0.003, $p > .05$). The effect of total number of posts in a week does have a significant effect on likes, comments, and shares for major label artists. The effect of post frequency on likes was significant (F_8= 20.8, $p < .05$), as with comments (F_8= 2.4, $p < .05$), and shares (F_8= 5.3, $p < .05$).

Table 18. MANOVA results of major label artists on Twitter

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Twitlikestotal	Likes in Twitter in a week	19399141.390	1	19399141.390	.577	.463
	Comments on Twitter in a week	14130.712	1	14130.712	.577	.463
	Shares on Twitter in a week	974742.395	1	974742.395	.577	.463
Twitposts	Likes in Twitter in a week	8344035630000.000	12	695336302500.000	20683.013	.000
	Comments on Twitter in a week	11599121020.000	12	966593418.200	39471.278	.000
	Shares on Twitter in a week	248990434500.000	12	20749202870.000	12283.241	.000

Major artist activity and follower interaction on Twitter (Table 18) show that the effect of total follower size has no significance on likes, comments, or shares for the test week, with likes (F_7= 0.577, $p > .05$), comments (F_7= 0.577, $p > .05$), and shares (F_7= 0.577, $p > .05$). Like the results of the Facebook analysis, the effect of total number of posts in a week does have a significant effect on likes, comments, and shares for major label artists. The effect of post frequency on likes was significant (F_{12}= 20683.01, $p < .05$), as with comments (F_{12}= 39471.3, $p < .05$), and shares (F_{12}= 12283.2, $p < .05$).

Evaluation of Findings

Comparing the initial frequency tests between major and indie artists on Facebook, the major label artists post slightly more frequently than indie artists with a 64% rate compared to the indie 60%. Looking further into those percentages, 84% of indie artist activity came from posting zero, one, or two times on Facebook in a week, while 64% of the major artist activity came from zero, one, and two posts. For follower activity, both major and indie artists had the same ratio of likes to posts (see list of tables). Indie artists had a 60% post rate and a 100% like rate, meaning there were likes on every post. Major artists had a 64% post rate and a 100% like rate. Comments had

slightly less prominence. For indie artists, there was a 73% comment rate on all posts, while major labels had a 100% comment rate. For shares, indie artists had an 86% response rate, while major artists once again had a 100% response rate. Major label artists posted only slightly more frequently than indie artists, but on all forms of interaction had a 100% response rate.

Activity on Twitter was similar to that of Facebook, but indie artists posted more with a 60% post rate compared to major artists 52% rate. Despite indie artists posting more, major label artists still had a 100% response rate on all forms of interaction, meaning there were likes, comments, and shares on every post. Indie artists had a 100% like rate, an 80% comment rate, and a 93% share rate. Comparing the two platforms, indie artists had more interaction on Twitter than Facebook, while major artists did well on both. On both platforms, likes and shares were more frequent than comments. These results are similar to other research, most notably by Srydal (2016), who concluded that likes alone are not indicative of interaction.

On Twitter, likes, comments, and shares were not significant to total follower count for major labels, but were for indie artists–which was the same result as the Facebook test. However, all types of interaction were significant for both types of artist when compared to total posts. This can be interpreted as both major and indie artists relying on all types of interaction on posts to see response to those posts.

Looking at the frequency tables and the MANOVA test results together, conclusions can be made about the rate (or frequency) of posting, the rate and percentages of follower interaction, and finally the comparison of those interactions to the number of times posted and the follower count. Major label artists post only slightly

more on Facebook and less on Twitter than indie artists, yet have 100% interaction of all types on all posts, whereas indie artists have less. This could be due to follower count, as seen in the MANOVA results, as indie artists are more reliant on followers than major label artists. This relationship between the frequencies of posts and interactions and the follower count is interesting and will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion, conclusions, and future research

This study observed the social media habits of independent and major label artists across two different platforms, as well as the follower or fan interaction. Research was conducted on 25 different indie and major label artists and the data gathered from one week of posts for each artist. Frequencies for posting, and the likes, comments, and shares on each post were measured and compared between the two types of artist. Follower count was measured against the interaction types as well in order to analyze any correlations. The statistical test used to understand the data was a multivariate analysis of variance, or a MANOVA, and this was done in the statistics program SPSS. The following research questions were proposed: How do the social media habits of independent and major label artists, and their followers, compare? Will posting more frequently on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter lead to more follower interaction or higher follower count? Does follower count have any effect on the amount of interaction for the different types of artist? What types of interaction have the most response?

<u>Discussion and interpretations</u>

The results provided some interesting outcomes on the social media habits of these artists. Major label artists had a 100% interaction rate on every post, meaning there were likes, comments, and shares on every post across both types of platform. Major label artists posted slightly more on Facebook, but indie artists posted more on Twitter. Even though major artists posted less on Twitter (and only slightly higher on Facebook), they still had interaction of all types on all posts, which could be attributed to the larger business teams that work for major artists, and also their potential for large budgets to put

into social media marketing. For indie artists, likes and shares were the most frequent form of interaction on both platforms. While indie artists had the same response for likes on both platforms, 100% on both, Twitter comments and shares were higher than those on Facebook. Looking at the frequencies of posts versus the follower response, it can be assumed that indie artists on Twitter see more fan interaction. Based on the researcher's own assumptions and observations while collecting the initial data (which included the number of likes, comments, and shares on each post), Twitter seemed to provide indie artists the ability to have more one-on-one conversation with followers, as opposed to Facebook.

Results from the MANOVA tests show some interesting trends as well. It seems that the total follower count for major label artists has no effect on likes, comments, or shares, while for indie artists it does on both platforms. This may be attributed to the large number of followers that major artists have, so there might not be a need to maintain follower count because there are already so many followers. This could be opposite for indie artists, in which the total follower count was significant in relation to follower interactions. Indie artists seem to rely more on followers because they are smaller, and as pointed out in previous research, have less income and smaller budgets than major label artists. On Facebook, certain types of interaction were not significant. For major label artists, comments were not significant, while for indie artists, shares were not significant. This can be interpreted as major artists relying more on likes and shares to connect and market their content, while indie artists rely more on the personal interactions, such as comments. Likes and shares are possibly the most substantial way to spread content and information, which would explain why major label artists need these

more. Major label artists are essentially an extension of the large businesses that are

major labels, and these labels know the best way to market and reach followers: through

likes and shares. Other researchers have noted that the most important way for large

marketing firms or business to gauge interaction is through likes, even though true

interaction may extend beyond this. Previous research has noted that an important part of

indie artists' marketing strategy is to connect directly with fans, which could explain why

the comments and likes for indie artists are significant, but not shares. Commenting

provides the most straightforward and direct form of interaction, and on indie artists'

posts, there were more two-way conversations than on the posts of major label artists.

Even though comments were significant in the MANOVA test for indie artists, they were

the least prominent form of interaction on posts, with likes and comments ranking higher

in terms of frequency. Since the MANOVA test compared the likes, comments, and

shares to follower count and post frequency, it could be interpreted that while

commenting on indie artists' posts was less frequent than likes or shares, it has more of

an impact on the overall follower count and follower interaction.

One area where the results did not match expectations was how post frequency

affected interaction or follower count. The researcher had hoped to show that more

frequent posting could lead to more interaction or followers for indie artists. On Twitter,

indie artists posted more frequently than major label artists, and almost as much on

Facebook, although major artists posted slightly more. Despite this, major label artists

had a 100% interaction rate while indie artists did not. This could be due to the fact that

major label artists have many more followers than indie artists, most in the millions, and

have specific teams designated to run social media pages, while indie artists usually run these pages themselves because of budget restraints.

Looking at the results of frequency tests and the MANOVA results, posting more frequently does not necessarily lead to more interaction or followers, specifically in regard to indie artists. Major label artists have interaction regardless, but indie artists do not. Even if indie artists did post more frequently, the results might not change because over-posting might lead to less interaction and the number of followers for indie artists is much lower compared to major artists. Total follower count does have significance on interaction for indie artists, but not major. Since major label artists had 100% interaction rate on all posts and had no significance from total followers from the MANOVA test, perhaps if indie artists had more followers then they would have a higher interaction rate. One way to achieve this may be to create a larger budget for the use of social media advertisements and campaigns. By doing this, the artist can reach more users than just those that already follow, and this will create exposure while the indie artist can still rely on creating relationships through the two-way interaction of commenting. So, follower count does have an effect for indie artists, but not major label artists. This study confirms findings of previous research on independent artists, in stating that fostering fan interaction and loyalty is one of the most important aspects of social media marketing.

One final question that the results and information from the literature review leads to is the possibility of indie artists to achieve the same amount of interaction or followers as major label artists. The possibility for this to happen is there, but it is probably not likely. Major labels are multi-billion-dollar corporations with teams designated to perform different tasks related to business operations, and indie artists do not have the

same budget or, in some cases, knowledge of marketing. There are successful indie

artists, and if one looked at just the interaction rates, then it is extremely possible that

indie artists could achieve a 100% response rate on their posts through consistency and

through fostering the fan-artist relationship. This idea has been discussed in previous

research as well. Indie artists may not reach the same number of followers that major

label artists have, but they can still do more in their marketing efforts.

Implications

    This study adds to the research on indie and major artists by addressing factors

that influence audience interaction and marketing and how these may or may not affect

these artists. Indie artists in particular should benefit from the findings in this study,

because it outlines the importance of marketing on social media in a consistent manner

and focusing on fan interaction as well as proper budgeting in order to fully take

advantage of the benefits of social media marketing. On the other side, it showed that

major labels do not necessarily need to focus as much on these things, since they have a

large following and will have interaction regardless of post frequency. This study adds to

previous research on indie artists, their social media presence, and their interaction with

audiences by looking at and comparing indie artists to major label artists in order to show

trends and how they might affect these artists. Research specifically on musical artists'

social media use, both major and indie, is limited. Prior research had noted the

importance of posting frequently and consistently, and the importance of fan interaction,

but studies that discuss the comparison between indie and major label artists on social

media, and take a quantitative approach to observe trends, are very limited. Thus, this

study outlines these ideas and discusses how they may or may not affect these types of artists.

Limitations

Social media data is constantly changing and follower counts can change rapidly, and thus if the test were run again, numbers may be slightly different, but the overall outcome would most likely remain the same. Another limitation lies with the artist and what he or she chooses to post and keep on social media. For example, an artist can delete a post or repost a previous post. This could affect this research because if a post was deleted, it would not be accessible by anyone else, thus changing the numbers slightly.

Future research in this field could succumb to this problem as well, as certain posts that were gathered as data for this research may very well not be available in the future, depending on the artists' habits and choices. Even though posts might be deleted, the numbers most likely would not be affected by a substantial amount, and the data for this study was collected with the resources (such as posts) available at the time of data collection.

Major label artists are larger entities than independent artists and have the business workings of their major labels working behind them. These business workings include the ability to have paid advertisements and promotions on all social media platforms and a more focused algorithm to target existing or potential followers. As such, the major label artists' ability to achieve a 100% response rate on all types of interaction is possibly attributed to their label's ability to create a larger budget for paid and targeted advertisements, compared to their indie label counterparts. When it comes to budgeting,

indie and major label artists are not on an even field, and the percentages in the results reflect that. This difference in the business aspects could have skewed the percentages.

Future research

Future studies on this topic could focus on smaller groups and conduct different types of studies, such as case studies or qualitative studies. Qualitative studies would allow the researcher to focus on why indie artists post the way they do, and how they feel their habits affect, or are affected by, audience interaction. Similarly, research could be conducted solely with indie or major label artists on a larger scale. Research could focus on each individual group to see differences within each group. Follow-up studies could address more clearly why major label artists are not impacted as much by infrequent posting, and why indie artists do not see more interaction despite posting more than major artists in some cases. Other research could look at different types of social media platforms and compare the platforms to each other instead of comparing the different types of artists. A study could be on how Instagram compares to other platforms. For this current study, data from artists' Instagram social media accounts was gathered, but ultimately not used because Instagram does not allow the function of sharing, only likes and comments. Thus, Instagram could offer a different look at social media with a possibility of producing different results. The future direction of this study would probably benefit most from a qualitative study or case study to address the whys of artists' posting habits.

Conclusions

With this study, the researcher hoped to point out how major and indie label artists use social media, how they compare, and ultimately if there is a trend between post

frequency and interaction. The research found that major label artists are not affected as much by post frequency, as they still had a 100% interaction rate despite posting less frequently than indie artists in some cases – this possibly being due to the fact that they have such a large follower count. Major label artists also have significance of liking and sharing more than commenting. In contrast, indie artists had more significance for commenting and liking and are affected by follower count and post frequency. In conclusion, this research has shown the statistical and numerical differences between major and indie artists, and how this might affect the interaction with followers and fans.

References

Alameddine, A. (2013). *Perceptions of executives from seven selected companies of the use of social media in marketing practices* (Order No. 3592694). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1436276259).

Alalwan, A. (2018). Investigating the impact of social media advertising features on customer purchase intention. *International Journal of Information Management*, *42*, 65-77. doi:10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2018.06.001

Atanassova, I., & Clark, L. (2015). Social media practices in SME marketing activities: A theoretical framework and research agenda. *Journal of Customer Behaviour, 14*(2), 163-183. doi:10.1362/147539215x14373846805824

Arditi, D. (2012). *The state of music: Cultural, political and economic transformations in the music industry* (Order No. 3506289). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1015033726).

Brown, J. (2014). *Whose voice do you hear? How does branding affect the solo artist's performance and/or career development?* (Order No. 3579674). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1508572353).

Bielas, I. (2013). "The Rise and Fall of Record Labels". CMC Senior Theses. 703. https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/703

Capodilupo, D. (2015). *Big data and analytics: The future of music marketing* (Order No. 10095990). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1780008771).

Chen, H. (2012). Essays on the impact of social media: Evidence from the music industry

and the stock market (Master's thesis, Purdue University, 2012). Ann Arbor:

ProQuest LLC.

Collard, M. (2012). *Musicians utilizing social media to increase brand awareness,*

further promote their brand and establish brand equity (Order No. 1513759).

Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1026566274).

Cox, S. L. (2012). *Social media marketing in a small business: A case study* (Order No.

1530195). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

(1239185181).

Dewan, S., & Ramaprasad, J. (2014). Social media, traditional media, and music sales.

MIS Quarterly, 38(1), 101-121. doi:10.25300/misq/2014/38.1.05

Facebook Analytics. (2017). Retrieved from

https://www.facebook.com/pg/facebookanalytics/about/

Garcia, K. P. (2016). *The fan-artist relationship on social networking sites: A cyberstage*

pass for the music fan (Order No. 10196207). Available from ProQuest

Dissertations & Theses Global. (1864650853).

Gillooly, J. R. (2010). *Daydream nations: The role of indie labels in the digital*

sphere (Order No. 1484767). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses

Global. (305216719).

Gray, C., & Mabey, C. (2005). Management development: Key differences between

small and large businesses in Europe. *International Small Business Journal,*

23(5), 467-485.

Harris, S. K. (2010). *Indie empowerment: New media strategies and the rise of the independent artist* (Order No. 1485933). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (750082648).

Haynes, J., & Marshall, L. (2017). *Beats and tweets: Social media in the careers of independent musicians. New Media & Society, 20*(5), 1973-1993. doi:10.1177/1461444817711404

Hefter, T. J. (2012). *The impact of sales when marketing a unique direct-to-consumer bundle to a niche music market on Facebook* (Order No. 1520180). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1143242923).

John, L. K., Emrich, O., Gupta, S., & Norton, M. I. (2017). Does "liking" lead to loving? The impact of joining a brand's social network on marketing outcomes. *Journal of Marketing Research, 54*(1), 144-155. doi:10.1509/jmr.14.0237

Jones, J. (2016). *Social media, marketing, and the opera singer* (Order No. 10106330). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1791128806).

Kamara, K. (2018). *Music artists' strategies to generate revenue through technology* (Order No. 10827391). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2055389271).

Klein, A. (2003, May 25). How record labels work. Retrieved from https://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/record-label1.htm

Konsor, K. J. (2017). *Essays on the industrial organization of the modern music industry* (Order No. 10289278). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1975370077).

Kumar, A., Bezawada, R., Rishika, R., Janakiraman, R., & Kannan, P. (2016). From

    social to sale: The effects of firm-generated content in social media on customer

    behavior. *Journal of Marketing, 80*(1), 7-25. doi:10.1509/jm.14.0249

Lupo, C. V. (2018). *Social media marketing strategies in landscape industry small*

    businesses (Order No. 10809098). Available from ProQuest Dissertations &

    Theses Global. (2037258037).

Macy, A., Rolston, C., Allen, P., & Hutchison, T. (2016). *Record label marketing: How*

    music companies brand and market artists in the digital era. New York, NY:

    Focal Press.

Maksimow, S. A. (2016). *Music publicity: Independent public relations in the digital age*

    (Order No. 10172644). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

    (1828000984).

Morgan, W. E. (2018). *Qualitative study of small business owners consideration of*

    marketing in business decisions and the possible use of social media and

    organizational websites in marketing (Order No. 10829405). Available from

    ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2086425350).

Oesterle, U. (2007). *Organizational influence on recorded music: A look at the*

    independents (Order No. 3267443). Available from ProQuest Dissertations &

    Theses Global. (304767801).

Paswan, A. (2018). Social media marketing strategies. *DAWN: Journal for Contemporary*

    Research in Management, 8-11.

Pikes, R. (2015). *Reconceptualizing markets: Hip-hop artists, marketing, distribution, and consumers* (Order No. 1599384). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1720292753).

Playlists. (n.d.). Retrieved from

https://support.spotify.com/us/using_spotify/playlists/create-a-playlist/

Potts, L. (2012). *Amanda Palmer and the #LOFNOTC: How online fan participation is rewriting music labels. Participations, 9*(2).

Ramaprasad, J. (2009). *Online social influence and consumer choice: Evidence from the music industry* (Order No. 3364967). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (304851740).

Schultz, K. B. (2009). *How symphony orchestras in Chicago, St. Louis, and Peoria use social media tools to connect with the public* (Order No. 1466408). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (305122449).

Syrdal, H. A. (2016). *Exploring engagement with social media content* (Order No. 10302072). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1858886671).

Twitter Analytics. (2019). Retrieved from https://analytics.twitter.com/about

Venciūtė, D. (2018). Social media marketing – from tool to capability. *Management of Organizations: Systematic Research*, *79*(1), 131-145. doi:10.1515/mosr-2018-0009

Wendlandt, L. B. (2012). *Return on investment concerns in social media marketing: An examination of recent cases* (Order No. 1529281). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1170917789).

Winstead, C. N. (2011). *Preparing to move recording artists from independent to mainstream: A collective case study of the critical success factors from the perspective of the professional artist manager* (Order No. 3433426). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (845508050).

What does it mean to "Like" something? | Facebook Help Center. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/help/110920455663362

White, H. L. (2007). *Marketing knowledge in the music business: A qualitative study of the levels of business acumen required of aspiring music artists to succeed in the music industry* (Order No. 3264289). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (304721634).

Yadav, M. (2017) The influence of social media marketing activities on customer loyalty: A study of e-commerce industry. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, *25*(9), 3882-3905. https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-05-2017-0092