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3

91490



Draw a cross through the box (☒) if you have NOT written in this booklet

+



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

## Level 3 Media Studies 2023

### 91490 Demonstrate understanding of an aspect of a media industry

Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Demonstrate understanding of an aspect of a media industry.	Demonstrate in-depth understanding of an aspect of a media industry.	Demonstrate perceptive understanding of an aspect of a media industry.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

**You should write an essay on ONE of the four statements in this booklet.**

If you need more room for any answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in any cross-hatched area (DO NOT WRITE). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

**YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

Low Excellence

TOTAL 07

## INSTRUCTIONS

Choose **ONE media industry**.

Write an essay discussing the **extent** to which you agree with **ONE** of the statements below. Respond critically to the statement by evaluating the **operation, impact, and wider significance** of an aspect of your chosen media industry.

## STATEMENTS (Choose ONE)

1. Ethics are important to how a media industry operates.
2. Technology dictates what media we consume.
3. Consumers influence media industries.
4. Innovation is essential in media industries.

Media industry: The music industry

Aspect of the media industry: Audience demand

Statement number:

3

PLANNING

Audience demand, Nostalgia  
 ROV - Warm present: Steve Miller  
 Status: Jay Zargofsky  
 \$1.8 bil USD: Billboard  
 1.7 mil sold: Luminate  
 Taylor  
 Paul pacific emotional connection

LA - 10% 90% : Orange UK  
 73.1% old music: MRC  
 Top 200 only 5%: Atlantic  
 Beatles 18-24 30%: Rolling Stone  
 Eftun

S - 1/5 sampled ↑ 31% 2021: Tracklib  
 60s to 80s most: Pirate.com  
 17% vs 15% 2021: Billboard  
 All reused: Oliver Tree  
 Madonna Hung Up

Consumers influence but ultimately are exploited by the music industry

Influence only as far as profitable, in many cases

Consumers can never really influence the industry ~~with~~ because the industry engineers their demand anything they attempt to influence is already planted by a profit seeking music industry.

29 + 14  
 43

You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 5–6 pages. The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay.

Make sure you **respond only to your chosen statement** *throughout* your essay, and include **relevant, specific supporting detail** from a range of media texts, and/or evidence from other sources.

Begin your essay here:

Consumers influence media industries

9.42

The music industry is a booming part of the economy and people's lives; it has become inextricably intertwined with memories, desires and values a person holds. Consumers appear to influence and control ~~the~~ the music industry, however, the music industry employs strategies such as vinyl, legacy artists and sampling to engineer audience demand in order to maximise profit. Using the vehicle of nostalgia, the music industry maintains control over its consumers and exploits them for maximum monetary gain.

Over the last fifteen years, vinyl has been on the rise as an auxiliary to digital streaming and answer to consumers' nostalgic desires. Nostalgia is a happy or bittersweet longing for the past that is often associated with music or other sensory factors. In 2022, vinyl surpassed CDs for the first time in 30 years and made \$1.8 billion, according to Billboard. The music industry has exploited consumers' longing for a more tangible, present way of life that has come with the digital age. Steve Miller writes that, 'while streaming is nice and convenient, playing back a vinyl has a hotter, more present and more appealing feeling.' The ~~media~~ music

industry is providing a solution to the problem they have caused: a lack of authenticity and ownership. Vinyl also intersects an interesting, cross-generational point, where those who listened to records with their parents now have the disposable income to pursue their own collections. In this sense, consumers influence record labels to produce ~~records~~<sup>vinyl</sup> but only due to an engineered demand caused by the music industry in the first place. Due to the promotion of sites like Discogs and collectors editions of vinyl being artificially promoted by the music industry, perceived scarcity of vinyl has led to it 'increasingly becoming a status symbol,' Jay Zargofsky claims. What used to be a thriving subculture of record collectors was poached by the music industry that then exploited the nostalgic connection that consumers have to music. Take Taylor Swift, for example, a behemoth in the music industry. Swift sold some 1.7 million vinyl records in 2022, a total greater than the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> highest vinyl sales (Harry Styles and The Beatles) combined. ~~She~~ She has a predominantly female fanbase, many of whom grew up with her music and have a deep nostalgic and emotional connection to their childhoods through it. Paul Pacifico writes that 'Fans view vinyl as ~~an emotional~~ physical representation of their ~~em~~ nostalgic connection to an artist,' and Republic Records has capitalised on this, and ~~the~~<sup>the</sup> new generation of vinyl ~~records~~ collectors. Republic has notably released different editions of Swift's

latest album, 'Midnights' in various colours to create a 'clock' the essential motif of the album. They released a 'Midnights 3am' version with exclusive tracks to exploit consumers into buying what is essentially four copies of the same album. The idea of becoming a superfan - a 'Swiftie' in this case, is ~~the~~ ultimately the product of marketing and the exploited desire to support a Billionaire. Consumers perceive themselves as influencing the music industry, but they can never really be in control when their demand for a product is carefully engineered by record labels.

Legacy artists are another way that record labels exploit consumers under the guise of their influence. Legacy artists can be defined as an artist who has had a lasting impact on a genre or the industry as a whole - Queen, The Beatles, Dolly Parton and ABBA come to mind. Consumers have listened to this music in a form of forced exposure for years. MRC writes that '73.1% of music streamed in 2022 was catalogue music' - or, as so generously characterised by The Atlantic - 'old' music. These artists are near endlessly promoted by record labels as they are essentially ~~guaranteed~~ guaranteed incomes; in a way, consumers can't influence them because legacy artists are ubiquitous. People listen to the Beatles, or listen to their parents listening to the Beatles which means there is an inherent nostalgic association with

these artists for many people. The music industry further promotes these associations by licensing music to TV shows and movies. A prime example of this is Kate Bush's 'Running Up that Hill' that shot to the top of the charts after appearing in Stranger Things. This creates an interesting phenomenon wherein ~~those~~ teenagers who watched the show began longing for a past they never actually experienced - engineered nostalgia. These consumers then 'influence' the music industry and its colleagues for more 80s-themed media, artificial demand that the music industry created. Kate Bush and other artists of the time experience more profit which leads back to the industry. The only way that consumers ever 'influence' the music industry is when record labels and companies have done the ground work. Atlantic writes that 'the top 200 songs only ever account for 5% streams,' showing that ~~audiences~~ consumers are predisposed to long for whatever the music industry wants them to. Elton John is a widely successful legacy artist, having sold over 300 million records. The music industry trots poor old Elton out as a cash cow - most recently he made \$939 million from his goodbye tour - and engineers demand for him through his social media presence, films such as Rocketman and The Kingsman: Golden Circle. A key way that they do this is through 'collabs' to widen Elton's sphere of influence. Young people weren't interested in Elton until he collaborated with Charlie Puth and Dua Lipa. ~~of what he~~ His record label

falsely engineers desire for him to create a wider fan base, exploiting older fans' nostalgia ~~for~~<sup>from</sup> forced exposure and younger fans' through other artists. Legacy artists are guaranteed to make profit, so the music industry allows ~~audiences~~ + consumers to feel as though they are the ones influencing the industry and not the other way around. ~~★~~ Consumers can influence the way labels promote artists, but they will always be exploited to some extent by the profit incentives of the industry.

Sampling was developed in the 80s with the rise of MPCs and DJ mixers. It involves taking part of one pre-existing (usually profitable) song - a sample - and inserting it into a new composition. Sampling draws from nostalgic similarity and often draws two different audiences together. Tracklib estimates that 'In 2022, 15 songs released were sampled, an increase of 31% from the previous year.' Sampling is cheap and easy for record labels and gives music a much greater chance of success, often boosting the original song on the charts as well. According to pirate.com the '60s to 80s are, disproportionately, the decades most sampled from,' showing that modern artists utilise the nostalgic value of older music to increase their chances of success. In this sense, audiences can influence the music industry but only to the extent of what will be profitable for the industry and artist. Madonna, in her song 'Hung Up,' heavily sampled ABBA's 'Gimme Gimme Gimme', a creative



The oversaturation of legacy artists' music also means that smaller artists are blocked out of the industry. It's easier and more risk averse for labels to promote an already successful artist than to risk supporting someone new to the industry; audiences can't influence the presence of something that does not exist.

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~~decision~~ <sup>choice</sup> that not only preyed on nostalgia for the 60s and shot both songs up the charts, but also boosted *Mamma Mia: The Musical*. This was likely a careful decision on Madonna's part to maximise profit and worked out for both artists. However, sampling also comes with a long list of issues such as Olivia Rodrigo and Taylor Swift, showing that even if the audience attempts to influence something, it doesn't go well. Sampling raises questions about creativity and ethicality that the industry chooses to grapple with, not consumers. Sampling ~~raises~~ also plays into post modern critiques, with Oliver Tree saying, 'Nothing is new, it's all re-used? The music industry exploits their own <sup>sanctioned</sup> engineered nostalgia through sampling, bending to their engineered influence of the consumers.

The only thing that truly influences the music industry is profit. Exorbitant vinyl sales, cash cows of legacy artists and the double profit of sampling have been

Extra space if required.

Write the question number(s) if applicable.

QUESTION  
NUMBER

paired with nostalgia for the music industry to exploit. Consumers' influence only extends as far as is profitable, and in most cases, they can never ~~really~~ <sup>meaningfully</sup> influence the industry because their desires and demand is already engineered. Anything ~~the~~ consumers attempt to influence is often pre-existing <sup>and</sup> sanctioned for maximum profit. The music industry allows consumers to feel as though they have influence, but profit will always come first: a model that has worked for decades.





## Excellence

**Subject:** Media Studies

**Standard:** 91490

**Total score:** 07

Q	Grade score	Marker commentary
1 (3)	E7	<p>The candidate provided a detailed analysis of an aspect of the global music industry, in response to statement 3: "Consumers influence media industries". The candidate linked the key points of the emergence of vinyl, legacy artists, and sampling to the key ideas of nostalgia and the way in which the music industry capitalises on this. The candidate interrogated the statement around the influence that consumers have on the genre, discussing the nuances. The response referenced a variety of stakeholders, including consumers, and the way in which they influence each other (for example, the manufactured sense of nostalgia), exploring the way vinyl, legacy artists, and sampling work within the industry. A range of primary and secondary evidence was provided, including details about musicians; data from the industry, such as sales and streaming data; and quotes from theorists and critics. Across the essay, there is evidence of perceptive insight into how the industry works, and evaluation of the way in which the consumer has real power within the industry. At the end, the candidate pulls the discussion together around how the consumer maximises profit for the industry.</p>