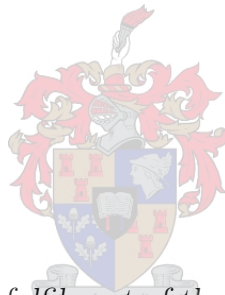


Mapping composers' experiences of contemporary film score composition processes in South Africa

by

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music (Composition) in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch University

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December 2021

Declaration

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Abstract

Mapping composers' experiences of contemporary film score composition processes in South Africa

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The experiences of film score composers working in South Africa is under-represented in academic literature. Known factors such as limited resources, competing artistic visions, negotiations between role-players, emotional stress, and variations in working processes are largely based on Hollywood film industry practices. This study explores key concerns of film score composers working in South Africa in particular, drawn from their own accounts by means of grounded theory.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted and common themes between participant accounts explored, categorised, analysed, and placed into dialogue with extant literature. Three central categories that emerged from the data suggest that the key concerns of film score composers in South Africa relate to *experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work*, *creative control*, and *rappport building*.

Experiencing intrinsic value motivates composers to engage with and enjoy their work despite typically unfavourable working conditions. Creative control relates to the need for autonomy when engaging in creative work. Perceived factors influencing this can be categorised by limitations from the client, from the industry, or from the composers themselves. Rapport building strategies employed by film score composers involve building and maintaining friendships, chasing repeated collaborations, and doing favours and working for free. This is done to get work, to increase trust and creative control, to improve communication and understanding between role players, and to pursue collaborative environments.

Uittreksel

Beskrywing van die ervaring van komponiste in Suid-Afrika met betrekking tot die hedendaagse proses van komponering van musiek vir die filmbedryf

*(“Mapping composers’ experiences of contemporary film score composition processes in
South Africa”)*

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Daar is min akademiese vakliteratuur beskikbaar wat die ervaring van komponiste in die filmbedryf in Suid-Afrika beskryf. Bekende faktore, soos beperkte hulpbronne, mededingende artistieke beskouings, samewerking tussen die verskillende belanghebbers, emosionele stres en verskille in werksprosesse, is grotendeels gebaseer op praktyke in die Hollywoodse filmindustrie. In hierdie studie word die primêre tuisblokke wat komponiste in die Suid-Afrikaanse filmbedryf ervaar, beskryf. Inligting is eerstehands van komponiste ingewin en deur middel van gegronde teorie beskryf.

Semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude is gevoer en herhalende temas geïdentifiseer, in kategorieë geplaas, ge-analiseer en dan in konteks met die bestaande literatuur geplaas. Die data het drie sleutelkwessies, wat deur die deelnemende komponiste ervaar word, blootgelê: die intrinsieke waarde van hulle werk as filmkomponiste, die belang van beheer oor die kreatiewe proses en die bou van gesonde werksverhoudinge in die industrie.

Komponiste word deur die intrinsieke waarde van hul werk gemotiveer en geniet die werk ten spyte van dikwels ongunstige werksomstandighede. Daarbenewens vervul die beheer oor die kreatiewe proses hulle behoefte aan outonomie. Verdere faktore wat komponiste se ervaring gedurende die kreatiewe proses beïnvloed, sluit die volgende in: persepsie deur die kliënt en die industrie, asook deur die komponis self. Om sukses te bereik in hierdie industrie moet komponiste aan verhoudings met ander rolspelers bou, gereelde kontak bewerkstellig en bereid wees om teen geringe, of selfs geen, vergoeding te werk. Hierdie strategie vergroot hulle kans om

werk te kry, vertrou te versterk en gee die komponis meer beheer oor die kreatiewe proses. Dit verbeter ook kommunikasie en samewerking met alle belanghebbers in 'n werksomgewing wat sterk op samewerking staatmaak.

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors for their patience and commitment in guiding me, family and friends who supported me financially, practically and emotionally, and finally my most steadfast Friend and Father, in whom I have my purpose.

Dedications

This thesis is dedicated to the friends, friends of friends, and so many others who lost their lives or loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Contents

Declaration	i
Abstract	ii
Uittreksel	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Dedications	vi
Contents	vii
List of Figures	ix
1 Background, methodology, and design	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Current film score composition processes	3
1.3 Grounded theory	8
1.4 Research design	12
2 Conceptual framework	18
2.1 Introduction	18
2.2 Film music	18
2.3 Film score composers	19
2.4 Film score composition	20
2.5 An overview of the contemporary film score composition process	21
2.6 Role-players impacting film score composition	23
2.7 Project management	24
2.8 Conclusion	24
3 Methodology continued: notes on coding and analysis procedures	26
3.1 Introduction	26
3.2 Initial coding	26
3.3 Subsequent coding	27

3.4	Identifying key concerns of film score composers	28
3.5	Development of categories	29
3.6	Conclusion	31
4	Category 1: Experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work	35
4.1	Introduction	35
4.2	How participants describe their work	36
4.3	Positive descriptions of composer's work	42
4.4	Theories of intrinsic motivation, self-determination and flow: exploring participants' positive experiences within negative conditions	44
4.5	Self-determination theory	47
4.6	Flow theory	50
4.7	Conclusion	51
5	Category 2: Creative control	52
5.1	Introduction	53
5.2	Limitations from the client	53
5.3	Limitations from self	62
5.4	Limitations from the industry	63
5.5	Summary of relationships between aspects of creative control	67
5.6	Conclusion	68
6	Category 3: Rapport building	70
6.1	Introduction	70
6.2	What is rapport building?	71
6.3	Why do film score composers employ rapport building?	80
6.4	Conclusion	87
7	Reflection	89
7.1	Introduction	89
7.2	Self-interview	89
7.3	Conclusion	91
8	Conclusion and recommendations	92
8.1	Conclusion	92
8.2	Limitations of this study	93
8.3	Recommendations and future research	94
	Appendix A Semi-structured interview protocol	96
	List of References	97

List of Figures

3.1	Preliminary groupings in NVivo 12 Plus	32
3.2	Flow diagram of initial coding process	33
3.3	Reorganised groupings in NVivo 12 Plus	34
4.1	Key phrases of experiencing intrinsic value in composition work	43
5.1	Elements of creative control	68
6.1	Elements of rapport building	72

Background, methodology, and design

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Through my involvement in numerous film score composition projects—in which I typically functioned as a composer, project manager, performer, or assistant—I had repeatedly observed tensions emerging due to various conditions in the industry.

Time constraints: I witnessed film score composers under extreme pressure to compose music quickly due to delays in the production schedule as a whole. The result was having to work late into the night for days or weeks at a time.

Budgetary constraints: Some film projects had little to no budget for music. If recordings needed to be made, musicians were asked to play free of charge as a favour to the composer. In other instances, film score composers opted to pay musicians for live recordings rather than receiving any financial gain from the film project themselves.

Competing artistic visions: Directors and film score composers sometimes disagreed on what was needed with regards to music in order to effectively compliment the film. Similarly, competing artistic visions between directors—or directors and producers—had the potential to cause uncertainty with regards to what the film score composer was required to do.

Perceptions regarding the function of the music within a project: Some directors inadvertently seemed to view music as a device that could compensate for elements they felt were lacking in the visuals. Pressure was placed on the film score composer to somehow rectify elements of the film—such as a lack of narrative coherency in the visuals—by means of the music.

Communications between role-players in the production team: I observed and experienced instances where communications between directors or producers and film score composers were delayed, unclear, or lacking in honesty, which resulted in confusion and frustration for all parties involved.

Emotional stress: The combination of working long hours and late nights, trying to meet demanding deadlines, and receiving criticism on one’s creative work sometimes had severe effects on the emotional and physical state of film score composers, with some becoming sick and even needing to be hospitalised.

Disparate processes with which various individuals carry out their work: Each film project and the role-players involved had unique processes in which aspects of the film were approached and completed. In the projects I was involved in, the film score composers had to adapt their working methods to each new project, resulting in further uncertainty and stress.

Existing literature provided little elaboration on this topic, with investigations into that of the South African film industry in particular being virtually nonexistent.¹ These observations led me to explore film score composition processes within the context of the South African film industry, as experienced by the composers involved. In doing so, I hoped to unearth the finer details and authentic experiences of *the average South African Film Score Composer* by means of a grounded theory approach.

This chapter summarises the researcher’s consultation with existing literature prior to the study in order to introduce:

- common themes and topics in film score composition,
- grounded theory and its application to this study, and
- the research design that is adopted for this project.

1.1.1 Preliminary notes on the structuring of this thesis

A more traditional dissertation formula might feature an introduction and background, followed directly by a literature review before presenting the findings, thus following the order of the research tasks themselves. However, Grounded Theory Method (GTM)—so described by Bryant (2002)—builds or produces theory through inductive research methods. Because of its inductive nature, which contrasts with traditional deductive research methods, certain structural changes are necessitated regarding the presentation of research findings in this document. The focus of a GTM study is to produce theory rather than test it, meaning the role of certain chapters in the research narrative are different. Collection and analysis of data in this context is an activity designed to produce theories that will guide extant literature searches,

¹Notable exceptions in the literature include Ellis-Geiger (2007) and Timm (2003), as well as Letcher (2009) who focuses on the South African film score composition climate in particular. However, these sources are arguably outdated in the context of a fast-changing industry such as that of film. Faulkner (2017) and Hexel (2014) represent the only sources the current researcher is aware of that closely resemble concerns addressed in this study, although set in a Hollywood context. Both authors draw together various Hollywood film score composers’ first-hand experiences in order to examine how an array of contextual factors influence their work and the resultant scores. More recent sources that address film music in a more general sense include Cooke & Ford (2016), Hexel (2019), Reyland (2015), and Saltzman (2015). There are also other—though less self-critical—sources available online that contain composer perspectives and experiences, such as Buskin (2001), C (2020), and Koppl (2009), to name a few. Online sources such as these were consulted alongside peer-reviewed academic sources and are occasionally referenced in this document. These provide valuable insight into an industry where most prominent role-players do not participate in academia.

the results of which are then compared to data findings (Urquhart, 2013:29). The literature review, then, is delayed as both an exercise and in its written presentation. In so doing, chronological integrity is retained and a cohesive research narrative provided for the reader.²

Based on these points, and the recommendations of Bryant (2002) and Urquhart (2013), this thesis is presented in the following structure:

Chapter one provides background to the research topic (including a brief, non-committal introduction to theories that may arise based on current literature), research methods, and research design.

Chapter two introduces a conceptual framework to familiarise the reader with the concept of film score composition.

Chapter three is designed to make the data collection and analysis process that took place transparent in order to equip readers to critically view findings presented in the chapters thereafter.

As it was beyond the scope of this study to denote generalised theory from its findings, **chapters four, five and six** present the preliminary concepts - or substantive theories (Urquhart, 2013:9) - that emerged, placing them in dialogue with current literature. In so doing, this section is integrated with the literature review in order to strengthen emergent (preliminary) theories (Martin, 2006).

Chapter seven features a personal reflection on the entire research process of this study in order to demonstrate the necessary processes of reflexive thinking involved in grounded theory research.³

Chapter eight follows with the conclusion, limitations and recommendations of the study.

1.2 CURRENT FILM SCORE COMPOSITION PROCESSES

1.2.1 Time, resources and budgetary constraints

Discussions surrounding how much time is needed and available to composers during film score composition projects is prominent in literature. The average working pace of a film composer, as calculated by Timm (2003:28), is approximately two to three minutes of music per day.⁴ However, composing time-frames often seem to be less than ideal. The final film music product is described by Cooke & Ford (2016:1-2) as:

²This is an intentionally brief description of grounded theory. The methodology and its suitability for this study will be further explained in 1.3 Grounded theory.

³See 1.3.2, Reflexivity

⁴Although the author does not explicitly delimitate which composer activities are being referred to here, the implication is that this refers to the act of composing alone. Other activities that may also fall on the composer's shoulders—such as recording, mixing and delivery—would likely still need to be added to this calculation.

[...] the intense product of exceptionally hard graft—a fundamentally collaborative process, often carried out to punishingly tight and in some cases even health-threatening deadlines—all accomplished at the very heart of a high-pressure commercial industry.

Timm (2003:28) posits that time-frames in which the full score needs to be completed and recorded has reduced from about ten weeks to a period of three to six weeks since the 1960s, with the additional possibility of editorial changes resulting in composition alterations occurring at any point leading up to or even during the process of recording. As sources such as Ellis-Geiger (2007), Eva (2020), and Hexel (2019) point out, Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) now form part of the typical composition process, where some composers resort to creating templates in which virtual instrument ensembles have been set up in anticipation for various film genres to cope with ambitious deadlines (Ellis-Geiger, 2007:60).

Literature suggests that available resources and budgets within the South African film industry in particular have been largely influenced by the natural and socio-political climates of the country. Tuomi (2006) suggested that the South African film industry held enough potential to compete internationally, though it fell short in doing so at the time. Whilst in agreement, Visser (2014:19) states that gradual yet clear improvement has been seen in this regard in more recent years, despite the seemingly feeble 0.4% contribution made by South Africa in the context of the international film industry in 2004. Ample time in daylight during summer coupled with the wide range of landscapes and environments with which the country is naturally equipped, provides an ideal habitat in which to film (Tuomi, 2006). Both Tuomi (2006) and Visser (2014) mention that the South African government is cognisant of the economic and social value of this sector, which is likely to benefit the industry. Visser (2014) suggests that this is particularly true in the context of the post-apartheid government, where film and television have been seen as an ideal mechanism to facilitate social transformation. However, this provides little indication as to the government's actual capacity to sustain this vehicle of change. With biased access to training, finances and distribution facilities (Tuomi, 2006), it seems that this industry is yet to fulfil its desired role. Films produced in more developed countries already earn ample profit through their local sales and can thus be offered to other countries—such as South Africa—at a reduced rate (Tuomi, 2006). The smaller local market in South Africa, on the other hand, rarely enables local films to turn over a profit, rendering them an expensive product to create and distribute in comparison to their global competition. Botha (2003:182) describes the good intentions of organisational bodies such as the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF) in promoting “a quality South African film and video industry that is representative of the nation, commercially viable and encourages development.” However, such organisations must always function alongside other governmental departments such as SARS and the Department of Labour policies, whose objectives may very well stand in conflict to that of the NFVF. As a result, South African films may not always enjoy the same financial benefits as that of their global competitors, whose governments can provide reliable tax incentive systems (Tuomi, 2006).

In summary, financial support available for South African film productions appears to be limited, while film budgets remain small in comparison to global compe-

tition. In this already fast-paced industry, finding ways to expedite turnaround while maintaining high standards of quality film production at lower costs seems desirable in the South African context in order to compete internationally. These sources also show that the success of creative industries is economically and socially beneficial to South Africa.

1.2.2 Competing artistic visions

While film score composers and directors possess superior subject-specific expertise, their potentially conflicting artistic visions could create problems within a film project. Each must reconcile the expertise of the other with their own artistic integrity (Morricone & Miceli, 2013:54-56). Composers are typically required to be submissive in this relationship. Letcher (2009:26) points out that “directors rarely see their composers [...] as creative equals”, despite necessary collaboration between them when creating a film score. Similarly, Sapiro (2013:15) mentions that directors and producers carry the most authority in all collaborations pertaining to aspects of a film (including film score composition). Recent years have furthermore seen increasing involvement from directors in creative decision-making regarding film scores (Hexel, 2014:vii). Other problems creep in when directors are not certain about their ideas regarding the film and how the music should function within it. Composers, on the other hand, occasionally struggle to put their musical thinking aside to first focus on the needs of the film (Timm, 2003:29). While discussing his experience of composing for the South African film *My Black Little Heart*, Letcher (2009:25) describes these negotiations between composer and director as a process of “fairly subtle reciprocal creative adjustments and readjustments”.

1.2.3 Perceptions surrounding the function of music in a film

Other difficulties include the subjective standard against which film score composers’ work will be measured (Carlin, 1991:63-64). Their level of expertise and creativity are judged based on the score as it functions within the film but also as a stand-alone work, yet they are obligated to answer to producers and directors who do not share their qualification in making musically informed decisions (Letcher, 2009:26; Timm, 2003:27). Directors have been known to request that music bridge the gap between the narrative they aspire to and that which is actually being depicted in the visuals. The result, according to Burt (1994:219), is a score that does not integrate and support the film effectively. In an interview with Mervyn Cooke (Cooke & Ford, 2016:88-89), film score composer George Fenton notes that producers typically approach prospective film scores with preconceived notions of what should and should not be done musically. Expectations placed on film score composers’ (or those composers perceive to be placed on them) can have an impact on the resultant score. The actions of role players surrounding film score composers and the manner in which composers experience them thus function as “contextual agents [...] [meaning] composers are not solely in control of their music” (Hexel, 2014:xx).

1.2.4 Communication between production team role-players

The composer’s musical ideas must please a myriad of people, some of whom could be the producer, executive producer, director and even those who are altogether uninvolved in the production of the film but whose opinion holds some level of weight to the individuals involved (Carlin, 1991:63). Hexel (2014:20) notes that these role players are not always in agreement with each other regarding the film score, resulting in an added complexity of external expectations that the composer must navigate.

Burt (1994:viii) suggests that miscommunication between the composer and director is a common problem even amongst the most experienced individuals in the industry. “Sometimes the director makes such crazy requests that the composer may want to gag” (Morricone & Miceli, 2013:53). Such challenges are caused by the composer’s having to work for—and answer to—non-musician team members (Morricone & Miceli, 2013:53). Reasons for this include the ‘language barrier’ caused by music terminology, misconceptions regarding the role, function and capabilities of music in film (on the part of non-musicians such as the director), and misplaced convictions regarding the need for musical tropes or similar devices in specific situations that limit the composer’s creative freedom (Burt, 1994:viii). Hexel (2019) advocates for constant, clear, and honest communication between composers and other role players—such as directors and producers—as a necessary means by which inefficient work processes and frustration can be avoided. Miscommunication seems to happen when directors attempt to explain their ideas in musical terms rather than aesthetic, emotional or descriptive ones, leaving room for an ill-informed use of vocabulary and as a result, misunderstandings. Burt (1994:219) suggests that “[i]t is best when [directors] talk about *what* they want the music to do, not how they want it done” to allow the composer to find his or her best method to achieve this. The relationship between composer and producer, according to Cooke & Ford (2016:55), is something akin to the historical tradition of composer patronage. The producer can very easily place the composer in an uncomfortable position by asserting their authority over any creative decisions made. In a South African context, the NFVF has identified similar hurdles, noting that there is often a lack of coordination between role-players in South African film production teams as a whole (Visser, 2014).

Developments in technology—such as the availability of DAWs in conjunction with advanced instrument sampling technology—have altered communication between role-players within the post-production team. Composers, sound designers and directors are consequently able to interact with one another’s ideas far more accurately (Ellis-Geiger, 2007:58). As a result, it is often expected that the composer will produce a ‘mock track⁵’ using orchestral samples to receive feedback from the director (Ellis-Geiger, 2007:30; Paris, 2018).

⁵Mock tracks—also known as MIDI mockups—are produced by film score composers in order to provide directors with a sampled demo of the score prior to recording sessions (Ellis-Geiger, 2007:43). They are created by means of sound libraries, which are “collections of digital or acoustic sound recordings” (Fagre, 2017:ii). In lower budget films where live recordings cannot be made, mock tracks essentially become the final score (Salmi, 2018:16). Fagre (2017:ii) suggests that in recent practices, mock tracks are used by various role-players—including arrangers, composers and producers—in a range of music industries.

1.2.5 Emotional stress

The spotting process⁶ coincides with the first point at which the director no longer has sole creative control over the film, often leading to an undercurrent of heightened emotion and anxiety during communications throughout this meeting and further complicating communication at this stage (Burt, 1994:218). Faulkner (2017:1) similarly mentions a sense of heightened emotion and impatience from the side of producers with regards to film music, as its completion often represents one of the last hurdles before the film can be released.

Directors may inadvertently place pressure on composers when asking them to demonstrate ideas for the score in ways that ineffectively communicate those ideas, or lie outside of the composer's expertise and comfort zone. For example, Hexel (2019) mentions instances where the composer was required to perform an entire film score on piano in order to communicate what it will sound like. Restrictions of a more personal nature can also play a role in the emotional stress experienced by film score composers. Carlin (1991:64) is of the opinion that "[t]o say that it takes a very special kind of ego to undertake this most esoteric of endeavours is an understatement." He suggests that the extent to which composers become personally and emotionally invested in the music they have written can serve as a professional hurdle, and may cause composers to feel offended when receiving criticism or revisions of their work for which, in the end, the composer is held solely accountable for. Similarly, composers may feel uncomfortable with the content of the film, and may even decide to refuse a composing job as a result.

1.2.6 Variations in working processes

Another challenge, identified by Burt (1994:221), is the use of temp tracks.⁷ This is a tool favoured by many production teams because it provides a stand-in reference for cuts and film editing, aids in selling the potential product to distributors, and allows a non-musician such as the director to avoid the challenges of providing an accurate verbal brief for the music (Sadoff, 2006). However, this can limit the creativity and freedom of the composer when film edits have been fashioned around the temporary score (Letcher, 2009:24), and in worse cases have simply supplanted the original score entirely due to a director's gradual attachment to it (Cooke & Ford, 2016:47). Burt (1994:221) comments, "[t]here are two words that will strike horror in a composer's heart: *temp track*." Aside from potential structural constrictions, the composer must navigate the inevitable familiarity that the director develops with the temp track, making it near impossible for them to produce an original score whilst adhering to the growing subconscious expectations of the director (Burt, 1994:221; Hexel, 2019).

New technological advances have increased procedural possibilities in film production, resulting in large variances between schedules and processes within post-production and therefore film score composition processes (Honthaner, 2010:468).

⁶The spotting process involves the director, composers and music editor. The film is watched in order to discuss where music should feature, what the character of the music should be, and what function the music should fulfil in each of these cues (Cooke & Ford, 2016).

⁷Temporary tracks are sections of existing music placed over the film temporarily as a reference (Cooke & Ford, 2016:47). Participants in this study occasionally referred to temporary tracks as 'reference tracks' or 'reference music.'

This is similarly reflected in the younger South African film industry, where production processes are notably erratic (Visser, 2014).

1.2.7 Conclusion

Upon investigation of the literature, the above collated topics regarding contemporary film score composition processes points towards the existence of potentially intriguing insights that could be explored in this area. These topics also represent possible points of bias the researcher had to initially set aside during data collection and analysis in order to allow concepts to emerge from the data itself, rather than imposing preconceived ideas onto it (Urquhart, 2013:17). The current study does so by engaging with the experiences of South African film score composers in a truly detailed, individual-oriented way, allowing emergent topics to guide the foci of the study and perhaps lead to more generalised theory in the future.

1.3 GROUNDED THEORY

1.3.1 Introduction

To openly explore the experiences of film score composition processes, the researcher must at first suspend all prior judgements regarding what these experiences might be (Gioia *et al.*, 2013). The initially unfocused nature of the study topic was thus an intentional mechanism to avoid the imposition of blind spots on the topic area by narrowing one's approach to data collection and analysis too early on. According to Charmaz (2014), Charmaz & Belgrave (2019:744), Glaser (1999:837), and Strauss & Corbin (1997:vii-viii), grounded theory is widely accepted within the social sciences as a well-suited methodology to explore the experiences of individuals within their practice, and is adopted in this study.

1.3.2 Origins and description

The origin of grounded theory is widely attributed to authors Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss and their 1967 publication of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Locke, 2003:1-4). Despite having begun its development less than 60 years ago, it has become one of the most prominent methods in qualitative research (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:2), particularly pertaining to the social sciences. It is characterised by its ability to generate new theory that is—as the name suggests—firmly rooted in and extracted from the data (Goulding, 2002:45). Locke (2003:1-4) suggests that the data should consequently be “systematically obtained and analysed.” It is this particular characteristic of inductively producing theory rather than simply verifying existing ones that has led to significant progress in various disciplines through the use of grounded theory (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:3). The application of grounded theory to the current research thus enables this study to be conducted in an area where minimal existing literature is available, drawing from the experiences of local individual composers in the context of their work as a point of departure from which generalised theory can emerge. As the term *grounded theory* has come to denote both the theory it produces and the method by which one arrives there (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:3; Charmaz & Bryant, 2010:406; Urquhart, 2013:2), GTM will be

used to refer to the method used in this study. The following concepts are central to GTM:

The **iterative process** refers to a back and forth research motion whereby data informs analysis which in turn affects data collection, and so on (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:1). Data collection and analysis thus happen simultaneously in an effort to gradually focus both processes on emerging themes.

Coding must commence immediately with the start of data collection in order to aid the simultaneous processes of data collection and analysis (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:12). Urquhart (2013:2) describes coding as “the process of attaching concepts to data, for the purpose of analysing that data.” It typically involves two or more layers of analysis. Short-hand labels - designed to be explanatory rather than merely descriptive - are assigned to sections of the data. Broader categories are then formed where similar codes occur multiple times and can be grouped together (Charmaz & Bryant, 2010:410). The purpose of codes are thus to “sort, synthesize and [...] analyze data” (Charmaz, 2014:341).

Grounded theory is predominantly **inductive** in nature (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:15). Urquhart (2013:8) explains this as “[reasoning] from the ground up.” Concepts are drawn from individual, specific cases and organised into categories in order to move towards the abstract, general and theoretical (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:15). This leap becomes problematic when too few individual cases are used to inform a more general theory. Grounded theorists therefore use theoretical sampling to combat this.

New data is continuously submitted to **constant comparison** against the categories created by the researcher as concepts are grouped together (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:13). It is this measuring up of each new unit of data with other small units of data grouped in the same category that forces the researcher to carefully consider every sentence they are analysing (Urquhart, 2013:9). This encourages grounding of theory in data as categories experience continual development and growth until theoretical saturation is reached.

The development of theoretical categories is achieved through **theoretical sampling**, which takes place once simultaneous data collection and analysis have begun to reveal these categories (Charmaz & Bryant, 2010:406). In so doing, “emerging theory directs future data collection” (Urquhart, 2013:8). The purpose of theoretical sampling is threefold: characteristics and dimensions of categories are constructed and refined; exploration of relationships between categories occur; and finally discrepancies, outliers or variation within the researcher’s emerging theories are investigated (Charmaz & Bryant, 2010:406).

Theoretical saturation is reached when the collection of new data begins to merely provide more examples of the same themes already populating developed categories (Urquhart, 2013:9). Charmaz (2006:113) argues that saturation is reached once data can no longer provide “new theoretical insights” or contribute towards the attributes of main categories that emerged in the study.

Memo-writing occurs throughout the data collection and analysis processes. Memos provide an avenue for the researcher’s own thoughts, notions and tentative categories and themes as they explore, code and analyse the data. These notes guide the later writing of the final paper (Charmaz & Bryant, 2010:410). Urquhart (2013:20) mentions the use of **theoretical memos** in particular as a tool to be

used during coding: the researcher makes note of analytical ideas, developments and thoughts as they occur, allowing simultaneously systematic and creative interaction with the data.

Reflexivity involves a continuous self-awareness of multiple aspects of the research being conducted, as well as the entire process as a whole (Urquhart, 2013:17-18). According to Schwandt (2007:261), it requires the researcher to consider their theoretical expectations and personal bias that will inevitably interact with the research process. This concept stems from the reality that researchers themselves approach a study from the particular context in which they exist.

The objective of grounded theory is **theory construction**. Grounded theories aim to describe and account for the data from which they surface (Charmaz & Bryant, 2010:406). Urquhart (2013:5) suggests this is done by exploring how participants interact with the phenomena of interest. However, many researchers neglect to develop their analysis into theory by not sufficiently exploring the relationships between conceptual categories (Charmaz & Bryant, 2010:410). The grounded theory resulting from one's research is typically either presented in the form of propositions, or narratively (Urquhart, 2013:5). **Substantive theories** form part of this theory construction process, functioning as smaller building blocks from which larger, formal theories are constructed (Urquhart, 2013:9). **Formal theories**, in turn, refer to larger scale theories that explain phenomena or experiences across several disciplines or "substantive areas" (Charmaz, 2006:8). Similarly, Urquhart (2013:131) refers to formal theories as "the highest level of abstraction" of concepts that can be achieved by means of GTM. An example of a formal theory in the context of the current study (and to which the substantive findings here contribute) would be self-determination theory⁸, as it represents formal concepts that aim to explain various forms of motivation across different industries and contexts from the perspective of basic psychological needs fulfilment.

Theoretical sensitivity is pursued by researchers conducting GTM in order to work towards theory construction in a way that is lead by the data rather than imposing ideas from the extant literature onto participant experiences (Charmaz, 2006:135). This is done by approaching lived experiences "from multiple vantage points, mak[ing] comparisons, follow[ing] leads, and build[ing] on ideas" (Charmaz, 2006:135). A recent literature review conducted by Rieger (2019) in which the author systematically compares components of the most prominent approaches to GTM to date (namely classic Glaserian, Straussian and constructivist grounded theory), suggests that theoretical sensitivity is defined differently as a result of varying perceptions of the role of the researcher (Rieger, 2019:2). In classic Glaserian grounded theory, the researcher must aim to be an objective observer of the data that puts their own views aside during coding, and thus theoretical sensitivity involves first "immersion in the data," and then the employment of coding families later on as proposed by Glaser (Rieger, 2019:4). Straussian and constructivist grounded theorists, on the other hand, perceive the role of the researcher as necessarily involved in theory construction processes, as "objectivity in qualitative research is [believed to be] a myth" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:32). Straussian grounded theory proposes that researchers are to be unapologetically involved in the interpretation of data, whilst

⁸see 4.5, Self-Determination Theory

constructivist grounded theory describes the researcher as a “cocreator of knowledge” (Rieger, 2019:6-8). In this context, theoretical sensitivity is guided by extant literature (Rieger, 2019:6-8).

1.3.3 Dominant streams of grounded theory

As mentioned, a notable divide has since developed within the methodology, implemented by the founding authors themselves known as the *Glaserian method* and the *Strauss and Corbin method* (Goulding, 2002:38). Constructivist Grounded Theory is a still more recent approach as described by Charmaz (2006), developed from and in response to these initial grounded theory movements.

Constructivist Grounded Theory views the presence of the researcher (who actively participates in the study) as a necessary contribution to the collection, analysis and value of data (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher’s intervention and interaction with the data are coupled with an awareness of current literature, context, prior experience and knowledge, as well as the concept of reflexivity. In the interest of conducting research that is self-aware, the current author cannot negate her involved presence during data collection as a researcher who has been active in areas of the South African film music industry, nor her own bias stemming from prior experience with related scenarios and familiarity with existing literature. As a result, a constructivist approach is applied here, with reflection on how these aspects of the research both affected and became integrated in the study.

1.3.4 Critiques

1.3.4.1 Variability within strands of gtm and applications thereof

Criticisms on GTM have been voiced as a result of variations in its application, considerable evolution in a short space of time, and disagreements amongst the founders of grounded theory themselves on how it should be approached (Urquhart, 2013:3). Charmaz (2006:133) acknowledges the presence of open critique between herself, the Glaserian, and the Straussian grounded theorists regarding the assertions each hold with respect to GTM. It is thus important for researchers conducting GTM studies to familiarise themselves with these three perspectives in order to make an informed choice between them. Although it is beyond the scope of this document to discuss GTM variants extensively, Rieger (2019) provides an effective comparison in this regard, and summarises current criticisms as follows (Rieger, 2019:5-9):

1. Glaserian GTM characteristics that have been criticised include
 - the seemingly naive notion that researchers can hold a completely objective role in a study, and
 - the superficial exploration of participants’ concerns by emphasising a distanced relationship between researcher and participants.
2. Straussian GTM criticisms include
 - a similar issue regarding unbalanced power dynamics between researcher and participants due to more rigid guidelines than both other GTM per-

spectives, which elevate the views of the researcher while reducing “sensitivity to the data” (Rieger, 2019:7), and thus apply preconceived concepts.

3. Constructivist GTM, in turn,

- aims to serve as a middle ground between the uncompromising freedom of Glaserian methods and the guidelines of Straussian GTM that are comparatively rigid, and aims to gain deeper understanding of participant experiences and data by fostering reciprocal relationships rather than elevating the researcher role.

1.3.4.2 Transferability of gtm theories

Theories that arise from GTM are incredibly detailed and specific. However, Urquhart (2013:10) points out that GTM devices such as theoretical sampling and dialogue with existing theories in literature can “scale up” the grounded theory in order to combat this, thus moving towards substantive and, in some cases, formal theory. She argues that it is this very same characteristic of GTM that generates new and meaningful knowledge in every study, granted it is conducted properly (Urquhart, 2013:10).

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The grounded theory approach of this study is geared towards exploring experiences of film score composers in relation to film score composition processes in the South African film industry. The aim is to generate new knowledge and substantive theories (Urquhart, 2013:9) pertaining to this topic, allowing future studies to take place in the same field, as well as contributing to interdisciplinary formal theories in the extant literature. It is carried out by means of rigorous qualitative research as described by Charmaz (2014), specifically aimed at achieving a systematic and thorough exploration and development of new concepts relating to individuals within their work space (Urquhart, 2013:10). This involves an exhaustive, detail-oriented and deep engagement with interviewee responses, as demonstrated in chapter three. An inductive approach is employed throughout the process of data collection and analysis in this study, drawing increasingly abstract themes from individual cases (Charmaz, 2006:4-5). This is paired with deductive research whereby theory that has emerged is stabilised by means of comparison with existing literature, towards the articulation of a dynamic grounded theory model as proposed by Bryant (2002, 2003) and Charmaz (2000, 2005, 2006). In the context of film score composition processes, this choice of methodology enables more subtle concepts, emotions and decision-making processes to be uncovered within an industry and creative practice where quality judgements are inherently subjective and socially constructed (Gioia *et al.*, 2013).

1.4.1 Materials

In the paradigm of grounded theory, and according to Glaser (2002), “all is data”. Constructivist grounded theory further acknowledges that the nature and source of these endless kinds of data need to be observed, taken into account and reflected

upon, due to their having inevitably been constructed by people within specific contexts (Charmaz, 2006:16). “Whatever stands as data flows from some purpose to realize a particular objective. In turn, purposes and objectives arise under particular historical, social, and situational conditions” (Charmaz, 2006:16).

1.4.1.1 Primary materials

The above notions are important in the context of this study as they provide access to a variety of primary sources and a position from which to approach them. This allows findings to be cross-referenced (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The following primary sources were included during data collection and analysis phases of this study, contributing toward a better understanding of the research topic⁹:

- Semi-structured interview transcripts and recordings,
- open codes,
- categories,
- emergent categories,
- observational interview memos,
- interview transcript memos,
- code memos,
- theoretical memos,
- NVivo query results,
- research journaling, and
- self interviewing and reflections.

1.4.1.2 Secondary materials

Secondary materials consist of existing literature surrounding themes emerging from the experiences of film score composers in this study, and are sourced and consulted in line with the methodological timeline set out in 1.1.1 (Preliminary notes on the structuring of this thesis). The following key words and phrases guide these extant literature searches, and are based on categories that emerged in the data¹⁰:

- Intrinsic motivation,
- self-determination theory,
- cognitive evaluation theory,
- flow theory,
- motivation in creative industries,
- creativity,
- control in creative industries,
- creative control,
- autonomy,
- creative autonomy,
- creative freedom,
- rapport,

⁹These are discussed in further detail in 1.4.2.3

¹⁰These categories are explained later on in the study.

- rapport building,
- relationships in creative industries/ the film industry,
- networking in creative industries/ the film industry,
- composer-director relationships,
- trust building.

1.4.2 Methods

Although the following research steps are listed one after the other for the sake of clarity, these take place simultaneously and repeatedly during the research process in order to facilitate the iterative processes of constant comparison and theoretical sampling so fundamental to GTM (Urquhart, 2013:5).

1.4.2.1 Preparation:

Defining what did and did not constitute as film score composition work or industries before the start of the study (and therefore data collection) - whether based on literature of film industries in other countries or other criteria such as limiting the study to composers for feature films, short films and documentaries - would have forced certain assumptions about the experiences of film score composers in South Africa that are not grounded in the data of the study. This would have neglected a central characteristic of GTM, which is to allow concepts to emerge from the data throughout the process of simultaneous data collection and analysis, rather than imposing preconceived theories or categories onto the data. The choice was thus made to leave the definition of film score composers open, relying on composer's own definitions of themselves, as well as film score composers' ideas of who the other film score composers in South Africa are, to guide the choice of interviewees and thus employ a snowball sampling method¹¹ (Charmaz, 2006:41). The current researcher began with film score composers known to her and referred to her by her supervisors, and continued on referrals made by each new composer until the data pool branched out and became sizeable enough to effectively explore emerging concepts.

1.4.2.2 Data collection

Following the suggestions of Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991) and Glaser & Strauss (1967), the multiple sources of data described in 1.4.1. are explored in order to cross-reference information gathered and interpretations made. Semi-structured interviews were held with film score composers who were working in South Africa at the time of the study. These took place in venues chosen by the participants themselves, ranging from studio spaces in which they worked to local coffee shops and in some cases, their own homes. The data pool includes composers situated in the Western Cape, KwaZulu Natal, and Johannesburg.

¹¹A snowball sampling method is a form of convenience sampling that relies on each new participant to refer the researcher to other possible participants in their same field, resulting in a growing group of participants accessed by means of a trusted network (Cohen & Arieli, 2011:423-424). The benefit of this method in the current research includes the ability to approach each participant with a reference from a previous composer that they are acquainted with, thus encouraging rapport between interviewer and interviewee.

Composers that agreed to participate in this study were asked open-ended questions in order to explore their experiences with the intention of looking for common threads across interviews. These served as mere guidelines to encourage the composers to talk, and impromptu follow-up or clarifying questions were often asked in order to follow leads and better understand responses in a natural, conversational manner.¹² Participants were asked to read and sign an informed consent form, and the aim and nature of the study was again explained to them in person before the interview. With the participants' permission, interviews were audio recorded and transcribed after the fact to facilitate coding and analysis of responses. The length of interviews ranged from 30 minutes to two hours, depending on the participant's natural manner of responding to questions and explaining their experiences.

1.4.2.3 Coding and analysis

NVivo software for data management

The software package NVivo 12 Plus (Qualitative data analysis software) was used throughout the research process of the current study as a useful tool capable of facilitating the integrated and iterative steps of GTM research effectively, systematically and efficiently (Hutchison *et al.*, 2010:283). Recordings and transcripts thus remained linked throughout the coding and analysis process, granting easy access to the context of data and the manner with which it was said at all times. Once sections of data were coded into nodes, these were viewed in the context of other codes in the same group to facilitate comparison of categories, while the original context of data within the transcript was always easily accessible by means of a 'coding context' function in NVivo. All transcripts, recordings, participant information, coding, memos, mind maps and even the majority of the extant literature referenced in this study (if available in electronic form) were collectively kept in one project in NVivo. This integrated manner of working with and managing data allowed the researcher to move between different types of tasks more regularly (such as line-by-line coding, writing down ideas, creating categories by means of more analytical and creative thinking, and memoing on a more theoretical level). This kept the feedback loop short, meaning problems in open codes and line-by-line coding noticed while engaging in analytical thinking could be addressed immediately, and hunches sparked by writing memos and thinking about data already coded could be explored or applied in further coding thereafter, thus facilitating constant comparison (Urquhart, 2013:50).

First group of interviews

Analysis began with line-by-line coding on the first group of interview transcripts in order to create open codes and analytical handles for sections of data in the form of gerunds. Describing codes in terms of gerunds, as suggested by Charmaz (2006:49), focused the analytical interpretations on the experiences of events rather than the events themselves. As a result, the analysis does not try to assume facts about the reality of events and how they occurred, but deconstructs how composers describe their experiences of them, aiming to unearth what can be learned from participant understandings and constructions of events.

¹²see Appendix A: Semi-structured interview protocol

The order in which transcripts were coded was chosen at random to reduce researcher bias, as those coded first would create the foundation of categories that would likely slant further coding thereafter. This was at first a slow process where each open code was reflected on in a memo linked to the interview transcript of Composer A¹³. Open codes were then organised into provisional groups or categories, which were also discussed in the same interview transcript memo. This process was repeated for the remaining interview transcripts in the first batch, with the process speeding up gradually as the current researcher became accustomed to the process, and a bank of existing categories in which new codes could be placed (as opposed to having to create new categories each time) began to develop.

Second group of interviews

The second group of interviews involved coding in broader strokes by dragging sections of interview transcript directly into existing categories to be viewed and compared to existing data in those categories from previous transcripts. Once main themes had emerged, coding efforts were directed at those particular categories and categories related to them. Coding thus became progressively more focused as emerging themes guided further coding.

Mapping out emergent concepts

Relationships between the main emergent categories, as well as relationships with smaller peripheral categories that serve to describe conditions or characteristics of the main categories, were plotted out as maps in order to explore connections and relationships. These demonstrated concepts and aided discussions in theoretical memos dealing with the final three emergent categories that developed into chapters four, five and six of this document.

1.4.2.4 Memoing

Several kinds of memos were used throughout the research process. A **research journal** was kept throughout. Here the researcher made a note of daily research activities and general ideas for the study as they arose, as well as keeping track of and reflecting on methodological processes and challenges faced along the way. Many sections of the research journal were adapted and are included in the write-up of this study. **Observational interview memos** contained notes made of initial impressions of each interviewee and transcript. **Interview transcript memos** were linked to specific interview transcripts and featured ideas and reflections on open codes created during line-by-line coding of that particular transcript. Similarly, **code memos** were linked to particular codes or categories of codes. These contained initial impressions and analytical ideas in relation to open codes, groups of codes and categories. Finally, all existing memos that were relevant to the three main emergent categories were integrated towards in depth discussions in **theoretical memos**. Here, raw data, memos, and concepts in the extant literature were brought into dialogue with one another and explored in order to develop the findings section of this study.

¹³As this study seeks to preserve the anonymity of participants, each composer is assigned a letter of the alphabet as a descriptor for the purpose of this document.

1.4.2.5 Literature review

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, the literature review is delayed in this study and functions as a means with which to bring emergent concepts from the data into a higher level of abstraction (Urquhart, 2013:130). The results of the literature searches mentioned in 1.4.1.2 (Secondary Materials) are incorporated into discussions of data in the theoretical memos. Research thus moves from inductive to deductive paradigms in this context.

1.4.3 Theoretical saturation

The concept of pursuing theoretical saturation by repeating the processes of data collection and analysis (theoretical sampling) until no new findings can be extracted from incoming data (Charmaz, 2006) is beyond the scope of this study. Findings should thus be regarded as preliminary, substantive theories that lay the groundwork for future research.

Conceptual framework

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As the function of the literature review is to compare existing sources with themes as they emerge from the data, it is integrated into chapters four to six. In accordance with the structuring of this document as discussed in chapter one¹, the following seven key concepts are presented here in order to situate the study and equip the reader with a necessary understanding of industry terminology and practices referred to in this document:

1. film music,
2. film score composers,
3. film score composition,
4. the contemporary film score composition process,
5. film score composition within the film production process,
6. role-players impacting film score composition, and
7. project management.

2.2 FILM MUSIC

Take the sound and music out of the film? You don't have a film.

— Composer F²

Timm (2003:332) presents a condensed definition of film music as follows:

Music that accompanies a film. It can be played 'live' (as in the case of films from the silent era), it can be an original score written specifically for the film itself, or it can be borrowed music from a prerecorded source.

Such music is traditionally first heard during the opening of a film, known as the main titles (Burt, 1994:4). Depending on the needs of the film, this music can vary

¹See 1.1.1 Preliminary notes on the structuring of this thesis, page three.

²This is quoted from one of the interviews that were conducted with South African composers during data collection for the current study. Throughout this document, participant perspectives such as this one are similarly represented with a reference to the anonymous composer and, if quoted directly, in italics.

greatly in terms of structure, instrumentation, and style (Cooke & Ford, 2016:2; Hexel, 2019). Burt (1994:4) suggests that film music possesses the ability to affect the audience’s perception of the visuals by non-verbal means in terms of mood, thematic connection, perceived tempo or length of scenes, character emotions, as well as influencing a sense of location, space, time and culture. The reception of film music is typically driven by socially propagated norms that instil certain expectations in the audience. This enables film music to stylistically relate itself to a particular genre of film by utilising accepted “film music codes” (Sapiro, 2013:18).

Film music can be categorised in terms of the audience’s perception of how the music relates to the film. The source of diegetic music can be identified within the action of the film, whilst non-diegetic—or extra-diegetic—music underscores the on-screen action and can therefore not be related to a specific visual source (Cooke, 2001). The latter is regarded as the film score, for which film score composers are typically responsible (Sadoff, 2006:170). However, Letcher (2009:27) points out that music in film does not always neatly fit within one of these two categories, but rather can have overlapping and complex functions within a visual scene. The role of film score composers can thus extend beyond the composition of non-diegetic music into other elements of film music. Consequently, Sadoff (2006:170) champions the following useful descriptors for various forms of film music: score, source music, and “sourced” music. These terms refer to non-diegetic music, diegetic music, and music that crosses boundaries between these two functions, respectively.

2.3 FILM SCORE COMPOSERS

I think a composer needs to have a dramatic element in them. There must be some part of a bit of an actor drama thing in a composer, you know?

— Composer F

Not only does film music promote emotional investment into the visual being presented (Carlin, 1991:10), but it also effectively implants the composer’s own thoughts and perspective regarding the onscreen action and drama into the film (Burt, 1994:3; Hexel, 2019). Burt (1994:3) thus describes these composers as “musical dramatists.” Summers (2013:84) points out that film projects do not always call for personally authentic musical interpretations from composers, but rather that of a persona employed by the composer in order to meet the needs of the film.³

Carlin (1991:10) differentiates between a composer and a film composer. The former refers to the general act of writing music, whilst the latter is a more specialised activity within this category, involving the appropriate emotional framing of a scene whilst accounting for—and working around—other sound sources such as effects and dialogue. Timm (2003:29) describes the necessary characteristics of a film composer as follows: stylistic flexibility, knowledge of one’s own composition abilities and how to utilise them, an ability to both compose and adapt one’s music quickly in order to cope with production schedules, willingness to work long hours, the

³Examples of this provided by Summers (2013) include projects where composers are asked to emulate the sound of another film score composer, or—as in the case of the film *Airplane!* where Elmer Bernstein consciously made compositional decisions as if he were younger and inexperienced—instances where composers choose to adopt another composer personality.

capability of taking and incorporating criticism aimed at one's music in a manner that is constructive, the ability to communicate one's ideas to non-musicians and the members of the production team that the composer must answer to, and finally the ability to effectively promote oneself as a composer within the context of the industry.

As mentioned in chapter one, the role and authority of film score composers are often ambiguous. Though hired as professionals in their field, their decisions regarding the score must submit to those of other role-players such as directors and producers. Both Hexel (2019) and Letcher (2009) mention this ambiguous position in which film composers find themselves, describing them as simultaneously contributing to the film as a creative collaborator, and as an employee simply under instruction.

2.4 FILM SCORE COMPOSITION

Your vision has to be flexible enough to complement the director's vision and the videographer's vision and the script's vision. — Composer B

Some of the central considerations that a film score composer must attend to by means of film score composition, are the creation of sounds that are aesthetically contemporary, relatable to the audience, and simultaneously relevant to the setting and requirements of the film (Carlin, 1991:10). The music they write should also fit perfectly between the boundaries of dialogue and sound effects, provide gravity, emotion and atmosphere for scenes whilst remaining predominantly subconscious in its communication of such things (Timm, 2003:27).

The movie itself, [...] there's so much framework or constraint that you have to work with in any way. Because you're working to time very specific time cues. And you're looking at a picture and you're not saying, 'well, I want to create this sort of scene,' you have to create what is being presented to you. So you really have that constraint. And then another constraint is what the director wants, another limitation to your creativity, it just can become a technician's job. — Composer G

Film score composition is necessarily collaborative (Cooke & Ford, 2016:82; Hexel, 2019; Letcher, 2009:26). This is due to its functioning within negotiations between various role-players' ideas regarding the film and its score—such as that of the director, producer, and composer— as well as having to interact with the visual, narrative and other auditory elements of the film. However, Letcher (2009:26) points out that this is rarely “a collaboration between [equal] peers”. As mentioned before, the act of film score composition functions within a hierarchy of role-players. It is for this reason that Hexel (2014) advocates for careful observation of “contextual agents” and their impact when reviewing processes of film score composition and the resultant scores.

2.5 AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONTEMPORARY FILM SCORE COMPOSITION PROCESS

Composers are typically first contacted by the director of a film on account of their previous compositions, which the director took a liking to or perceived as suitable for the purposes of the new film to come (Morricone & Miceli, 2013:3). Cooke & Ford (2016:49) argue that the “factory conditions” of Hollywood film music production in the past—involving a full team of personnel including composer, music supervisor, orchestrator, music recordist and copyists, with orchestral musicians hired for recording the score—is no longer the norm. It is being replaced by scenarios where composers own and work from their own studios as freelancers, often taking on the responsibilities of recording engineers and mixers as well as that of a composer (C, 2020). This is often paired with a complete removal of the recording process in lower budget films, making use of sampled instrument libraries instead (Fagre, 2017:8). In other cases, both small and large-budget film productions have been known to utilise an entire team of composers—sometimes combined with the use of pre-composed library music—in order to meet tight turnover deadlines and to reduce costs (Cooke & Ford, 2016). Collaborative efforts within film score composition processes involve anyone from the production and post-production teams—such as editors, recording engineers, directors and producers—to other musicians or pop artists. Even the music itself is often the handiwork of several composers, arrangers and orchestrators (Cooke & Ford, 2016:51).

Directors often have specific ideas about what they want in terms of music for a film. According to Cooke & Ford (2016:47) and Sadoff (2006), temp tracks will regularly be used to communicate these ideas to the composer as well as facilitate how the film is edited prior to the score being composed. During the spotting session, a document containing information about the timing of music cues, as well as the character of this music in each section, is compiled for or by the composer (Hexel, 2019; Paris, 2018). This is referred to as timing, spotting, or breakdown notes (Cooke & Ford, 2016:47; Paris, 2018). Even once the composer has started their work, the film provided is rarely locked.⁴ Recomposing and re-recording due to last minute edits is commonplace (Ellis-Geiger, 2007:57).

Composer processes are as variable as the personalities that utilise them. These range from working eight hour days to varying lengths involving periods of working through the night, and composing in sizeable chunks sporadically to composing a mere two to three minutes of music consistently every day (Timm, 2003:28). According to Morricone & Miceli (2013:53), film score composers need to build the musical structure by first deconstructing and analysing the film. This analysis should observe the tempo of the film, how scenes were cut and edited, camera angles and types of shots, as well as the emotional and psychological state of characters. Composers report engaging in immersive processes of research in order to familiarise themselves with topics, cultures, and music genres present in a film prior to any film score composition processes (Paris, 2018).

⁴Locked film is a version of the footage in which no more editing of timing, order or length of events will occur (Sadoff, 2006:182). It is known as the final cut, as opposed to the rough cut, which may be offered to the composer prior to the spotting session to allow them to get a general sense of the film (see Carlin, 1991:56)

2.5.1 Film score composition within the film production process

There are six stages in which film production takes place: development, pre-production, production or principal photography, post-production, distribution and exhibition (Du Toit, 2010:1). The post-production phase involves assembling the edited picture, music production and sound effects, Foley, automated dialogue replacement, visual effects, colour correction and titles of a film (Saltzman, 2015:xxi). All of these are typically overseen by the post-production supervisor (Honthaner, 2010:463). As film music processes predominantly occur during the post-production stage, this phase will be the principle focus of this study.

Although the majority of post-production activities only commence once principal photography is complete, stages of film production rarely unfold in a linear fashion (Honthaner, 2010:463). Decisions regarding the post-production schedule, budget, work-space setup and crew for editing and mixing of sound and visual effects are made during pre-production as a means to secure the desired team and ensure continuity throughout the film production process (Clevé, 2006:19). Editing marks the genuine start of post-production, approximately a week to a day before principle photography ends, and may continue for either months or merely a few weeks, depending on the scale of the project (Honthaner, 2010:463).

The following frames the post-production work-flow as depicted by Honthaner (2010:465):

1. The editor completes a ‘first cut’ of the film,
2. Several weeks are given to the director to make changes,
3. The spotting process for music and sound effects commences,
4. The Temp Music Editor creates a ‘temp dub’ for the film,
5. Re-shoots (if necessary) and visual effects are incorporated,
6. Alterations after film previews (if necessary) are made,
7. Screen credits are included,
8. Picture Lock is established,
9. Post-production sound begins in earnest, including music scoring,
10. Final mix,
11. Sound effects and music are recorded, and
12. Sound is mixed.

It is important to note that this description is based on established and well-developed film industries creating predominantly high budget, large-scale films. In his exploration of contemporary film scoring trends, Ellis-Geiger (2007) presents the film production trends of Hong Kong in contrast to those of Hollywood.⁵ Similarly, Letcher (2009)’s description of his experiences in composing music for a South African film⁶ demonstrates that there are deviations to the film production process listed above where personal preference of other role-players or resource limitations might

⁵Ellis-Geiger (2007) notes that—in relation to Hollywood film productions—Hong Kong film productions have comparatively shorter production timelines, informal processes, limited financial resources available, and typically place less importance on the role of music.

⁶Letcher provides a personal account of what he views as an atypical process of film production, in which he was already involved and composing the score at the development and pre-production stages of the film.

demand it. Thus, findings in the current study—being focused on the South African film music industry in particular—is presented here in comparison to the ‘typical’ post-production work-flow shown above.

2.6 ROLE-PLAYERS IMPACTING FILM SCORE COMPOSITION

I think in any project you work with people where they might want something different, or they might want you to change something, or their personal taste just dictates that [the music] needs to be something that it's not.
— Composer C

Both Hexel (2014) and Sadoff (2006) argue that film score composition processes—and the resultant film scores—are largely influenced creatively and practically by external factors surrounding the composer. Film score composition is not the task of one isolated individual, but rather an inherently collaborative practice (Letcher, 2009:25) featuring negotiations between several role-players. Hexel (2014:vii) notes that “a shift in the creative control of music” towards filmmakers (such as directors and producers) has increased in recent years.

Producers manage the entire film production from beginning to end in terms of organisation, finances and human resources (Timm, 2003:12). As a result, they often advocate for the use of temp tracks in order to demonstrate the emotional and narrative intent of the film as a marketing strategy (Sadoff, 2006:169). In this way, producers’ commercially-oriented thinking has the potential to limit the film score composer’s creative agency.

Though hired and managed by the producer, directors are in charge of the daily shooting throughout principal photography, give creative input and leadership regarding the translation of the script into film, and communicate these elements to the composer in order to inspire the desired film score they believe will compliment their artistic vision (Timm, 2003:12).

Music editors can have an even larger impact on film score composers and the expectations placed on them for a specific film. With knowledge spanning over musical, visual and narrative elements of film, they can serve as a middle man between directors and composers, and often influence decisions regarding music for the film before the composer has even been hired (Sadoff, 2006:168-169). Directors will typically convene with the composer and music editor during the spotting process (Paris, 2018).

If orchestrators are involved, they will take the shorthand score containing melodic material and notes on orchestral arrangement and texture, and expand it into a full score for orchestra (Timm, 2003:21).

Carlin (1991:10-15) lists the following possible additional roles—depending on the size and budget of the film project—that influence the composition process on the periphery: picture editor, post-production supervisor, music supervisor, music coordinator, music contractor, production mixer, music engineer, and music recordist.⁷ Not only are there large variances in the number of team members involved in post-production processes between projects, but the specific requirements for each of these roles seem to be equally adaptable (Nozaic, 2006).

⁷See Carlin (1991:10-15) for a brief description of each role.

2.7 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project management has expanded from its origins in quantitative research towards more behavioural aspects and management strategies of organisations, aligning it with social sciences research in more recent years (Abbasi, 2018). The purpose of project managers, according to the Project Management Institute (2017:51), is to aid, nurture or guide a project towards its intended objectives and goals. Not all businesses or projects will have an official project manager role. Berkun (2008:2) states that:

in many organisations, the person leading a project doesn't have the job title project manager. Everyone manages projects in their daily work.

Duties of the project manager vary considerably and necessarily from case to case as the role is inherently tied to the nature of the project it aims to manage (Project Management Institute, 2017:51). Berkun (2008:2) defines the role as “applying technology to the relevant problems of the times.”

My previous involvement in film score composition projects partially occurred from the viewpoint of a project manager. Duties in such instances involved the organisation and booking of recording sessions for the film score (including venue bookings, as well as communication and co-ordination with musicians, sound engineers and assistants). I noticed that the manner in which a film project was managed had bearing on the context, efficiency, freedom and effectiveness with which the composer was able to work, given that my role was to aid the composer in navigating various challenges and goals as they arose. The concept of project management was therefore of interest in my study, not only as a means by which the research topic could be provisionally observed, but also as an ideal platform by which the findings of my research could be implemented or tested in future research.⁸

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduces and familiarises the reader with seven key concepts relating to film score composition in order to situate the study. These are: film music, film score composers, film score composition, the contemporary film score composition process, film score composition within the film production process, role-players impacting film score composition, and project management.

Film score composers can be responsible for all areas of music within a film, or only aspects thereof. Typically, they are hired to compose non-diegetic music, which is film music that cannot be related to a specific source within the narrative of the scene. However, their role is occasionally extended to include the composition of diegetic music, as well as music that might straddle these two functions. In this

⁸Throughout this document, italic text in a grey box is used to indicate and set apart personal reflections made by the researcher. These sections are thus written in first person and reflect on first-hand experiences prior to and during the current study.

study, film music represents the output of film score composers, who are individuals that must compose music within the limitations of several contextual factors. These include the creative requirements of the project, and practical limitations created by the broader production schedule of the film as a whole. Another factor influencing film score composers is negotiations between the visions and goals of various role-players—including directors, producers, and the composers themselves—in which both creative and commercial motivations come into play. Due to this need for negotiation and co-ordination of schedules and human resources, a role such as project management has the potential to influence film score composers, their experiences, the process of film score composition, and finally the resultant film music.⁹

⁹Other industry-specific terms and related concepts that are used in this document but that have not been described here include: the spotting process, temporary tracks, NVivo 12 Plus, film score composition as creativity, self-determination theory, cognitive evaluation theory, intrinsic motivation, flow theory, autonomy, self-efficacy, and rapport building. Unlike the seven concepts featured in this chapter—which the current author perceives as foundational and therefore useful to understand from the outset—definitions for other relevant concepts such as these are provided within the document as footnotes or subsections as they arise. This is done to reduce the need to jump between chapters and thus encourage ease of reading.

Methodology continued: notes on coding and analysis procedures

Steps were often taken, retraced, and retaken or modified in response to emerging concepts and reflexive thinking, displaying a reflexive process not only in the collection and analysis of data, but also in the refinement of methodology within this project that defines GTM research as a whole (Charmaz, 2014).

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a descriptive and visual account of the data analysis processes followed in this study. First, the manner in which initial and subsequent coding processes developed throughout the study is depicted. This is followed by a description of the process by which central categories presented as the key concerns of film score composers in this study were identified. Finally, the process of developing these key categories—as featured in chapters four to six—is explained.

3.2 INITIAL CODING

Initially, interviews were transcribed as they were conducted, systematically explored, and sections of text divided into broad themes. Many sections of text were placed in more than one category in order to explore their significance within the context of different concepts they related to. During this process, I noticed the potential for data to be arranged into subcategories within these categories, and made a note of this. Once this process was complete, each category was opened and the data segments therein reflected on and compared to one another. This enabled me to familiarise myself with the accounts of my participants and their manner of speaking about their experiences. It soon

became clear, however, that exploration of the data in this manner was occurring in broad strokes rather than in a detailed, reflexive manner. According to grounded theory literature, line-by-line coding is a key characteristic of GTM analysis that would serve to guide me away from superficial analysis (Charmaz, 2006). In light of these experiences and methodological refinements, the coding process was re-evaluated and adapted. A more detailed process of analysis was pursued at this point, with existing codes constructed from the coding that had been done in broader strokes being transported into the research journal memo where it was reflected upon in order to guide the next line-by-line coding steps.

Coding was continued by first systematically working through Composer A's interview transcript with line-by-line coding, assigning open codes for each line. These contained both descriptive and analytical thoughts, which were captured and reflected upon in a linked interview transcript memo. Each of those codes constructed from Composer A's transcript were organised into provisional groups thereafter by means of the coding and grouping functions in NVivo 12 Plus (fig. 3.1). The provisional groups were similarly reflected upon and described in code memos during and after the line-by-line coding process for the first interview.

This initial coding thus consisted of a cyclical process involving creating open codes for each line of transcript, reflecting on these in a linked transcript memo, organising the open codes into preliminary groups, reflecting on these in code memos, and returning to line-by-line coding for the next section of the transcript at which point the process is repeated until the entire transcript has been coded (fig. 3.2).

3.3 SUBSEQUENT CODING

After repeating this process with Composer B's interview transcript, the initial groupings were reorganised with the addition of the new open codes (fig. 3.3).

This process of line-by-line coding, memo writing, reflecting and reorganising of code groups was repeated with several transcripts until the code structure began to settle and new open codes tended to fall within these existing groups or preliminary categories. At this point, the researcher began to focus on categories that contained the most data segments across different interview transcripts when exploring new data in interviews. Coding became progressively more focused until only data pertaining to the three emergent categories were coded in the final interview transcripts. This demonstrates the iterative process described by Charmaz (2014:103), by which "new lines of inquiry in later interviews [. . .] reflect [one's] developing analyses". The nature of these three central categories and the manner in which they emerged are discussed below and in chapters four, five and six.

3.4 IDENTIFYING KEY CONCERNS OF FILM SCORE COMPOSERS

Participants have varying preferences and experiences in relation to one another, but also between their own accounts of different projects. Examples of this is preferring to be involved earlier or later in production, preferring one kind of director personality or style over another, experiencing temp tracks as either being useful or a hindrance, and preferring to work either alone or with co-composers. It is this seeming lack of consistency between composer responses—on a superficial level—that renders common preferences and experiences particularly interesting. This is especially noteworthy when these common experiences serve as an underlying influence that explicates the instances of variation in composer preferences and experiences. - Research Journal

3.4.1 Query results

Identifying key concerns of composers during the coding process occurred in several stages. After 2 384 open codes had been assigned to segments of data and coded into 157 categories, categories emerging as most prominent (in terms of number of references across different interviews) were identified. Five categories comprising of references from all seven transcripts that had been coded at that point were then identified as possible key concerns for the composers. They are listed below:

1. Having creative control
2. Rapport building
3. Approaching and managing creativity by practical processes
4. Experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work
5. Breaking into the industry

These served to focus further coding. Their development was explored through memo-writing during this process.

While engaging in further coding towards the potential key concerns of film score composers in this study, the researcher reflected on the manner in which prominent categories were emerging and factors that may have influenced this (as per reflexive thinking strategies suggested by Schwandt (2007)), as well as the limitations in scope of the current study. It became evident that the reason numerous references fell within *breaking into the industry* was because of the the manner in which interviews were initiated by the researcher:

Just as an introduction, tell me a bit about your career as a film composer so far. - Extract from semi-structured interview protocol

This prompted participants to take the interviewer through an overview of their career so far, which inevitably led to all participants giving an account of how they found their way into the industry. It seems that the category was the result of a common approach to describing the history of one's career rather than an unprompted indication of a key concern for film score composers. Similarly, *approaching and managing creativity by practical processes* was found to have yielded a high number

of references from interviewees due to the range of code themes that was assigned to the category (and thus a result of two prematurely merged categories). These, in hindsight, described two different concerns rather than one, the first being the use of the term *problem solving* when participants described their work. The second was simply a collection of descriptions of how different composers went about their work. These factors suggested that these topics were less prominent than originally theorised, yet by no means irrelevant to the key concerns of film score composers. However, a detailed discussion of these along with the development of the three substantive theories would have been beyond the scope of this study. Consequently, the decision was made to integrate *breaking into the industry* and *approaching and managing creativity by practical processes* with the remaining central emergent categories, discussing them in the context of how they relate to and influence *experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition*, *creative control*, and *rapport building*. Similarly, other less prominent categories were integrated into the three central categories in order to demonstrate and elaborate on the dimensions of the central categories as they occurred in the study.

3.4.2 Alternative approaches

The previously described approach is not the sole manner in which to interpret the data gained from these participants. Charmaz (2006) notes that the same data can provide different insights in the hands of different researchers and within different studies. I noticed, for example, that categories could also be organised into three groups of perceptions made by participants, namely:

- 1. perceptions of themselves,*
- 2. perceptions of the industry, and*
- 3. connections and interactions between themselves and the industry.*

The perspective chosen for the current study—resulting in the three central categories discussed in chapters four to six—is pursued here as it best explores the intended focus of this study, which is the key concerns of film score composers in South Africa. Another study aiming to explore self-definitions of film score composers and the environment they work in, for example, might have pursued approaches such as the one mentioned above.

3.5 DEVELOPMENT OF CATEGORIES

While investigating the three emergent categories, I first conducted a preliminary exploration and described concepts as they appeared in the data. This guided literature searches thereafter, and was done to ensure that data was not moulded into concepts found in extant literature retrospectively, but rather examined in its own right and then placed into a dialogue with existing theories and research thereafter.

As Charmaz (2014:87) points out, grounded theory research is characterised by an “explicit emphasis on conceptual development and theory construction”. The process of developing the central categories, of which chapters four, five and six are the result, simultaneously functions as a literature review.¹

Data from each central category, their subcategories, and other related categories was constructed into a coherent narrative that demonstrates the manner in which participants made meaning of *experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition*, *creative control*, and *rapport building*. The extant literature was then consulted and placed into dialogue with these narratives. As mentioned in chapter one, the following key words—rooted in concepts from the data—guided the exploration of appropriate literature:

1. Experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work:

- a) intrinsic motivation,
- b) self-determination theory,
- c) cognitive evaluation theory,
- d) flow theory,
- e) motivation in creative industries, and
- f) creativity.

2. Creative control:

- a) control in creative industries,
- b) creative control,
- c) autonomy,
- d) creative autonomy,
- e) creative freedom, and
- f) self-determination theory.

3. Rapport building:

- a) rapport,
- b) rapport building,
- c) relationships in creative industries/ the film industry,
- d) networking in creative industries/ the film industry,
- e) composer-director relationships, and
- f) trust building.

By placing these emergent category narratives in dialogue with existing theories and concepts in literature, participant experiences interact with and contribute towards interdisciplinary phenomena. Emergent categories are in turn filled out, contextualised and theoretically elevated from their context and their detailed state (Urquhart, 2013).

¹See 1.1.1 Preliminary notes on the structuring of this thesis, page three

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an account of the methodological approach and presentation of data as described in chapter one. Chapters four, five and six hereafter expand on each of the three key concerns of film score composers working in South Africa that have emerged through the data collection, coding and analysis processes of this study, namely *experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work*, *creative control*, and *rapport building*. These interpretations and analyses are compared to and discussed in the context of existing literature related to these emergent themes.

Nodes Search Project

Name	Files	Reference
Open Codes	0	0
Selective Codes	0	0
Accepting and adapting to insufficient performance skills	2	8
Also finding self-recording enjoyable; perceiving positives to self-recording	2	2
Applying increased time and effort to make the composition 'sound good'; having insufficient performance skills	2	2
Enjoying the illusion of sufficient performance skills; editing self-recordings	2	2
'Feeling good' because of the end result; self-recording	2	2
Accepting and adapting to lower payment standards	2	7
Coping with disappointed payment expectations by 'coming to terms with it'; reality checking and accepting	2	2
Describing a moment of realisation; own services are worth less than expected	2	3
Feeling that composers are forced to accept the lower payment standards	2	2
Adapting creative goals to suit video content saturation	1	6
Feeling that video media production was more rare in the past	1	1
Having to adapt composer business model for an industry saturated with video content	1	1
Having to charge less; oversaturated video media production	1	1
Having to 'decrease effort put in'	1	1
Having to 'increase turnover'	1	1
Perceiving impact of technology on industry; saturation of video media production	1	1
Adapting work conditions expectations to industry	1	2
Attributing having limited time to doing free work for students; lowering working conditions expectations	1	1
Seeing section of industry as contributing factor to working conditions; film students	1	1
Assuming general sonic expectations of clients	2	4
Needing to make 'things sound big and loud'; needing sound engineering	2	2
Needing to 'make things sound good and cinematic'	2	2
Becoming disillusioned about payment expectations	6	32
Changing to different composition industry	2	2
Comparing expectation vs reality of lesser payment	1	1
Describing lack of financial gain; low pay, no usage	3	3
Describing lower value of own services as 'depressing'	2	2
Discovering wrong expectations; changing ad industry	2	2
Emphasising having to charge less	1	1
Expressing dissatisfaction	1	1
Feeling that composers are forced to accept the lower payment standards	2	2
Finding complimentary source of income	3	3
Having to charge less; oversaturated video media production	1	1
Perceiving impact of changes in the world on ad composition payment	2	2
Placing importance on the changing conditions of the industry; payment expectations	1	1
Realisation of less pay disillusioning	1	1
Recognising the discrepancy between expected payment vs the reality of what can be charged	1	1
Tolerating and working around low pay	2	2
Trying to fight against low payment standards in the past; feeling devalued	2	3
Wanting to earn a lot per project; ad industry	2	2
Wishing to experience ad composing as lucrative now	2	2
Breaking into industry	2	5
Looking for entry point; composing for adverts	1	1
Naming sustained interest in composition	1	1

In Nodes Cod

Figure 3.1: Initial coding: Screen capture of preliminary groupings and open codes for Composer A's transcript, as carried out in NVivo 12 Plus

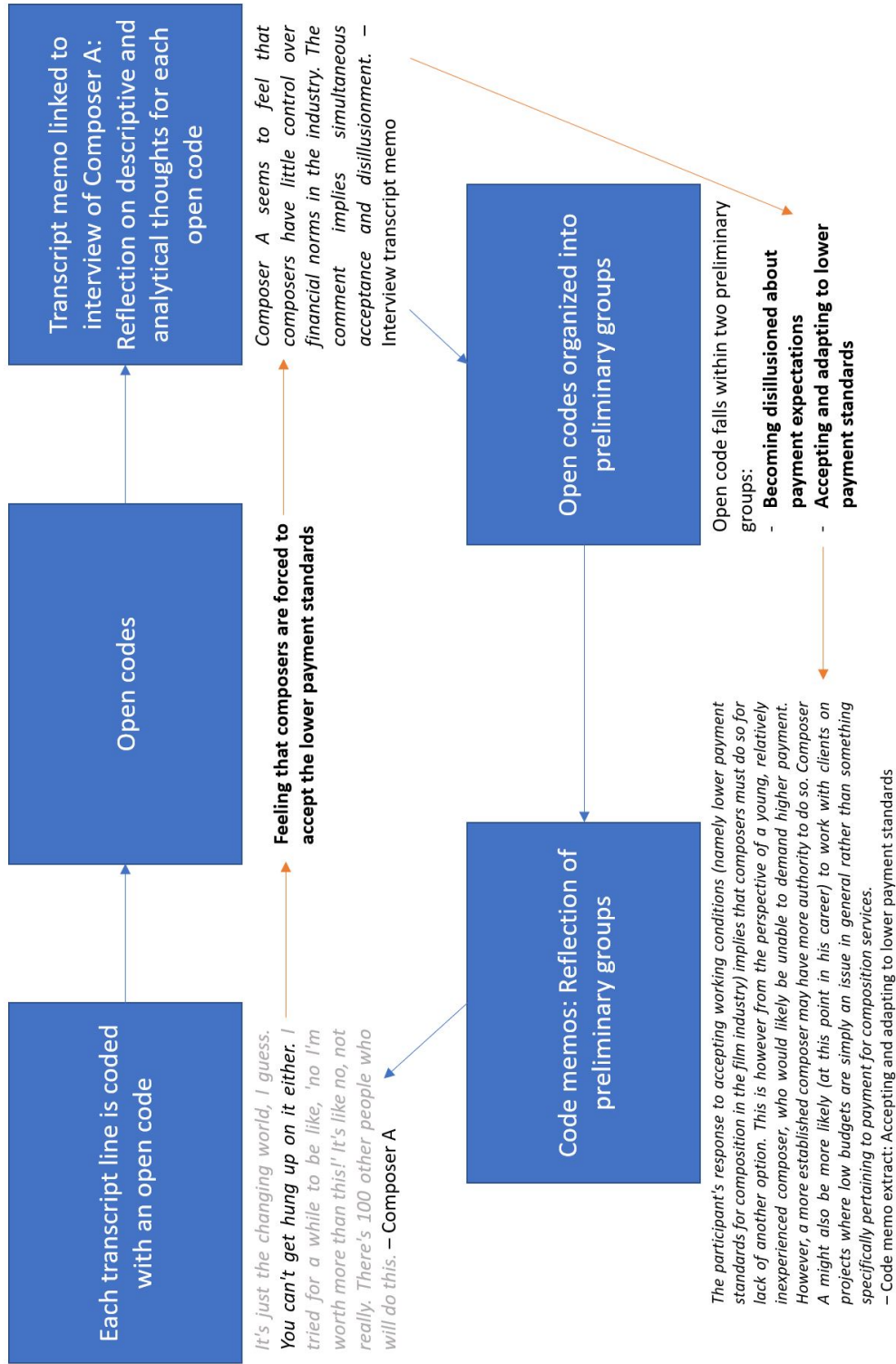


Figure 3.2: Flow diagram of initial coding process

Name	Files	References
Selective Codes	0	0
Breaking into industry	0	0
Breaking into industry	2	5
Looking for entry point; composing for adverts	1	1
Naming sustained interest in composition	1	1
Seeing career as just starting	1	1
Seeing 'sound design assistant' as landing into the job	2	2
Character traits needed	0	0
Needing a thick skin	4	8
Experiencing rejection and repetition of hard work as soul destroying	4	4
Needing a thick skin for negative feedback	4	4
Experiencing inherent value in composition work	0	0
Experiencing inherent value in composition work	2	5
Enjoying working on projects where no money is involved	2	2
Finding composing 'rewarding'	1	1
Finding value in doing composition work for one's self	2	2
External limitations	0	0
Working with limited equipment or software	2	4
Discovering limitations of own equipment on the job	2	2
System not processing video fast; equipment limitations	2	2
Working with limited time	0	0
Needing time for composition	2	8
Being typically unable to finish the work in one day	1	1
Needing time to realize when composition ideas aren't working	1	1
Needing time to think about the composition ideas	1	1
Taking a day to set up and organise the session; 'housekeeping'	1	1
Viewing time as very important for composition	1	1
Wanting to have enough time work	1	1
Wanting to have time with a project; ad industry	2	2
Working with limited time	3	11
Applying a short process to a composition job	3	3
Film students leaving editing to the last minute	1	1
Finishing within a day out of necessity	3	3
Having little time to compose and contact musicians	3	3
Having to work on project two days before client's deadline	1	1
Having creative control	0	0
Having creative control	2	2
Gaining creative control if unpaid work	2	2
Learning on the job	0	0
Learning on the job	1	4
Acknowledging broad knowledge needed for composition	1	1
Anticipating a learning curve on the job	1	1
Listing areas of knowledge required to compose for choir	1	1

Figure 3.3: Subsequent coding: Screen capture of reorganised groupings containing open codes from Composer A and B's transcripts, as carried out in NVivo 12 Plus

Category 1: Experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work

I originally titled this category ‘experiencing inherent value in film score composition work’ while coding the first interview transcript. The aim was to capture an underlying message brought forward by comments surrounding finding film score composition work itself rewarding, and being willing to work on film projects for free simply for one’s own enjoyment. The underlying message I observed was the concept that composers might be engaging in film projects for reasons other than external rewards such as acceptable financial compensation. In fact, I wondered if a sense of emotional investment and pride in their work might not outweigh not only external rewards, but external challenges, such as a complete lack of budget, too. After I noticed that all my participants had similar notions of gaining inherent reward from the act of film score composing itself, paired with an intriguing resilience towards unfavourable working conditions (albeit to varying extents), I explored existing literature for reasons why individuals are motivated to engage in creative work. Numerous studies and theories referred to the concept of intrinsic motivation as a driving force that predominantly outweighs external rewards in encouraging individuals to engage with creative activities in a persistent way, often in spite of challenging working conditions. I felt this rang true with the experiences of the composers I had spoken to, and thus chose to swap out ‘inherent’ for ‘intrinsic.’

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work represents a significant motivation for taking on such work, but also for the commitment and creative investment with which composers carry it out, despite working conditions that serve as a challenge or hindrance to the film score composer. That is, the work itself is considered rewarding. It is a motivation that seems to originate internally,

as opposed to externally oriented motivations such as financial gain, and is linked to having pride in one's work and a reputation to uphold (occasionally for the purpose of securing future jobs, but often in an attitude of defiance toward those future opportunities).

In some cases, composers are willing to do work for free, and eluded to “doing it for [one's self]” (Composer A) as adequate motivation. Lines between *rapport building* and *experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work* become blurred here, as doing projects free of charge can sometimes be attributed to composer-client familiarity and trust-building efforts. It does not seem far fetched, however, to consider that composers' willingness to work purely for the promise of more work in the future is an indication of their emotional investment in the reward of doing the work itself. Even composers that are less willing to do work for free, asking “how many exposures will pay for my rent at the end of the month?” (Composer F), report working for payment they perceive as unfair and inadequate, and yet describe a sense of passion when doing the work. The notion that composers take pride in their work and the final outcome of the film, means that irrespective of budget, there is a drive to carry out the work not just to the liking of the client, but also in a way that is effective and creative in their own eyes. In some cases a conflict of interest then arises when negotiating creative decisions with the client, and rather than feeling the need to submit to the client's requirements as when budget is reasonable, composers more negatively experience losing creative control in this way when they feel financial compensation does not justify it. Furthermore, the composers' desire to create a product they are proud of exposes them to being potentially mistreated by clients as they are not necessarily willing to reduce time, energy, effort and quality in proportion with lower budgets.

4.2 HOW PARTICIPANTS DESCRIBE THEIR WORK

4.2.1 Challenging work conditions

Composers in this study give numerous accounts of experiencing working conditions that are, more often than not, physically and mentally demanding, frustrating, and lacking in fair financial compensation.

Creative work is expected to be demanding and time-consuming... [it] requires sustained attention over long periods of time, under conditions where ambiguity is high, negative feedback is likely, and stress is a part of daily life (Grabner & Speckbacher, 2010:3).¹

Although many kinds of challenges related to work conditions are raised by participants, the following are most prominent across all the interviews and represent significant difficulties rather than the minor hindrances one might expect to find in any career.

¹see 4.4.1.1 Film score composition as creativity: How does literature describe creativity?

4.2.1.1 Budgeting and payment

Each of the composers in this study mention experiences related to insufficient pay or working with a low budget for at least some of the film projects they have been involved in.

I think like any job it's got its challenges. The biggest challenge is money. I'm sorry to say that, but it's true. — Composer F

I don't even know why people talk about proper music budgets because I don't think they exist in the real world to be honest. — Composer C

In some cases this was the result of composers taking on projects with little to no budget available for the film as a whole.

So right now I'm doing a lot of work for the [...] production [students]? I've got an in through my girlfriend, and then I started working on them for free, and now they like me so they keep using me. — Composer A

I've worked on some short films, which have been directors' passion projects, mostly. — Composer L

In other cases, composers feel there is a tendency in clients to assign too little budget for music (from which the composer's payment is typically awarded) due to undervaluing the importance of the role that music plays in a film, combined with a naivety regarding the costs of samples and recording instruments in studio, as well as the immense time and effort involved in film score composition.

But I mean I honestly think composers are underpaid. Way underpaid. — Composer F

The only thing that I see as a problem is that [composers are underpaid] - and they'll say 'ah of course he will say, he's a composer, he will say that,' - but it's the truth. If you compare it to what other people earn out of, in the film budget, and I know film budgets, I know who earns what. We're not stupid. Information gets to you. We are as composers probably the most underpaid people in the whole process unfortunately.

— Composer F

You know you've got to be paid if you're going to work six months on something. I mean come on. — Composer D

Directors routinely, and I don't know why, directors routinely under-budget for music throughout.

— Composer C

And I think also working in the sound department, to a certain extent you are always seen as a second class citizen in the film world. People don't realise the value.

— Composer E

And [managing] their expectations of how fast you can work and the expectations of: their budget only allows for two violinists but they actually want a score that sounds like Gladiators. The Hans Zimmer's Gladiator which is like a hundred piece London Symphony or whatever. —

Composer D

The third scenario relating to working with low budgets for music (which seems for composers is typically synonymous with receiving little payment themselves), is clients' tendencies to spend the vast majority of their budget on other aspects of the film prior to the post production stage when music and sound budgets are first considered. These seem to be more due to lack of planning than under valuing music per se.

But usually by the time they come to sound and music they've spent much of their money and they offer really rates that are really really honestly not fair, on musicians or on composers or on sound people.

— Composer F

Producers need to set aside a larger chunk of change for [music]...

— Composer E

...but for the most part a director will come to you and sort of apologise and say, 'oh actually we need a 30 minute film score, we only have like R5000.' In the meantime they've just bought a new R120000 lens that they didn't need, just because it's an amazing thing, like 'we have to have the lens.' And like, they've splurged money on, what I think, are pretty useless things to actually pull the film off, because they saw something that they thought, 'oh this would be super cool, let's try this.'

— Composer C

4.2.1.2 Negotiating creative decisions

In the end the director or client gets the final say. This is something the composers acknowledge and in many ways accept, despite the personal cost.

But in the professional world, if it's not to the liking of the director in the end of the day and a producer, then it just does a back and forth game all the time.

— Composer G

It often feels a bit soul destroying. You worked so hard on this and they're like 'No I don't like it all, change it completely.'

— Composer A

And you have to be a chameleon because you have to... You're keeping lots of different people happy. Except yourself. Your own happiness is pushed to the side.

— Composer D

They did however mention the difficulties surrounding negotiating creative decisions with individuals who are simultaneously in a position of authority, yet under qualified to make decisions about the musical score, that being the composer's area of expertise.

So, it's happened to me a few times in the past where I'm asked to do things that I honestly don't agree with. Something like Mickey Mousing, which is mimicking movements too closely. So I know from a music point that if you do that you draw attention away from the visuals firstly. Secondly, you make the music sound gimmicky. And thirdly you make the music seem less real.

— Composer B

And often you're taking advice from people who are not musically educated. So you're taking... Yeah, you're an expert in your field and you're taking advice from people that are not, in your field. You know, which is not easy to do. I can tell you it's hellishly difficult. To accept all of that all the time.

— Composer D

One composer did notice that directors in South Africa are typically inexperienced with regards to working with film score composers in general, as most film budgets in the past have predominantly only allowed for the use of library music. This characteristic of the South African film industry is likely the cause of further frustration, as instances where the clients are inexperienced seem particularly challenging to participants.

So you kind of .. Yeah I think working with composers is a relatively new thing for a lot of directors in South Africa.

— Composer D

Another difficulty composers mention with regards to these negotiations is clients' inability to effectively communicate their vision for what the film's music should be, a standard the film score composer must strive to satisfy. This, however, becomes difficult to do when various barriers in communication between client (typically the director) and composer arise.

Something that I think could be clearer and I think a lot of composers complain about is briefing procedures for film and advertising and it can be very vague. Briefing procedures can be... it's a very grey area because the director or the producer has got something in mind but he does not really know what he wants. So you have to do options and it's kind of a guessing game and that can turn into a very lengthy process before you get to the end product.

— Composer H

Like they'll say 'more energy,' and that could mean a million different things so you make it louder, you make it faster, you add more high hats and it's like, I don't know.

— Composer A

And then often you have to decipher the code that they use in their language because they don't have musical language so you have to like 'what does he actually mean?'

— Composer D

So people tend to try and talk music terms and you don't want to offend them and think that it's not yeah, you don't want to presume that they don't know what they're saying. So, but 90% of the time they don't.

— Composer B

Similarly, clients who can give very little direction as to what they would like the music of the film to be, yet simultaneously do not give the composer authority to make creative decisions for the film score and exercise creative agency, can also lead to frustrating working conditions for the composer.

*Clients who don't know what they want [negatively impacts composing].
And by that I mean not just clients who don't know how to communicate,
really clients who don't know what they want.* — Composer C

4.2.1.3 Having to fulfil several roles beyond that of film score composer

Composers feel they have to be a *jack of all traits* in a South African film industry that often expects composers to fulfil several roles in the post production crew due to the smaller scale of film projects. The combined list of skills perceived to be necessary mentioned across all the interviews are listed below, with those listed first having been mentioned most often:

- Knowledge of instrumental technique and how instruments are performed,
- knowledge of recording technology,
- knowledge of mixing and sound design,
- advanced sampling skills,
- skill in numerous musical styles of composition,
- administrative, business and financial knowledge,
- instrumental performance skills,
- good communication skills,
- classical training and knowledge in music theory,
- knowledge of computer hardware and software,
- knowledge of psycho-acoustics, and
- music editing skills.

In addition, with nearly no exceptions, composers report having to maintain alternative careers in order to sustain themselves. Their experience of the South African film industry is that the number of films produced each year (and the lack of budget for most) are insufficient for the majority of composers to make a living solely reliant on film score composition work.

...because you really either need to have a second job to composition, and that's why I teach and I do sound. I will not survive only on composing. So you need to do more than one thing to survive in South African... In overseas it's a different story... Especially if you get to a certain level, you can make a good living just off composing for film. Not in this country.
— Composer F

And that's the nature of the South African industry as well. It's like you have to wear many hats. It is why I write library music or why I mix shows and do sound design and work on Foley and record voices.

— Composer E

But if it wasn't for the film sound part I think I wouldn't have been able to afford the lifestyle, which is not spectacular.

— Composer F

These conditions require composers to balance the demands of various career paths simultaneously, which is perceived as less than optimal for their performance as film score composers.

Not having to do a shitload of other stuff. That always helps.

— Composer C

Having to deal with side projects or other work at the same time is not always conducive [to composing].

— Composer B

So I have those two worlds [performance and film score composition] that I have to juggle quite often.

— Composer D

4.2.1.4 Working long hours

Composers describe composing film scores as daunting, intensive and time consuming.

Because you know when you look, each piece is on version eight or more. And by the end of it you're on version 12 of each piece so it's like 79 minutes of music that you've done eight versions of each piece. And it's little changes here and there. Director wants a cymbal swell just when the person looks left and not right- whatever. And you start to sort of micro edit those things in, but when you look again you've done so many edits on each little piece.

— Composer D

And [film score composition] is extremely hard work and it's daunting.

— Composer F

...but I mean in terms of, if you compare it to onset and blah blah blah, I think for the amount of hours we put in and effort, sound even more than composers, we are really the least paid.

— Composer F

So when people pay for something, even if it's not a lot, they'll make you do reverts and reverts and keep coming back.

— Composer A

It takes precision. It takes a lot of attention, a lot of listening. Your ears get tired. And like I said, our turnarounds are too short for us to take decent breaks in between.

— Composer B

You've got to be so quick I mean, like to the point where you need to be able to write three or four cues a day, at times... They will tell you okay these are the places where they want music so they'll put temp music blah blah blah blah, but one week before the deadline they'll be like, 'oh there's eight other places we also now think we need [music].' And you've got to quickly write eight pieces, or you've got to quickly write four pieces or five pieces or two pieces whatever. And yeah that's the game actually. That's the game. — Composer D

4.2.1.5 Working with impossibly tight deadlines

Film score composition time frames vary significantly in participants' accounts due to differences in the size, budget, and purpose of film projects. However, the composers consistently mention feeling immensely pressured for time to accomplish the tasks expected of them.

...it was an hour documentary. And I think we had two weeks... to three weeks to complete the whole score. — Composer G

I need to get it done in like a day. — Composer A

Feature film yeah. Full score. Two weeks. So you really work hard. — Composer F

Time frames are also much shorter on film projects. So there's a lot of pressure, so there's a lot of stress involved. — Composer B

I think probably the biggest hurdle is time. Time is always my biggest hurdle yeah. Because of course, [I] think Hans Zimmer says it, it's like you never really finish a score, you kind of give up on it. Because you never have enough time, there are always things you can change. And again when you're doing the production yourself, the mixing the blah blah blah, there's always something that you could have done better. Your routing could have been better, your panning could have been better, the actual composition could have been better. So time is the biggest hurdle. — Composer D

4.3 POSITIVE DESCRIPTIONS OF COMPOSER'S WORK

Despite the general consensus of being underpaid, experiencing difficulties in negotiating creative decisions regarding music with the director, having to fulfil several roles beyond that of a film score composer, and working long hours to finish large amounts of work within near impossible deadlines, composers also use overtly positive terms and phrases to describe how they experience their work (fig. 4.1).

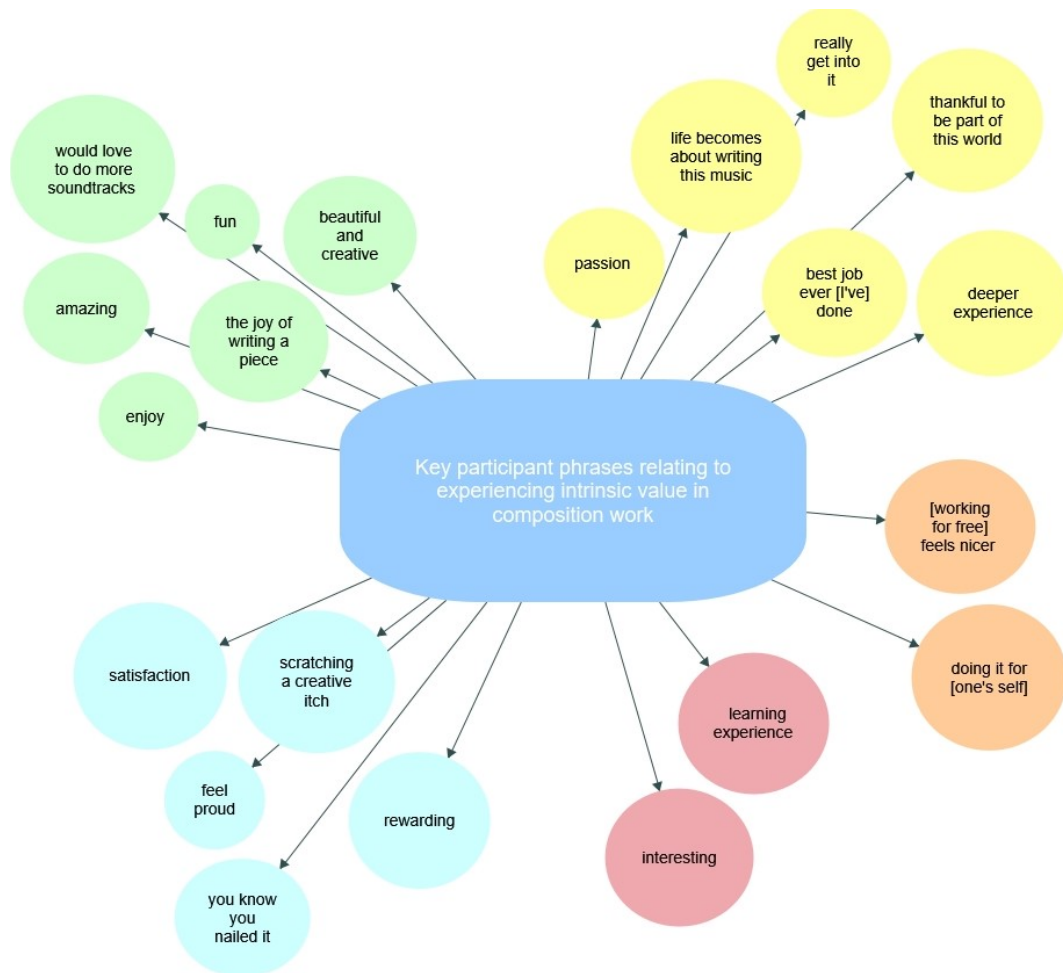


Figure 4.1: Key phrases relating to experiencing intrinsic value in composition work, mapped out and grouped into themes by colour

The simultaneously positive and negative experience of film score composition work is neatly summarised by one of the participants:

...It's difficult to compose a good product when you're not certain if what you're doing is the right thing... but then somehow always things come together as well. And then afterwards it's always you know, 'it was such an amazing experience, and you know what actually the films look great, and you know what we should do it again, it's a good learning experience.'
So there's always a down and an up. — Composer C

While the source of negative experiences can be easily identified due to their being external factors, the positive perspective points to a source of intrinsic motivation within composers' attitudes towards their work that seems to outweigh the effects of external challenges. Auger & Woodman (2016:346) describe intrinsic motivation as "a motivation to undertake an activity for one's own pleasure and interest."

What might the results of approaching one's job with predominantly intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivations be? The composers mentioned their desire for

greater creative control in various capacities (see chapter 5: Creative control). This implies that they wish for the autonomy and authority to express themselves creatively within a career that they themselves simultaneously describe as predominantly “problem solving,” in which the composer should submit to the creative vision of the client and the creative needs of the narrative. It seems that being predominantly intrinsically motivated leads composers to place underlying expectations of creative self-expression on their film score composition work, rather than simply meeting external requirements to keep the client satisfied. The next section explores creativity, intrinsic motivation, self-determination theory, and flow theory in existing literature to develop a better understanding of how film score composition might interact with and become an outlet for these concepts.

4.4 THEORIES OF INTRINSIC MOTIVATION, SELF-DETERMINATION AND FLOW: EXPLORING PARTICIPANTS’ POSITIVE EXPERIENCES WITHIN NEGATIVE CONDITIONS

4.4.1 Intrinsic motivation

4.4.1.1 Film score composition as creativity: How does literature describe creativity?

As intrinsic motivation is often studied within the realm of creativity and creative labour, it is helpful to first consider whether film score composition might realistically be perceived as an example of creative activity, and if so, in what capacity. A large body of extant literature covering the topic of creativity and intrinsic motivation relates to creative labour within organisations. This is due to a global economic environment that increasingly demands adaptability and innovation in businesses, meaning there has been a high demand for research into new knowledge creation and fostering creative qualities in employees (Stenmark, 2000:310). In this context, Auger & Woodman (2016:346-359) describe one widely accepted definition of creativity as “a process allowing new and useful products, services, ideas, or procedures to be developed,” but also as being “essentially determined by the existence of a creative personality, a high level of expertise, and strong intrinsic motivation”. Composers in this study describing film score composition processes as simply having “no formula” (Composers D and K) and having to approach each film project differently, links closely to definitions of creativity emphasising the innumerable possibilities both in options for carrying out the task and in what possible solutions might be employed for a particular task (Grabner & Speckbacher, 2010:3). Composers feel that the manner in which they should approach writing music for any given film (although certain rules of thumb may be applied) must inevitably be tailored to suit the creative needs, budget and schedule of that particular film project. Similarly, the film score as an end product is never a clear cut solution, but rather a moving target that demonstrates a negotiation between the director’s vision, the needs of the visuals and narrative, limitations such as budget and turnover, and finally the creative expression and input of the composer. Gilson *et al.* (2012:171) suggest that creativity can either be radical or incremental. They describe creativity as either

predicated upon the generation of new ideas that are revolutionary to

a field, are risk taking in nature, and focus on experimentation and paradigm shifts... [or] focused on finding new applications for existing methods, processes, or products, and adapting what is currently done (Gilson *et al.*, 2012:171).

On these grounds, one could argue that film score composition is an example of creativity, whether the composer's intention is to push boundaries of the industry's norms, or simply to work effectively in finding a unique solution for a particular film within the confines of existing cultural tropes, as both instances demand some level of idea generation and innovation from the composer.

4.4.1.2 In what ways did the participants perceive their work as creative?

The words *creative*, *creatively*, *creatives* and *creativity* were mentioned 94 times in interviews where participants were given little prompting with regards to what topics to discuss within their experiences as film score composers. On the surface one might assume that composers do not view their role as creative at all. They often speak of striving to work by practical processes, striving to problem solve, and refer to themselves as a "technician" (Composer G). However, their willingness to do film score composition work despite trying conditions in the South African film industry, and desire for more creative control, autonomy and opportunities to express themselves suggests that they still find ample reward in doing the work and want it to fulfil specific psychological needs in their lives.

Creativity and the concept of being creative in itself does not emerge as one of the most prominent topics in the accounts of the participants. When creativity was mentioned, composers in this study spoke to the concept of having, losing or desiring creative control (see chapter 5: Creative control). Thus, while an understanding of how film score composition processes and experiences might interact with creative ones was useful to understand the categories of experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work and creative control, an in depth and comprehensive exploration into film score composition as a form of creativity is beyond the scope of this study, and risks forcing a topic onto the data rather than seeking to explore those that emerge from it as per grounded theory methods.

4.4.1.3 Intrinsic motivation

Alongside knowledge and skill in one's area of expertise and that of creativity itself, Amabile *et al.* (1996) mention task motivation as one of the three factors influencing creativity. Steele *et al.* (2017:102) suggest that "motivation refers to a set of internal forces that underlie the direction, intensity, and persistence of behaviour or thought." Motivation, or the lack thereof, features detailed explorations in extant literature as a central concept within the paradigm of Self-Determination Theory (SDT). SDT is particularly concerned with identifying different types of motivation, namely intrinsic versus various kinds of extrinsic motivation, and the varying effects these have on individuals (Ryan, 2000:69). This focus on motivation is due to its importance in any context or industry where there is a need for "mobilizing others to act" (Ryan, 2000:69).

Perhaps no single phenomenon reflects the positive potential of human nature as much as intrinsic motivation, the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn (Ryan, 2000:70).

Intrinsic motivation affects the depth of attention and perseverance with which an individual tackles a creative problem or task (Auger & Woodman, 2016:344). Auger & Woodman (2016:344) liken intrinsic motivation to the amount of commitment one has to a task. According to Di Domenico & Ryan (2017:1), it encourages a vested interest and intrigue in the activity at hand, a willingness to engage with challenges, and a honing of one's knowledge and skills in order to do so. Through this process, an improvement in "enjoyment and vitality" is reached by facilitating development both socially and cognitively (Ryan, 2000:70). As identified in the participants' attitudes towards their work in this study, "intrinsic motivation arises from a person's positive reactions to the qualities of the task," rather than any reward originating outside of it (Steele *et al.*, 2017:102). In order to define intrinsic motivation, studies compare it to external motivations.

When intrinsically motivated, people engage in an activity because they find it interesting and inherently satisfying. By contrast, when extrinsically motivated, people engage in an activity to obtain some instrumentally separable consequence, such as the attainment of a reward, the avoidance of a punishment, or the achievement of some valued outcome (Di Domenico & Ryan, 2017:1).

Di Domenico & Ryan (2017:2) propose that intrinsic motivation is not a static character trait, but rather "a lifelong psychological growth function... [that] depends on ambient supports for basic psychological needs, especially those for competence (feeling effective) and autonomy (feeling volitional)." It may be that film score composers sought out conditions supporting their own sense of intrinsic motivation out of necessity. In order to gain the needed depth of commitment to pursue the best possible creative solution under stressful, time-sensitive conditions and an elusive moving target, composers are driven to depend on intrinsic motivation as the only adequate source of energy and perseverance driven by the enhanced performance, self-esteem, excitement, and determined well-being it manifests (Ryan, 2000:69).

Across extant literature, the combination of endurance and curiosity-induced problem solving has been associated with intrinsic motivation across numerous areas of life, including that of health, social contexts, workplace, education and sport (Hagger, 2011:485). Similarly, Di Domenico & Ryan (2017:1) state that

[...] over the past four decades, experimental and field research guided by self-determination theory has found intrinsic motivation to predict enhanced learning, performance, creativity, optimal development and psychological wellness.

It is therefore fitting to next examine self-determination theory as the framework through which intrinsic motivation has predominantly been studied (Di Domenico & Ryan, 2017:1).

4.5 SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

Self-determination theory [...] maintains that an understanding of human motivation requires a consideration of innate psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000:227).

SDT explores the interaction between three elements: different kinds of motivation (falling under either extrinsic or intrinsic motivations), three basic psychological needs believed to be fundamentally present in all human beings (namely autonomy, competence and relatedness), and external conditions that either encourage or frustrate those needs and motivations (Ryan & Deci, 2017:3-4). In this way, the theory expands on other more goal-oriented theories in motivation research by acknowledging and defining the psychological needs that determine the manner and intensity with which those goals are pursued (Deci & Ryan, 2000:228).

SDT is not only concerned with factors that positively influence intrinsic motivation and the fulfilment of an individual's psychological needs, but has also invested vast bodies of research into the nature of factors that undermine intrinsic motivation and therefore autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000:247). The main factors proposed by SDT contributing to these are "environmental and interpersonal" (Hagger, 2011:485). The extent to which these basic psychological needs are not met and intrinsic motivation frustrated due to external factors or conditions, is theorised to be directly related to an individual's psychological well-being in that context (Deci & Ryan, 2000:227).

The basic psychological needs proposed by SDT are described in terms of an "organismic-dialectical metatheory" (Deci & Ryan, 2000:228). That is to say, self-determination theorists work from the standpoint that the nature of human beings is to instinctively pursue engaging challenges that promote cognitive growth, as well as overall well-being gained from psychological needs fulfilment (Ryan & Deci, 2017:4).

The fullest representations of humanity show people to be curious, vital, and self-motivated. At their best, they are agentic and inspired, striving to learn; extend themselves; master new skills; and apply their talents responsibly (Ryan, 2000:68).

It is, however, suggested that these natural human tendencies are not only subject to, but vastly influenced by external social factors (Ryan, 2000:70). The dialogue, then, occurs between the individual's inner striving for needs fulfilment, and external factors from their environment that play a role in the extent to which those needs are supported or frustrated (Ryan & Deci, 2017:8).

SDT encompasses six mini-theories that focus on different sub concepts elaborating on aspects of the broader concepts mentioned above (Ryan & Deci, 2017:123-318). These are:²

1. Cognitive Evaluation Theory
2. Organismic Integration Theory
3. Causality Orientations Theory

²see Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017) for a detailed explanation of each.

4. Basic Psychological Needs Theory
5. Goal Contents Theory
6. Relationships Motivation Theory

4.5.1 Cognitive evaluation theory and intrinsic motivation

The first of the mini-theories within SDT was of particular interest in the context of this study as its purpose was to further explore intrinsic motivation and elaborate on variations in experiencing it (Ryan, 2000:70). The mini-theory does so with a particular focus on the need for competence and autonomy, and aims to identify and explain the particular contextual factors that encourage intrinsic motivation, or frustrates its natural tendency to manifest itself (Ryan, 2000:70).

Among its findings, cognitive evaluation theory suggests that external rewards presented as a highest priority in the context of a particular task will tend to reduce intrinsic motivation, as individuals experience their purpose for working on the activity as originating from outside themselves “emerging from coercion or another’s control” (Steele *et al.*, 2017:105). Ryan (2000:70) demonstrates that this is because individuals also need to feel that their actions are self-determined in order to fulfil their need for competence. Other than external rewards, communication and feedback representing the social element of one’s context are also seen as influential in determining an individual’s experience of competence, alongside the extent to which the challenge is optimal for the individual’s level of expertise (Ryan, 2000:70). In cognitive evaluation theory studies, feedback reflecting negatively on an individual’s competency was found to reduce intrinsic motivation while feedback that reflected positively on the individual’s competence intensified it (Ryan, 2000:70).

Individual motivation among entrepreneurs in the creative and cultural industries: A self-determination perspective (Cnossen, 2019) is a study that intentionally employed an SDT orientation in the context of exploring motivation amongst “individual entrepreneurs in the creative and cultural industries” (Cnossen, 2019:389). It bares similarities to the current research as Cnossen’s (2019) main concern was to ascertain why individuals choose to work within creative industries despite challenging conditions referred to as an insecure, strenuous and fast-paced environment (Cnossen, 2019:389), a notion that *experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work* was originally based on as a category.

Cnossen’s (2019) study involved self-completed questionnaires filled out by participants pursuing careers such as “visual artist, architect, theatre manager, cultural entrepreneur, art director or singer” (Cnossen, 2019:394) in order to examine the relationships between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, and the three basic psychological needs proposed by SDT, within a creative industry context in particular. Among the findings, the following is proposed in their study:

- intrinsic motivation is more prominent than extrinsic motivation among creative entrepreneurs,
- intrinsic motivation is even more prominent among creative entrepreneurs who perceive their creative expertise and talent as being above average,

- when perceiving their own creative expertise and talent as being above average, creative entrepreneurs expect to receive some form of compensation (financially or in terms of recognition), and
- that creative entrepreneurs are more prone to experiencing tension between “autonomy and commercial viability rather than... between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations,” despite predictions based on the extant literature (Cnossen, 2019:397-398).

As seen in the last two points, Cnossen (2019) found that extrinsic motivations in the context of individuals working in the creative industry did not necessarily have a purely negative impact.

Despite the stereotyped image of the intrinsically motivated creative who is driven by vocation and reluctant to receiving any mundane reward such as money, the present study shows that there is a clear link between someone’s creative competence and extrinsic motivation as well (Cnossen, 2019:396).

The final point involving individuals’ sense of autonomy was drawn from findings that suggested that as creative entrepreneurs’ experiences of autonomy increased, their expectations of extrinsic motivations decreased.

Creative entrepreneurs experience a pleasure in doing what they want to be doing while trying to make a living out of those activities, which sometimes requires them to give up on total freedom of action (Cnossen, 2019:396).

Similar to this study on creative entrepreneurs, the current research addresses a relatively unexplored area in extant literature (albeit less intentionally) identified by Cnossen (2019) regarding the relationships between different kinds of motivations and SDT’s psychological needs fulfilment in the context of individual entrepreneurs doing creative work in particular (Cnossen, 2019:390).

Furthermore, Cnossen (2019:396) found that out of the three basic psychological needs, experiencing competence more prominently influenced how motivated participants were in their creative setting, whereas autonomy lowered their expectations of external rewards. An interesting distinction is made between a feeling of competence related to creative activity, and that of entrepreneurial skills. Participants in the study only connected feelings of competence in the former area with their level of motivation (Cnossen, 2019:396). The third basic psychological need in SDT, relatedness, seemed to have less of an effect on motivation in the context of their study. This may have been due to the sample of creative entrepreneurs targeted.

This study and the current research intersect on several topics. First, both studies rely on participants’ own perceptions of their motivations, needs and experiences. Second, the concepts of SDT, Flow Theory, self-actualisation and intrinsic motivation are found to be applicable in both studies. Third, the studies relate the basic psychological needs of SDT to scenarios in the creative industry in similar ways.

The current research furthers that of Cnossen (2019:396) in that it addresses another population sample, both geographically (Cnossen’s (2019) study took place in

the Netherlands) and in terms of the type of creative industry in which individuals were working. The latter difference is of particular interest as film score composers, though working in a creative industry and often as freelancers, are required to work within a team including directors, producers, music editors etc.. This places the current study in an ideal position to further explore the psychological need of relatedness among a participant group for whom it would be more relevant.

While industries such as architecture, fashion, film and television feature intense teamwork during long days (circumstances that could satisfy the need for relatedness), other professions such as in the visual arts, graphic design and web development, are carried out in splendid isolation (Cnossen, 2019:396).

Another factor that may have masked findings involving relatedness in Cnossen's (2019:396) study is the manner in which relatedness questions were asked of participants. A question such as "How strongly do you feel related to people doing the same activity?" (Cnossen, 2019:393) neglects to investigate participants' feelings towards those doing different activities to them, but that have a direct influence on their own work, such as the relationship between a film score composer and a director. As all their relatedness questions asked about others doing the same activity as them, these potential findings involving creative team relatedness were unlikely to reflect in the results.

4.6 FLOW THEORY

I guess for me, it is getting into that zone, that sort of total focus kind of zone, where everything else is, you're not thinking about it. It's just out of the question and then you just flow basically and that is absolutely the ideal.
— Composer K

Another theory that is closely related to SDT is Flow Theory. It may be that composers' positive experiences in this study involve a state of flow in their work, characterised by a sensation of all encompassing immersion and focus in an activity where an equilibrium between the individual's expertise and skill, and the challenge of the task is experienced (Beard, 2015:353).

Flow Theory was first coined and explored by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who positioned the concept within the realm of positive psychology (Beard, 2015:353). Tse *et al.* (2020:171) describes the concept as follows:

Flow is a subjective experience characterized by (a) complete concentration on tasks at hand, (b) heightened sense of control, (c) loss of self-consciousness, (d) merging of action and awareness, (e) distortion of sense of time, and (f) autotelic experience.

The conditions needed to support this experience are seen as clear and prompt feedback, a well-grasped understanding of the goal, and an experience of equilibrium between one's skill and that needed for the task at hand (Tse *et al.*, 2020:171).

4.6.1 Comparing flow theory and SDT

Flow Theory and SDT intersect in terms of the central role and prominence of intrinsic motivation in their explorations of doing a task for its own sake rather than for externally motivated reasons (Deci & Ryan, 2000:260). The two theories differ in their explanations of intrinsic theory, however, in that SDT identifies the satisfaction or thwarting of three basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness as being an important influencing aspect, and thus provides a more detailed explanation of the nature of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000:261). Flow Theory, on the other hand, predominantly places its focus on the experience of competence in its preoccupation with the challenge-expertise balance, without fully situating competence in a broader context of psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000:261).

4.7 CONCLUSION

Experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work is a category that emerged from the data of this study and refers to the notion that composers' main motivation to do such work resides in an intrinsic motivation (finding more enjoyment in the work itself than in external rewards). When examined through an SDT lens, this intrinsic motivation relates to the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. How these needs interact and manifest themselves within the context of film score composers working in the South African film industry will also be discussed in the next chapter. Similar to SDT, Flow Theory provides another possible lens through which to view this category, focusing on a feeling of enjoyment the composers may have been chasing, based on a desire to experience balance between composers' expertise and a task that provides the ideal creative challenge to inspire intrinsic motivation.

As intrinsic motivation, creativity, SDT and Flow Theory are each sizeable concepts in their own right, an extensive literature review on the vast body of research addressing these topics would be beyond the scope of this study.

Category 2: Creative control

So something that I've definitely noticed is that if you're not being paid for something, you've got a lot more freedom.

— Composer A

This is the first segment of data leading to Creative Control as a category in this study. I asked myself what kind of freedom the composer was referring to here. Later in the same paragraph, he mentions that paid work is “something that’s kind of been particularly annoying” (Composer A), a rather odd comment that can now be better understood in the context of intrinsic value in the previous chapter. He mentions this alongside the apparently undesirable task of having to recompose music at the request of clients and being told that what he had written was not what they wanted, which “often [felt] a bit soul destroying” (Composer A). This suggests to me that he considers the ability to make decisions about the score, or taking control, a type of freedom, where he has the ability to refuse to make certain changes to his music as a result of doing work for free. Surprisingly, this privilege seems to outweigh the importance of being paid. With this in mind, I coded that first data segment with the following analytical handle: ‘Gaining creative control if unpaid work.’ During the process of line-by-line-coding, I initially grouped similar comments relating to creative freedom or leeway together in a category. It soon became clear that when speaking about creative freedom, composers are in fact referring to a kind of creative control, meaning the ability to make specific decisions about the film score and how they work on it as they see fit. They identify various factors encroaching on this sense of control that originates internally, from the client, or from limitations surrounding the project itself.

After aspects of SDT emerged as pertinent during the analysis and exploration of literature on the previous topic (experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work), the concept of creative control is similarly investigated in terms of perspectives provided by SDT. I did this because concerns specifically related to the basic psychological need for autonomy proposed by SDT seems to effectively and theoretically articulate the sections of my participants’ accounts that I collected in this category. To identify further perspectives

from which to explore creative control, I searched for existing literature with the following key phrases: creative control, autonomy, creative autonomy, creative freedom.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Creative control first existed as two complimentary categories, where composers' comments were grouped as either *having creative control* or *losing creative control*. These two are combined in this chapter in order to contribute towards a broader discussion of how creative control might be defined according to participants' accounts and from various theoretical perspectives in the literature, as well as the factors influencing it in the context of film score composition work.

As mentioned in the reflection, having creative control (for the composers) means having freedom to be creative and authority to make decisions about the score. It could thus be likened to a feeling of autonomy. Instances of losing creative control are described in terms of limitations that denied composers the ability to enact the full extent of their creativity. It is associated with a lack of choices when making decisions about their composition work. Rather than having creative agency, composers who feel they have lost creative control see their role in the project as being that of a mere "technician" (Composer G). They are there to execute the creative vision of the client and navigate other external limitations as a "technical challenge" (Composer F) rather than contribute creatively themselves. Losing creative control in extreme cases is typically associated with overly controlling clients who seek to micromanage the composer.

Factors that emerge in relation to having, losing or desiring creative control in the accounts of film score composers in this study are discussed below in the form of topics grouped into three types of limitations affecting creative control: namely limitations from the client, limitations from the composers themselves, and limitations from the industry. How these relate to and influence one another according to the participants will be demonstrated thereafter.

5.2 LIMITATIONS FROM THE CLIENT

These kinds of limitations involve the relationship between the composer and the client. The word 'client' here refers to directors, producers and any other individual approaching the composer in relation to the creation of a film music score for visuals without perhaps formally holding any particular title. However, it was most often interactions with a director that composers make reference to in the context of having to negotiate decisions surrounding the score.

Clients affect composers' experiences of creative control in two ways. First, they establish the amount of freedom awarded to composers to give creative input, and to choose the manner in which they work towards creative goals for the score. Second, clients affect composers' creative control in the extent to which they successfully make their own creative vision for the film and score known to the composer. These interactions between composers and clients and their influence on creative control

resemble discussions in the literature surrounding factors influencing whether or not individuals are able to experience autonomy in a creative working environment.

5.2.1 Freedom to be creative

5.2.1.1 Wanting freedom

Film score composers in this study desire freedom provided by the client to both express their own creative input regarding the score, as well as the authority to carry it out, thus enabling the composer to be creative in their own eyes. Instances where they are asked to do more than simply carry out a set of instructions and can engage with the score in a more creative and proactive way are described favourably.

And then you get the other [type of director]. And I've experience a bit of all three. You get the other one who totally lets you... be free and that's it. Has a little bit of input here and there but generally you are... writing the score. — Composer D

I guess what was nice about [a low budget environment] was that... the idea wasn't clean cut at the beginning. So... I could input a lot of what I had to offer creatively. — Composer G

I guess both [ad and film industries], are great. I mean, at the end of the day I'm making music, and that's fun, so it's a fun job. But working on films just feels... like you can be more of an artist, you can be more creative. Like working on the feature film was definitely the best job I've ever done and I definitely did enjoy it more than working on the ads. Because when you're working on ads, it's quick, it's a minute or two minutes, it's selling a product. It's a lot more shallow. — Composer L

You want to feel like a creative person making stuff but then you also part of an industry and... there is a kind of work-a-day thing that happens in film music that yeah, sometimes it is just a job is a job... I think most of the time it feels like there's enough freedom to put something into it that's not just about delivering on briefs... Something more interesting, artistic... — Composer K

And then you get guys who put temp music in there. That's the other category of director and producer that says okay well, 'this is just [to] give you an idea,' and they're open, they're really open for you to be creative. — Composer F

5.2.1.2 Autonomy in the literature

In *Becoming Creative: Insights from Musicians in a Diverse World* (Hill, 2009:4-5), the author lists agency as the most important of six components of creative activity. The book draws from the creative experiences of a diverse group of music practitioners from various contexts and industries. Agency, here, is defined as personal autonomy, meaning the ability and opportunity to decide for one's self how

and what to act on. In the context of musicians, it means “having the permission and authority to make one’s own decisions determining musical sound and meaning” (Hill, 2009:4-5). As described earlier in this chapter, autonomy is one of the three basic psychological needs influencing motivation in SDT. In this context, Ryan & Deci (2017:10) defines autonomy according to the extent to which an individual’s actions are self-regulated and originating from a genuine personal interest in the task at hand. When a sense of autonomy is not present, an individual’s experience of competence and self-efficacy inevitably suffer as well, leading to decreased intrinsic motivation (Ryan, 2000:70). SDT explores autonomy as a component that encourages intrinsic motivation, where environments that encourage an individual to perceive that they have control and influence over their situation and actions, as well as having their feelings acknowledged, in turn increase their intrinsic motivation and thus commitment to that particular task (Ryan, 2000:70). In the context of a teacher-student dynamic, environments and leadership that encourage autonomy increases willingness to tackle challenges and curiosity in the student (Ryan, 2000:71). Increased autonomy is further believed to positively influence creativity, self-assurance, difficult problem solving and cognitive adaptability (Deci & Ryan, 2000:234).

Contributing factors that have been found to frustrate an individual’s autonomy include both positive and negative external motivations if they are presented as salient and overwhelm intrinsic motivations. Examples of the former would be financial compensation or acknowledgement, and examples of the latter include “threats, deadlines, directives, pressured evaluations, and imposed goals” (Ryan, 2000:70). External factors such as these decrease intrinsic motivation by shifting the individual’s perception of the cause (or motivation for) their actions, known as a “perceived locus of causality” (Deci & Ryan, 2000:234), towards an external rather than internal origin (Deci & Ryan, 2000:234). To return to comments made by composers in this study, the factors prone to reducing feelings of autonomy described in the literature mirror participant experiences (such as receiving too much or too detailed instruction, and working with time, budget and style limitations that prescribed certain aspects of the score) that were reported to frustrate the composers’ creative freedom and control.

5.2.1.3 Micromanaging clients

The manner in which clients approach and negotiate creative decisions regarding the score with the composer is sometimes experienced as too controlling. In these cases, composers describe being micro-managed by the client and this is associated with feelings of losing creative freedom and thus, creative control.

Some directors are too, you know, they tell you what they want musically, instead of just directing the music, they literally telling you what to compose, like down to the note, which... kind of takes away from your creative process because now they telling you what to do. And you might not think it works but they think it works. So then you kind of have to just do it. So that can happen quite often and they don’t really know a lot

about music. So they don't really know what they saying. But then you have to try and do what they telling you to do. — Composer L

...having the leeway to write what I would like to write and for the director to be open enough to the musical ideas of the composer, rather than having a strict idea of what he wants, because often... it does become subjective. — Composer G

Composers prefer narrative or descriptive instruction over specific instruction containing musical terms used to control the score “down to the note” (Composer L). This demonstrates their desire for more creative control, as the former allows a composer freedom in *how* they approach and achieve the general creative vision of the client, whereas the latter demands a process of adhering to specific steps established by the client in order to meet their creative goals for the score. As mentioned in *chapter 4: Experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work*, situations where clients have a little musical knowledge or training seems to aggravate this effect. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to do so, an investigation into the types of composer-director relationships and the factors influencing them could be valuable in helping both parties to navigate these interactions.

It is clear that there is a tendency for film score composers in this study to strive for maximum creativity as an ideal condition in which film score composition processes might flourish. Assuming clients similarly see value in encouraging composers' creativity as a means to achieve the best possible result for their film's score, the examination of existing literature in how client-composer interactions might nurture or thwart creativity in composers below is deemed necessary.

5.2.1.4 Effects of close monitoring on autonomy

Managing creativity is about raising the probability for creative acts to happen by stimulating the factors that works in favour of creativity (Stenmark, 2000:310).

Similarly, composers in this study feel that actions and behaviours of clients in their interactions with the composers they hire, affect their creativity. A recent study by Lee *et al.* (2018) explored the relationship between self-efficacy and creativity within a manager-employee dynamic (finding that although a sense of self-efficacy aids creativity, self-efficacy in excess had negative impacts that again reduced creativity), as well as the influence of close monitoring on this relational trend. This is in alignment with trait activation theory, in which close monitoring is described as a situational cue that can reliably be assumed to result in less creativity due to its incompatibility with self-efficacy (Tett & Burnett, 2003). In the context of a supervisor-student dynamic,

[...] supervisor close monitoring refers to the extent to which supervisors keep a close watch on their employees and ensure that they do exactly what they are told, perform tasks in expected ways, and do not do things that the supervisors might disapprove of (Zhou, 2003:414).

This definition bares a resemblance to interactions with clients where the composers in this study feel micro-managed and lacking in creative freedom. Similarly, Lee *et al.* (2018:378) found that close monitoring, seen as an example of an extrinsic pressure, reduced self-efficacy in the individual being monitored and thus their ability to be creative. In this way, increased close monitoring—and decreased self-efficacy as a result—led to employees experiencing less job autonomy (Lee *et al.*, 2018:386).

Lee *et al.* (2018:380) describes several negative effects of close monitoring administered from a managerial role or supervisor.

When employees' work progress is tracked, they are not involved in decision-making, and their job autonomy and self-determination are limited, and they are more likely to exhibit poor attitudes, minimal effort, and decreased creativity (Lee *et al.*, 2018:380).

Studies in the extant literature examining the underlying psychological triggers of such behaviours find that close monitoring reduces feelings of responsibility and autonomy, as well as the safety and comfort required for individuals to confidently make decisions (Lee *et al.*, 2018:380). The result is that individuals have a far narrower mindset in how to approach creative problems (Deci *et al.*, 1989). It stands to reason that in the context of film score composition, composers would be more likely to consider a wider range of possibilities and draw from a broader range of ideas when experiencing less close monitoring from clients, and in so doing come to the best possible solution for the film's score.

Employees facing low supervisor close monitoring experience task autonomy and are relatively free to apply their skills and novel ways of thinking, and thus may activate their self-efficacy to increase their creativity (Lee *et al.*, 2018:381).

Naturally, as in most manager-employee scenarios, it is very rarely possible to remove supervision or monitoring completely. Managers still need to provide guidance to ensure that the company's goals are met (Lempiälä & Vanharanta, 2018:63), supervisors to ensure that students meet the standards of academic research, and directors or clients to ensure creative coherency of the film as a whole. For this reason, Lee *et al.* (2018:385-386) proposes seeking “effective interactions and open communication” in order to navigate this. From the perspective of the composers in this study, this would involve narrative descriptions of what the client would like the score to achieve rather than specific and overly instructive guidance regarding musical elements such as style, instrumentation, harmony etc. and continuous progress tracking efforts, both of which are aimed at method rather than creative end goals.

5.2.1.5 Open-mindedness and trust from clients

Composers in turn associate open-mindedness as an attitude related to the amount of trust clients have in them.

And I wish in [an] ideal world, that directors could have that sense of freedom to the composer and just say, 'listen, I trust you.' But again, that goes back to the relationship between director and composer. And

I'm sure at this stage now when Hans Zimmer is asked to do a job, the director or producer is just like, 'you know what, we know what you can do, go wild.' — Composer G

Very often you also get good directors who will give you the leeway to create and trust, but it's always a 50/50. — Composer B

One would expect that this trust is based on the client's perception of the composer's prowess and reputation with regards to film score composition. Another influencing factor, however, could be the extent to which clients believe a composer is able and willing to create something the client would connect with and feel works effectively with their film. Rather than accepting a score on the grounds of the composer's professional opinion, composers perceive that clients want to know that the composer is in step with their ideas. The ways in which clients and composers need to trust each other could be an insightful area of exploration in future research.

When trust is absent or lacking in the client-composer relationship, composer's experiences of working with a client are decidedly more negative. Not only does this reduce their sense of creative control, but in extreme cases their own trust in their competency as a composer.

And it was impossible to compose for people where they clearly just have no trust in what you're doing. Then nothing that you do is ever okay, and that eventually made me doubt my abilities as a composer, which I think is really just unethical. — Composer C

Composers describe processes of attempting to gain and increase clients' trust by means of *rapport building*, a concept that emerged from the data as an equally important key concern alongside *creative control* and *experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work*. The topic of *rapport building* will thus be explored in the next chapter.

5.2.1.6 Use of reference tracks

Although clients' use of reference tracks (alternatively known as temp tracks) hold both positive and negative connotations with regards to creative control in the data, composers associate it with losing control over the creative vision for the score and the method with which to achieve it. A client's familiarity and attachment to reference music is described as a mode of limitation placed on the composer's creative control, as they are expected to recreate music similar to that of the reference track rather than provide their own creative input.

The directors had a different relationship with temp tracks. With some of them, that's the holy grail, you know? And it's a thing we call Demolitis, you know? Like they get used to the demo sound and then they just cannot imagine it without that and no matter what you do. — Composer I

Composer K further experiences this as a barrier to his natural creative process, resolving to exclude it from his composing procedures as early as possible.

I mean often we work with temps obviously and that can be a barrier to getting into the sort of flow zone I find. So yeah, [I] definitely try to have as brief a listen to the temp [and] engagement with it as possible really.

— Composer K

The participants typically describe projects positively when no reference tracks are involved, in that the client is not yet accustomed to seeing the visuals with music, thus giving the composer more room to influence the type of sound employed in the final film score.

It's such freedom and everything to not be straitjacketed by any other music that's touched the images, and you know that the director is coming totally fresh.

— Composer K

And the feature film, I was also just given complete creative freedom, which was, really great, but also scary I guess, because you don't have any boundaries to work with and she was like, 'do whatever you want, however you feel.'

— Composer L

Obviously the number one is if you can if you have that blank canvas that's great. Also that can be daunting.

— Composer F

On the other hand, as seen in the comments made by Composer L and F, too much freedom over what the score should sound like also has the potential to negatively impact creative control as this becomes overwhelming and leaves room for insecurity regarding the client's acceptance of the score. For this reason, clarity of project outcomes emerged as an important aspect of creative freedom.

5.2.2 Clarity of project outcomes

5.2.2.1 Balancing freedom and clarity of outcomes

The participants' desire for creative freedom, then, is balanced by the desire for clear but open-minded input from the client in order to understand their needs and take those into account when making decisions about the score. The combination of wanting more freedom, along with clear boundaries to that freedom, can thus more aptly be described as a desire for creative control or autonomy, where authority to make creative decisions and how to follow through with them is combined with (and often dependent on) being in the loop and having the necessary knowledge regarding the project requirements in order to make informed decisions.

I don't like too much instruction, basically. I find that can be limiting. So it's really hard to say actually. I mean, you do want a director to say... what they want, to be able to communicate it, but also you want them to give you some freedom to do what you think.

— Composer K

It is nice if someone gives you feedback, that they know exactly what they want, then things become a lot easier.

— Composer J

5.2.2.2 The benefits of clear outcomes

Due to participant comments such as those of Composer K and J above, it would appear that composers experience benefits from understanding what the client wants and expects from the score. In *Rethinking the Control-Freedom Paradox in Innovation: Toward a Multifaceted Understanding of Creative Freedom* (Lempiälä & Vanharanta, 2018), the authors look at the value of intrinsic motivation as an indicator of personal interest in a particular creative task (as in the vast body of extant literature on creative freedom and in the current study), but propose that another equally important factor in motivating and managing individuals in creative work is an individual's perceived ability to positively contribute toward organisational goals. In the context of organisations, Lempiälä & Vanharanta (2018:63) point out that when the importance of bringing creative employees into the loop regarding organisational goals is neglected in the name of championing creative freedom, “managers can end up protecting innovators from important motivational factors,” in that they become excluded from the broader purpose toward which they are working. The intended freedom thus becomes a “restrained agency” where the creative innovators are not given the opportunity to make the organisation's goals their own (Lempiälä & Vanharanta, 2018:76). Job autonomy involves not only freedom regarding the specifics of the outcome of creative work but also freedom in how that work is approached and handled (Liu *et al.*, 2016:242), neither of which are possible for an individual to experience when working in the dark with regards to what they are working towards on a larger scale. Translated into the context of film score composition, this phenomena relates to composers wanting a client to know “what they want” (Composer K) and communicate it, so that it becomes possible to not only keep the client's creative goals in mind, but respond to and integrate that creative vision into their own, thus taking ownership of the score's envisioned outcomes and experiencing autonomy. This can be described as “strategic agency” (Lempiälä & Vanharanta, 2018:64).

The manner in which clients communicated their needs thus affect how well the intended outcome for the score is understood by the composer, and thus influences their ability to exercise autonomy in how they tackle the creative problem of meeting that requirement. The practical benefits of understanding the client's end goals also seems to extend to creative benefits as well. Composers reported using boundaries and starting points created by the client's ideas for the music as a spring board for their own creativity.

[I] always found it was easy to compose when... the whole seed isn't planted by you. Like there's a frame or something to give... 'okay, there's a song: this is what it's about.'
— Composer I

Perhaps the fact that the composers in this study routinely refer to their work as problem-solving both directly (Composers B, C, and I) and indirectly, is not only indicative of a tendency to approach creative work in a practical manner, but also in relation to negotiating their autonomy as film score composers. The concept of problem-solving in this context implies a process in which one creatively works towards a desired solution. In order to do so, the desired solution must be understood. In the context of film score composers, then, the requirements of a project as set out by the client is not always a purely negative limitation, but rather potentially

provides a clear outcome towards which the composer can work or problem-solve, granted they are able to fully understand what it is the client wants for the music, and can thus experience autonomy as they are able to make informed decisions regarding how they work towards that desired outcome. *Losing* creative control is thus in some ways not always experienced negatively.

Composer H places further importance on clarity of the client's desired outcome. He reasons that composers' efforts are rendered ineffective when lacking insight into what the client wants due to the fact that disregarding the client's ideas is not an option for composers in a film project context. Although he also wants to experience a sense of creative freedom, Composer H describes an environment of complex hierarchical creative entities and opinions within which he has to function. Composing with freedom for him, as with the other composers, is not composing with utter abandon and disregard for other elements of the final product, but rather from a clear understanding of the boundaries within which to work, and a respect for the collective goal toward which he is working alongside an entire creative team.

And it's not always up to me to decide what style. It's mostly dictated by whoever is doing it so, the clearer the message is from the other side, the quicker I'll get to something that they like. Because at the end of the day, it's not my soundtrack. It's a soundtrack for a movie. I'm not making my own music. I'm making something for a story line. So I have to work out what is going to convey that message the best in a way that will work for the movie, but something that the director is envisioning for this, because it's his vision really. I'm just helping him get there. I'm just one of the people that help him get somewhere. I'm not there to put my own stamp on it. — Composer H

5.2.2.3 Positive use of reference tracks in clarifying creative outcomes

Previously discussed in terms of their limiting effects on composers' freedom, reference tracks are also described as a potentially effective method through which clients could accurately communicate their thoughts and ideas for the film's music, granted they remained open to the professional opinion and creative input of the composer. This further allows for a less daunting start to the composition process.

But also the ideal situation is if they put reference in, and they say 'that's more or less what we like but we're not attached. We... haven't fallen in love with it. You can replace it.' That's great. You know because then it gives you 'ah okay well they were thinking this and that.' And you get an idea of what the director also likes and the editor. — Composer F

I was lucky in the sense that the editor, he had quite an idea for mood. So he put drips and drabs of music in already in some places that kind of gave me an idea. Okay, the director and the editor was thinking along those lines. So that was the starting point. — Composer I

A better understanding of the client's needs from the start is perceived to result in fewer revisions of the score needing to be done, which is also associated with *having creative control*.

But in the professional world, if it's not to the liking of the director in the end of the day and a producer, then it just does a back and forth game all the time.
— Composer G

That's why I like writing for library [music], because I was always nervous of directors and I don't like having to redo something that I like.
— Composer E

5.3 LIMITATIONS FROM SELF

Limitations composers place on themselves due to how they perceive their self worth, competence and authority within the composer-client dynamic also affects their sense of creative control. This ties in with the concept of self-efficacy and is typically mentioned in the context of composer-client relational and power dynamics when working on low or no budget projects.

5.3.1 Creative control and self-efficacy

As seen in the very first quote from Composer A at the start of this chapter on creative control (as well as in quotes from other participants thereafter), being paid less often gives the composer more authority over the score and thus creative control. However, this is not always the case. Composer A later mentioned a project in which clients paying very little were experienced as demanding and wanting several changes for the score. He attributes this to clients having a tendency to feel more entitled to occupy his time when paying, even if the payment is immensely insufficient. Power relations between composer and client could naturally also come into play here. This scenario was experienced by a young composer at the start of his career. It is likely that he would have been less inclined to hold an authoritative position in the relationship than an older and more experienced film score composer might have. Composer K, who had been involved in the film score composition industry for a number of years already, demonstrated this trend in one's professional career in the following comment:

I feel in many ways, the point of me in film is that I think a lot about film music. I do feel entitled in some ways to have my say about what I think, how best the music could work, or how it could be most interesting in a film really, and make a sort of positive contribution to the project in that way, rather than feeling always... And I've always felt very overly grateful for every job I got over there. I mean, I do still here a bit. I think I was maybe a little bit more subservient than I am now and probably feeling less confident to say, 'we could go with that. You know, we could follow the temp [track] in this example as closely as you seem to want to, but we could also have a bit more fun with it and throw other things at it and see what what works.'
— Composer K

In this way, a progression of creative control over a composer's professional work lifespan can be traced. Creative control, then, might be somewhat influenced by a composer's sense of self-efficacy or confidence in their professional opinion, which

has the potential to develop and increase over time. This is likely to interact with external factors such as the client’s attitude and attributes of the project itself.

5.3.2 Self-efficacy in literature

Self-efficacy is “belief in one’s capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 2000:16). Liu *et al.* (2016:242) describes creative self-efficacy as the manner in which one perceives their own capability and likelihood of completing creative objectives. Self-efficacy is a concept often addressed and explored in literature concerning notions of creativity and is believed to influence individual’s motivation in doing complex and creatively-oriented tasks (Lee *et al.*, 2018:377). It has a particularly large impact in working environments where ambiguity is typically present (Lee *et al.*, 2018:377). This can be seen in creative industries and environments such as the film industry, where every project invites unique challenges, subjective goals and interplay between various creative elements that need to collectively contribute to a coherent whole. Interestingly, excessive amounts of self-efficacy can have as negative an impact as having too little, as a certain level of self-doubt serves as motivation to pursue various options and alternative plans when presenting creative work (Lee *et al.*, 2018:378). Too much self-efficacy can, in this sense, result in a kind of creative laziness or passivity.

5.4 LIMITATIONS FROM THE INDUSTRY

Practical limitations relating to the nature of each specific film project are also capable of affecting composers’ creative control. These include limitations to budget and (by implication) instrumentation and recordings, limitations to the amount of time available to work on a film score, available film genres and thus film score styles being made in the South African film industry, and finally inherent limitations in the nature of film score composition itself.

5.4.1 Budget: limitations on instrumentation and recording

Composer’s mention very direct affects on their creative control that emerge from limited budget. When asked to describe their ideal world, larger budgets that would not determine specific choices of instrumentation and whether or not recordings could be done were described as desirable.

Perfect world is director says write any music, like express yourself. Write music for my film that’s an expression of yourself. So you’re free from... You can use any instruments, there’s budget for anything.

— Composer D

Similarly, having to use samples due to limited budget would in itself demand certain decisions to be made by the composer in order to work around the limitations of the samples.

So again like I said, we sample most of the things we score and sometimes that hinders the composition as well because you can only do what the samples can do. If you try and create something outside of what the samples can do, you end up fighting with the samples for too long and never getting to a good enough sound. — Composer B

...and then being able to work with musicians from an early stage definitely is what I prefer and having the freedom to both not be too locked in with other people's music that's already there kind of thing, but then also not too locked in by software or sample libraries and yeah. But then ultimately having the budget to record whatever the film needs. — Composer K

In other ways, composing with samples seems to increase composers' sense of creative control where composers are either more accustomed to writing with samples and thus saw this as their comfort zone, or because they then have control over the track as a whole. Rather than recording a sound by means of another musician (who in this context would essentially function as a middle man), the composer has sole custody of every aspect of the track's production.

But and I think having the virtual instruments also helps my writing. I mean, that's how I learned to compose music, is on the computer with these virtual instruments. So that's where I'm most comfortable and you also get an idea of the timbres and the sounds you're going to use and yeah. — Composer L

With film music at least you have the time to sit with samples and shape and edit and build quality into a track, into produced track. — Composer C

Composer C's comment makes reference to a feeling of helplessness with regards to situations where musicians being recorded are under-prepared or substandard, resulting in a 'low quality' expression of his composition. When composing an entirely sampled track, he has more control over the end product (within the confines of what the samples are able to do, that is), than when involving the performance of musicians in order to realise composition ideas. Although most composers in this study still indicate preferring recording live instruments over creating purely sampled tracks when given the opportunity, several mentioned similar challenges when working with musicians.

So if you put a session orchestra together, what we tend to do is just to pick the best from all the orchestras and then put them together and you see there's not much time for rehearsal and just hope they crack it. — Composer F

And the main thing was that they weren't really up to scratch? I don't know, I find with string players, they're kind of a bit pitchy until they're professional and then they're good. — Composer A

...there was budget for a few players. But I recorded them and didn't use them because my plugin sounded better. My plugin sounded better! It sounded more in tune.
— Composer D

5.4.2 Deadlines and tight turnarounds

By nature, having limited time to do a certain task diminishes one's control over creative decisions where certain ideas would exceed the deadline.

...it was an hour documentary. And I think we had two... to three weeks to complete the whole score...
— Composer G

I'd also like more time to practice working in a DAW and working in samples. And I mean you don't really have time to do that when you're working on a film. Because then there's a deadline, there's a very tight turnaround.
— Composer B

...which within that paradigm was very good because there wouldn't have been time to compose music and then cut film to music.
— Composer C

Most of it is rushed jobs, and usually music and sound is right at the end and they unfortunately take the flack.
— Composer F

So I mean in my experience it's usually at the end of the project it's like, a case of running out of time. So for bass sounds I have to go to Massive or other bass design sub-bass sounds. I mean I own a few analogue synths but unfortunately I hardly get to use them. And that's unfortunate actually.
— Composer D

I think probably the biggest hurdle is time. Time is always my biggest hurdle yeah. Because of course, [I] think Hans Zimmer says it, it's like you never really finish a score, you kind of give up on it. Because you never have enough time, there are always things you can change. And again when you're doing the production yourself, the mixing the blah blah blah, there's always something that you could have done better. Your routing could have been better, your panning could have been better, the actual composition could have been better. So time is the biggest hurdle.
— Composer D

I usually don't have a lot of time to like write and then contact musicians.
— Composer A

Instances where composers feel they have unreasonable deadlines for completing film scores would in such cases particularly experience a loss of creative control. Open-ended or lengthy project schedules, however as Composer K points out below, are also not conducive.

I guess part of what helps definitely is a sense of approaching deadline, it's definitely always a motivating factor in the sense that [the score] is empty. It is so totally empty. There's nothing there and something has to be there by three days time. So that is helpful actually. It's horrible and helpful at the same time and you don't have endless time and there is a fast approaching kind of limit to how much time you can be thinking about this idea that it actually just has to come together. That is absolutely key.

— Composer K

5.4.3 General limitations of working in the South African film industry

And it's not always up to me to decide what style. It's mostly dictated by whoever is doing it so, the clearer the message is from the other side, the quicker I'll get to something that they like. Because at the end of the day, it's not my soundtrack. It's a soundtrack for a movie. I'm not making my own music. I'm making something for a story line. So I have to work out what is going to convey that message the best in a way that will work for the movie, but something that the director is envisioning for this, because it's his vision really. I'm just helping him get there. I'm just one of the people that help him get somewhere. I'm not there to put my own stamp on it.

— Composer H

To return to this comment quoted from Composer H's transcript, the very concept of composing for a film and working with visuals is already to an extent a source of losing creative control, as composers must fashion or mould their creativity into the confines of what is needed for a scene as well as take the client or director's preferences into account.

As discussed in the background section of this study (see 1.2 Current film score composition processes), budgets for films in the South African film industry are typically very limited. As a result, variations in film genres encountered by the composers in this study are also limited to those that could be done within a smaller scale project context, such as dramas and romcoms. This, in turn, results in reduced control over the musical styles of scores that could be composed in a genre appropriate manner by composers.

But in South Africa, if you ever get a film that's for action-adventure then I'd say well done because in South Africa, because of budgets, they cannot make films like that. So you're making dramas. They're making loads of dramas. Like so many dramas. And comedies. They'll make comedies. But so many dramas. And then when you are composing for a drama... your palette is more that sort of British drama... The biggest you go is like a 16 piece chamber unit because it's dialogue driven, character driven films... It's different if you're in L.A. or wherever, but if you're in South Africa and you're a composer you become good at scoring dramas. Definitely in my experience, anyway.

— Composer D

Not only are there limited available film genres in the South African industry, trends in “pop culture” (Composer F) affecting musical stylistic trends favoured by directors also feature as a form of external restriction.

So pop culture has a massive influence [on what directors want] because the directors are not isolated people. They are part of it. They listen to this stuff all the time. — Composer F

As far as, another thing I've mentioned [about] composition is that—and I think this is a trend that's happening very much over the this century—it's not so much about the melodies that you create. It's about the texture that you create. And that was a very, very sort of new thing for me because I was always of the idea that I wanted to use classical orchestra and have instincts to have orchestral sound. But that's not the way the world's going really at this point, which is sad but also, I guess, you have to kind of move with the times. — Composer G

5.5 SUMMARY OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ASPECTS OF CREATIVE CONTROL

The above topics can be summarised as characteristics, influencing factors, and resultant composer experiences of having or losing creative control. Participant terms and phrases that lead to these topics can thus be grouped in this way in order to demonstrate the dimensions of creative control (fig. 5.1).

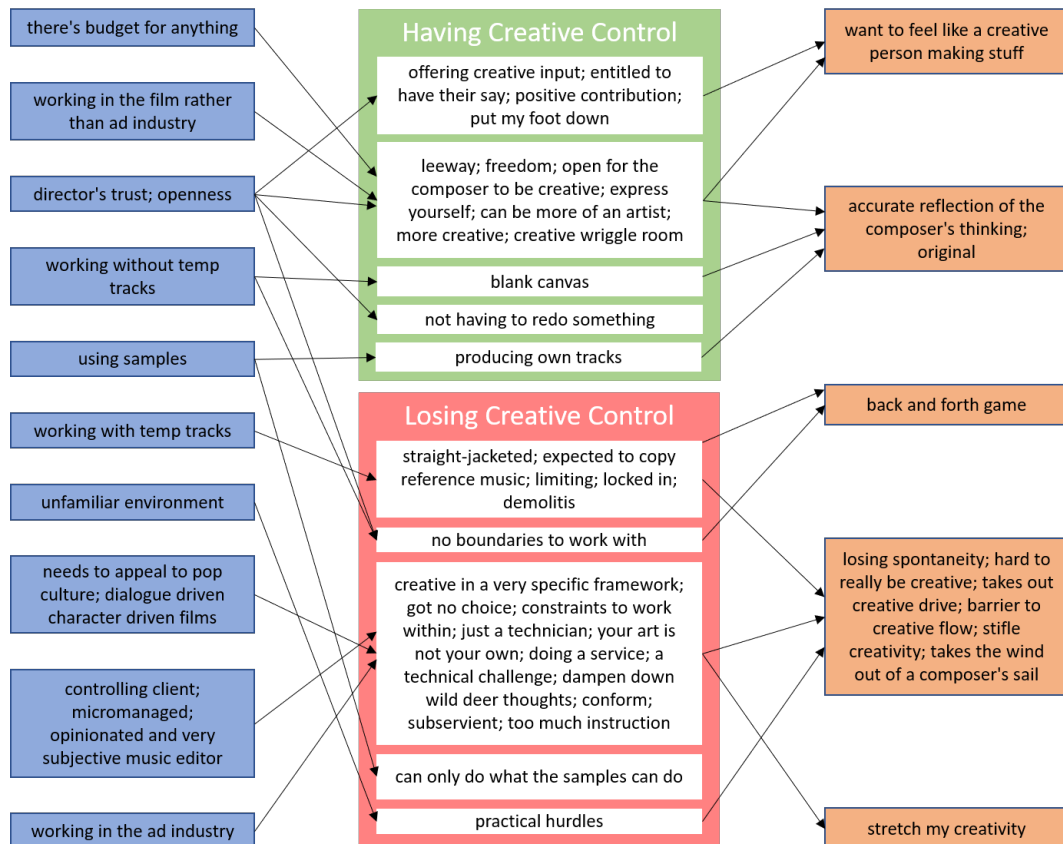


Figure 5.1: Elements of creative control: A map constructed of participant terms and phrases relating to creative control. Various factors that are mentioned (blue boxes on the left) influence perceptions of either having or losing creative control (white boxes in the centre), which in turn results in the various experiences listed on the right (orange boxes).

5.6 CONCLUSION

Freedom to the composers means a transferal of control or authority over decisions relating to the film's score from the client to the composer, and the reducing of external limitations residing in the nature of the project itself. It is also related to composers' level of self-efficacy. Forms of *losing creative control* are related to a diverse group of external factors that forces the composers to make specific decisions about the score in order to work around them.

The category of *creative control* emerged and is discussed in the form of several topics; namely clarity of goals, types of interactions with the client, and limitations in budget, time and film genre. Clarity of goals refers to the tension between wanting enough freedom whilst wanting a clear understanding of what the client wants in order to place the composer in a position to meet their own creative outcomes as well as those of the project. From the perspective of the composers, clients reduce their creative control by either giving too little freedom, or too much freedom so that composers struggle to understand and meet the client's expectations. Being given too little freedom in the form of being closely monitored will also be explored in the

next topic, where composers reported feeling micromanaged by the client and given too much instruction, thus not being able to engage with the film score creatively. Clients that are perceived to be more open to creative input from the composer regarding the film score are seen to do so due to their trust in the composer's abilities both in their ability to write an effective score for the film and to meet the creative vision of the client. Having low self-efficacy resulted in lower creative control, as this influences the relational dynamic between the composer and client in favour of the latter. Limitations in budget, time and film genre all represent factors that reduce the amount of creative possibilities and decisions that can be made by the composer. These in turn reduce creative control, but are not always experienced negatively when serving to provide clear goals or boundaries for the composer, granted composers have the freedom to navigate them as they see fit. Each topic essentially come down to a combination of factors that either allow for or negate the autonomy of the composers.

Tensions between having or losing creative control seems to be a natural and expected state in creative industries such as that of film. Rather than solely pursuing opportunities for more creative control in these contexts, a better suited response might be an awareness of both positive and negative implications of having more and less creative control, and orientating composers and clients towards negotiating the best possible outcome for each particular project accordingly.

Category 3: Rapport building

The term rapport building does not come from the data but was rather an analytical handle I encountered while preparing for the current research in an example of another grounded theory study. I applied the term to describe intentions underlying actions, statements and suggestions that composers made relating to the importance of building, maintaining and managing relationships. I use this category to collect incidents and remarks where composers took the opportunity to build trust and familiarity with clients, such as making an effort to work with the same client pool on more than one occasion, meeting face-to-face, and getting to know the client in informal contexts. This later expanded to include rapport building efforts with other film production role players as well. I noticed that when speaking about trust and relationships in the context of their work, composers either speak in terms of actions they take (rapport building tactics), or descriptions of relationship and its role in their careers (making meaning of rapport building).

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Composers describe processes of getting to know clients and colleagues better and building a sense of familiarity and trust over time. Rather than referring to professional acquaintances, the concept of personal relationships with clients, musicians, sound engineers and co-composers are routinely brought up and identified as invaluable by the composers. This chapter will first combine participant accounts and extant literature to define rapport building as a general concept and within the realm of film score composition. This will be followed by a discussion surrounding reasons why film score composers employ rapport building strategies based on those that emerge in the data, namely getting work, increasing trust, improved communication and understanding between role players, and pursuing collaborative environments.

Connected categories such as *experiencing rapport building positively*, *losing ground on rapport building*, and *experiencing lack of rapport building negatively* were initially constructed separately from the data, but are combined (along with the

rapport building category itself) and placed into dialogue with extant literature to create a comprehensive discussion of rapport building in this chapter.

6.2 WHAT IS RAPPORT BUILDING?

From the perspective of composers in this study, rapport building is a tool with which to gain familiarity, trust and ease of collaboration with an individual by means of regular and consistent face-to-face interaction. In the extant literature, the character and behaviour of rapport is believed to be highly influenced by social and environmental factors in which relationships take place, and is thus predominantly discussed in a manner that is context specific (Gremler & Gwinner, 2008). Curry (2019:214) describes rapport building as a collective term for various behaviours that can be either verbal or nonverbal. Examples of the latter are visual cues indicating a sense of interest and absorbed attention in what the other individual is saying: including smiling, nodding, eye-contact and posture (Curry, 2019:214). Similarly, verbal cues that suggest interest in and an effort to understand another individual's life, experiences, and desires by means of open-ended and qualifying questions, as well as acknowledgement of responses to exhibit attentiveness, also serve to build rapport (Curry, 2019:214). Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal (1990) further suggest that rapport building is most supported and interactions most enjoyed when elements of positivity, amicability and attentiveness are reciprocal. Feelings of "personal connection" or synchronisation further amplify experiences of rapport (Gremler & Gwinner, 2008:309). The result is that both parties experience higher levels of commitment and control in their perception of the relationship (Gremler & Gwinner, 2008:308). In this way, rapport building and creative control overlap. Not only do the composers' sense of creative control (see Chapter 5: Creative control) increase with rapport building, but that of the client as well.

Participants' terms and phrases relating to rapport building describe either rapport building tactics, or perceptions of the results of rapport building (fig. 6.1).

When referring to *rapport building* as a practical and beneficial tool, composers describe it as the process of building and maintaining a relationship with a particular client, colleague or other post-production role player over a long period of time. Phrases such as *knowing the [clients]*, *connection*, *partnership*, *personal*, and *build[ing] trust*, show that these relationships aim at improving ease of understanding, enabling the film project to run more smoothly. This is done by focusing on personal connection, familiarity and friendship, rather than solely work-related interactions.

Network. Network because those are the people that eventually will give you jobs. And just build a strong social network, in terms of not just social media but actual physical relationships where you actually go and have coffee with someone or visit them or hang out together or play Dota together or whatever you know? Where people get to know you, trust you.

— Composer F

The perceived value of personal relationship with directors in both landing and doing film score composition work is so high that composers even defined film score composition as quite simply being a "relationship with a director" (Composer D).



Figure 6.1: Elements of rapport building: Participant terms and phrases referring to rapport building tactics (in blue) and perceived rapport building results (in orange), organised into themes (by darker or lighter shades of blue and orange).

And there does become this great synergy between the director and composer. And that's one thing I didn't realise in the beginning was how important the relationship between composer and director is. It is invaluable. Absolutely invaluable.

— Composer G

I would say my experience as a composer is again mostly it's a relationship with a director.

— Composer D

Composer I felt that the concept of relationship in his line of work is so important that in cases where rapport building efforts are unsuccessful, he recommends parting ways as the most appropriate course of action.

And then there are working relationships where it doesn't work out. Where you just very quickly, early on, you get to a meeting with your producers and it's like, 'look, maybe you should ask somebody else. This is not, you know, let's part ways. We have completely different ways of what we imagine and I don't think I'm the person to do it, you know? And if we're going to continue, then we're going to become bad friends or never work again, it's a small industry. You know, let's respect that and...' So that's going to happen. And that happens with the best of music producers in the world, you know? It's a matter of personalities, almost same amount as it is with music and creative ideas. You know, it's just like, do you have a working relationship? — Composer I

Daskalaki (2010:1655) found that participants had a similar attitude in her study on evolving network identities within “semi-permanent work groups” in cultural industries. The following quotation from her data shows an individual feeling that lack of rapport between colleagues in a collaborating creative group outweighs the benefit of exceptional talent or skill and is in fact detrimental to the creative outcomes of the group. “Well, if one of the crew proves destructive in emotional and relationships level, no matter how good they are at their work the tension is going to ruin the intimacy and destroy the creativity” (Daskalaki, 2010:1655). Another study in which individuals working in cultural industries reported trust building efforts as necessity was that of Banks *et al.* (2000). “Amongst our interviewees there was a palpable desire to resource and develop new and informal alliances, associations and individuals to offset or help manage risk. Correspondent with this desire was an expressed need to develop informal and social networks of trust” (Banks *et al.*, 2000:460). Evidence of similarly seeking and creating networks of trust with industry role players in order to reduce personal risk can also be seen in the accounts of participants in the current study. Behaviour analysts endorse these notions in the extant literature, recognising the impact of rapport within professional relationships (Curry, 2019:213). The subjective nature of key industry role players’ decision-making processes in the film score composition and film industry necessitate a focus on informal interactions, relationship and trust building practices. This is due to hiring and collaboration traditions that are “built on relationships of trust, reputation and reciprocity (Cannizzo & Strong, 2020:11). Cannizzo & Strong (2020:11) further argues that this has resulted in a reinforcement of male-dominated networking environment that disadvantages professional opportunities for female film composers.

Composers describe their efforts to remain calm and collected by “maintaining humility” and “eating humble pie” (Composer G) in an effort to prioritise beneficial relationships in their careers. People skills are thus viewed as being part of the ‘film score composer’ job description.

It's very much a personal thing. And that's the only way to really get in. And that's why people skills are so important. — Composer F

So yeah, [synergy between the director and composer] was a major thing. And if you can, eat humble pie as much as possible to form these relationships.

— Composer G

In terms of the act of film score composition itself, the difference between having a relationship with clients and working with near strangers determines whether or not composers describe their experiences in terms of a collaborative environment conducive to creative work. Familiarity with clients enables a sense of safety that encourages and facilitates the exchange of creative ideas, thus improving and expediting communication and understanding between parties.

It was daunting. The first time, just the magnitude of... doing a full length feature film. And you have no idea where to start. And you don't know the director. You don't know the producer, you don't know the editor. And those are your three main sound boards. They could either work with you or work against you and then I had no idea yet what was lying ahead for me because in the past was people I knew well, you know? So it was very easy.

— Composer I

As mentioned earlier, the concept of rapport building in the literature is considerably flexible in its definition and versatile in its use depending on the research discipline (Gremler & Gwinner, 2008:309) and social context (Altman, 1990). Gremler & Gwinner (2008) describes it in the context of participants actively looking to build rapport as a necessary part of their job, that is, retail employees seeking to improve their customer service. It is useful to keep in mind that the rapport building efforts of film score composers would far more likely be aimed at the mutual benefits of successful relationships than solely on the client's experience of their interaction with one another. In the case of retail employees, rapport building would likely be an intentional act and conscious duty. In his study, Gremler & Gwinner (2008) identified and confirmed three categories of rapport building behaviour in the extant literature: attentive, imitative and courteous behaviour; and proposed two new additional categories: connecting and information sharing behaviour. These were pursued in the context of retail employees and offered examples of their perspectives as well as those of the customers they served.

1. **Attentive behaviour** involves predominantly (although not exclusively) non-verbal indicators that one individual is paying attention to what the other is saying, but also the way in which they are communicating it as a cue of what kind of communicative behaviour would be experienced as appropriate in that context. Examples include nodding, audible acknowledgements, eye contact and proximity (Gremler & Gwinner, 2008:310). As attentive behaviour is predominantly dependent on visual cues from both parties, favouring “actual physical relationships” (Composer F) over remote or social media networking and asking clients to join them “for a beer” (Composer I) to discuss a new film project could be interpreted as favouring environments where rapport building opportunities are increased.

2. As with attentive behaviour, **imitative behaviour** is strongly reliant on visual cues and thus similarly explains composers' instincts of seeking face-to-face contact with clients. Physical mimicry is believed to support rapport building in social psychology research (Lakin & Chartrand, 2003). This imitative behaviour comprises of "matching activities... [involving] posture, voice tone, type of language, pace of speech, gestures, breathing patterns, or facial expressions" (Gremler & Gwinner, 2008:310).
3. The third category of rapport building behaviours as explained in terms of interactions between retail employees and customers seems less applicable in a film score composition context, although its absence may have adverse effects on composer-client impressions of one another (or those with other role players). **Courteous behaviour** involves exhibiting interest in another individual's welfare and remembering simple details about their life, and in the case of retail employees: smiling, friendly greetings and other polite behaviour (Gremler & Gwinner, 2008:310). As interactions between a composer and client or post production role player can last anything from a couple of weeks to months on one film project, one could argue that superficial courteous behaviour such as smiling might impact a first impression, but that longer lasting and more intentional tactics (such as asking about the welfare of a client's family) would have a greater impact on rapport in relationships of this kind.
4. Gremler & Gwinner (2008:317) grouped together participants' observed behaviours that involved "using humour, pleasant conversation, and friendly interaction" in an effort to connect with the customer. This was classified as **connecting behaviours**. In the context of the current study, composers' attempts to meet with clients and co-workers in conversational and informal settings (such as going for coffee or a beer or meeting in one another's homes) to discuss elements of the project could signify an effort to encourage environments where connecting behaviours might come naturally, thus increasing rapport.
5. The second additional category of rapport building behaviours that emerged in Gremler's study is **information sharing behaviours**, which involved "giving advice, imparting knowledge, and asking questions" (Gremler & Gwinner, 2008:318). These information giving and gaining actions served to build rapport in that they aided retail employees to understand and serve the customer's needs efficaciously (Gremler & Gwinner, 2008:318). Information sharing behaviours could also then be viewed as an attempt to increase creative control. In the context of this study, composers essentially engaged in information sharing behaviours when seeking to improve their understanding of the client's needs—and that of the film—by means of rapport building tactics that focus on exchanging information in order to better understand the desired outcome for the score and thus clarify their own goals.

Pullin (2010:459) offers small talk as another important yet often underestimated activity in the context of rapport building. Its importance alongside the "goal-oriented talk" typically addressed in literature is the ability of small talk to initiate

and sustain a sense of relationship through which “goal-oriented talk” might be effectively channelled (Pullin, 2010:458). In her study, Pullin (2010:471) found that “the notion of finding and building on common, non threatening ground was shown to be of importance in building solidarity and intercultural understanding.”

Kong (2005) discusses relationships and network building in the context of the film industry, and in so doing provides a broader context in which composers’ relationships with clients and colleagues must operate. This refers to both location-specific and remote networks from which production teams are constructed. Kong (2005:63) described a tension in her study between the effects of well established relationships and looser ties, where the former encourages ease of communication and co-ordination whilst the latter fosters more creativity by bringing in fresh perspectives and unanticipated collaborations of ideas.

6.2.1 Losing ground on rapport building

Data segments that are coded into *losing ground on rapport building* and *perceiving lack of rapport building negatively* demonstrate hurdles to building trust, mutual understanding and improved communication between two parties in the experiences of the participants.

6.2.1.1 Interfacing with different individuals on one project

An example of such a hurdle is having to interface with different people on one project, resulting in having to relearn clients’ expressions of their needs and rebuild trust each time. This implies that one of the goals to rapport building is improved communication due to familiarity with the client’s manner of explaining their needs, and thus understanding them better. As discussed earlier (see chapter 5: Creative control, 5.2.1.2 Clarity of project outcomes), rapport building is thus a means of increasing the composer’s creative control in that it aids clarification and understanding between the client’s creative vision and that of the composer. Hurdles to rapport building thus influences the composer’s ability to judge and carry out the project requirements and needs of the client.

6.2.1.2 Working remotely

Composer A mentions experiencing a “difference when not meeting clients in person” compared to projects in which he meets clients face-to-face to discuss the project requirements and receive feedback. He then proceeds to describe several aspects of communication in which he perceives as lacking, namely that of closure upon completion of the work (i.e. the clients did not let him know whether they had received the file, were satisfied or if they were going to use it), a lack of acknowledgement or gratitude for doing the work, and lack of feedback both during the project (making it a linear and non-collaborative work flow) or afterwards (indicating a lack of rapport building as the clients did not make an effort to describe their experience of working with him, suggesting they were not trying to build and improve on their relationship with him for future projects). Most of the composers in this study have similar sentiments of championing face-to-face contact and having discussions with clients and other post production role players in person.

6.2.1.3 Lacking honest feedback

Rapport building efforts are not only described as improving composers' comfort and willingness to easily engage with clients when making creative negotiations regarding the score, but conversely seems to improve how comfortable clients feel to express their creative vision for the score and give critical, honest feedback immediately. In cases where clients do not feel confident to do so, director-composer communication and collaboration is frustrated to the detriment of the project's progress.

I've been in situations where the directors try and spare your feelings, and then too late down the line you're playing catch up, which is very dangerous for the project. — Composer B

6.2.2 With whom do participants build rapport?

Segments of transcript data that are coded into the *rapport building* category make reference to several different post production role players surrounding the composers. They speak of building, managing and maintaining relationships with directors, producers, editors, sound engineers, co-composers or assistant composers, as well as musicians with whom they work to record scores. Although the specific aims of rapport building with various role players differ (i.e. understanding the director's creative ideas for the film vs. negotiating budget with producers vs. being on the same page with co-composers in order to create a coherent score etc.), the underlying concepts of improving communication, trust and understanding seems universal across these relationships.

6.2.3 Types of rapport building tactics

Three main rapport building strategies emerge in the data of the current study: building and maintaining friendships, chasing repeated collaborations, and doing favours and working for free.

6.2.3.1 Building and maintaining friendships

Building and maintaining friendships is a method of gaining individuals' trust and developing familiarity with one another's communication styles over a long period of time. This involves engaging in social activities unrelated to work.

So [the director] just sent me a message on Facebook like said, 'would you like to do music for a film?' And I was like that was quite random. Said, 'yeah, sure. Do you want to come for beer at... [Restaurant]? Yes, I'll be there, having a beer, come over.' — Composer I

...[the director and I are] friends now. So yeah I like that.

— Composer E

Composer descriptions in the above transcript extracts both refer to interactions with directors. Another example of this form of rapport building is between composers and their co-composers or assistants. Similar to building relationships with clients,

getting to know one's co-composers is viewed as an effective way of insuring coherency in the score and ease of collaboration due to the composers being more 'on the same page'. For this reason composer F often chooses to work with ex-students. Others share co-composing roles with teaching colleagues.

My co-composers, I've chosen my team very carefully. Some of them are actually of my ex students, which have really become great composers in their own right. And we still have great relationships with each other... So they've been well trained and well tuned... We're very well tuned in together. It's a bit hard in the beginning. That's why the assistants, if you're just an assistant composer, you still learn, and some of them really do good work as well. But the moment you become a co-composer you should really be 100% on the same page. Otherwise the score feels a bit disjointed. It doesn't feel like part of a whole, it feels like stuff has been just stuck there together you know just like a rough edit. — Composer F

We've also worked quite a bit - and I say we because it's usually myself and my [teaching] colleagues - with documentaries and some smaller short films as well. — Composer B

Two other studies that looked into creative industries, and the film industry in particular, produce similar notions of developing relationships with work acquaintances for practical purposes. In a study exploring factors surrounding relationships and networking in creative and cultural industries, Daskalaki (2010:1655) notes that individuals' inclusion in film production teams tends to become motivated by "socio-emotive interactions," even when more practical reasons such as reputation and financial gain are the initial motivators. This is particularly relevant in instances where the same creative teams are used across more than one film project due to ties of familiarity and friendship that render repeated collaborations practical. Participants in Daskalaki's study support concepts of rapport building and friendship by noting that film production teams become "a family... it is a very intimate process, you have the same vision... creativity is intimacy" (film director) (Daskalaki, 2010:1655). Kong (2005:68) received similar responses from her participants: "We need time to develop our team spirit which means we need a longer period of time so that we can form a family-like relationship... Even if I feel you are good, it doesn't mean you can cooperate with others. It's all about group dynamics." The implication is that the nature of relationships in a creative team has a sizeable impact on the outcomes of their collaborative work (Kong, 2005:68).

6.2.3.2 Chasing repeated collaborations

Most composers in this study mention committing to repeated collaborations and the desire to work with the same client more than once.

I haven't yet worked twice with a director, which I would like to. — Composer D

...and then from there every year we've done [work with them]. — Composer C

...and the bulk of my film work has gone into working for them.

— Composer B

A motivating factor seems to be the already established familiarity with a client's way of working and expression of their creative vision from the first film project in which they collaborated. Working with the same client or team more than once simultaneously aids and occurs as a result of the rapport building processes of building and maintaining friendships mentioned above. Daskalaki (2010:1655) refers to this as "affective bonding," where a natural tendency to build relationships displaying characteristics of friendship, familiarity and emotional bonds when working together over longer timespans could be observed.

6.2.3.3 Doing favours and working for free

It is mentioned in experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work that instances where composers are willing to do projects for free could be interpreted as both an expression of being intrinsically motivated to do and enjoy the work itself, or as a means of rapport building. The latter is achieved when committing to do a free project leads (or is intended to lead) to more work (paid or unpaid) with the same client (i.e. chasing repeated collaborations) to encourage a progressive mutual familiarity between composer and client or creative team member (such as co-composers etc.). This in turn increases trust, improves ease of communication and thus, the composer's creative control.

...and then I started working on [their student films] for free, and now they like me so they keep using me.

— Composer A

I've worked on some short films, which have been directors' passion projects, mostly.

— Composer L

Using a similar approach, Composer C mentions the act of doing clients a favour by initially providing a free film score for a trailer in order to help the clients gain funding for the rest of the project.

So when we were producing a trailer for them for free... — Composer C

Surprisingly, there is little to be found regarding the effectiveness of gaining "social capital" in order to achieve repeated collaborations and thus build rapport in existing literature (Siebert & Wilson, 2013:713). Composer F echoes this sentiment by asking "how many exposures will pay for [his] rent at the end of the month?" And asserting that in the end, "exposure means nothing. It doesn't pay any bills" (Composer F). Though it is beyond the scope of this study to do so, an exploration into the benefits of doing work for free in order to gain exposure and future work, as well as the effects this practice might have on the South African film industry as a whole, could be of value.

6.3 WHY DO FILM SCORE COMPOSERS EMPLOY RAPPORT BUILDING?

Various perceived benefits of rapport building can be identified in the data. Synergy with a co-composer ensuring coherency in a score and an effective collaborative interaction between composers is mentioned earlier. Similarly, the gaining of a client's trust in the composer's ability to do their job and deliver a product that will be effective in the client's eyes is another perceived benefit of rapport building, as this resulted in the composer being awarded increases creative control by the client. Trust in the composer increased the client's willingness to give them more authority and leeway over the score of the film. Bassett *et al.* (2002:172) support this notion, stating that rapport building actions increase "trust-based, co-operative behaviour" in relationships.

...and [some client's] will know how to give you the space that you need.
— Composer A

The perceived benefits of rapport building mentioned by participants are organised into the following categories and discussed below: getting work, increasing trust, improved communication and understanding between role players, and pursuing collaborative environments.

6.3.1 Getting work

One aim of rapport building is the benefit of getting hired more frequently. The composers perceive trust and familiarity, as well as being perceived as having personality qualities that make one easy to work with, as being even more valuable than having exceptional composition talent in encouraging potential clients to hire them (initially, as well as for repeated collaborations).

Of course you can have the most beautiful website, you can be better than Hans Zimmer. You won't land a single job if you don't have the relationships. Unfortunately.
— Composer F

And that's why I find that directors and producers would rather work with somebody they know that has a good attitude than somebody that is just good. So yes you have to be competent, definitely. But the human aspect, the relational aspect, you know the human part... That element of good relationships and good attitude that plays ... I would say that's half of it.
— Composer F

The opportunity just came my way because I've worked with the director's husband before. He's also a director and does lots of ads, and yeah, he suggested me to his wife. She was the director of [film name].
— Composer L

...and that was more case of my good friend, she was the director and she was going 'well we got somebody to write the theme song, it's going to go on air tomorrow. I don't like it so come.'
— Composer I

I knew the director and the editor from touring... a lot as a musician, so and I've played in a band with the... editor... He's a musician as well. So I've worked with him on a musical level and they came out to South Africa and they just phoned me up. So again, it was via a larger errand in the music industry or in the entertainment industry, rather than, you know, nothing started by me going to a film school and learning any of the tricks of the trade.
— Composer I

Here we observe that composers see repeated collaborations as the result of the quality of their interactions with clients, rather than the mere act of doing work for free or low pay. Getting more work by means of rapport building seems to involve using opportunities for building relationships—of which working for free could be an example—in order to gain familiarity and trust, which in turn leads to more work.

People also tend to work again with people that they've worked before. So try and keep relationships good because it's return customers.
— Composer F

...and then I started working on [their student films] for free, and now they like me so they keep using me.
— Composer A

An interesting observation made by Composer K is that, while directors often largely influence who is hired to score the film, editors are similarly able to make suggestions and influence directors in this regard. They are also more likely to work on more film projects than directors as their role takes place over a shorter period of time for each project. This composer's observation aimed at practical solutions to getting more work perhaps signifies a more conscious utilisation of rapport building tactics.

And but the editor, I found actually a very useful person to make a good working relationship with because they often work on other projects, and then they would be in that early post production phase speaking to the director, and they are in a position to say, have you thought of using this guy kind of thing? So he's been quite useful in that sense that you have the yeah, I suppose it's a way of getting more work, whereas the directors seem to do fewer projects than editors, I guess. It makes sense. Directors take longer for their projects to be developed and to get to the production stage.
— Composer K

Banks *et al.* (2000:459) notes that accessing regular work opportunities by means of “friendships and collaborative networks” has an added benefit of increasing financial and creative security in terms of a creative group's success rate. Here the assumption is that familiarity between members, evidence of past collaborative success and knowledge of each other's creative and working styles inevitably bare positive results. As noted earlier, however, the inclusion of new individuals has also been observed to be fruitful, as repeated collaborative teams might tend towards the same processes of creative problem solving from one project to the next (Kong, 2005:63).

Other ways in which rapport building tactics aid getting work in creative industries mentioned in the extant literature includes frequenting informal, public and

social environments of leisure such as cafes or bars that are known to draw individuals working in complimentary creative careers, with the intent of tempting chance and casual socialisation with these individuals (Banks *et al.*, 2000:459). Another example specifically related to film score composition involves gaining access to networks and necessary relationships by way of working as an assistant or co-composer for another well-known film composer (Burlingame, 2020:50).

The relational aspect of creative industries consisting of “project-based careers” (Cannizzo & Strong, 2020:3) can also serve as a barrier to rapport building and therefore opportunities when clique mentalities result in the exclusion of particular groups in society. Cannizzo & Strong (2020:3) points out that “for women employed in male-dominated industries, network sociality presents the possibility of marginalization due to the informal practices around employment, promotion and participation in work groups.” This would be an example of losing ground on rapport building efforts aimed at getting work, initiated by external factors in the global film industry and broader socio-political context.

Financial insecurity for the individual creative worker is another negative aspect of industries built on relationships and constructed from project-based work in cases where individuals lose ground on rapport building. Daskalaki (2010:1651) suggests that a tendency to form familiar groups and pursue repeat collaborations and, in other words, build rapport, might be explained by individuals’ need to increase their job security by building and maintaining strong relationships and thus informal agreements.

6.3.2 Increasing trust

And just build a strong social network, in terms of not just social media but actual physical relationships where you actually go and have coffee with someone or visit them or hang out together or play Dota together or whatever you know. Where people get to know you, trust you.

— Composer F

In this example, Composer F brings together concepts of rapport building and trust. He mentions activities of leisure and informal social environments unconnected to work as a context in which he can come to know potential clients or colleagues on a personal level and form genuine friendships with them via mutual hobbies or interests. The implication is that they also “get to know” him, and therefore “trust him.” Rapport building efforts in the form of building and maintaining friendships is thus used by film score composers to foster a sense of trust in their client or colleague relationships. In the context of a relationship with a client, composers in turn feel that increasing trust results in the client being prone to award them more creative control.

And I wish in [an] ideal world, that directors could have that sense of freedom to the composer and just say, ‘listen, I trust you.’ But again, that goes back to the relationship between director and composer. And I’m sure at this stage now when Hans Zimmer is asked to do a job, the director or producer is just like, ‘you know what, we know what you can do, go wild.’

— Composer G

Very often you also get good directors who will give you the leeway to create and trust, but it's always a 50/50. — Composer B

Navigating these rapport building tactics of friendship building and maintaining is described in terms of consistency by Composer F. In particular, he seeks to engage in ample conversation consistently over long periods of time. These actions seem particularly crucial in cases where face-to-face friendship building is not an option and rapport building efforts has to be approached remotely.

You have a bit on social media, with a lot of interaction. Especially if you make friends online. But there's a lot of conversation. It's like seeds that you sow. A lot of conversation. You build trust over a long period, it takes long to build trust. And people like consistency as well. So if you're there, if you're on a certain platform, be there consistently. Don't just be there for three months and disappear for two years and then you're there again then you disappear for a year. Be consistent. And keep in touch consistently. — Composer F

The extant literature on cultural and creative industry contexts provides clues as to why trust is such a salient issue for film score composers and their clients and colleagues, as well as insight into why trust building seems to engender certain benefits relating to creative control. In a study exploring *Risk and trust in the cultural industries*, Banks *et al.* (2000:457) mentions “reflexive modernisation” as a societal process resulting in high levels of risk for individuals working in creative and cultural industries. These are associated with uncertainty in career, finances, culture, ethics, identity and relationships (Banks *et al.*, 2000:457). The notion of risk management is similarly brought up by Kong (2005:64), as an issue that is prevalent in the Hong Kong film industry. Rapport and trust building activities, then, could be seen as methods employed by individuals to reduce and manage risk by securing interdependent connections with people working in complimentary careers. “Both risk and trust are embedded within the unique working practices and forms of (dis)organisation characteristic to the fashion, music, design and promotions industries” (Banks *et al.*, 2000:463).

6.3.3 Improved communication and understanding between role players

If it doesn't work for the director even if you write the best music you won't get hired again, as the composer, and it's not that you are bad, it just doesn't work or gel for him, or her, you know? — Composer G

It is the most important thing [managing relationships]. Yeah. It's the most important thing in producing records. It's the most important thing in [film score composition] as well, because this doesn't happen in isolation. You don't, maybe in another world, but you don't just get a piece of film and then send it back and never talk to these people and then get a yes or no, I mean it's an interactive process. — Composer I

Composers make it clear that the ability to understand the requirements of the client for the score, as well as the ability to effectively serve those requirements, is of utmost importance in their role as film score composer, particularly in accessing repeated collaborations as mentioned by Composer G above. When rapport exists in relationships between composers and their clients, composers experience clients as more willing to express their needs for the score and give honest feedback. As this aids composers in gaining clarity of creative goals sooner in a project, this also leads to greater creative control. Healthy rapport means that clients seem more comfortable to express their ideas for the scores, and composers are more able to process criticism emotionally and engage with it practically.

So having a good relationship with your director means that they can tell you 'not quite what I need.' I mean you can go back to the drawing board without any hard feelings. So that's one thing that, again, communication is important. — Composer B

According to one of the participants, another benefit of rapport building with clients or colleagues over several projects (repeated collaborations) is camaraderie. In this instance, Composer J reports that a director he had come to know well chose to defend him in a creative negotiation with the client. Rapport thus creates a level of security, not only in securing future work with the same client, but also in keeping work where tensions have arisen due to competing creative visions or miscommunication.

I worked with this [director] for a very, very long time. So he did all the commercials and stuff as well and then this season. By that point, we knew each other a little bit better. But he went up to bat for me once, which was one of the first commercials that I did where [the clients] kind of, they got sort of a brief of like, 'yeah, I don't know, it's sort of like a little bit John Williamsy.' And his reply was, 'oh I'm sorry, I thought you wanted it to be big and grand.' 'No, no, we do, we do. Keep that.' It was like phew, kept that job. — Composer J

As mentioned earlier, it is possible that small talk could be an effective rapport building tactic in a context like the one Composer J describes. Pullin (2010:471) noted that “small talk and time spent on social activities both within and outside the company were shown not only to build solidarity but also to function in repairing and maintaining relations in times of tension, allowing politeness strategies, for example, through the acceptance of different views, and the mitigation of power.”

Similarly, ease of communication and understanding from knowing one another well aids co-composers to be on the same page regarding style, instrumentation and creative decisions. Understanding based on familiarity thus assists in coherency of score.

Now I've got three other composers that I can really lean on and that we feel each other and so we could write in the same style. We more or less have the same instruments. Virtual instruments. So the sound is the same. And they have a very good idea of the aesthetic of the sound of

the world that you're creating, what instruments ... So they've been well trained and well tuned... We're very well tuned in together... Otherwise it's... the score feels a bit disjointed. It feels, it doesn't feel like part of a whole, it feels like like stuff has been just stuck there together you know just like a rough edit.

— Composer F

In the preliminary findings of his study on working practices within cultural industries in England, Banks *et al.* (2000:461) quotes participants who mentioned striving “for a smoother job, smoother relationship and happier people all round” (graphic designer) by cultivating working interactions with clients that were unmediated and personal rather than by means of a middle-man. This demonstrates creative individuals making a connection between relationship (and thus rapport), with better communication and understanding with the client, and ultimately better work outcomes. “The development of such dense networks is typically associated with strong and long-lasting ties that encourage communication among the parties and the creation of routine, common languages and a common culture” (Delmestri *et al.*, 2005:982).

Daskalaki (2010:1653) describes a debate in the literature discussing whether it is similarity and being creatively on the same page (and thus conditions of improved communication and understanding) that results in ideal creative team dynamics and outcomes, or whether in fact “creative compatibility decisions may be based on diverse yet complementary qualities that would enhance the creative potential of the network.” Similarly, Delmestri *et al.* (2005:982) notes that studies focused on a creative group’s capacity for novel ideas and creative outcomes suggest that “weak ties” (meaning less familiar members of the team) are pivotal in breaking past working process patterns, whereas studies addressing more “routine activities” champion the maintenance of stronger relationships and repeated collaborations with the same team members in order to reach the most ideal outcomes. These sources imply that while composers in this study need to pursue strong connections with industry role players in order to work and communicate more effectively, receive more creative control and gain relative job security, the process of working with different clients on various occasions may also have an important role to play in the creative development of the South African film industry as a whole. It is possible that very few of the composers mention the need for variety in clients and colleagues due to the fact that this is simply an unavoidable norm in the South African industry, thus drawing their attention more to perceived benefits of the few occasions in which they were able to work with clients more than once. Composer K, however, touches on this concept in the following response when discussing the importance of variety in film genre:

It's fun to have the range [of film genres] there basically and not feel that you yeah. I suppose it means you don't struggle to not repeat yourself. I guess that's something that we can quite often fall into the trap of, that we do rely on the same kind of ways of going about things and tend to fall into the same musical reactions that we come up to the things, and that I think is to be avoided. So, you always feel you're somehow pushing yourself and not getting too cozy. So having the variety definitely means

that's more possible. I guess for me, also not having a structured process of working on every film means there's less chance of falling into the same kinds of responses to situations on screen that result in the same kinds of music and rather result maybe, you know, you can get something that feels new to you and hopefully to people generally. — Composer K

6.3.4 Pursuing collaborative environments

I like collaborating with people. So I do like that kind of like, 'okay, I think I got that right, you happy? You happy? Good.' I like making people happy. — Composer J

Several composers describe working in collaborative environments positively. Both Composers K and H in their comments below relate environments in which successful and reciprocal collaboration and exchange of ideas take place, to the achievement of ideal creative outcomes for the project. In these examples, both composers are referring to their relationships with the musicians they were working with for the creation of the film score.

I guess more and more, I would like to do more in depth kind of collaborations that involve a kind of more equal trade off between musician and composer rather than just, you know, play this. I think those can make for more interesting music some of the time. — Composer K

...mostly I prefer the collaborative [scenario]. I find if you write for yourself, you can get a bit stuck by yourself. I find that collaborating gives a better creative outcome. — Composer H

Composer I, G and L report additional benefits of working in effective collaborative environments. Familiarity gained through successful rapport building tactics enable informal back and forth processes of exchanging ideas and feedback, resulting in a shorter feedback loop, greater creative collaboration and expedited sharing of knowledge between composer and client role players. Post-production colleagues in these contexts become effective sounding boards against whom composers can test creative ideas throughout the film score composition process.

...in the past was people I knew well, you know? So it was very easy. There was no there was no hierarchy, you know, I could just bounce ideas back and forth and they they came to me even I could just take any random rough idea to them and play to them and say, is it like this? Or is it like that? And they'd be yeah, more like that. Give me half an hour and I'll send something. — Composer I

I worked with an engineer... who is a very, very good sounding board for me... I work with various engineers, but [this one] particularly is very good at immediately deciphering a good from a bad idea. You know, I'll just, I'll start a rough thing and he goes 'that works.' — Composer I

But we looked at frame rates and all that, for some reason just wasn't syncing to the absolute cue that a lot of the head points... So fortunately, he's close to me. So I said, 'listen, I'm going to come to your place. I've done all the compositions now, all the cues'... — Composer G

But with this director, she came into my studio, like once a week, so it was really great just having that one on one... in person interaction. We just had more of a relationship because we saw each other in person. I think working on a feature you have more time to discuss things and to explore things. — Composer L

Similarly, interaction between the director's and composer's creative processes due to familiarity with each other's work also increases with rapport building, as each can keep the other's styles in mind while working.

Another thing I've learned, on the friends basis as far as relationships go, yeah: it all made sense to me why directors use their composers. For instance, Steven Spielberg using John Williams. James Cameron using James Horner, you know? All the major directors using all the major composers that they know because they've developed a relationship and friendship and it gets to the stage where the director knows the composer's work so well, that in his choice of camera work, and he's always got that idea in his head that he knows what music is going to be put to this.

— Composer G

Curry (2019:213) identifies a lack of rapport building as a contributing factor to relational disconnect and resultant unwillingness to engage in collaborative exchanges. In the context of a supervisor-employee dynamic, employees were reportedly more prone to seek unqualified guidance from third parties in order to avoid approaching supervisors with whom they lacked rapport, with problems or questions. In the context of film score composition, a client may be less willing to discuss creative possibilities, provide their own creative vision or give honest feedback where rapport does not exist in their relationship with the composer. Likewise, composers may feel less willing to ask necessary questions in order to gain a clear understanding of the client's needs. In both cases, creative control is reduced and the outcomes of the film project, frustrated.

6.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter on rapport building encompasses descriptions of relationship and its importance in creative and cultural industries, as well as actions taken to improve rapport. In the realm of film score composition, rapport building takes place between composers and other post-production role players. Although the relationship between the composer and director emerges most prominently in this category, other rapport building relationships include those between the composer and clients, producers, editors, sound engineers, co-composers or musicians.

The extant literature identifies various forms of rapport building behaviour, including: attentive, imitative, courteous, connecting and information sharing behaviours, as well as small talk. Rapport building tactics that emerge from the data of the current study are grouped into building and maintaining friendships, chasing repeated collaborations, and finally doing favours and working for free.

Within the composer-director or client dynamic, rapport building is described as a tool that on the one hand improves the composer's experiencing of a film project by affording them greater creative control and therefore opportunity to engage more creatively with the film. On the other hand, rapport building is seen as a tactic also capable of benefiting the director or client in that it enables the composer to become familiar with a particular director's way of working and communicating. Rapport building benefits the composer in terms of getting work, building trust, improving communication and understanding, and creating collaborative environments. These benefits in turn improve composers' creative control and their ability to meet the client's expectations for the score. Rapport building also benefits clients and the project as a whole by creating an environment in which the best possible creative solution for the score can be reached via effective interaction and negotiation between the creative role-players involved.

Reflection

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will be structured as a self-interview in order to demonstrate the process of pursuing reflexivity in this GTM study. Reflections made on various aspects of the study and the research process as a whole have been captured in the research journal as they arise, revisited, and are discussed here retrospectively.

7.2 SELF-INTERVIEW

7.2.1 What bias might you have brought to this study, and what effect did this have on the research process?

With a degree in music composition and aspirations of working as a film score composer myself, I am likely to view the perspectives of the composers in this study more sympathetically than those of other production role players mentioned in the data. As this study consciously sought to explore film score composition processes as experienced by the composers, I believe this potential bias is not inexorably detrimental to the current study, granted readers are aware of this stance favouring the composers' concerns.

As mentioned in chapter one, the order in which transcripts were coded was chosen at random. In hindsight, it is perhaps ideal that the first interview analysed is not that of a composer that I knew well. The experiences of composers I knew prior to the study were familiar to me and would thus have encouraged the formation of preconceived categories. Being forced to code and analyse a composer's experiences from the perspective of someone who does not know them personally enabled me to start the coding process with 'fresh eyes' and thus encouraged the perception of more data-based, novel concepts from the start. Perhaps making a conscious decision to code a couple more interview transcripts of composers I had been unfamiliar with, before turning to those that were familiar to me, would have encouraged even more active engagement with underlying meanings and intentions in the data. That being said, the film score composer who's transcript was coded first was by chance

also the youngest and one of the least experienced of the participant pool. The result is that a number of categories that were created at the start do not emerge as particularly prominent in the overall analysis as older or more experienced composers do not share the same concerns or view the industry in the same way. Naturally, however, those categories that seem to cut across age and experience are precisely those that are of particular interest in this study and inevitably lead to the most prominent emergent concepts.

The following themes discussed in chapter one of this document represent further potential points of bias. These are drawn from my own experiences in the industry as well as concepts found in the literature overview prior to the study, and create expectations regarding research outcomes that had to be set aside once preparation and data collection began.

- *Lack of time, resources and budget,*
- *competing artistic visions,*
- *differing perceptions of the role and function of film music,*
- *miscommunication,*
- *conditions of high emotional and physical stress, and*
- *different working processes.*

7.2.2 Who are the participants in this study and how do they describe their experiences as film score composers?

Not one of the participants in this study worked exclusively as a film score composer. Other part-time or even full-time jobs inevitably come up during interviews as being a necessary part of pursuing a film score composition career. Furthermore, very few are eager to describe themselves as film score composers at all. This raises questions of identity as well as working conditions in the South African film industry that could certainly be pursued in further research. Composers also naturally bring up experiences of composing in various industries (including feature film, short film, advertisements, and art music composition), and compare their experiences between these realms as a means of elaborating on their experiences of writing film music, which provides rich and detailed descriptions for the purposes of this study.

Another interesting characteristic regarding how participants describe their experiences is the tendency to straddle between detailed, case specific descriptions of how they experienced film projects they were involved in previously, and that of a far more general description that seems to represent how they believed things should be. When compared, these coupled descriptions indicate that film score composers working in South Africa sense a discord between their own experiences and that of film score composition as an abstract concept, one that seems to be based on more established film industries such as Hollywood.

7.2.3 How does your inexperience as a gtm researcher impact the study?

Coding the data was a far slower process than expected or planned, where line-by-line coding began as a systematic, steady process in which each code and step taken was captured and considered in memos. While this process encourages careful and deliberate consideration of every data segment as well as reflection on my own thoughts and actions while doing so, the scope of the study demanded that further coding in later interviews become progressively more efficient. Coding strategies described in the research journal are thus revised and reworked several times throughout the coding and analysis processes of the study.

7.2.4 How does the use of NVivo 12 Plus affect coding, analysis and write-up procedures?

Use of the software in the context of this study produced a number of benefits. Data, literature, memos, maps and codes are all integrated and thus more easily considered holistically. The software allows for flexibility in terms of assigning, changing and merging codes, thus facilitating the need to embrace ambiguity while considering and comparing data segments. Furthermore, version management is possible. Files remain secure and backed up online at all times. It is also practical and convenient to have all files and documents in one place. However, researchers new to GTM are encouraged to first attempt grounded theory coding methods by hand in order to avoid having to deal with simultaneous learning curves. Time constraints made this impossible on a large scale, however a very short section of the first transcript was indeed first attempted by hand before being translated into processes in the software. Although the tactile and visual experience of physically organising segments of data into groups and categories is lost, my over all experience of using NVivo software in the context of GTM research is a positive one.

7.3 CONCLUSION

By offering these reflections in this chapter, the researcher acknowledges her active participation in the collection, interpretation and analysis of data, as well as in the process of abstraction of concepts towards theory building.

Conclusion and recommendations

8.1 CONCLUSION

In this study exploring composers' experiences of contemporary film score composition processes in South Africa, three concerns emerge as most prevalent. These are *experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work*, *creative control*, and *rapport building*. In many ways, the three emergent categories are foreshadowed by concepts found in the noncommittal literature overview in chapter one.

Composers depict **experiencing intrinsic value in film score composition work** by describing juxtaposing experiences of negative working conditions seemingly inherent within the current state of the South African film industry, with those of passion and enjoyment in their work as film score composers in spite of unfavourable conditions. This spoke to concepts of intrinsic motivation, which are similarly found in the extant literature pertaining to working in creative industries. This topic thus contributes towards bodies of literature pertaining to SDT and Flow Theory.

Having **creative control** emerges prominently as a concern for film score composers working in South Africa. It resonates with the need for a sense of autonomy, particularly in the context of creative work, described in the extant literature. Originally based on the concept of wanting creative freedom, an intriguing element of this category is that having too much creative freedom without clarity of outcomes serves to reduce rather than encourage experiences of creative control. Factors influencing composers' perceptions of their creative control can be categorised into limitations from the client, limitations from the industry, and limitations from the composers themselves.

The third key concern of film score composer in this study is **rapport building** actions and results. Participants seek rapport with a number of production role-players who have bearing on and influence their work, although the relationship between composers and directors emerges most prominently. Types of rapport building strategies employed by the participants involved building and maintaining friendships, chasing repeated collaborations, and doing favours and working for free. Concepts of rapport building, seeking relationship, and networking as integral aspects of working in creative and cultural industries can similarly be found in extant liter-

ature. Rapport building tactics are found to be employed in these contexts in order to get work, increase trust (and therefore creative control), improve communication and understanding between role players, and to pursue collaborative environments.

As mentioned in 1.4.3 (Theoretical saturation), the current study aims to provide substantive theories regarding the experiences of film score composers working in South Africa, rather than formal theories on the three emergent topics. The hope is that experiences, insights, concerns and emergent concepts discussed in this study will resonate with readers working in similar industries and contexts.

8.2 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

8.2.1 Limitations

- Conducting the large number of interviews required to reach theoretical saturation is beyond the scope of this study. Attempting to construct formal theory from the data collected here alone is thus premature.
- As a result of using the snowball method for identifying participants for this study, variables such as geographical location or age of interviewees are not necessarily equally represented. The current study aims to represent a data pool constructed and guided by the experiences of the participants themselves rather than attempting to verify differences in experiences when controlling variables such as age or geographic location.
- Access to ongoing film projects was not available during the time period in which this study took place. I could therefore not include certain additional kinds of data (such as observations made in the field) that could have potentially enriched the findings of the current research¹. However, this could be explored in future studies in order to produce further insight into the experiences of film score composers in South Africa.
- The data in this study reflects conditions prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, as data collection occurred in 2019 before restrictions and the effects thereof were felt. Although the results of Covid-19 pandemic conditions on film score composer experiences in South Africa will not reflect in this study, these effects could be explored in future research and compared to the findings in this study.
- It is also beyond the scope of this study to conduct interviews with important role-players surrounding film score composers (as discovered in this study) such as directors, producers, editors, musicians and clients. Doing so in future research could similarly serve to cross-reference data and provide a multifaceted perspective with which to view film score composer experiences.
- The composition work discussed by film score composers in this study varied considerably in terms of musical function, length of the product, hours of work and budget. Rather than being cause for concern, this proves to be beneficial

¹These conditions were a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent shutdown of the film and other entertainment industries.

to research outcomes as it allows for common threads to be drawn between inevitably varying processes that occur naturally within the industry.

8.2.2 Delimitations

This study focuses on the experiences of film score composers, as opposed to those of other members in the production team. Furthermore, composers' experiences of the film score composition process are explored, rather than aiming to verify objective concepts of physical, step by step processes and events themselves.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The following is a summary of recommendations and possible future research mentioned throughout this document:

1. Although this study did not intentionally set out to do so (having used a snowball data collection method where interviewees were suggested by previous interviewees), the sample of participants points towards a potential lack of both female composers and composers of colour in the industry. The distribution of film score composers in terms of geographic location, race, gender and sexual orientation in South Africa could be investigated in further research.
2. Composers in this study describe their experiences of different types of clients (and the different styles with which directors interacted with them in particular). This touched on topics such as communication styles, personality traits and power dynamics. Future studies could explore what factors influence interactions and relationships between film score composers and their clients.
3. Based on the data in this study, the researcher's suspicion is that trust between clients and composers is, as one might expect, based on the client's perception of the composer's prowess and reputation as a film score composer. Another influencing factor, however, could be the extent to which clients believe a composer is able and willing to create something the *client* connects with and feels works effectively with their film. Rather than accepting a score on the grounds of the composer's professional opinion, composers perceive that clients want to know that the composer is in step with *their* ideas. This topic could be an insightful area of exploration in future research.
4. The current study does not address the extent to which experiences discussed here are unique to the South African industry. Future research could explore this and in so doing, situate the South African film industry within a global film industry context.
5. Future studies could differentiate and compare experiences pertaining to various kinds of media composition, such as composing music for advertisements, academic projects, short films, documentaries and feature films.
6. As mentioned earlier, none of the participants work as film score composers exclusively, or are particularly in the habit of referring to themselves as film

score composers. Future studies could explore questions of identity within the realm of the South African film industry and the manner in which film score composers describe themselves.

Semi-structured interview protocol

1. Just as an introduction, tell me a bit about your career as a film composer so far.
2. Tell me about some of your experiences as a film composer.
3. How do you experience *writing* film music?
4. Factors influencing composition:
 - 4.1. What makes you feel like you can compose well or easily?
 - 4.2. And what about the things that negatively impact your composing?
5. Ideal working conditions:
 - 5.1. In an ideal world, what would your film composition process look like?
 - 5.2. What would need to happen for that to become feasible for a film composer like you?
6. Thinking about the conversation we have just had, what question would you have liked to answer that I didn't ask?

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