



LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT IN THE SALE AND PURCHASE OF UNOFFICIAL K-POP MERCHANDISE AS REVIEWED FROM MUI FATWA NO. 1 2005

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Article Info

Article history:

Received :

Revised :

Accepted :

Available online

<http://jurnal.uinsu.ac.id/index.php/analytica>

E-ISSN: 2541-5263

P-ISSN: 1411-4380



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ABSTRACT

K-Pop merchandise is part of the work protected by intellectual property rights (IPR), both in the form of copyright and trademark rights. However, the practice of buying and selling unofficial K-Pop merchandise is still rampant, especially through online marketplace platforms, and raises legal and ethical issues. This study aims to analyze the forms of copyright infringement in the sale of unofficial K-Pop merchandise and the legal liability of the parties involved, reviewed from positive law and the MUI Fatwa Number 1 of 2005. This study uses an empirical juridical approach with data collection techniques through online observation of the practice of selling unofficial merchandise on the Shopee marketplace as well as a literature study of laws and Islamic legal literature. The results show that the practice of selling unofficial K-Pop merchandise contains copyright and trademark violations due to the use of works without permission for commercial purposes, thus contradicting the provisions of the Copyright Law and the principles of Islamic muamalah. The novelty of this study lies in the integrative analysis of the legal liability of sellers and marketplaces as transaction facilitators, which is not only juridical, but also includes moral and religious dimensions. This study confirms that this practice is not justified under either positive law or Islamic law because it violates the principles of justice and protection of property rights.

Keywords: Intellectual Property Rights; Unofficial Merchandise; K-Pop; MUI Fatwa.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the global entertainment industry, particularly Korean Pop (K-Pop), has given rise to a creative economy phenomenon that focuses not only on music but also on the production and distribution of merchandise as part of a commercialization

strategy and artist identity. K-Pop merchandise, such as albums, photocards, clothing, and accessories, has high economic value and is protected by the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) regime, both in the form of copyright and trademark rights (Djumhana & Djubaedillah, 2003; Darmawan, 2019). However, high consumer interest and the price disparity between official and unofficial products has led to the rise of unofficial merchandise sales, particularly through online marketplace platforms.

In Indonesia, digital marketplaces like Shopee have become the primary distribution medium for unofficial K-Pop merchandise that uses artists' images, logos, and identities without the rights holders' permission. This practice not only causes economic losses for agencies and creators but also weakens the IPR protection system in the digital space. Empirical data shows that unofficial merchandise is traded openly with high sales volumes, indicating weak oversight and low legal awareness among both sellers and consumers (Karunia, 2024; Fanani, 2023). This situation demonstrates that IPR violations in the marketplace are no longer sporadic but rather systemic practices in the digital economy.

From a positive legal perspective, the sale of unofficial merchandise violates Law Number 28 of 2014 concerning Copyright and Law Number 20 of 2016 concerning Trademarks and Geographical Indications, specifically regarding the economic rights and exclusive rights of trademark holders. Copyright, as an exclusive right, grants the creator or rights holder the authority to control the commercial use and exploitation of a work (Husna & Permata, 2023). Therefore, any unauthorized duplication, distribution, and exploitation of a work constitutes an unlawful act.

Beyond the positive legal aspect, the issue of unofficial merchandise also has a normative dimension in Islamic law. The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Fatwa Number 1 of 2005 concerning the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights affirms that copyright and trademark rights are part of property (*māl*) that must be protected. Violations of IPR are categorized as acts of injustice (*ẓulm*) and *ghasb* (aggression) because they take another person's rights without a legitimate basis, thus deeming the resulting transaction impermissible (Quraisy, 2011; Rahmi Jened, 2014). Therefore, the practice of buying and selling unofficial merchandise is not only legally problematic but also contradicts the principles of Islamic transactions, which emphasize justice and mutual consent.

Several previous studies have examined the legal protection of unofficial K-Pop merchandise, focusing on copyright infringement and weak law enforcement in digital marketplaces (Puspitasari & Tashya; Karunia, 2024). However, most of these studies focus on protecting creators and have not comprehensively addressed the legal liability of the parties involved, particularly sellers and marketplace platforms, using an integrative approach between positive law and Islamic law. In other words, there are limited studies linking IPR violations to the ethical, moral, and religious dimensions of responsibility as stipulated in the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Fatwa Number 1 of 2005.

Based on this research gap, this study focuses on analyzing the forms of copyright violations in the practice of buying and selling unofficial K-Pop merchandise and the legal liability of sellers and marketplaces as transaction facilitators. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative approach, which not only assesses the formal legal aspects but also examines the moral and religious consequences of digital trade practices that violate IPR. Therefore, this research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the

development of Sharia-based IPR studies, as well as practical implications for strengthening regulations and business ethics in digital marketplaces.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses an empirical juridical approach, one that examines law not only as written norms (law in books) but also as practices occurring in society (law in action) (Muhammad, 2004). This approach was chosen because the research focuses on analyzing copyright infringement in the actual practice of buying and selling unofficial K-Pop merchandise in digital marketplaces, as well as the legal accountability of the parties involved based on positive law and the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Fatwa Number 1 of 2005.

The research object focuses on the practice of selling unofficial K-Pop merchandise on the Shopee marketplace, with restrictions on products that use the identity of K-Pop artists or groups (names, logos, and visuals) without official permission from the copyright holder or a distribution license. This limitation of objects was implemented to maintain the research focus and avoid overgeneralizations regarding all e-commerce platforms.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through online observation of unofficial K-Pop merchandise sales activities on Shopee. Observations were conducted by examining storefronts, product descriptions, product photos, prices, sales volumes, and product status information (fanmade/unofficial). To strengthen the validity of the empirical data, researchers also conducted limited interactions via chat with several sellers to confirm the authenticity of the products and the visual sources used. This online observation technique is relevant in digital economic law research because it allows researchers to observe actual legal practices in cyberspace (Fanani, 2023).

Secondary data was obtained through library research, which included primary and secondary legal materials. The primary legal materials consisted of Law Number 28 of 2014 concerning Copyright, Law Number 20 of 2016 concerning Trademarks and Geographical Indications, and the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Fatwa Number 1 of 2005 concerning the Protection of Intellectual Property Rights. Secondary legal materials include legal textbooks, scientific journals, previous research results, and expert opinions relevant to intellectual property rights and Islamic jurisprudence (Djumhana & Djubaedillah, 2003; Quraisy, 2011; Jened, 2014).

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively and descriptively, with the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and analytical conclusion drawing. Empirical data from the marketplace was analyzed to identify patterns of copyright infringement, forms of unauthorized use of works, and the roles of sellers and marketplaces in facilitating transactions. Next, these empirical findings were normatively analyzed by linking them to positive legal provisions and Islamic legal principles, particularly the concepts of *ḥaqq al-ibtikār*, *ghashb*, and *ẓulm* in Islamic jurisprudence (Syafe'i, 2001; Quraisy, 2011).

To maintain data validity, this study employed source triangulation, comparing observational data, seller statements, and normative provisions in laws and regulations, as well as the MUI Fatwa. This approach is crucial in empirical legal research so that the

analysis results are not merely normative but also reflect the reality of legal practices in digital society (Muhammad, 2004).

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Analysis of Copyright Infringement in the Sale of Unofficial K-Pop Merchandise

Wealth (al-mal) originates from the word māla (leaning or turning from the center to one side). It is defined as anything that pleases humans and is cherished by them, whether in material form or for use. Scholars of the Hanafi school define wealth as anything that humans desire and can be brought to them when needed, or anything that can be owned, stored, and utilized. The majority of scholars define wealth as anything that has value and is subject to compensation for damage or loss (Encyclopedia of Islamic Law, 1994).

Ibn 'Arafah argued that "material wealth includes tangible objects ('ain) and intangible objects ('arad) (benefits). He defined al-'arad as benefits that cannot be physically identified by reason. This includes creations formed by human creativity, will, and feelings, not external to humans (Rahmi Jened, 2014). If benefits are categorized as wealth, as the nature of wealth applies to objects, then ownership rights apply to benefits as to objects, as long as their use is permissible according to sharia (Quraisy, 2011).

In Islamic jurisprudence, intellectual property rights are known as haq qul ibtikar, which is derived from the two words haq and al-ibtikar. Haq is a special right owned by an individual or group of related individuals, or a newly created work (al-ibtikar). Meanwhile, ibtikar itself has the meaning of creation (Syafe'i, 2001). This concept affirms that creators have exclusive rights over newly created works, both economically and morally. In the context of K-Pop merchandise, this means that official agencies have the sole right to produce, sell, and distribute official products. The sale of unofficial merchandise without permission is a violation of these rights and is ethically and sharia-compliant.

Most scholars, including the Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools, believe that original copyright and its benefits are considered valuable assets (mal), just as any object that can be utilized under Islamic law (Quraisy, 2011). This clearly equates copyright with property or wealth, with the exception of this fatwa: copyright protected under Islamic law is copyright for works that do not conflict with Islamic law or sharia. Based on these scholars' views, copyright inherent in a work has the status of assets (mal) that must be protected, so any form of its utilization must be carried out legally and with permission. This principle serves as the basis for assessing the production and distribution of K-Pop merchandise, particularly in distinguishing between official and unofficial merchandise.

This understanding of copyright as property protected by Islamic law is relevant for application in the entertainment industry, including the production and distribution of K-Pop merchandise. In this context, it is important to distinguish between official and unofficial merchandise.



Figure 1. Difference between Official Photocard and Unofficial Photocard

The difference between official and unofficial merchandise can also be seen from the two photocards above because photocards are one of the most counterfeit K-Pop merchandise. Official photocards are usually obtained when purchasing an album, while unofficial photocards can be purchased without purchasing an album. Authentic photocards usually have the name of the album on the back, while unofficial ones usually have a plain white back without the album name or the name of the K-Pop idol group. Unofficial photocards usually use standard screen printing that is prone to fading.

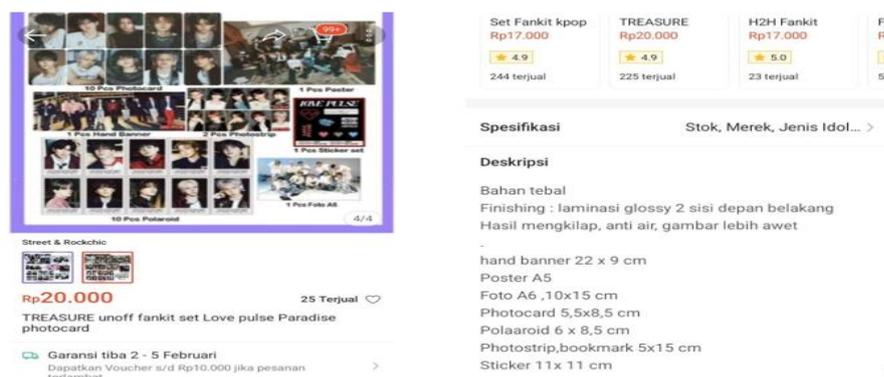


Figure 2. Display of unofficial K-Pop fan kit sales on Shopee showing the use of group identity, product package contents, and relatively affordable prices.

In the product description, the seller details the material specifications, size, and type of printing used, but does not mention any official permission or license from the copyright holder. Furthermore, the product uses photos and visuals of idols identical to the K-Pop group's official material.

To clarify the authenticity of the visuals used, the researcher also communicated directly with the seller through the messaging feature on the Shopee marketplace. In the conversation, the author inquired whether the photos used on the merchandise were the same official visuals as the original album. The seller responded that he was unsure of the official album in question and stated that the images used were obtained from the display available on the product display. This statement indicates that the seller lacks knowledge or authority over the official source of the visuals used and cannot confirm the existence of permission from the copyright holder. This situation indicates weak legal accountability in the practice of selling unofficial merchandise on the Shopee marketplace.

In addition to direct observations, the researcher also briefly communicated with other sellers of unofficial K-Pop merchandise on the Shopee marketplace without conducting a transaction. In this communication, the author inquired about the compatibility of the photocards sold with the original K-Pop group's album. The seller emphasized that the products offered are fanmade merchandise and do not contain photocards identical to the original album. This statement indicates that the seller consciously differentiates its products from official merchandise, yet continues to exploit the idol's visuals and identity in commercial activities outside the copyright holder's licensing system. The experience of communicating with this unofficial seller demonstrates how fanmade products circulate outside official channels. This situation differs from the production and distribution mechanisms of K-Pop merchandise, which are managed directly by agencies.

Because these products are protected by copyright, unauthorized distribution or sale falls within the legal and sharia law. Therefore, any party producing, distributing, or selling merchandise without the copyright holder's permission, as is often the case with sales on Shopee, has committed an intellectual property rights violation. From a sharia perspective, this is considered an unjustified act. MUI Fatwa No. Law No. 1 of 2005 explicitly states:

"Any form of violation of IPR, including but not limited to using, disclosing, creating, using, selling, importing, exporting, distributing, handing over, providing, announcing, reproducing, plagiarizing, counterfeiting, or pirating another person's IPR without authorization, constitutes injustice and is prohibited."

Allah SWT also states in Surah An-Nisa, verse 29:

اَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَنْ تَرَاضٍ
مِّنكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا

"O you who believe! Do not devour one another's property unjustly, except by means of mutually agreed trade. And do not kill yourselves; indeed, Allah is Most Merciful to you."

However, in the practice of selling unofficial merchandise, businesses intentionally exploit these copyrighted objects without the consent of K-Pop agencies. This action demonstrates an element of unauthorized control and use, which contradicts the concept of ownership in Islam. This exploitation is carried out to gain economic gain, where the product's selling value depends entirely on the popularity and commercial value of another party's work. Thus, the violations involved are not only related to the administrative aspects of licensing but also touch on the moral dimension of transactions, as profits are obtained through the unauthorized use of others' rights.

Furthermore, the distribution of unofficial merchandise also causes real losses for copyright holders, both in terms of economic well-being, image, and the protection of the exclusivity of official products. The presence of illegal products on the market can reduce the value of official products and disrupt legally regulated distribution systems. This situation emphasizes the elements of injustice (zulm) and harm prohibited in Islamic teachings, as reflected in the principle of "la dharar wa la dhirar," which prohibits any action that causes harm or loss to others.

Some consumers purchase unofficial merchandise because the price is more affordable than official products, without considering the legal status and halal nature of the goods. In fact, many consumers are aware that the products they purchase are not official but still purchase them due to trends and affordability.

In Islam, consumer regulations reflect their relationship with Allah SWT. Islam imposes restrictions on consumers to avoid consuming prohibited goods and/or services to ensure their safety in this world and the hereafter (Zulham, 2013).

Based on all of these elements, namely the use of works without permission, use for commercial purposes, the occurrence of losses for the rights owner, and violations of the principles of Islamic transactions, the practice of selling unofficial K-Pop merchandise meets the qualifications of copyright infringement according to the MUI Fatwa Number 1 of 2005. The fatwa expressly states that every form of copyright infringement is a haram and unjust act, because it includes taking the rights of others in vain (ghashb). Therefore,

the legal status of this practice is prohibited according to Islamic law and is a strong basis for the birth of legal, moral, and religious responsibility for the business actors involved.

Accountability in the Sale and Purchase of Unofficial K-Pop Merchandise

Accountability in the sale and purchase of unofficial K-Pop merchandise cannot be understood solely as an administrative violation, but must be viewed as a legal relationship that simultaneously involves legal, ethical, and religious dimensions. In the context of the digital economy, transactions occurring in marketplaces not only create a legal relationship between sellers and buyers but also involve the active role of the platform as a transaction facilitator. Therefore, accountability analysis must be directed at identifying the main actors contributing to intellectual property rights (IPR) violations, namely sellers and marketplaces, as well as the legal implications inherent in each of these roles (Muhammad, 2004).

Sellers of unofficial K-Pop merchandise are the primary perpetrators of violations because they directly produce, reproduce, and distribute works protected by copyright and trademark rights without the rights holder's permission. Under positive law, these actions fulfill the elements of a violation of the creator's economic rights, particularly the right to distribute and reproduce works, as stipulated in Law Number 28 of 2014 concerning Copyright. The use of K-Pop artists' images, logos, and identities for commercial purposes without a license not only harms the rights holder economically but also undermines the intellectual property rights protection system that underpins the creative industry (Djumhana & Djubaedillah, 2003; Husna & Permata, 2023).

In addition to legal liability, sellers also bear moral and religious responsibilities. From an Islamic legal perspective, copyright is viewed as part of the right to own property (*māl*) because it possesses economic and utility value. Using someone else's work without permission for profit is classified as *ghasb*, the unlawful appropriation of another's rights, which is prohibited (Quraisy, 2011; Jened, 2014). Thus, sellers are not only liable under state law but also bear ethical and spiritual burdens for transactions that violate the principles of *muamalah*, which emphasize fairness and mutual consent of the parties.

On the other hand, accountability for the sale and purchase of unofficial K-Pop merchandise cannot be separated from the marketplace's role as an electronic system provider. Marketplaces provide the infrastructure, search algorithms, and payment systems that enable the widespread and massive trading of illegal products. Under positive law, platforms that know or should know of copyright infringement but still allow it to continue can be held legally accountable. This provision demonstrates that marketplaces cannot fully protect themselves under the pretext of acting as neutral intermediaries, especially when violations occur openly and repeatedly (Fanani, 2023).

From an Islamic legal perspective, marketplaces' negligence in monitoring the circulation of goods that infringe on intellectual property rights also raises ethical issues. The principle of *ta'āwun 'ala al-ithm* (restriction of mutual benefit) stipulates that no party is prohibited from assisting or facilitating acts that contain elements of injustice. By allowing the sale of unofficial merchandise that clearly violates the rights of others, marketplaces are potentially indirectly involved in acts that contradict the values of justice and the common good (Quraisy, 2011). Therefore, marketplace responsibility

extends beyond formal legality to moral obligations to ensure that digital trading systems do not become a means of acquiring illegitimate wealth.

From an Islamic legal perspective, Shopee's role as a transaction facilitator cannot be separated from the principle of prohibiting aiding contrary actions, as explained in Surah Al-Maidah, verse 2 of the Quran:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ

"And help one another in righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and enmity."

Accountability in the sale and purchase of unofficial K-Pop merchandise is multi-layered and collective. The seller is directly responsible for copyright and trademark infringement, while the marketplace bears structural responsibility as a transaction facilitator. The integration of positive law and Islamic law in this analysis demonstrates that IPR violations are not merely technical violations, but also issues of business ethics and social justice. These findings strengthen the argument that law enforcement efforts against unofficial merchandise must be accompanied by strengthening digital business ethics and religious awareness to ensure sustainable intellectual property protection (Djumhana & Djubaedillah, 2003; Quraisy, 2011).

4. CONCLUSION

From the analysis and discussion conducted in this research, it can be concluded that copyright, from an Islamic legal perspective, is part of the right to own property (hamil) and must be protected. The practice of selling unofficial K-Pop merchandise, which uses the work of others without permission for commercial purposes, and causes losses to the copyright holder, is proven to violate the provisions of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Fatwa Number 1 of 2005 and contradicts the principles of muamalah (transactions). According to Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), this act is classified as *zulum* and contains elements of *ghasb* (violence) because it takes and exploits the rights of others without a legitimate basis. Therefore, the income derived from this practice is classified as illicit property and gives rise to legal liability for the parties involved.

In this context, liability is not only legal but also encompasses moral and religious dimensions. The seller bears primary responsibility for being the party distributing copyright and trademark infringements, as stated in Article 113 of the Copyright Law and Article 100 of the Trademark and Geographical Indications Law, and is contrary to the values stipulated in MUI Fatwa No. 1 of 2005, which emphasizes the prohibition of practices that harm others and are contrary to sharia principles. Meanwhile, Shopee as a place that facilitates sellers in trading the results of their copyright infringements is also subject to legal responsibility as stipulated in Article 114 of the Copyright Law.

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