Abstract

Copyright Protection of K-Pop Choreography: Legal Issues and Industry Implications

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K-Pop has evolved into a global cultural force, with original and refined choreography at its core. Despite its artistic and economic value, legal discourse on copyright protection for K-Pop choreography remains limited. Unclear standards for originality, complex collaborative production, and non-standardized contracts have created uncertainty over authorship and usage rights. The growing use of choreography in cover dances and social media challenges further increases the risk of rights-related conflicts. This study analyzes legal issues surrounding K-Pop choreography in three dimensions: (1) originality and scope of protection, (2) production structure and contractual ownership, and (3) relationships between rights holders and users. It argues that K-Pop choreography can be protected under current copyright law as a choreographic work if originality is met, especially when considering the overall structure and expressive context of the choreography. Rather than advocating for legislative reform, the study emphasizes the need for interpretive consistency and practical enforcement. The paper also highlights that current contract practices may leave both choreographers and agencies legally vulnerable. As a potential solution, it examines the applicability of the "joint ownership and independent commercialization" model used in Korean government software contracts, exploring its feasibility and limitations when applied to choreography agreements. Ultimately, the study calls for clearer contract structures and stronger industry dialogue. It emphasizes that balancing creators' rights with industry development

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requires not only legal clarity, but also voluntary cooperation and consensus-building within the creative ecosystem.

Keywords

Choreography Copyright, K-Pop Choreography, Dance Copyright, Copyright Contract, General Conditions of Service Contracts