



Mapping the Global Landscape of Music Copyright Research: A Bibliometric Analysis

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v9i5.3513>

Abstract

This study presents a global bibliometric analysis of research on music copyright published between 2010 and 2025, drawing on 1,090 peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in Scopus. Using VOSviewer, it maps co-authorship networks, keyword co-occurrence, and thematic clusters to provide a comprehensive overview of research structures and trends across disciplines and regions. The analysis highlights a multidimensional field encompassing music as cultural practice and creative expression; copyright governance; digital rights management; piracy; artificial intelligence and creative innovation; digital platforms and globalization; popular music and identity; the creative economy; and music therapy. Findings show that scholarship is predominantly concentrated on legal enforcement, technological regulation, and digital platform governance, particularly since 2016, while socio-cultural perspectives, contributions from the Global South, and micro-level creator experiences remain underexplored. Artificial intelligence emerges as a transformative area, yet its integration into copyright governance, especially regarding authorship, ownership, and remuneration, remains fragmented. Geographic and co-authorship patterns reveal strong dominance by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe, indicating global imbalances in research production and collaboration. The study identifies critical gaps, including limited exploration of algorithmic governance, the need for fair compensation systems in AI-assisted creativity, and the disconnect between policy frameworks and creators' lived experiences. By synthesizing fragmented scholarship into a coherent framework, this study provides a roadmap for future research, emphasizing interdisciplinary approaches, inclusive global representation, and human-centered inquiry. In doing so, it offers a timely and integrative perspective on the evolving dynamics of music copyright in a rapidly digital and AI-driven creative economy.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence; Bibliometric Analysis; Creative Economy; Digital Platforms; Music Copyright*

Introduction

Copyright is a cornerstone to the creative industries since it guarantees a creator their work, equitable compensation, and credit for their efforts. In the music industry, songs, music, and recordings

often reflect years of hard work, cooperation, and creativity. Such protection is not merely an economic imperative but a process of conserving cultural expression, maintaining creative ecosystems, and supporting innovation (Smith, 2018; Garcia, 2020). Music has long been used to shape identities and social realities and to facilitate cross-cultural exchange, which makes its preservation a legal as well as a cultural necessity.

The last two decades have been marked with a series of changes that have transformed the nature of music production, distribution, and consumption. The growth of digital platforms, online streaming services, and file-sharing networks has enlarged access to music globally and at the same time created difficulties in the enforcement of copyrights. There are also digital piracy, an unclear revenue structure, algorithmic content promotion, and the growing role of artificial intelligence in music production that make traditional governance structures more challenging (Lopez, 2019; Mustafa & Zhang, 2021). The problems of authorship, ownership, fair compensation, and legal liability have become so complicated that research to cover both technological innovation and creative practice is highly needed.

Scholarly writing on music copyright cuts across a variety of disciplines, including legal, economic, social sciences, and arts. Studies have focused on digital piracy, the financial effects of unauthorized sharing, licensing patterns, digital rights management, and the new AI-related issues. Irrespective of this breadth, the literature is still dispersed, and, in many cases, it is limited to particular disciplines or even geographical areas. Integrative cross-disciplinary studies that combine these various strands of study, discern world trends, and map intellectual forms are relatively rare.

To address this gap, the current paper carries out a bibliometric review of 1,090 peer-reviewed journal articles on music copyright published in 2010-2025 in Scopus. Using VOSviewer, the research plots the co-authorship networks, co-occurring keywords, and thematic clusters to give a systematic summary of intellectual networks, contributions to disciplines, and the distribution of the same across the geographical space. Through the combination of multiple disciplines, the exploration can determine the prevalent themes, the new areas of research, and those areas that are not under-explored, thus providing a guide to the future scholarship. This multidisciplinary approach combines the knowledge of legal, technological, cultural, and human-oriented approaches and provides a holistic picture of music copyright in a more digitalized and AI-enhanced creative economy.

2. Methodology

This section elaborates on the research design adopted in this study, data sources, and search strategy. It also depicts the inclusion and exclusion criteria used along with the approach to analyze the data.

2.1 Research Design

The study follows a bibliometric approach to the systematic mapping and analysis of the intellectual terrain of the academic literature on music copyright. Bibliometric analysis helps to conduct a quantitative analysis of the trends of publication, collaboration networks, and development of topics within a certain range of academic output. Therefore, it is particularly suitable when it comes to identifying research patterns, their driving forces, and emerging areas of knowledge.

2.2 Data Source and Search Strategy

To examine the academic landscape of copyright infringement in the field of music, a structured search was conducted in the Scopus database. The following Boolean query was used:

TITLE-ABS-KEY (copyright AND music) AND PUBYEAR > 2009 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "ARTS") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "SOCI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "ECON")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , "j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE , "final"))

This search string was designed to retrieve peer-reviewed journal articles related to copyright infringement and music in the fields of arts and humanities, social science, economics published between 2010 and 2025. A total of 6,546 documents were initially retrieved. The following filters were applied to refine the dataset:

Table 1: Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Inclusions	Number of results
Year Range	2010-2025	Filtered to 3490
Subject Areas	Social Sciences Arts and Humanities Economics/Econometrics/Finance	2177
Document Type	Journal articles only (“ar”)	1167
Publication Stage	Final publication (“final”)	1158
Source Type	Journals only (“j”)	1134
Language	English	Final dataset: 1090 articles

2.3 Data Cleaning and Screening

The records retrieved were exported as CSV and screened manually to remove extraneous records (e.g., articles that only talked of India and did not focus on it). Bibliographic data such as authors, affiliations, keywords, abstracts, and citations were saved to be analyzed.

2.3 Analytical Framework

To conduct the bibliometric analysis, VOSviewer has been applied together with descriptive statistical methods. The analysis processes used in the study include investigating the annual publication patterns and citation patterns. It utilizes co-authorship analysis to visualize collaboration networks between countries and authors and keyword co-occurrence analysis to discover major thematic clusters. It also traces the thematic development over time in an overlay visualization. Minimum threshold values were used in the construction of networks to ensure clarity and strength of analysis.

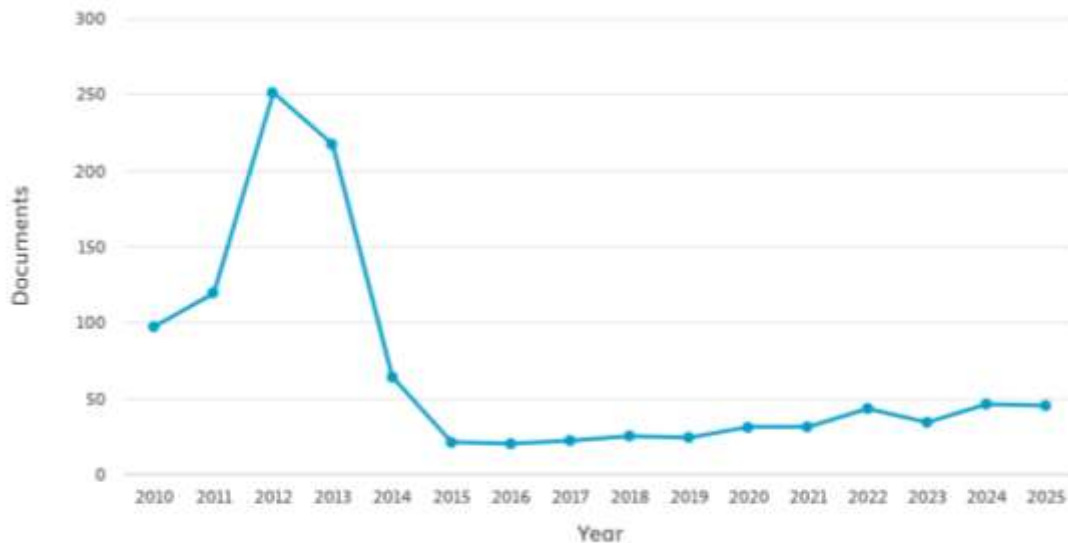
3. Results and Findings

This section presents the results of bibliometric analyses. The findings are organized to highlight the trends in publication volume, geographical distribution of research output, and collaboration networks. It also elaborates on the top cited studies, co-authorship networks, and thematic analysis based on keyword clusters. It visualizes the evolution of research in music and copyrights over the past 15 years.

3.1 Publication Trends

Year-wise publication trends are depicted in the figure below. It shows how the academic literature has expanded over the last 15 years.

Figure 1: Year-wise Distribution of Documents

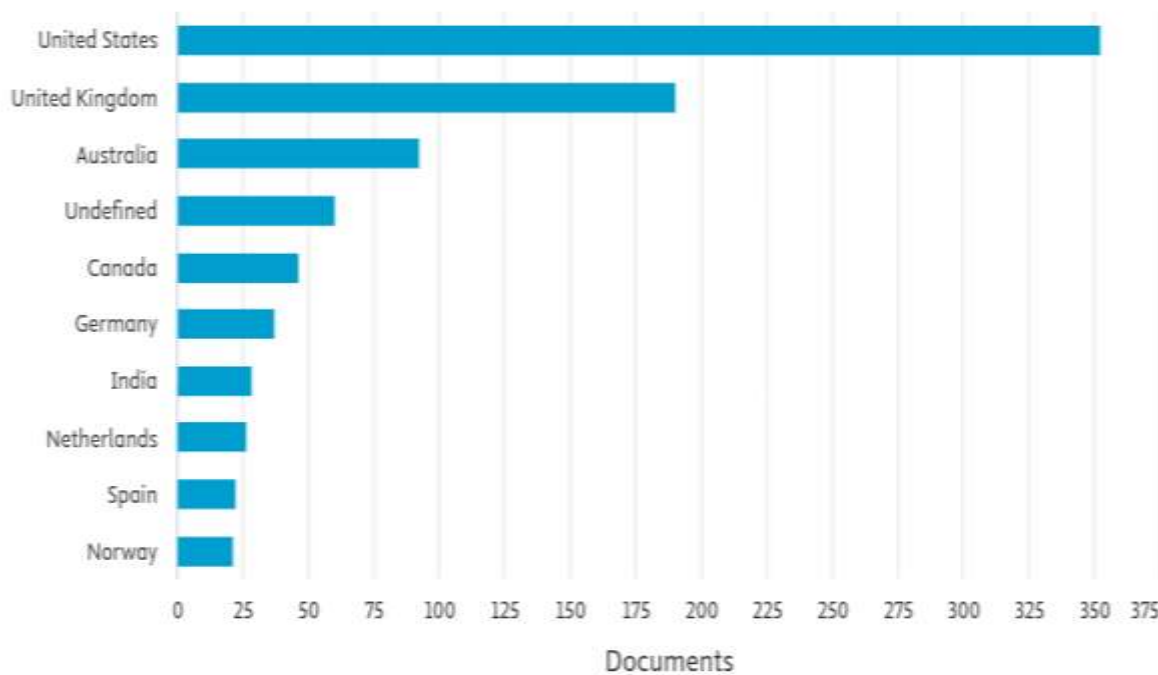


Over the last fifteen years, the pattern of research has been a bit erratic, with music and copyright being the subjects of study. The years 2010 to 2013 were marked with a quick rise in the number of published studies that reached its zenith in 2013, the peak of more than 250 papers, which was the highest in the whole dataset. The sudden concentration of publications is connected to the global switch to digital music distribution, the rise of streaming services, and the growing legal controversies about copyright enforcement that happened in that period, among other factors. On the contrary, from 2014 onwards, the research output suffered a steep decline, and by the year 2016, it was less than 50 papers a year and after that, it stayed at a low level throughout the years 2017-2025. This drastic decline during the entire period may be the result of digital copyright frameworks being cut off from the rest, the law's focus having switched to the area of AI, and copyright disputes becoming less and less interesting. The variations in the number of publications happening in the years between 2021 and 2025 (31 to 46 papers per year) are more indicative of a plateau than a new growth, hence pointing to a matured research area.

3.2 Geographic Concentration and Collaboration

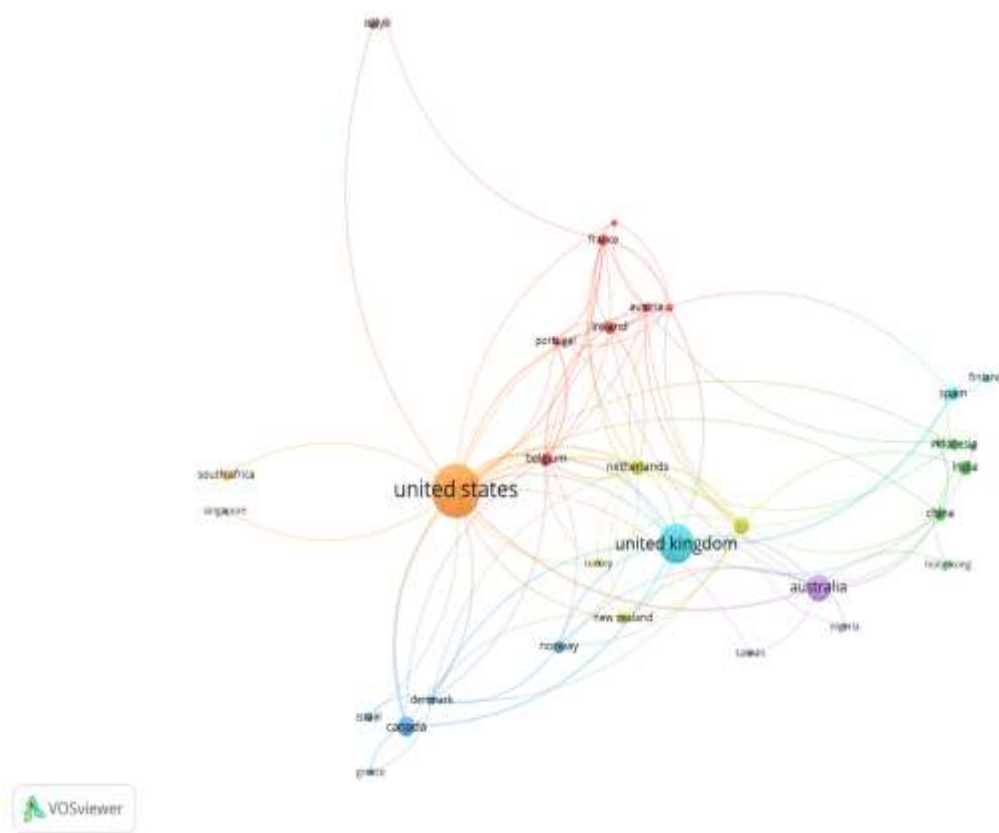
The figures below depict geographic concentration of academic output in terms of countries publishing the highest numbers of articles on music and copyrights. It also elaborates on the collaboration networks within the countries.

Figure 2: Geographic Concentration of Academic Output



The Western world has a very large share in the field, with the United States being the largest contributor with 352 publications, the United Kingdom coming second (189), and Australia (92) third. The combined output of these three countries already surpasses 60% of the total world research output related to copyright and music for that period. This situation is a consequence of them having a long history of focusing on intellectual property law, the development of high-quality entertainment industries, and the presence of academic institutions that are well-funded and very supportive of these areas of research. The mid-tier contributors are represented by Canada (44), Germany (37), India (26), and the Netherlands (26) which form a secondary cluster, indicating a wider but lopsided international engagement. The 60 "Undefined" entries are noteworthy as they indicate that there are some publications which do not have a specific country attribution, and these are probably either multi-affiliated or lacking metadata. The fact that North American and European nations dominate the field while Asian, African, and Latin American regions remain underrepresented points to a very significant geographical imbalance and at the same time reveals a great amount of research participation from the Global South that could be easily expanded.

Figure 3: Country-level collaboration network



The network of people writing together about music copyright shows that the US and the UK are at the center of things worldwide. The US is the biggest part of this map, since a lot of studies come from there, and it connects different research projects in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. It works a lot with countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, France, and South Africa, mixing teamwork between Western places that have been doing this for a while and new partners.

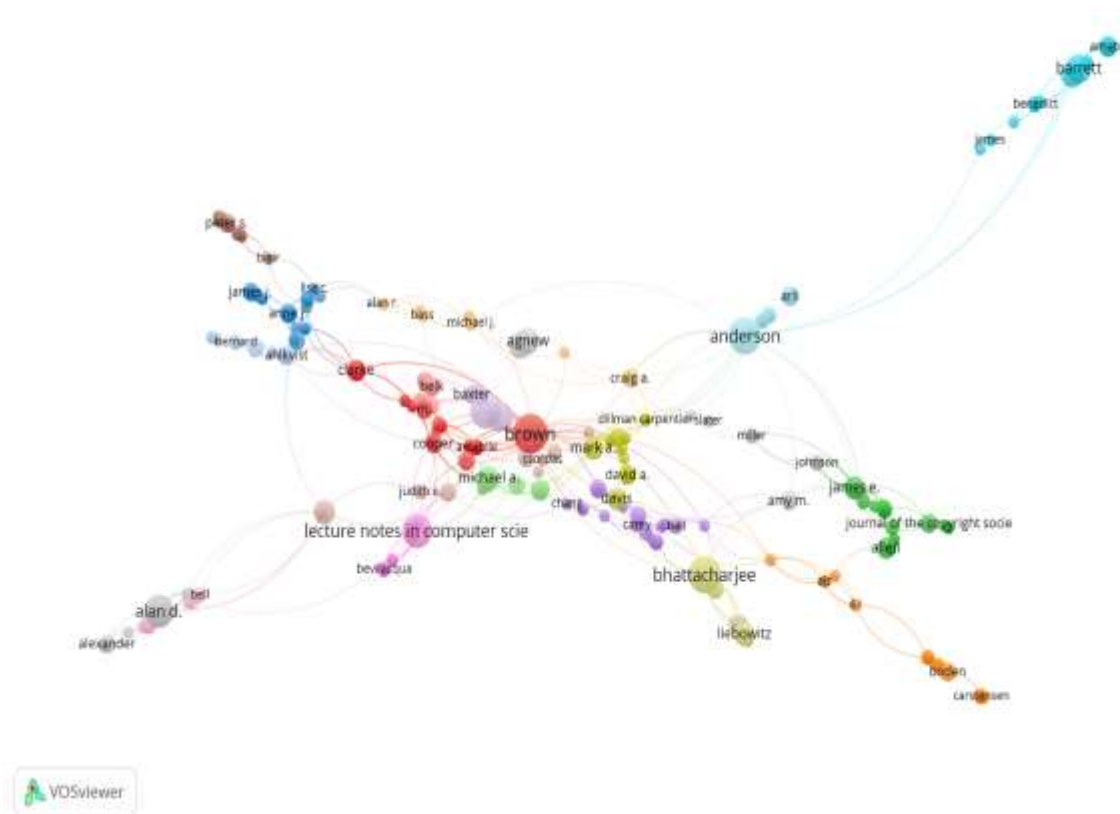
The UK is the next biggest part, and it's closely tied to Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and some European countries like Denmark, Norway, and Ireland. This grouping makes sense given the academic and language ties, where research teams from different countries pop up often. India, China, Indonesia, and Spain are connected by smaller lines, showing that scholars in Asia and Southern Europe are getting into the music copyright discussions around the globe. There's also a European group with France, Austria, Italy, and Portugal. They work with the US and the UK, but they also have strong ties within Europe, likely because of shared research interests and maybe because of EU copyright rules and cultural stuff in the area.

Smaller spots like Singapore, Greece, and Nigeria are starting to join the game but haven't done much yet. The big picture shows that English-speaking countries are the key players in research and teamwork, and Europe is a strong second. Asian and African countries are on the edge of the network, which points out that research is focused in certain areas and that there's room for more countries to get involved down the road.

3.3 Influential Publications Based on Citation Analysis

Co-citation analysis reveals how frequently authors are cited together, providing insight into the foundational thinkers and the networks of scholarship that shape the field. The resulting co-citation network highlights both central figures who anchor multiple subfields and peripheral contributors who specialize in narrower topics.

Figure 4: Author's Collaboration Network Chart



The author co-citation network shows a close-knit group of thinkers, Brown, Clarke, Belk, and Bhattacharjee, whose work is key to multiple subfields. These main authors link computer science, information studies, and copyright law, creating the field's basic structure. On the edges, you have separate smaller groups like Barrett Amato on one side and Alan D.–Bell on the other. They do specialized work that touches the main group, but not by much. So, the map looks like a wheel, where a few often co-cited authors set the ideas for the field, and smaller groups add specific details without changing the main ideas.

3.4 Thematic Analysis

The conceptual landscape of music copyright research is explored using keyword co-occurrence analysis as part of the bibliometric mapping procedure. This method identifies patterns of thematic convergence by clustering frequently co-occurring terms, thereby uncovering the underlying knowledge structure and dominant research themes within the selected body of literature.

Streaming platforms have undeniably revolutionized music distribution, but they also reshape the power dynamics of copyright governance. Junior et al. (2024) note that these platforms often fail to compensate artists equitably, raising key questions about how digital performances are classified under copyright law. The opacity surrounding revenue calculations and rights distribution further complicates the ecosystem, indicating a pressing need for more transparent governance mechanisms in the industry (Junior et al., 2024). Governments are increasingly adopting active regulatory roles to mitigate copyright violations and stabilize the music market. According to Selvira and Izzatsholekha (2023), these interventions involve both direct anti-piracy measures and broader strategies to cultivate fair competition among digital platforms. Their findings suggest that policy coherence is essential: initiatives such as monitoring foreign platforms and fostering domestic alternatives contribute to ensuring that creators receive proper recognition and economic benefit. Collectively, the literature suggests that while the digital music economy presents substantial governance challenges, it simultaneously opens pathways for legal and technological innovation. Strengthening copyright protection in this rapidly shifting environment

requires adaptive frameworks, enhanced transparency, and coordinated policy responses to safeguard creators' rights.

3.4.2 Copyright, Rights Management & Digital Distribution

The convergence of copyright governance, rights management systems, and digital distribution has become increasingly critical as technological innovation accelerates. Digital Rights Management (DRM) stands at the center of this transformation, operating as both a protective mechanism for intellectual property and an enabler of content circulation. The literature collectively illustrates how DRM shapes the digital environment, while also exposing the tensions it creates for legal, technical, and consumer-oriented concerns. DRM technologies fundamentally aim to preserve the economic and moral rights of creators by preventing unauthorized access, copying, or redistribution of digital works (Liu et al., 2003). Beyond protection, DRM also acts as a structural facilitator for digital marketplaces: its mechanisms create a secure transactional environment, which has been essential to the rise and credibility of online content distribution models (Sander, 2002). In this sense, DRM does not simply secure content; it underpins the trust architecture required for digital commerce.

However, the integration of DRM into distribution systems introduces significant challenges. Legal debates center on how these technologies interact with user rights, particularly in contexts where restrictions may conflict with doctrines of fair use, consumer autonomy, or lawful access (Adams, 2006). Technically, DRM has persistent limitations: despite ongoing development, systems remain vulnerable to circumvention and often face resistance from users who perceive them as intrusive or restrictive (Picot & Thielmann, 2005; Liu et al., 2003). These issues weaken DRM's ability to function as an all-purpose enforcement tool. As digital distribution continues to expand, the need for more sophisticated DRM frameworks is expected to grow, demanding innovation in both technological design and the legal structures that govern their application (Sander, 2002). Yet scholars also caution against over-reliance on DRM. Excessive control can create rigid content ecosystems, potentially suppressing creativity, limiting interoperability, and constraining consumer rights. This critique underscores the importance of pursuing balanced governance models, ones that protect creators while ensuring openness and flexibility in the digital sphere.

3.4.3 Piracy, Infringement & Digital Governance

Digital piracy represents one of the most persistent disruptions in contemporary copyright governance, arising from the ease with which digital content can be copied and shared. Its emergence is closely linked to the economic characteristics of digital markets, where unauthorized content circulates at negligible cost, eroding traditional models of content monetization and straining regulatory systems. Scholars describe digital piracy as the unauthorized reproduction and dissemination of copyrighted media, including music, films, and software (Walker, 2010; Ingram, n.d.). However, Walker (2010) emphasizes that the term "piracy" itself is contested: while it is often equated with theft, not all instances of unauthorized copying constitute legal infringement, particularly in contexts involving open-access or public-domain materials. This ambiguity complicates policymaking by blurring the boundary between legitimate sharing and actionable copyright violations.

The digital piracy ecosystem operates as a parallel market in which numerous actors offer illegal copies at little or no cost, creating direct competition with legitimate suppliers. Strykowski and Scorpecci (2009) show that this dynamic significantly weakens revenue flows for copyright owners. Their case studies in the sports broadcasting sector illustrate how piracy can dilute the value of exclusive rights, undermining both creators and licensed distributors. These findings reflect broader concerns about the sustainability of rights-based business models in the face of unfettered digital copying.

The rapid pace of technological development further intensifies the challenges surrounding piracy. As digital systems become more complex, so do the methods used to circumvent protections. Oganyan et al. (2018) argue that effective governance requires not only improved technical safeguards but also a deeper understanding of user motivations and online behavior. Their research suggests that combining behavioral insights with modern security tools can strengthen copyright enforcement in online environments. While digital piracy generates significant economic and legal pressures, it also stimulates broader debates about the adequacy of existing copyright regimes. The literature collectively points to the need for updated legal frameworks and more adaptive technological solutions capable of protecting intellectual property without inhibiting access to information. These tensions underscore the ongoing challenge of balancing creators' rights with the evolving expectations of digital users.

3.4.4 Technology, AI & Creative Innovation

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence into creative industries is fundamentally reshaping how creative work is produced, distributed, and conceptualized. Literature across fields highlights AI as both a catalyst for innovation and a force that redefines traditional creative ecosystems. This shift is especially evident in the growing reliance on generative technologies, AI-assisted workflows, and hybrid human-machine creativity.

Generative AI systems spanning text-to-image, text-to-video, and multimodal creation—have transformed the mechanics of content production, allowing creators to generate high-quality outputs with unprecedented efficiency (Anantrasirichai et al., 2025). The integration of AI into editing and post-production workflows further enhances this transformation, streamlining formerly labor-intensive processes and expanding the scope for experimentation and creative refinement (Anantrasirichai et al., 2025). Moura (2024) adds that this shift has introduced new co-creative dynamics between humans and machines, challenging established models of authorship and prompting reconsiderations of what constitutes “original” creative work. AI adoption is also driving structural change at the industry level. Wagan and Sidra (2024) argue that AI contributes to deeper technological integration across creative sectors, improving operational efficiency and enhancing competitiveness. The ability of AI to personalize creative outputs—tailoring products to audience tastes in real time—further strengthens market responsiveness and user engagement (Wagan & Sidra, 2024). At the same time, the growing accessibility of AI tools lowers barriers to entry, enabling individuals with limited technical or artistic backgrounds to participate in creative production, thereby broadening the demographic scope of creative industries (Anantrasirichai et al., 2025).

Despite these advantages, scholars highlight concerns around authenticity and over-dependence. Rosado (2024) warns that excessive reliance on AI risks homogenizing creative output and potentially diminishing the role of human intuition, emotion, and originality qualities traditionally considered core to artistic expression. These critiques underscore the need for balanced governance and thoughtful integration that preserves human creativity while leveraging AI's generative capabilities. Collectively, the literature suggests that AI is not merely an enhancement tool but a transformative agent reshaping creativity itself. Its influence extends from production workflows to industry structures and creative philosophy. Yet, realizing its full potential requires navigating tensions between technological possibility and the preservation of human creative agency.

3.4.5 Music Industry, Platforms & Globalization

The convergence of digital platforms and globalization has fundamentally reconfigured the contemporary music landscape. Technological innovation has facilitated new forms of cultural exchange and wider access to international audiences, yet these shifts also expose underlying tensions related to economic inequality, cultural homogenization, and platform power. The literature illustrates how the digital environment both expands and constrains the possibilities for music production and cultural

expression. Streaming platforms such as Spotify and Apple Music have transformed traditional music practices by reshaping how music is produced, distributed, and consumed. Bonini and Magaudo (2023) argue that these platforms centralize control over visibility and circulation, thereby altering power relations within the industry. At the same time, the global reach of streaming services provides new pathways for cultural mobility. As Ahmed (2025) notes, artists from regions like Africa are increasingly gaining international exposure, using platforms to bypass traditional industry barriers and participate in cross-cultural collaborations.

The rise of digital platforms has also introduced new economic challenges. Li (2025) highlights how revenue concentration among a small number of dominant platforms creates unequal income distribution and disrupts traditional revenue streams. Moreover, the algorithmic systems that govern content recommendations can inadvertently homogenize musical output, narrowing artistic diversity and reducing cultural richness. These dynamics suggest that digital platforms, while expanding global access, simultaneously shape aesthetic trends and commercial success through opaque mechanisms. Local music scenes provide insight into how globalization interacts with local cultural contexts. Hagen's (2015) work on Beirut demonstrates that global musical flows can enhance local creativity by enabling new forms of cultural expression, even as local artists grapple with the pressures of platform-dominated distribution. Similarly, Ameri (2022) shows that the Argentinian music industry has adapted to global trends while retaining distinctive local consumption habits, underscoring the interplay between global forces and localized practices mediated through digital platforms. Though digital platforms have democratized access to music and facilitated global connectivity, they also risk marginalizing local cultures by privileging commercially dominant or algorithmically favored content. The literature collectively underscores an ongoing tension: globalization expands opportunities for artistic exchange, yet platform-driven dynamics may threaten the sustainability of diverse and locally rooted musical traditions.

3.4.6 Popular Music, Identity & Social-Cultural Studies

Popular music occupies a central role in shaping identity and structuring social relationships across diverse cultural and generational contexts. In the digital age, its influence extends beyond simple entertainment, functioning as a key medium through which individuals articulate belonging, negotiate cultural meaning, and navigate evolving social environments. The literature highlights how music operates simultaneously as a unifying cultural resource and as a mechanism for social differentiation. Studies among university students demonstrate that musical taste functions as an important identity marker, shaping how individuals form friendships and integrate into social networks. Huang and Wang (2025) show that shared preferences strengthen peer bonding, while music-sharing behaviors can also draw boundaries around taste-specific groups, creating forms of social exclusivity even as they cultivate internal cohesion. These findings reveal the dual nature of music as both a tool for inclusion and a basis for subtle social hierarchies.

Harvey's (2010) work in Okinawa illustrates how popular music becomes a cultural resource through which communities navigate the interplay of local heritage and global cultural flows. Music is positioned as a symbolic medium that encodes historical, political, and social narratives, enabling communities to express resistance, articulate cultural identity, and respond to processes of globalization. This underscores the capacity of music to mediate identity formation at both individual and collective levels.

Contrary to assumptions that popular music primarily shapes youth culture, research indicates that its significance extends across generations. Bennett and Taylor (2012) and Ennett (2012) argue that older audiences continue to use music as a cultural and lifestyle resource, contributing to post-youth identity construction and ongoing cultural participation. This suggests that the identity-forming role of music is dynamic, evolving throughout the life course and adapting to shifting cultural contexts. While popular music is often celebrated for its ability to foster connection and cultural expression, it also

reinforces taste-based exclusivity and social differentiation. The literature collectively portrays music as a complex social force—one that shapes identity, mediates cultural exchange, and both challenges and reproduces social boundaries.

3.4.7 Creative Economy & Policy Interface

The creative economy has emerged as a strategic driver of economic growth, innovation, and cultural development, especially within developing and middle-income countries. Its multidimensional nature spanning cultural production, technology, design, and media positions it as a key sector requiring targeted policy interventions. The literature consistently highlights both its economic potential and the structural limitations that impede its development. Cerrilla (2015) emphasizes that the creative economy contributes meaningfully to national GDP and employment, particularly in middle-income states where supportive regulatory frameworks can amplify economic performance. Beyond its cultural value, the sector generates high levels of value addition, stimulates innovation, and strengthens foreign trade capacity, reinforcing its importance within broader development agendas.

Despite its recognized potential, policy structures governing the creative economy often lag behind the sector's evolving needs. Tvrdon and Belvončíková (2013) argue that traditional regional development policies fail to adequately support the unique characteristics of creative industries, which rely heavily on SMEs, flexible labor models, and innovation-driven outputs. Tailored policies especially those that enhance institutional capacity, reinforce intellectual property protection, and provide regulatory stability are essential for enabling sustained sectoral growth. The literature also identifies persistent constraints such as limited financing options, difficulties in measuring creative outputs, and the need for interdisciplinary research capable of addressing rapid technological shifts and changing audience behavior (Doyle, 2016; Boga & Topcu, 2020). Cerrilla (2015) notes that many developing countries lack comprehensive public policies to support cultural and creative industries, restricting their ability to capitalize on global market opportunities. These gaps illustrate a misalignment between the sector's potential and the institutional support available to sustain it. Collectively, the research underscores the creative economy's capacity to drive innovation and economic diversification, while also highlighting the urgency of developing cohesive, sector-specific policy frameworks. Without systematic support ranging from financing mechanisms to intellectual property governance the creative economy's transformative potential may remain underutilized, particularly in regions where its growth could have the most significant developmental impact.

3.4.8 Music Therapy & Qualitative Research

Qualitative research has played a critical role in advancing the understanding of music therapy by illuminating the subjective, emotional, and relational dimensions that quantitative methods often overlook. By emphasizing lived experiences, therapeutic narratives, and cultural contexts, qualitative studies provide a nuanced account of how music facilitates healing across diverse populations. Zalzman (2025) presents a psychoanalytic approach to music therapy with children who have experienced violence in Buenos Aires. The study highlights sound-expressive indicators of trauma, such as silence, noise, and fragmented musical gestures, as diagnostic and therapeutic tools. Through guided musical improvisation, children demonstrated significant progress in trauma symbolization, emotional containment, and recovery of speech, underscoring music therapy's capacity to access non-verbal aspects of traumatic memory. These findings position music therapy as an essential modality for trauma processing where verbal expression is limited. Gupta and N. (2024) investigated music therapy practices in India, focusing on the mechanisms through which therapists elicit and regulate emotions. Their findings emphasize the integration of therapists' personal-professional identities, the cultural meaning of musical choices, and the necessity of culturally inclusive, individualized interventions. The study reinforces the idea that emotional regulation through music cannot be separated from cultural context and personal histories, highlighting music therapy's adaptability across sociocultural settings. A systematic review by Grimm

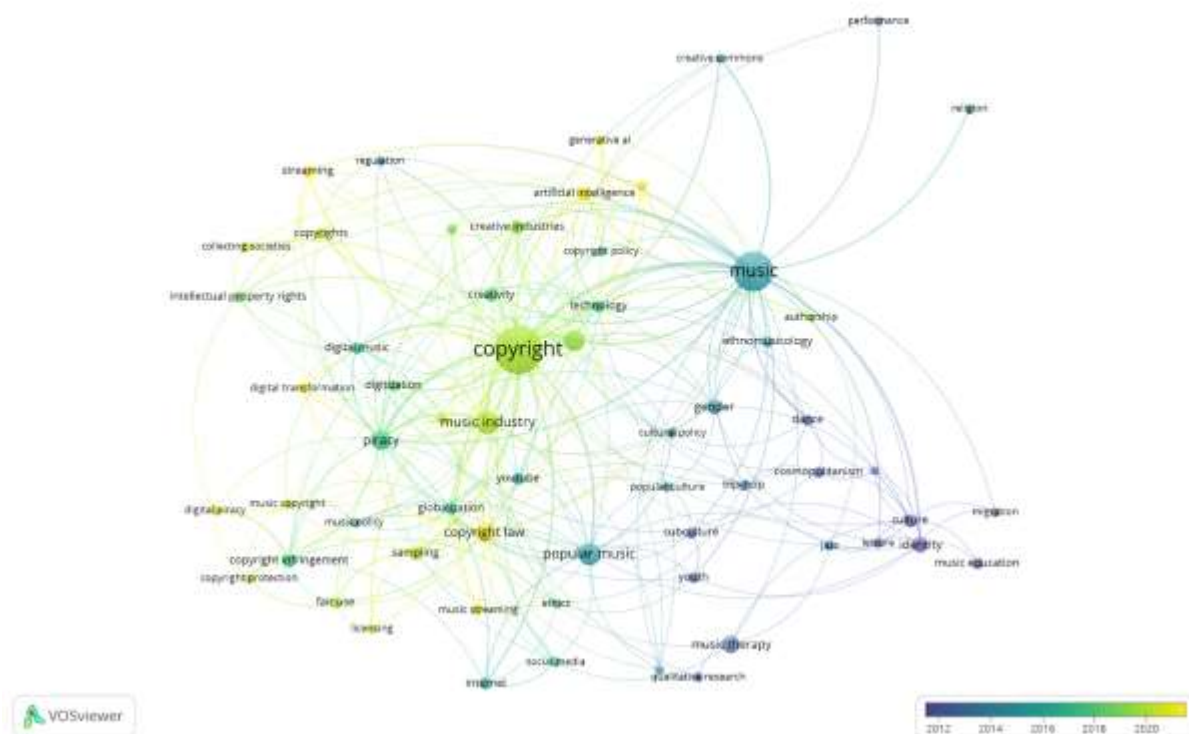
and Kreutz (2021) examined the effects of music therapy on individuals with disorders of consciousness (DoC). Across multiple qualitative accounts, music therapy was associated with improved behavioral responsiveness, including enhanced breathing patterns, increased eye contact, and signs of cognitive engagement. These findings suggest that music may activate preserved neural pathways and support residual awareness, offering a non-invasive therapeutic avenue for individuals with severe neurological impairments. Thomson's (2018) qualitative study in a community day care center demonstrated how music therapy fosters social cohesion, emotional expression, and shared enjoyment among adults with disabilities. Participants reported an increased sense of purpose and belonging, indicating that music therapy extends beyond individual healing to contribute to broader community well-being. These outcomes highlight the social dimension of music therapy, particularly in collective or group-based environments.

While qualitative research captures depth, narrative texture, and emotional nuance, scholars argue for complementarity with quantitative methods. Gonzalez (2025) emphasizes that integrating philosophical grounding with empirical validation can strengthen music therapy's position within evidence-based healthcare. Such methodological pluralism allows for a more comprehensive understanding of therapeutic change capturing both measurable outcomes and experiential realities.

3.5 Evolution of Research

The evolution of research in the study area is shown through the network visualization chart. It maps the time periods in which the research has been undertaken.

Figure 6: Trend Analysis



The overlay map created by VOSviewer shows the time-based development of the subject of research in the field of music copyright between the years 2010 and 2025. In this representation, the node colours represent the average year of publication of the keywords, with blue colors representing earlier scholarly interests, green colors representing the mid-period themes, and yellow colors representing the most recent spheres of academic interest. The network structure illustrates a structural change in intellectual focus over the years that reflects a wider range of technological, economic and cultural changes that define the music industry worldwide.

The literature in the first part of the dataset, around the years 2012-2014, was mostly focused on conceptualising music as a cultural and social phenomenon. The keywords music, identity, culture, migration, leisure, youth, subculture, and music education appear in blue shades, which is an indicator of the fact that, initially the research was mostly produced by sociology, ethnomusicology and cultural studies. During this stage, the most important issues among scholars were how music aids in identity formation, cultural exchange and community building. Themes such as ethnomusicology, cultural policy, and qualitative research are also present in this initial cluster, implying that the interpretive and qualitative methodology prevailed in the emerging scholarship. Although copyright has developed into a minor node in the network, it was not yet the central organizing theme of research at this time.

The shift in the visualization towards green nodes indicating research that appeared between 2015 and 2018 takes place in the mid-2010s. This time is one of the moments when the digitalization of the music business became a central topic of academic debate. Such keywords like digital music, music industry, globalization, social media, internet, and YouTube are acquiring more and more importance, which corresponds to the growing scholarly interest in studying how technological change has transformed the way music is produced, distributed, and consumed. The fast proliferation of streaming platforms and online music channels in this period triggered discussion on intellectual property protection, new forms of revenue, and the regulation of a digital distribution system. This led to copyright gradually shifting to the heart of the network thus bridging debates in the technological, economic and cultural fields.

In the final phase of the chronology, denoted by yellow nodes indicating the period between 2019 and 2025, the focus on the research has been on legal and technological regulation of the digital music ecosystem. The copyright law, copyright policy, regulation, licensing, streaming, collecting societies, and artificial intelligence feature prominently in this cluster. The increasingly growing popularity of keywords related to artificial intelligence and generative AI is an indicator of the new discussion around machine-assisted creativity, authorship, and intellectual property rights. These advancements represent a wider change in creative industries, whereby algorithmic technology, automated content creation tools, and distribution models that operate on platforms are challenging the conventional lines of creative ownership and control. At the same time, the discourses related to piracy, intellectual property rights, and digital enforcement mechanisms are still tightly intertwined with these emerging technological issues.

A clear change in the academic landscape is thus brought out in the temporal structure of the network. Previously, the socio-cultural aspects of music and its involvement in identity and creation were in the focus of previous studies, along with the formation of community practices, but more recent studies started to focus more on legal regulation and technological infrastructure as well as digital governance. The socio-cultural issues remain present in the network, but they seem to be less central than the growing group of interests around the copyright law, digital platforms, and technological innovation. This development suggests that the discipline has increasingly shifted to the consideration of the institutional and technological issues of digital music distribution and copyright protection.

Finally, the persistence of cultural and identity-related topics is a testament to the naturally interdisciplinary character of the music copyright research, which spans across legal studies, cultural

studies, economics, and technology studies to achieve the understanding of the complex changes that are taking place in the modern creative industries.

3.6 Research Gaps Identified from Bibliometric Analysis

Even though the bibliometric networks and thematic clusters capture a wide range of knowledge, there are a number of noteworthy gaps that indicate unexplored topics and potential directions for future research.

1. An imbalance between sociocultural and legal-technological research

The data reveals a significant concentration of recent research, especially starting in 2016, on copyright law, piracy, DRM, platforms, and AI. This has come at the price of more in-depth sociocultural research, even though it reflects pressing industry and regulatory issues. Identity formation, subcultures, community practices, and music therapy are examples of topics that seem incidental and have little bearing on the mainstream copyright debates. Future studies should look more closely at how technical and legal regimes affect social well-being, cultural expression, and everyday musical activities.

2. Limited AI Integration with Creator Rights and Copyright

The literature mostly approaches AI as a technological tool or as a creative phenomena rather than completely incorporating it into copyright governance discussions, despite the fact that AI and creative innovation form a growing cluster. Research on authorship, ownership, liability, and compensation in AI-assisted or AI-generated music is lacking, both empirically and legally. Future research could examine equitable remuneration schemes, regulatory frameworks appropriate for generative technology, and hybrid human AI creation models.

3. The Global South's Geographic Concentration and Underrepresentation

The United States and the United Kingdom dominate the co-authorship network, with Europe serving as a secondary hub. Asia, Africa, and Latin America continue to provide little and unconnected contributions. This implies that Western legal frameworks and business models continue to have a major influence on the global conversation surrounding music copyright. To create more internationally representative frameworks, future studies might concentrate on indigenous music rights, regional copyright practices, informal music economies, and platform implications in the Global South.

4. Algorithmic Governance and Platform Power Are Still Understudied

Although sites like Spotify and YouTube are often mentioned, algorithmic decision-making, accountability, and transparency in copyright and music distribution systems are rarely critically examined. Seldom does research link more general issues of cultural diversity and market justice to algorithmic visibility, recommendation systems, and revenue distribution. Future research might look into how platform governance affects access, creative production, and inequity within the music industry.

5. Poor Relationship Between Micro-Level Practice and Creative Economy Policy

Although there is limited connection to the micro-level experiences of independent musicians, small producers, and creators, the creative economy and policy cluster places a strong emphasis on institutional frameworks and economic growth. Understanding how policies transfer into actual economic reality is hampered by this divide. Future scholars could evaluate the efficacy and inclusivity of creative economy policies by combining policy analysis with qualitative studies of producers.

6. Inadequate Methodology and Excessive Dependency on Macro-Level Analysis

Strong theoretical and legal underpinnings are highlighted by the bibliometric maps, but fewer research incorporate qualitative methods, ethnography, or longitudinal approaches 1especially in developing fields like platform labor, music therapy, and community well-being. Mixed-method

approaches that link broad trends with personal experiences and cultural contexts may be advantageous for future research.

When taken as a whole, the gaps indicate that the discipline has placed more emphasis on technology adaption, enforcement, and regulation than on cultural, geographic, and human-centered viewpoints. By addressing these shortcomings, future research on music, copyright, and creativity in the digital era could advance toward more comprehensive, inclusive, and flexible models.

4. Discussion

The bibliometric review establishes that the study of music copyright has become a deeply interdisciplinary area of study that has been influenced by technological change, industry reform, and changing cultural behaviors. The time series in the data shows that there is a specific change of academic emphasis. Previous research was largely rooted in cultural and sociological insights, and explored music as a medium of identity formation, cultural expression and community building. Nonetheless, with the gradual transformation of the music production and distribution process brought about by digital technologies, the academic discourse increasingly moved towards legal, technological, and regulatory issues. The shift reflects wider changes in the music industry globally, specifically the rise of digital platforms, streaming, and algorithmic distribution systems.

The clusters of themes on the basis of which the keywords were co-occurring also emphasize the nature of the field as multidimensional. The pillars of the modern scholarship are legal and technological topics like copyright governance, digital rights management, piracy, and artificial intelligence. These motifs are echoes of growing anxiety in the field of safeguarding intellectual property in an ever more digitised and automated creative economy. The theme of artificial intelligence becoming a research topic is quite respective, as it poses complicated questions related to authorship, ownership, and sharing of creative value. Although AI technologies provide new opportunities in music production and experimentation with creativity, they simultaneously question the current legal framework, which was originally created to control human-produced works.

At the same time, the bibliometric review demonstrates that the growth of legal and technological studies has been accompanied by a relative marginalisation of socio-cultural approaches. Music identity, subcultures, cultural exchange and music therapy are topics that are found in the network but are peripheral to the mainstream arguments around regulation and enforcement. This asymmetry is an indicator that the academic discourse has been more concerned with the institutional and technological reaction to digital disruption and occasionally neglects exploring the influence of copyright regimes on cultural participation, artistic creativity and popular music habits. These human and cultural dimensions are still very crucial to understand since eventually, copyright policy does not just impact on markets and industries, but the entire cultural ecosystems in which music is created and consumed.

Ecological disparities in the world of research are further supported by geographic trends in the co-authorship networks. The excessive power of the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as other western nations, is indicative of the fact that the concentration of academic resources, institutional funding, and the existence of well-established intellectual property regimes are all located in these areas. This means that MCNs have dominated the international discussion on music copyright through Western legal frameworks and models of the industry. The input of the Global South is still relatively small, even though the digital music market is expected to grow quickly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Increased involvement of such areas is essential to formulate more inclusive and internationally representative approaches to the regulation of copyright, especially in areas where informal music economies and other forms of alternative cultural practice are dominant.

The results also shed light on the increasing power of online resources in the development of the music industry and academic research. The economics of music distribution has been altered by streaming services and algorithmic recommendation systems that cast new transparency, revenue allocation, and market power questions upon the music industry. However, the bibliometric evidence shows that the problem of algorithmic governance and accountability of platforms is underrepresented. The growing importance of platforms in determining the appearance and monetisation of creative work makes understanding their role in organizing cultural production an essential field of research in the future.

Collectively, these results indicate that the study of music copyright is at a new stage of development marked by the complexity of technology and changing its institutional character. Although substantial advances have been achieved on the analysis of legal enforcement and technological regulation, a more balanced research agenda should be set, which involves a fusion of cultural, economic, and technological views. This type of interdisciplinary method would allow researchers to have a better comprehension of the interaction of the copyright systems with creative practices, digital infrastructures, and changing cultural norms in the modern music ecosystem.

5. Conclusion

The bibliometric analysis shows that the topic of scholarship on music copyright has become a multidisciplinary and sophisticated field, influenced by the speed of technological change, platformization, and globalization. The conversation has been dominated by legal and technological studies, particularly in the fields of digital rights management (DRM), digital piracy, and governance of platforms, whereas human-based, cultural, and geographically dispersed approaches remain relatively underdeveloped. The results show that current literature would emphasize more on regulatory adaptation and enforcement frameworks rather than on the wider socio-cultural implications of copyright regimes, even though music is central to identity formation, community welfare, and artistic expression. Besides, even though artificial intelligence is currently considered to be revolutionary in the creative sectors, the question of copyright ownership, liability, and fair compensation associated with AI has not been fully developed. The geographic distribution of publications also shows a high concentration of the research output of Western countries, which highlights the necessity to extract more inclusive perspectives that will include the insights of the underrepresented areas and music ecologies. This study adds to the literature by consolidating disjointed research to a systematic review of the intellectual growth of the field, the prominent themes, and the future research perspectives. The review is, however, confined to materials retrieved in Scopus and bibliometric mapping using VOSviewer, which might not reflect the entire contribution or conceptual subtleties of the broader literature. Further studies are encouraged to build on this study by incorporating other databases and adopting other analytical methods to understand the changing interrelations between copyright regulation, digital environments, technological development, and original creation in the music industry at the global and various musical ecosystem scales.

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