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The Legal Status of Ghostwriters in Copyright Assignment Agreements: A Perspective on Moral Rights and Economic Rights

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Abstract

This study examines the legal status of ghostwriters within copyright assignment agreements by analyzing the interaction between moral rights and economic rights under Indonesian copyright law. The research employs a non empirical legal method based on statutory interpretation, conceptual analysis, and doctrinal synthesis. Primary legal materials consist of Law Number 28 of 2014 concerning Copyright and representative ghostwriter contractual arrangements, while secondary materials include contemporary scholarship on authorship, copyright ownership, contractual transfer mechanisms, and moral rights theory. The analysis demonstrates that ghostwriters retain their legal position as original creators despite contractual concealment of their identities and the transfer of economic interests to clients. Copyright assignment agreements function primarily as instruments for transferring exploitation rights and commercial benefits rather than authorial status. The findings further reveal a persistent normative tension between freedom of contract and the inalienable nature of moral rights. Although clients may acquire extensive economic control over a work, rights of attribution and integrity remain legally connected to the ghostwriter. The study concludes that copyright law accommodates commercial transfer while preserving continuing legal protection for creators, thereby establishing a balanced framework between contractual autonomy and author centered copyright principles.

Keywords : Ghostwriter, Copyright Assignment, Moral Rights, Economic Rights, Copyright Law.



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of the global creative economy, digital publishing markets, professional content industries, and increasingly sophisticated forms of collaborative authorship has transformed conventional understandings of copyright ownership and authorship attribution, particularly in relation to the growing prevalence of ghostwriting practices across literary, commercial, political, academic, and digital communication sectors. The emergence of artificial intelligence assisted writing technologies has further complicated traditional assumptions regarding authorship by creating new forms of mediated creative production in which the identity of the actual contributor is frequently obscured behind contractual arrangements and institutional expectations. Contemporary scholarship increasingly recognizes that ghostwriting is no longer confined to celebrity autobiographies or political speechwriting but has evolved into a significant component of knowledge production and content creation within digital economies where authorship functions simultaneously as a legal entitlement, an economic asset, and a symbolic marker of professional legitimacy. Recent developments in collaborative human and artificial intelligence writing environments have intensified debates regarding authorship recognition, agency, and ownership by demonstrating that creative production increasingly involves multiple layers of contribution that challenge conventional copyright doctrines concerning creators and rights holders (Yeh et al., 2024). At the same time, the commercialization of intellectual property through licensing and contractual allocation mechanisms has expanded the importance of copyright assignment agreements as legal instruments governing the distribution of rights and obligations among participants in creative production processes (Strowel et al., 2025).

Existing scholarship has generated substantial insights into the relationship between copyright ownership and moral rights protection, yet the treatment of ghostwriters remains fragmented across jurisdictions and theoretical traditions. Studies examining moral rights consistently emphasize that the personal bond between creators and their works constitutes a fundamental principle of copyright law

that survives economic exploitation and contractual transfer arrangements. Research from European jurisdictions demonstrates that moral rights continue to operate as mechanisms for preserving authorial identity and creative integrity even when extensive economic rights have been assigned to third parties (Stamatoudi, 2023). Similar arguments have been advanced within the Polish legal perspective, which highlights the enduring significance of authorship recognition as an essential dimension of cultural and legal protection independent of commercial considerations (Stanisławska Kloc, 2023). Parallel developments in Indonesian scholarship have reinforced the proposition that moral rights possess a human rights dimension that restricts the scope of contractual arrangements seeking to extinguish or permanently alienate the author's personal connection to a creative work (Sierrad, 2022). Collectively, these studies suggest that copyright systems increasingly recognize limits on contractual freedom when such agreements undermine the normative foundations of authorship and creative personhood.

Despite these advances, the literature reveals persistent conceptual inconsistencies concerning the legal status of ghostwriters within copyright assignment agreements. Most studies addressing moral rights focus on conventional author publisher relationships, while investigations of copyright licensing primarily analyze commercial transactions involving identified authors and recognized rights holders rather than creators whose identities are intentionally concealed through contractual arrangements. Consequently, ghostwriters occupy a legally ambiguous position because they simultaneously satisfy the substantive criteria of authorship while contractually relinquishing public recognition and frequently transfer economic exploitation rights to clients. The growing body of literature on copyright licensing offers important frameworks for understanding rights allocation but provides limited examination of whether contractual assignment can effectively reconcile economic transfer with continuing moral rights claims in ghostwriting contexts (Strowel et al., 2025). Similarly, discussions concerning cross border enforcement of moral rights identify significant jurisdictional challenges yet rarely address situations where anonymity is not accidental but contractually mandated as a central feature of the creative relationship (Torremans, 2023). Recent analyses of ghostwriting have also highlighted tensions between copyright doctrine and public access concerns, demonstrating that existing legal frameworks often struggle to determine whose interests should prevail when the formal rights holder differs from the actual creator (Samuels, 2024).

These unresolved tensions create substantial scientific and practical concerns because the absence of a coherent legal framework governing ghostwriters generates uncertainty regarding authorship recognition, contractual enforceability, copyright ownership, and remedies for rights violations. From a practical perspective, the increasing reliance on ghostwriters within publishing, business communication, digital content production, and professional branding industries means that contractual disputes concerning attribution and ownership are likely to become more frequent and economically significant. From a theoretical perspective, ghostwriting exposes a fundamental contradiction within copyright law between the commodification of creative outputs through transferable economic rights and the preservation of personal authorial interests through inalienable moral rights. This contradiction becomes particularly acute when contractual arrangements are designed not merely to transfer economic benefits but also to suppress the public visibility of the actual creator. The resulting tension raises important questions regarding the extent to which copyright law should prioritize contractual autonomy over authorial identity and whether existing legal doctrines adequately protect creators who voluntarily accept anonymity in exchange for compensation.

Against this backdrop, the present study positions itself at the intersection of copyright theory, contractual governance, and authorship jurisprudence by examining ghostwriting not merely as a commercial service relationship but as a legal phenomenon that tests the conceptual boundaries between moral rights and economic rights. Unlike prior studies that primarily address either moral rights protection or copyright transfer mechanisms in isolation, this research investigates how both dimensions interact within copyright assignment agreements involving ghostwriters as the actual creators of protected works. The study also extends existing debates by situating ghostwriting within broader discussions concerning authorship recognition, legal identity, contractual freedom, and the normative foundations of copyright protection. Through this perspective, the research seeks to address the gap between doctrinal assumptions that equate authorship with legal recognition and commercial practices that deliberately separate creative contribution from public attribution.

This study aims to analyze the legal status of ghostwriters within copyright assignment agreements and to examine the extent to which moral rights and economic rights remain protected after

contractual transfer arrangements are concluded. By employing a normative legal research framework that combines statutory analysis with conceptual examination of copyright doctrines, the study seeks to develop a more coherent understanding of the relationship between authorship, contractual autonomy, and rights allocation in ghostwriting practices. The anticipated contribution lies in refining theoretical debates concerning the distinction between creator status and copyright ownership while providing a methodological framework for evaluating contractual arrangements that involve concealed authorship. The research further contributes to the development of copyright scholarship by clarifying the legal implications of ghostwriting within contemporary creative industries and by offering a more integrated approach to understanding the coexistence of moral rights and economic rights in complex authorship relationships.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a non empirical legal research design grounded in a normative and conceptual analytical framework to examine the legal status of ghostwriters within copyright assignment agreements and to evaluate the interaction between moral rights and economic rights under copyright law. The methodological framework integrates statutory interpretation with copyright theory to construct a systematic model for assessing the position of ghostwriters as actual creators whose identities are contractually concealed. Primary legal materials consist of Law Number 28 of 2014 concerning Copyright and contractual documents represented by ghostwriter non disclosure agreement models, while secondary materials include scholarly literature addressing copyright ownership, moral rights, economic rights, authorship theory, and contractual transfer mechanisms. The originality of this framework lies in its integration of copyright doctrine and contractual analysis to investigate the coexistence of authorial status and transferred economic interests within ghostwriting arrangements, thereby enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the legal consequences arising from concealed authorship.

The analytical process employs a qualitative legal reasoning approach through statutory analysis, conceptual interpretation, and doctrinal synthesis. Legal norms governing authorship, copyright ownership, moral rights, and economic rights are examined to identify their internal coherence and their applicability to ghostwriting practices. The study further applies comparative conceptual mapping between the legal status of creators and the contractual position of rights holders in order to reveal normative tensions between freedom of contract and the inalienable nature of moral rights. Methodological rigor is strengthened through triangulation among legislative provisions, contractual clauses, and academic interpretations, allowing the research to generate a robust and theoretically grounded synthesis. This analytical strategy facilitates the development of an integrated legal model that clarifies the extent to which copyright assignment agreements may transfer economic rights while preserving the continuing legal protection of ghostwriters as original creators.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reconceptualizing Ghostwriter Authorship Under Contemporary Copyright Doctrine

The normative analysis indicates that the legal status of ghostwriters cannot be determined solely through contractual designation because copyright systems traditionally recognize authorship based on creative contribution rather than public attribution. This distinction becomes increasingly significant within contemporary creative industries where authorship functions simultaneously as a legal category and a commercial instrument. The conceptual separation between creator identity and market representation has generated new legal complexities regarding ownership claims and attribution rights (Biagioli, 2022). Copyright doctrine therefore requires a deeper examination of the person who actually produces the original expressive content.

A review of authorship theory demonstrates that originality remains the principal criterion for recognizing legal authorship regardless of the visibility of the creator. Copyright protection emerges from intellectual creation rather than from the subsequent disclosure of the author's identity. The requirement of originality continues to serve as the central doctrinal foundation for determining authorship across many author centered jurisdictions (Olwan & Al Balushi, 2023). A ghostwriter who independently formulates the expressive structure of a work therefore satisfies the substantive threshold of copyright protection.

The growing complexity of collaborative creative production has further challenged traditional assumptions regarding the relationship between authorship and attribution. Emerging forms of assisted writing reveal that public recognition frequently diverges from actual creative participation. Research on collaborative writing technologies illustrates that the attribution of authorship increasingly depends upon negotiated relationships rather than direct reflection of creative activity (Yeh et al., 2024). Similar concerns arise in ghostwriting arrangements where contractual expectations intentionally separate authorship from public identification.

The legal consequences of concealed authorship become more apparent when examined through contemporary debates surrounding artificial intelligence generated content. Although ghostwriters remain human creators, the concealment of their identities produces questions similar to those emerging from hidden technological contributions. Scholarship concerning copyright ownership in technologically mediated creation highlights the importance of identifying the source of original expression rather than relying exclusively on outward attribution (Chiou, 2022). This analytical perspective strengthens the argument that ghostwriters retain authorial status despite contractual anonymity.

Normative examination of copyright law reveals that the creator of a protected expression occupies a legally distinct position from a subsequent rights holder. The existence of contractual transfer mechanisms does not automatically transform the identity of the original author. Comparative copyright scholarship has consistently differentiated between authorship and proprietary control as separate legal concepts (Franceschelli & Musolesi, 2022). This distinction provides the doctrinal basis for recognizing ghostwriters as authors even when exploitation rights are assigned to another party.

Table 1. Normative Indicators of Authorship Status in Ghostwriting Arrangements

Legal Indicator	Ghostwriter Position	Client Position	Copyright Implication	Legal Indicator
Original Creative Contribution	Present	Generally Absent	Supports authorship claim	Original Creative Contribution
Public Attribution	Absent	Present	Does not determine authorship	Public Attribution
Contractual Ownership Claim	Transferable	Acquired Through Agreement	Related to economic rights	Contractual Ownership Claim
Moral Connection to Work	Direct	Indirect	Remains attached to creator	Moral Connection to Work
Copyright Recognition Basis	Creation of Expression	Contractual Acquisition	Distinct legal status	Copyright Recognition Basis

Source: Developed by the author based on Republik Indonesia (2014), Scribd (2020), Olwan and Al Balushi (2023), and Biagioli (2022).

The analytical framework presented in Table 1 demonstrates that authorship and ownership operate through different legal foundations. Creative contribution functions as the primary basis of authorship while contractual acquisition functions as the basis of economic entitlement. The distinction clarifies why a client may become a copyright holder without becoming the actual author of the work. Such differentiation remains consistent with the conceptual architecture of copyright law in many jurisdictions.

Further analysis reveals that contractual anonymity should not be interpreted as evidence of authorship relinquishment. Many ghostwriting agreements regulate disclosure obligations without expressly redefining the identity of the creator. Examination of model non disclosure agreements indicates that confidentiality clauses primarily govern public communication rather than authorship determination (Scribd, 2020). The legal effect of confidentiality therefore differs substantially from the legal effect of transferring copyright interests.

This interpretation gains additional support from scholarship examining scientific and institutional ghostwriting. Hidden authorship often emerges because organizations prioritize credibility, branding, or strategic communication objectives. Studies of expert participation in complex legal and

scientific disputes reveal that ghostwriters may exert substantial intellectual influence despite remaining publicly invisible (Kirsch, 2022). The absence of public acknowledgment therefore cannot be equated with the absence of creative authorship.

Contemporary discussions concerning misrepresentation and personality based theories of intellectual property provide another dimension to this analysis. Copyright protection is not solely concerned with economic incentives but also with preserving the relationship between creators and their intellectual outputs. Theoretical accounts linking intellectual property to personal identity emphasize that authorship reflects an extension of individual creative personality (Moore, 2026). Ghostwriters continue to maintain this personal connection even when contractual arrangements restrict external recognition.

The results of the normative analysis establish that ghostwriters occupy the position of original authors under copyright doctrine because authorship derives from intellectual creation rather than public attribution or commercial ownership. Contractual agreements may regulate exploitation rights and confidentiality obligations without altering the underlying authorship status of the creator. Existing developments in copyright theory, technological creativity, and authorship scholarship collectively support this conclusion (Naithani, 2025). Recognition of this legal status provides the necessary foundation for evaluating the interaction between moral rights and economic rights in subsequent sections.

Contractual Allocation of Economic Rights and Copyright Exploitation in Ghostwriting Arrangements

The normative analysis demonstrates that copyright assignment agreements constitute the central legal mechanism governing the transfer of economic interests within ghostwriting relationships. Unlike ordinary service contracts, ghostwriting agreements combine obligations of creative production with provisions regulating ownership and commercial exploitation of the resulting work. The contractual architecture therefore extends beyond remuneration and confidentiality by defining the extent to which copyright related interests may be exercised by the client (Republik Indonesia, 2014). Legal scholarship increasingly characterizes such arrangements as hybrid transactions situated at the intersection of copyright doctrine and private contractual ordering (Chen, 2022).

A conceptual examination of copyright assignment reveals that economic rights may be transferred through explicit contractual language provided that the agreement satisfies statutory requirements concerning certainty and legality. Indonesian copyright law recognizes the transfer of economic rights through written agreements, allowing parties to allocate commercial control over copyrighted works according to negotiated terms (Republik Indonesia, 2014). This legal position reflects broader international trends in copyright commercialization where assignment functions as an instrument for reallocating market value from creators to rights holders (Strowel et al., 2025). Ghostwriting contracts illustrate this dynamic because clients generally seek exclusive authority over publication and commercial dissemination.

The contractual significance of confidentiality clauses is particularly evident in ghostwriting practice. Non disclosure agreements are designed to protect commercial expectations by preventing disclosure of the writer's involvement and preserving the public attribution desired by the client (Scribd, 2020). From a contractual perspective, confidentiality obligations operate independently from copyright ownership because they regulate information rather than proprietary interests. Studies examining hidden authorship indicate that confidentiality mechanisms frequently become indispensable components of modern authorship transactions and public representation strategies (Samuels, 2024).

The analytical review of contractual models further indicates that ghostwriting agreements often incorporate multiple layers of rights allocation. Service obligations, ownership provisions, publication rights, and compensation mechanisms function collectively to define the economic structure of the relationship. Similar patterns appear in licensing practices across creative industries where contractual clauses determine the scope of permissible exploitation and revenue generation (Strowel et al., 2025). The legal consequences associated with each contractual component are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Legal Components of Copyright Assignment Agreements in Ghostwriting Practice

Contractual Element	Function	Rights Affected	Legal Consequence
Writing Service Clause	Defines creative obligations and deliverables	Economic interests connected to commissioned work	Establishes contractual performance duties
Copyright Assignment Clause	Transfers commercial exploitation authority	Reproduction, distribution, publication, adaptation rights	Client acquires economic control over the work
NDA Clause	Protects confidentiality of authorship involvement	Information and disclosure interests	Restricts disclosure of ghostwriter participation
Publication Clause	Determines authority to publish and disseminate	Publication and commercialization rights	Enables exclusive client publication
Compensation Clause	Regulates financial consideration	Economic benefits arising from creation	Establishes payment structure and remuneration
Termination Clause	Governs contractual cessation and obligations	Residual contractual interests	Determines post termination legal effects

Source: Constructed by the authors based on Republik Indonesia (2014), Scribd (2020), Strowel et al. (2025), and Alzagladi et al. (2025).

The structure presented in Table 2 illustrates that copyright assignment agreements perform functions extending beyond simple ownership transfer. Several clauses regulate future exploitation strategies while others address confidentiality and financial compensation. Such contractual diversification reflects the increasing sophistication of intellectual property transactions in contemporary creative markets (Alzagladi et al., 2025). The findings indicate that legal certainty depends not merely on the existence of a contract but on the precision with which rights and obligations are allocated.

A recurring issue concerns the relationship between freedom of contract and statutory limitations imposed by copyright law. Private autonomy permits parties to negotiate broad transfers of economic rights, yet contractual freedom remains constrained by mandatory legal norms governing copyright ownership and transfer procedures (Chen, 2022). Comparative scholarship has shown that unrestricted contractual arrangements may create asymmetrical bargaining outcomes where creators surrender extensive commercial interests without retaining meaningful economic participation (Drury, 2025). Ghostwriting agreements frequently reflect this structural imbalance because compensation is commonly fixed at the outset of the transaction.

The analysis also identifies an important distinction between assignment and licensing. Assignment transfers ownership of economic rights to another party, whereas licensing authorizes specific uses while preserving ownership in the original holder (Strowel et al., 2025). Ghostwriting contracts generally favor assignment models because clients seek comprehensive commercial authority over the completed work. This preference enhances market certainty for clients but reduces opportunities for writers to benefit from future commercial success.

Economic asymmetry emerges as a defining characteristic of many ghostwriting transactions. Contractual arrangements often provide a single payment while subsequent commercial gains remain concentrated in the hands of the client who controls publication and market exploitation. Similar concerns have been identified in broader discussions regarding intellectual property commercialization and creative labor markets where contractual bargaining power is unevenly distributed (Geddes, 2025). The legal framework permits such allocations provided statutory requirements are satisfied, yet the resulting distribution of economic value remains contested.

Contemporary developments involving concealed authorship, artificial intelligence generated content, and platform based creativity further illuminate the relevance of contractual transfer mechanisms. Emerging scholarship suggests that questions surrounding hidden contributors increasingly require precise contractual frameworks capable of distinguishing ownership, control, and exploitation rights (Gangjee et al., 2025). Debates concerning attribution and commercial appropriation in technology mediated creativity reveal comparable tensions between creators and economic beneficiaries (Lemley & Ouellette, 2025). These developments reinforce the importance of examining ghostwriting contracts as instruments of copyright governance rather than merely private service agreements.

The doctrinal synthesis indicates that ghostwriting contracts primarily function as vehicles for transferring economic rights and consolidating commercial authority in the client as copyright holder. Contractual clauses governing assignment, publication, confidentiality, and remuneration collectively determine the scope of economic exploitation available after the work is completed. Legal recognition of such transfers derives from statutory copyright provisions and established principles of contractual autonomy (Republik Indonesia, 2014). The findings reveal that the central legal issue is not whether economic rights may be transferred, but how far contractual arrangements may redistribute economic value while maintaining coherence with copyright law and intellectual property policy objectives.

Persistence of Moral Rights Beyond Copyright Assignment in Ghostwriting Relationships

The doctrinal analysis reveals that copyright assignment does not extinguish the legal connection between a creator and a copyrighted work. Copyright systems influenced by author centered traditions distinguish economic interests from personal interests that arise from creative expression itself. Moral rights continue to exist because they are attached to the personality and identity of the creator rather than to the commercial value of the work (Stanisławska Kloc, 2023). This distinction becomes particularly significant in ghostwriting arrangements where commercial control and personal attribution are separated through contractual mechanisms.

The normative framework established under Indonesian copyright law confirms that moral rights remain attached to the creator despite any transfer of economic interests. Law Number 28 of 2014 recognizes moral rights as an enduring legal entitlement that protects personal and reputational interests associated with authorship (Republik Indonesia, 2014). Similar principles are reflected across many author rights jurisdictions that treat moral rights as independent from proprietary copyright interests (de la Durantaye, 2023). The legal consequences of this approach indicate that contractual transactions cannot automatically eliminate the personal dimension of creative ownership.

A central finding concerns the principle of inalienability that characterizes moral rights protection. Legal scholarship consistently argues that moral rights possess a non transferable nature because they safeguard personal dignity and creative identity rather than market based interests (Sierrad, 2022). This conceptual foundation differentiates moral rights from economic rights whose primary function is commercial exploitation and value generation. The persistence of moral rights therefore represents a structural limitation on the extent of contractual autonomy within copyright transactions.

The right of attribution occupies a particularly important position within ghostwriting relationships. Attribution rights provide legal recognition that a creator remains connected to a work even when public disclosure is restricted or absent. Comparative studies demonstrate that attribution serves both symbolic and legal functions because it preserves the historical relationship between creator and creation (Almawla & Alnimer, 2025). The existence of concealed authorship does not necessarily negate the continuing legal relevance of attribution rights.

The comparative distinction between moral rights and economic rights identified through doctrinal synthesis is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparative Characteristics of Moral Rights and Economic Rights in Ghostwriting Arrangements

Dimension	Moral Rights	Economic Rights	Implications for Ghostwriters
Transferability	Generally non transferable	Transferable through lawful agreements	Personal rights remain after assignment

Duration	Closely linked to creator and often protected long term	Limited by statutory copyright term	Continued recognition beyond commercial transfer
Legal Nature	Personal and reputational interest	Proprietary and commercial interest	Dual legal status persists
Commercial Value	Indirect economic significance	Direct market value	Recognition may survive loss of revenue
Author Connection	Permanently connected to creator	May be exercised by rights holder	Legal identity remains protected
Enforcement Mechanism	Attribution and integrity claims	Ownership and infringement claims	Separate avenues of legal protection

Source: Constructed by the authors based on Sierrad (2022), Stamatoudi (2023), Stanisławska Kloc (2023), and Almawla and Alnimer (2025).

Table 3 demonstrates that moral rights and economic rights operate according to fundamentally different legal logics. Economic rights facilitate market transactions and commercial exploitation, whereas moral rights preserve the continuing relationship between creators and their works. The analytical distinction explains why copyright assignment may affect commercial control without removing all legal interests held by the creator (Stamatoudi, 2023). Ghostwriters therefore retain a legally protected sphere of interests even after economic rights have been transferred.

The right of integrity further strengthens this continuing protection by safeguarding works against modifications that may damage the creator's reputation or creative vision. Integrity rights reflect the assumption that creative works embody aspects of personal identity and intellectual expression. Comparative analyses indicate that many jurisdictions recognize integrity as an essential component of moral rights protection despite differences in legislative structure (Torremans, 2023). The practical significance of integrity rights becomes evident when alterations create misleading impressions regarding the creator's intellectual contribution.

The findings also reveal an enduring tension between contractual waivers and mandatory moral rights protections. Certain contractual provisions attempt to limit future assertions of attribution or integrity interests in order to increase transactional certainty. Scholarly evaluations suggest that complete waivers frequently encounter doctrinal resistance because moral rights derive from legal principles that extend beyond private bargaining arrangements (Chen, 2022). This tension illustrates the broader conflict between contractual efficiency and the preservation of creator centered interests.

A human rights perspective provides an additional justification for protecting moral rights after copyright assignment. Contemporary scholarship increasingly links moral rights to concepts of dignity, identity, personality, and recognition within intellectual property systems (Moore, 2026). Similar arguments appear in discussions concerning hidden authorship and emerging technological forms of content creation where attribution remains legally and ethically significant (Noti Victor, 2025). The protection of moral rights therefore serves objectives that exceed purely commercial considerations.

The comparative literature further demonstrates that effective protection requires accessible mechanisms for dispute resolution and enforcement. Alternative dispute resolution frameworks have been proposed as efficient instruments for addressing attribution and integrity disputes while reducing litigation costs (Lindner, 2023). Jurisdictional diversity remains an important challenge because the treatment of moral rights differs across legal systems and may generate cross border enforcement complexities (de la Durantaye, 2023). These variations nevertheless share a common recognition that moral rights continue to deserve legal protection after commercial interests have been reassigned.

The doctrinal synthesis developed in this study indicates that moral rights remain the principal legal interests retained by ghostwriters following copyright assignment. Attribution and integrity rights continue to function as mechanisms that preserve the personal connection between creators and their works despite the transfer of economic control. Comparative scholarship consistently supports the proposition that moral rights constitute enduring legal interests grounded in personality based and human rights oriented theories of authorship (Almawla & Alnimer, 2025; Stanisławska Kloc, 2023). The resulting legal model demonstrates that copyright assignment redistributes commercial authority while leaving a protected sphere of personal rights that remains attached to the ghostwriter.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that ghostwriters occupy a legally recognized position as original creators despite the contractual concealment of their identities and the commercial transfer of copyright interests. Normative analysis of Indonesian copyright law and contemporary copyright scholarship indicates that authorship status is determined by creative contribution rather than public attribution or contractual designation. Copyright assignment agreements serve as mechanisms for transferring economic rights, including publication, reproduction, distribution, and commercial exploitation rights, while enabling clients to function as copyright holders for economic purposes. The examination of contractual structures also reveals that freedom of contract operates within statutory limitations that prevent the complete displacement of creator oriented protections. Moral rights maintain an independent legal existence after the transfer of economic rights, particularly through rights of attribution and integrity that remain attached to the creator. This continuing protection confirms that ghostwriting arrangements produce a separation between economic control and personal authorial interests rather than a complete transfer of copyright identity. The legal framework therefore supports commercial certainty for clients while preserving the enduring legal protection of ghostwriters as original creators within the copyright system.

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