

Research Article

Capital Commodification in the Field of Tarling Music Digitalization

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Abstract.

Tarling's method for creating Tarling music is evolving over time. The digitalization field observes the agents' ways in production, distribution, and consumption of digital music files. Agents build their own habitus in employing their numerous capitals in the digitalization space. By combining the correlation of habitus and field theories of Bourdieu and Mosco's perspective on commodification, this research is presented in a qualitative descriptive way with the research locus in the Cirebon region, West Java. The purpose of this research is to find out the commodification practice of Tarling's music in the digitalization field, including the production, distribution and consumption sub-fields. As a result, commodification is carried out by producer agents, managers, and singers, who tend to be submissive and adaptive to the production structure built through the role of agents in their respective habitus. The production, distribution, and consumption of Tarling music tends to ignore the value of authenticity that the practice of commodification in the digitalization fields produces a pseudo-culture due to standardization and uniformity of form, in which Tarling music becomes a profit commodity.

Keywords: commodification, Tarling music, digitalization, Mosco, Bourdieu

1. INTRODUCTION

Commodification is the way of capitalism in implementing capital accumulation, or intentionally converting use value into exchange value (Mosco, 2009:134). Commodification is a process, while commodity is an object. Both correlate one another showing indications of the capitalism practice. Commodification transforms commodity objects that were originally non-commercial into commercial dealings. The practice of commodification cannot be separated from the development of the cultural industry such as film and music. Music production, for instance, changes a lot in the pre-industrial era which was produced without necessarily go through a large industry that was subject to the market system, but was done independently. On one hand, the practice of capitalism results

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to to an explosion of cultural products close to the public and are consumptive. On the other hand, industry also produces cultural forms that are subject to market needs, thus becoming a determinant in various systems including the production of music.

Cultural products that used to be considered to have high value, authenticity, and truth, are now transformed into commodities by the cultural industry and mass-produced with the aim of profit (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2007:37). In this context, the digitalization field is the determinant, how the practice of commodification runs is not separable from from various digital devices that are connected to facilitate the production system. Likewise, the presence of social media platforms (Airoldi, 2021) can facilitate commodification, transformation and distribution of cultural products that used to have use value into the products with profitable value.

Besides changing the production and distribution system, commodification in the digitalization field has changed the way music is consumed, which was free, then it is now paid. Music consumers' tastes have been exploited by the agents through utilizing social media Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. Digital media with various hardware and software devices have been used by agents to produce a cultural industry through commodification practices. The practice of commodification has changed capital through the role of agents in the production, distribution, and consumption sub-fields, which used to have a use value into exchange value. The exchange rate in this context, as the structure in the digitalization field, which previously served as a way to produce quality products and has a massive impact on music lovers, has now turned into another goal that leads to convertible values that fit for trade. The capital increase factor was created in purpose of gaining more profits.

2. Methodology

This study applies descriptive-qualitative method in which the researcher analyzes how the agents implement commodification practice of talking music in the digitalization field related to production, distribution, and consumption methods by combining the correlation of theory of habit and field theories of Bourdieu and Mosco's perspective on commodification. The qualitative data are analyzed simultaneously with the data collection process (on going analysis) using data analysis which is applicable in qualitative research, to draw conclusions later (Djamba and Neuman, 2002). The object of this

research is Tarling music groups and producer agents, managers, and singers from the three tarling music groups which are the samples of this research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The effects of digitization make Tarling music lose its originality as the term *Tarling* itself, but has been really affected by other music genres. Tarling is a combination of guitar and flute instruments with the addition of a spoon *kecrek* which has now changed with many versions (Kasim, 2012). Tarling groups are, on the contrary, freely collaborating between genres of music groups, while still using Tarling identity (Pepen Effendi, 1999). The practice of commodification has led to a change in the identity of Tarling musical instrument, carried out by music groups through the roles of producer agents, managers, and singers.

In the digitalization field, the role of agents can be seen from their performance fields, namely the production, distribution, and consumption sub-fields (Boby Owsinski, 2000). The digitization field in Tarling music production then leads to a new habitus and agent perspectives on the capitalist doctrine by utilizing the production structure. The ways agents carry out commodification practices in this study are discussed based on Pierre Bourdieu's perspectives, where the existence structure of symbolic economic domination in society covers the true justice (Bourdieu, 1998).

The scheme shows that commodification is carried out by producer agents, managers and singers in the digitalization sub-field. Agents practice commodification, not only influenced by capital (Bourdieu, 1983), but also their habitus in the digitalization field. The capital factors referred to in the commodification practice, which are carried out by agents, connected to Bourdieu's theories are; (1) economical capital; all forms of capital owned in the form of material, such money, gold, cars, land, and others. (2) social capital; consists of valuable social relationships between individuals, relationships and networks of relation that mean as useful resource in the determination and reproduction of social classes. (3) cultural capital; includes a wide range of valid knowledge, such as diploma, communication skill, how to get along, how to carry one's self (manners), and (4) symbolic capital; those come from one's honor and prestige, for example one's position in the government structure (Bourdieu, 1990). The practice of capital commodification can be seen from the production, distribution, and consumption sub-field as described below;

3.1. Capital commodification in production sub-field

In the production sub-field, commodification involves two things. The first is the commodification of content. This occurs in the process and method of producing Tarling music by the producer agents in production sub-field. The second is the commodification of workers, for the workers are the operator of the production, distribution, and consumption activities. Optimal utilization of workers' minds and energy is emphasized by constructing their minds to feel comfortable working in a music industry, even with undue wages.

3.1.1. Content Commodification

In the 1980s, Tarling entertainment show changed already, now that it is equipped with multimedia settings and glamorous lighting. Musical instruments are also varied with fancy types of guitars arranged in such a way, even Tarling music filing media keeps changing, starting from using black disc in the form of vinyl, then switching to Compact Discs (Sexton, 2016), and now they are easily transformed into digital music file format. Technology and media change Tarling music towards a marketable marketing system. Commodification is also carried out with the inclusion of Tarling genre which is modified with a combination of dangdut music (Bader and Richter, 2014), then developed into semi-dangdut with live performances.

Producer agents create music in the form of digital files through the editing process, which allow to include other features such as text, animation, and graphics. Not only producing audio music and video clips, but also promotional materials for a product integrated with the music itself in one file. The impact of the presence of new media on the development of Tarling music is that many new groups with Malay pop and dangdut genres claim themselves as Tarling groups, while the fact is that it is played along with guitar and flute. According to Jana, Cirebonese Tarling masetro, there is no such a thing like Tarling dangdut (tardut), because the characteristics of dangdut are more to Malay songs (Kasim, 2012). However, commodification eventually makes it customary for any instruments or their designation. The most important thing is that it still raises its characteristics with guitar and flute.

Commodification in the production field also occurs in changes in music packaging content, by providing advertising space for product promotions either directly, or through

product packages included in the digital music files. In fact, Tarling music singers can also promote the products through the performances delivered directly at the opening, in the middle of the show or last minutes before the music ends. Commodification occurs in the production structure indirectly, for example in the form of product branding that we can see in the fashion worn by Tarling singers or the production team's clothings. The client's product branding is visible to the audience from the special clothings worn by the musicians on the stage and in the video clips they produce. This method bridges the agency's interests as clients who need product promotions with production teams or music group singers who need economic benefits.

3.1.2. Commodification of workers

A producer carries out commodification of workers by planning a production system through utilizing the resources of supporting newcomer singers. In addition to simplifying the organization during production, the presence of supporting singers outside the lead singer of a music group provides producers some opportunities to gain economical benefits. Newcomer singers are considered to have new networks of relation, opportunities for inviting new fans, and in business relations, the presence of these newcomer singers provides an opportunity to package more updated promotional materials.

The human resources in the production team, outside of those carried out by the producers, also involve a number of cameramen, audio stylists and a visual editor, also talents and singers. They are paid with monthly salary system, some are paid with part time job system. The producer as the person in charge of production, strives so hard to manage the production budget. Commodification is carried out by trying to reduce the production budget through paying the workers as low as possible, by utilizing the capabilities of multi-talented resources. A producer sometimes asks a workforce such as cameramen, audio directors, and visual editors to self-taught to improve their specific skills in order to achieve production targets.

In the digitalization field, a producer also takes advantage of new technology equipments, not only to produce taping in the studio or produce music video clips, but also to make new breakthroughs in holding shows on stage compiled live streaming feature. The producer utilizes the power of an audio visual editor who is responsible for creating special accounts on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube channels to do

live streaming. That strategy enables double profits to gain, from offline production targets and online through live streaming, resulting in monetization on social media like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube which give chances for financial benefits from addsense.

3.2. Capital commodification in distribution sub-field

Commodification in the distribution sub-field concerns how digital music files are transformed to the audience. With such business management, the form of music is marketed for financial benefit. Because music distribution is related to the job of a manager in a music group, the manager's role becomes significant to determine the direction Tarling music business. Managers need to consider a business model including the strategic steps in identifying the work of music distribution through observing the target consumer and business value proposition. This study resulted in the identification of capital owned by the manager's agent with a sample of three Tarling music groups, Nada Ayu, Dian Prima, and Nirwana Mandala. Agents with their own capital try to build their respective habitus to carry out commodification practices, where a manager can convert their social, cultural, and symbolic capital for obtaining the economic capital of commercial value.

The current changes in music distribution imply that the industry's major agents, musicians, record labels, distributors, and consumers change their traditional roles to adapt to digitization. The impact of digitalization on the music industry is that the prevailing strategy of each agent is maintaining market power (Mathew, 2013). Meanwhile, media products or content industries outside of mainstream media, especially music, are a fact of increasing number of Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube social media users. In distribution sub-field, a manager bridges how the production of Tarling music in the form of digital files can be marketed to consumers. He is also responsible for the popularity of music groups and singers, as well as increasing the number of stage shows. In carrying out managerial functions, a manager must be able to run a management system to manage artists, both personally, in business and in the scope of their daily work (Satria Ramadhan, 2015)[?]. Managers, in commodification practice in the distribution sub-field, are agents with the authority to advise and guide musicians in their day-to-day career choice and development. Tarling music group managers also assists in creating the

personality of singers and bands in the public, as well as signing the binding contracts on behalf of the groups through a power of attorney.

A Tarling music manager also sometimes represents music artists in several matters related to digital music laws, music copyrights, building connections between other artists, and has the ability to generate income from clients according to negotiation which of course involve artists (Kinney, 2015). Fajar Andriyanto, the manager of a Tarling group, Dian Prima, chose to quit his previous job and has been working as a Tarling music manager since 2000. The digitalization field has made him change the mechanism of Tarling music production, from arranging show schedules, managing all studio needs, and promoting sales of Diana Sastra's albums.

In commodification practice, managers play an important role for Tarling music groups, and they can create a work timeline and the targets to achieve, such as doing promotions for albums, determining the first single, making video clips, and using mastered channels to promote and increase the artist's popularity. Things that managers do in the digital era (digitization) is to work by utilizing Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and social media with broad goals and scopes. In the digitalization field, managers adapt to choose how to make the next single to set the moment for the artist to keep interesting the music lovers. A Tarling music group manager must be able to see opportunities or innovate strategies to promote that don't cost too much because they can take advantage of Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and or the official website. Precisely from Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, some well managed social media can produce monetization that is profitable. On the other hand, when holding an event on their own, managers can collaborate with print media, radio, television, online media, to expose their artists and music groups. The resulting commodification is that the three performance-supporting agents get the benefits, not only popularity but financial benefits.

Even some artists consider the manager as an honorary member of the band outside the official formation that the public knows (Shipton, 2002:1). Through the manager they can sell, listen, promote and distribute their music worldwide (Ellefson, 2004: 23-40). They still have the freedom to release music online by selling and playing songs through Instagram, Facebook, YouTube such as iTunes, Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube Music, Deezer, Amazon Music and Instagram, Facebook, YouTube digital music and other worldwide though. Collaborating with music publishers by releasing the products will result in a revenue share of 75% for artists and 25% for online music stores.

3.3. Capital commodification in consumption sub-field

In digitalization field, the capital commodification is carried out by singer agents in consumption sub-area because the singer's identity contacts directly with the audience, both on stage and through Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube social media. Singers on stage have a passion and an emotional connection to their audience. Singer agents must adapt to new habitus in the digitalization field to practice capital commodification. Tarling singer personally no longer expects massive show orders like ticketed concerts. Digitization is actually used as a way to increase the number of fans (Sumardiono, 2022) which is carried out independently by utilizing mini studios and live streaming (Lee et al., 2020). However, digital downloads have an impact on music products holistically, including independent singles (not albums) with long duration. The reason is that digital downloads are sold through individual channels. Singers direct their audience or fans to enjoy their work through digital platforms marketed by publishers who distribute Tarling music through paid music selling applications such as Spotify and Joox. This commodification of social capital and symbolic capital is carried out to target fans abroad. Those who are generally Indonesian Migrant Workers (TKI – Tenaga Kerja Indonesia) are willing to listen to music by downloading through paid applications.

The effective option often chosen is promoting through social media channels like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, to get many fans like those of Indonesian Migrant Workers (TKI) abroad. They sometimes become big fans and often order shows when they return home, to hold family celebrations such as weddings, circumcisions, and other traditional events. The fanaticism of Tarling music fans among Indonesian migrant workers such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and Abu Dhabi is felt very strong. The social and symbolic capital of the singers can be converted through commodification so as to generate profits. Fans of migrant workers can request Tarling songs and give money from "sawer" (Baders, 2011) through the singer's account number. Indonesian migrant workers use YouTube's live Tarling show as a way of communication with fellow Indonesian migrant workers and their families at home.

The practice of commodification in the consumption sub-field is also carried out by a singer by building a relation with content creators through YouTube channel. Content creators who need and hunt for contents related to Tarling music collaborate with the singers via online through the platforms Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Tiktok, Smule, Gmeet and Zoom. These content creators see the business opportunity to become a

content producer to get the benefits of addsense. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Tarling singer Diana Sastra, since 2017, has been creating a social media account as a channel to build new fans. In addition to expanding the network on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and social media through their official accounts, singers also get feedback in the form of increasing number of followers and subscribers, thus providing profit opportunities from increasing addsense.

One of the keys to the success of live streaming is that it is real without referring to storyboards or planned scripts. This is the goal to show the personality and musicians and Tarling music group. The singer also launched the practice of commodification by inviting competent speakers to comment on various themes on the sidelines of the live stream of his/her Tarling song. Bourdieu's statement in context of this research shows the dominance of capital practices in the form of capital commodification scoping the practice of producing Tarling music files in digitalization field. In practice of digitization, agents are affected by its structure, but still free to act as they desire. It means that individual actions are not separable from the field with their own habitus to run capital commodification practice. This is in line with Bourdieu's view that agents own freedom, which means they can take position of any field in the social life. (Wilujeng, 2019). Commodification practice leads agents to an economically dominant position, thus ease their position in certain classes for holding the authority to get more respect as a powerful group. The practice of capital commodification in Tarling music digitalization field is carried out by agents through converting social capital, cultural, and symbolic capital into economic capital.

4. CONCLUSION

Capital commodification occurs in Tarling music digitalization field, carried out by producer agents in the production sub-field, managers in the distribution sub-field, and singer agents in the consumption sub-field. They implement the practice of commodification by converting social capital, cultural, symbolic capital into economic capital (profit). To achieve the profit goal, the agents adapt to his habitus in the field. They adapt through their work in production, distribution, and consumption performance which used to be conventionally, now directed with digital devices and social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. The digitalization process has agents obey the regulation and performance structures by utilizing digital equipments and social media

platforms. The outcome of capital commodification is the economic benefit increase in the forms of finance, cash, health insurance, investment prices, loans, movable and immovable assets.

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