

## **Asianization, Imagination, Fan Culture and Cultural Capital of Vietnamese Youth: A Case Study of K-pop Cover Dance Groups in Hanoi Vietnam**

***Phan Thanh Thanh***

### **Abstract**

This research explores the influence that economic integration, flows of capital and information, the media and popular culture - specifically Pop Dance Culture from South Korea - has led the changes in the identity of young Vietnamese people living in urban areas. The aim is to study the cultural phenomenon of a cohort of teenagers born in Hanoi after the economic reforms of the late twentieth century, and their practice of K-Pop dance covers using their bodies to convey their aspirations in terms of who they want to be in a post-Socialist society. K-Pop cover groups first sprang up in 2011 in Vietnam, after such groups won the international K-Pop dance cover contest. This contest utilizes social media to promote and disseminate Korean music culture, and young Vietnamese people have made use of it to form their own cover groups, and have used social internet sites such as YouTube and Facebook to display their hybrid identity and leverage their social status as middle class young people born after Doi Moi and living in urban areas, and in the capital city of Hanoi in particular. The target groups in this study are two K-Pop dance cover groups in Hanoi, each with members born in the 1980s and 1990s. The groups studied are, first, 'YG Lovers Crew' (YGLC), who cover K-Pop dance acts belonging to YG Entertainment, a mostly hip hop focused label, and 'St.319', who cover all the hit music videos from South Korea, and aim for a pop style. These groups were chosen for this study because of their fame in terms of performing K-Pop covers, of having a domestic and international fan base, due to the competition between them, and the strategies they use to move of the shadow of K-pop and create their own, new identities. Much of this research was based on face-to-face interviews with YGLC, St.319 and their fans, as well as the bands' videos. Social networking sites such as

Facebook and You Tube, and online newspapers, were also important sources of information for this study.

Keywords: K-Pop cover dance groups, youth culture in Hanoi, Asianization

## **Introduction**

This paper examines changes in Vietnamese youth's identity and their daily life that become more engaged with internet, variety of entertainment including K-Pop. Ethnographically, I will explore 'K-Pop Dancing Culture' which has recently emerged and become popular among Vietnamese youth. Based on qualitative research with deep interviews and to participate closely in everyday activities of the group named YG Lovers Crew with its 12 official members from 18 to 23 years old and St319 with its 20 official members from 15 to 25 years old who were born after Doi Moi (the Vietnamese economic renovation policy), and practicing K-Pop Dance Cover in Hanoi and their fans to answer the following questions: How young people (teenagers) in Hanoi, Vietnam form themselves in social space to contest the meaning of youth identity to be both Vietnamese and K-Pop fans. Hence, in my research, I propose to study this cover dance group YGLC and St319 from the approach of fan culture, emphasizing youth perspectives in relation to both the nation-state and the global cultural capital.

### *YG Lovers Crew and St319*

In Vietnam, a number of groups perform K-Pop dance music, mostly in the big cities such as Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City and Hai Phong. In total there are about 20 such groups, but the number varies a lot, and there are many small and little known groups at local high schools and universities, and also fan club dance cover groups all over the country. In Ha Noi, the most famous groups are St.319, LYNT and YGLC, and they faced strong competition at the beginning in 2011. While other groups still remain, St.319 is the most successful K-Pop cover group in Vietnam, as its fan base outnumbers other groups' and it is known among the

international K-Pop fan community. The group is even ranked as one of the most influential and leading K-pop dance artists by social media, based on the number of views and subscribers on YouTube (Hellokpop 2013).

YG Lovers Crew is a dance group based in Hanoi, it was formed in 2011 by Doan Nhat Anh as part of the K-Pop Global Contest in Vietnam, and now performs many different kinds of dance, such as Hip Hop, modern dance and K-Pop cover dance. YG Lovers is one of the K-Pop cover groups in Vietnam which has risen to fame, particularly among Vietnamese young people, and has gained a following through online media outlets such as YouTube. Currently, the group has 12 members, all of whom are fans of Big Bang and YG Entertainment.

St 319 was also formed in 2011, and at first had only two members. St.319 has since grown, meaning there are now over 20 people in the band. The groups cover videos have received two to three million viewings on its own YouTube page. The group has won contests staged all over the world, and has performed alongside some renowned artists. In the future, St.319 dance group will continue to develop its own brand of K-Pop covers, and continue to produce self-choreographed products, to assert its own brand. In particular, the group is moving away from its St.319 dance group core, to become the first entertainment group model in Vietnam, with members from different areas. In December 2014, the St.319 Entertainment label released its non-St.319 record, performed by MIN, with a debut digital single called 'Find'.

### *K-Pop Cover Dance*

Cover dance is the copying of choreographed dance movements and other gestures to create the feeling for audience as watching a dance performance in a concert or music video. Movements are learned by watching official music videos and dance tutorials. It is Korean media mega-agencies that are omnipresent dominant powers that created these Cover Contests. Moreover, the phenomenon of cover videos by fans over the world has been popularized through the inception of

Youtube.com, a video-sharing website (as an internet technology) in 2005.

### **Transnational flow of K-Pop music in Vietnamese Society**

The purpose of this part is to examine the Korean wave which has been emerging and countering to Vietnamese media flows. However, in Vietnamese society, this 'Korean Wave', which includes K-Pop, is considered to be only for the teenagers who are young and materialistic, who love music without meaning. In this first part, I will explore different opinions and controversial dialogues from both the older and younger generations, as K-Pop has become popular among Vietnamese young people plus its impacts on their lifestyles and tastes.

The year 2011 marked the entering of K-Pop cover dance into Vietnamese K-Pop fan society. Coincidentally, it was also the year that National examination for university entrance by Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training addressed students sitting in literature subject with the question about K-Pop fandom (www.Vietbao.VN 2012). The question was "Admiring idols is a good culture but being crazy about idols is a disaster, what do you think about this?" This shows both the influence of K-Pop stars on Vietnamese fandom and the concerns of the Government on the changes in urban Vietnamese youth identity. That was also the first time, Vietnamese K-Pop Dance Cover groups won prizes (including first prizes) of K-Pop Global Dance Cover contests internationally organized by SM Entertainment, JYP Entertainment and YG Entertainment on YouTube (Facebook Pages of YG Lovers Crew, St.319, and LYNT).

Thomas Mandy spoke about the Vietnamese Government's attitude as Korean culture has come to Vietnam. She argued that the enjoyment of East Asian (specifically Korean) cultural productions in Vietnam is maybe viewed as an act of resistance and negotiation to the regime, because the nation fears political instability due to this new post-communist media revolution.

Moreover, there is also competition in the domestic music market for external cultural influences, because the State realizes that local programs do not meet the needs of consumers. However, this represents a rich and creative area for Vietnamese artists to move into; to develop new themes, from the old nationalistic and patriotic theme (based on war and propaganda songs), to a new material pop culture (Thomas 2004).

The reason Vietnamese consumers have greater choices in terms of consuming international cultural products is because the country has opened its markets and entered the world economy (Lee 2013: 99). However, there is a paradox with respect to Vietnamese Government policies, for on the one hand there is a fear of losing a grip on the ideology of the regime, while on the other, the Government wants to open-up and compete on the world stage (Nguyen-Vo 2008).

In the meantime, the older generation's opinion of K-Pop is relatively negative. In one online Vietnamese newspaper, a mother revealed her concerns about her children, who are fanatical fans of K-Pop:

*"If there is any information about a band, or a Korean singer has plans to perform in Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh city, there will be an extremely strong undercurrent of excitement among young people and children, who will use any method to get a ticket to see their idols. Soon, one Korean girl band, 2NE1, will perform in Hanoi, and my daughter has asked for a ticket. When the performance comes closer to the actual date, her attitude and determination will go as far as threatening to quit school if she cannot see the band. I asked a lot of students waiting outside the Korean show, "Why do you love K-Pop bands like this". One fan said, "If I can get to Korea once, I will die without regret. For me Korea is paradise." For me, this is painful to hear; my national pride is hurt so much"* (wwwWWW.Vietbao.VN 2012).

In response to what the older generation has expressed, as above, young people consuming K-Pop have also expressed their

views as to why they like K-Pop so much. The main reason is that the nation's own pop music is not attractive enough for them, and they feel they are living in a time in which they want to open space on the internet and have more choice; to choose the most suitable music for their tastes. As fans said:

The problem is when Hallyu wave develops everywhere in the world, no one will have negative thought about that... No country has published a critical article about Hallyu wave negatively affecting young people. But why, in Vietnam, so they criticize? The Vietnamese perspective on Korea is too negative... On many pages of the 'Vietsub' online website opened by young Vietnamese, you can see that, besides Korean movies, drama and music, they also have zone for Japanese, Thai, Chinese, US and UK films and music.

The fact is that youth-led Korean music or the Korean style is not superficial; the young people want something new, they want to break out of the old ways, to learn about cultures outside...In fact, people now have a new concept called the 'global citizen', due to the development of the internet, and the development of new cultures, especially Hallyu wave and Korean Wave... (Thao 2014). I am a K-Pop fan, a fan of 2NE1, Big Bang and YG Entertainment...Did you ever find out why your daughters love them so much?

1. South Korea's entertainment industry is developing very much! It is affecting not only Vietnam, but the entire world. Eastern cultures have little in common; they catch trends and audience tastes and of course they have won sympathy;

2. The entertainment industry in our country is not competitive; please look and compare...I am a fan and according to you and many other people, I am a "crazy fan"! I'm prepared to go to Ho Chi Minh City to see Big Bang, the band I long to see even once in my lifetime...You should ask yourself first: 'Why do Vietnamese singers not attract young people?' It is your responsibility to answer this. For me, the phrase 'meet one day, die satisfies', is not about living and dying, but

really means: In this life, we must see the people who we have a lot of feelings for... (Ziu's Facebook 2012).

Therefore, in the minds of young Vietnamese, they consume cultural products mainly according to their own tastes, regardless of the products' nationalities. Moreover, the cultural tastes which the young people are living and experiencing have changed to reflect the advanced standards of living and cultural modernity they are experiencing. Before Doi Moi, it was only propaganda music that dominated the Vietnamese music scene; however, now young people are concerned with the quality of cultural products, such as their refinement, creativity, individuality and diversity. Therefore, Vietnamese nationalism has surged, suggesting an alternative globalization process is developing among the younger generation in terms of its identity.

### **Asianization: Consumption and Reproduction**

In this section, I will show how K-Pop cover music has expanded the range of identities people use to think of themselves beyond the nation. In my view, this practice does not simply represent resistance to the state, but also the fact that international dance contests and the globally available YouTube channel have become unprecedentedly available in Vietnam, providing a ways for young Vietnamese people to break-out and become part of the globalized world. This development needs to be looked at from the perspective of technology and youth culture.

The term "Asianization" was coined by Iwabuchi in 2002, and the terms "Asian values" and "Asia sentiments" by Chua in 2004, as a means to counter to Western hegemony and Western cultural influences in Asian societies. Moreover, Asianization represents the new flows of cultural products within the East Asian region. The growing trans-Asian cultural flow that has emerged since the 1990s, and the alliances developed within it, have decentered or reversed, and recentered the previous direction of globalization (Iwabuchi 2002). Moreover, I should

also refer to Appadurai's work from 1996 on the new imaginary landscapes of cultural globalization; cultural products which reflect modern life and the experience of globalization while living in metropolises (Siriyuvasak 2008).

After the drama of the Asian economic crisis, there was an Asian economic miracle, and since then, an emergence of popular Asianization and Asian dialogues whose main feature has not been Asia values or traditional culture, but capitalist consumer/popular culture. I borrow the term "Asianization" to highlight the reproduction created by young Vietnamese people, who want to be a part of Asia and learn from role Korean role models while consuming Korean cultural flows, and this helps shape the idea that Asians are living in the same, imagined transnational space. Young Vietnamese people have responded to the global spread of West-dominated capitalist modernity that has given a new momentum to the meaning of being Asian in the new millennium. Although it is not a new trend, it should be recognized as a different type of global flow, one in which "Asianness" is emphasized, and one that is affected by the accelerated speed of the cultural movement through new technologies (Iwabuchi 2002).

In the Vietnamese case, because of the growth in advanced technologies, fast internet speeds and cable/satellite, since the 1990s (The Enemies of Internet n.d.), people in Vietnam, and especially the young, who are main internet users (around 95% are those between 15 and 24 and live in urban Vietnam; Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) access the internet (Cimigo 2011). I would argue that the internet has raised the speed of cultural flows and created new kinds of globalization. In this process of proliferation, consumers can enjoy increasingly diverse choices regarding what they watch or listen to.

*"I and St.319 often listen to and enjoy both K-Pop and US/UK music, because they are the two kinds of music which dominate the world music market..." (Kevin, leader of the St319 fan club, 2014).*



The music taste of young people today is very diverse; there are many genres, many more international genres. Due to technology and the internet, the integration of cultural exchange is obvious.

“I like both, but I feel I am closer to South Korea music”  
(Tommy, a dance member of YG Lovers Crew, 2014).

“Because each entertainment industry has its own strengths and weaknesses, when I listen to many genres and approach more music styles, I will select good points from each to learn from them. So Korean music and American music also affect my lifestyle, but I see this as no problem; I feel comfortable because when I change, it is merely make-up, such as a way of speaking. Of course, when I meet older people, my communication is still pure Vietnamese, so I think it does not affect me so much, just a little bit of my style and manner  
(Zoie, a dance leader with St.319, 2014).

I also argue that Korean cultural products are closer in a style sense to Vietnamese young people rather than Western products. Straubhaar proposed that audiences are becoming more comfortable with receiving products from countries with which they share cultural ties, and this encourages the regionalization of media and the dynamics of media exports within particular geo-cultural regions, rather than the pure characterization of globalization - as the spread of Western (American) popular culture (1991). To continue with this idea, Iwabuchi has provided the term “coevalness” (2002:154), suggesting that non-Western countries believe it is impossible to catch up with Western US led cultural domination, due to the political, economic, technological and cultural lag that exists. Rather than copy the US style directly; therefore, young Vietnamese people have chosen to copy K-Pop - which has some of the US elements - to bridge this development gap:

“I think our style is more American than K-Pop. When we do K-Pop covers, we think we are more American. I started with Hip Hop, but the YG Lovers started with K-Pop, and in this way K-pop

represents Asia. Actually, YG artists write the music, and it is based on R&B and jazz, but to be as good as Americans I think there is a long way to go. Maybe because they are Asian groups who like Hip Hop and the American style, bands such as Big Bang and 2NE1 are like role model dance groups for us. They are also Asian, but they love the American style” (Nhat-Anh, leader of YG Lovers Crew, 2014).

Moreover, the style, fashion and dance produced by Korean artists are also easier for young Vietnamese people to adapt to during their everyday lives, meaning they can copy the style. The value of K-Pop does not necessarily lie in the distinctive singing ability of the artists. The main feature of what is called the Korean idol system is the creation of an intimacy between the stars and their audiences, and the closing of the gap between professionals and amateurs, which is different from the Hollywood star system. Instead of being a dominant cultural form (like American popular culture), K-Pop and its entertainment industry “have tried to exploit and produce [a] desire among the people to be members of the middle class in a modern capitalist society” (Iwabuchi 2002:103).

“...if you watch Korean music...it is very nice, very teenage; well-suited to the song content. US music has a very strong choreography. US artists can sing and dance Hip Hop perfectly, and it is also very physical. But here, K-Pop is gentle dance; it is very close to young people, and even if people do not know how to dance, they still can follow the acts. The K-Pop videos are very easy to cover, because they have dance clips, to guide the fans; usually just a one shot clip and no edition, meaning one can track the movement very easily” (Nhat-Anh, Leader of YG Lovers Crew 2014).

Directly copied through observation, Korean songs, dance, hairstyles and clothing have become popular among young people in Vietnam; they have even changed their names to foreign sounding English and Korean names. For example, some group members have Korean names, such as “Min” from St319

and “Sal Park” from YGLC, while others have English names, such as “Zoie” and “Ethan” from St319, and “Tommy” and “Jemmy Lucas” from YGLC. However, this is no different between the way Koreans have copied Western music and technology, and Japanese styles and Vietnamese have copied Western and K pop. The imitation of Korean pop can be considered a national hybrid identity, highlighting the fact that skillful hybridization is not unique to Korea, but is quite common among subordinated nations (Appadurai 1996).

## **Fan Culture**

In this section, I will argue that we cannot equate dance reproduction - which is one of the new, emerging cultures among the Vietnamese youth - with the original products from South Korea. While the members of the group are doing covers, they are at the same time producing something new out of the original element. They have also created their own fan clubs, their own audiences and fans.

Here I will show the viewers’ perspectives on dance cover MVs made by Vietnamese teenagers. The positive response generally made was that young Vietnamese consumers are now recognized as one of the game changers on the pop culture map. They are not only seen as “cool” and “talented” among the Vietnamese, but in other countries also.

Both those groups (St319, YGLC) have hit dance cover MVs on YouTube, comments from viewers both in Vietnam and other countries. The common comments from YouTube audience are appreciated; praised Vietnamese teenagers “cool” and “talent”. However, there is also a competition among the groups and their fans. While the cover dance style of St319 is very pop, covered all hit songs from Korea, YG lover crew only focus on some hits from YG entertainment which is mostly focused on Hiphop and R&B style.

There is also a competition among different dance teams... In VN there is only one group St.319 has their own fan club. Meaning

that they have their offline meetings sometimes and fan club members can meet dancers. But we only manage the group page views and every year show in August, holding one concert of the group on cover dance, selling tickets to our audience and also to promote a better image of the group, specialized and stronger (Tommy 2014).

The style of YGLC is more hiphop dance. I am not really interested in K-Pop dancing anymore but I am into YG entertainment. They are like American living in Korea. The style, music, everything do not look like K-Pop at all. It is K-Pop because they sing in Korean but their style music is not because they don't sing Pop, they just sing Hiphop, R&B, Jazz and some kinds of really artistic music (Nhat-Anh 2014)/

Due to having different styles in K-Pop cover dance, their fame and opinions about K-Pop are different. St319 has become more successful because they are very stick to Pop style. Being said that becoming famous because of the names of Korean artists and their fame, St319 has answered:

“So -called followers of the famous Korean artists is not very true because if we do not spend our time and energy to practice, if we do not invest in our products (cover dance MVs), then actually nobody will care about us and let us become famous. And the so-called goal of us is not to get fame but our target is to express what we like and we become famous not because of Korean artists but due to the appreciation of the viewers. Meaning when audience think they are beautiful (MVs), audience support us and and we begin to success” (Zoie 2014).

“Why their cover clip 's dance become special because they might have different story for each video clip butdid not completely copy the original music video, the group did not merely in the mirror dancing but they have paid attention to distinctions , they build the iconic character , the character's personality on video clips and songs based on it, everything fits together to make up their own definition of it” (Thao 2014).

“For me main reason St319 dance cover and invest in their clip is their passion that has driven them spend a lot of time and effort to achieve what they want. I think their wish is not only to become popular but to devote to entertainment industry of Vietnam...” (Kevin 2014).

According to Alvin Toffler, fans have become “prosumers” who create when they consume (1980). Jenkins (2006:3) has extended Toffler's work to refer to the interactive consumption that is embedded in production, an influential elaboration of media convergence, in which new practices are driven by a participatory culture as participants engage in a dynamic interaction rather than occupy prescribed, distinct roles as producers or consumers. The notions of the prosumer and of participatory culture are reiterated through the concept of Web 2.0, a term coined by Darcy DiNucci in 1999. This term was given to the concept of the Web as "a space for collaboration and reciprocal communication" (Gere 2009:212). As the cases presented to illustrate, the processes of producing, consuming, and being consumed or shaped by digital media are intertwined and often simultaneous.

Only St319 has Official Offline fan club and has its fan page for their fan group in Facebook: IOWA, name of St.319's Fan club (Accessed on 8<sup>th</sup>, February, 2014 on FB had 20,532 likes.) The page was created to support for St.319 and help people like St.319 communicate with each other.

“Fan club of St 319 was established right after the first days of group activities. A small offline meeting of the group usually has around 50 to 60 people. In a big meeting there are more than 500 people” (Kevin 2014).

And for YGLC performs, they meet their online audience by celebrating offline K-Pop party performance every year. However, YGLC has plans to become a professional dance crew instead of being a K-Pop dance cover group. “I don’t think of your group as K-Pop dance cover group anymore. I think we are like professional dance group for showcases and performances.

Actually I started from Hiphop first then I love YG so I started to take some directions into K-Pop, try to listen to K-Pop and I have been loved K-Pop for a while” (Nhat-Anh 2014).

## **Cultural Capital**

In this part, I want to argue that by practicing K-Pop cover dance, the members of YGLC, St319 do not only show their love for K-Pop music and K-Pop stars but they also have an ambition to jump into the National music industry and entertainment sector. They even produce new products on their own. As a consequence, practicing K-Pop cover dance can be seen as the first step for gaining fame both domestically and internationally.

In St 319 case, they have created new identity by learning from Korean music and Western music to making music and dance “cool” and “modern”. St. 319 is already started to reach that dream with 2 new debut products by themselves. They released a new album: MIN from ST.319 - TÌM (LOST) (ft. Mr A) M/V Published on Dec 18, 2013 which lyric is in Vietnamese but dance choreography was inspired by K-pop dance.





It proved for their ambition, plan, to become a more professional entertainment group, not only K-Pop dance cover group.

“We actually is not a truely dance cover group anymore... In the beginning phase we probably have learnt from them a lot but in the next step, we have changed into local entertainment group” (Zoie 2014).

“When the group is in a certain height, then the maintenance is quite important for the group. It will help them progressly deeply go into the entertainment industry of Vietnam” (Kevin 2014).

Vietnamese youths’ active acceptance of new digitalized music will have a great influence on Vietnamese music industry in the future. The same pattern has been seen from American baby boomers’ embrace of rock music which changed the American music industry in 1960s (McRobbie 1993). Like rock music in the 1960s, K-pop music produced by digital technologies is new, trendy, and cool appealing feature of cultural products for youth

“I think in the future, the impacts of the Korea in Viet Nam will not last much longer like before. We will receive more other styles and even domestic music industry in Vietnam will develop so maybe youth will like this music more” (Ziu 2013).

Within a specific context of several non-Western countries, popular music is distinguished not between high or low culture but between domestic music and Western (US-UK) music (Mori

2009:219-223). In this context, highbrow culture is seen as something from the West, represents for middle class youth because consumption of the authentic fashionable items of the hip-hop culture is as important as the music itself. They are expensive and difficult to find for audiences, unless they lived in the big cities (Lee 2013). Therefore, the audiences who could most easily access global (American) hip-hop culture, the newest trend of that period, were the middle and upper class youths who were living in the big cities.

In the case of Vietnam, even living in big cities, it is still difficult for young people especially young high school/university boys and girls to consume expensive CDs, subscribe to satellite music channels, and purchase international brands of hip-hop fashion items. They are likely to consume those fake international products and/or made in Vietnam products for international brands in local shops but have same styles of international consumers. However, conspicuous consumption of hip-hop cultural products in Vietnam still is one of the symbols of the middle class youths' own highbrow culture Westernized.

“ST319 they are very young , they are very young people , having an opened way of thinking and living and willing to change in term of fashion sense, dressing, hairstyle to fit the song and match outfits and match the background of the music videos. Then I can see that if they come from normal families and they are only students, it will be difficult for them to change their clothes and styles like that” (Thao 2014).

## **Discussion**

Cultural flow of K-Pop is most visible among Vietnamese youth because the youth are the most active recipient of cultural contents across national borders. The nationalities of the cultural products they favor most were US-UK music and K-Pop because they regard themselves as global citizens and consumers. However, they feel closer with K-Pop because they share with K-Pop the same experience and emotion and



because K-Pop represents a new hybrid modernity mixing Asian culture and Western culture.

By forming into a subculture group as such, those K-Pop fans and Dance cover groups in Hanoi have produced transnational dialogues, share cultural meaning, and form affective ties with each other. Within this visual space, those groups also help K-Pop fan communities in Vietnam to further take part in K-Pop consumption, disseminating their cultural capital in K-Pop. In the process of consuming and reproducing those cultural products, their identities are shaped as they clarify their desire to pop music, dance and life style what they consider as cool and modern.

Using K-Pop cover dance as a key platform to cultivate more cultural capital, it comes as no surprise that youth practicing K-Pop cover dance are also making their friends, leveraging their social status and even become small idols, have fan clubs both online and offline on their own rights and take a higher step in the entertainment industry.

There is a certain degree of economic growth which enables (particularly younger) people to consume cultural products. Youth are more confident because they have both cultural economical and social capital to pursue what they want. They want to be competitive, famous, and not only limited inside Vietnam but internationally, they want to be friends of the world and open to the world.

What is hint behind the scene of K-Pop cover dance practice among youth is not necessary that the youth want to fight against the current regime but what they actually want is to contribute to their fan community and/or their country and let other foreign communities know about Vietnamese youth who have global and regional tastes in a new urban landscape. There are many groups of young Vietnamese who want to do differently from their older generation by their online and offline activities. The case study of K-Pop cover dance from St319 and YGLC is just one of many young Vietnamese groups nowadays after Doi Moi.

Like most ethnographic research, I only focused on a small sample group for this study. Therefore, while generalization of this study might need to be questioned, I tried to demonstrate interpretive subtlety and nuanced cultural understanding that are strengths of ethnography. The research study was conducted in a specific area, and because of that the findings and recommendations may not apply generally and to other places, as they may depend on the context. Therefore, it needs more studies with empirical data collected from participation, interaction and involvement with different groups and in different regions for further understanding of this phenomenon.

## References

- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Chua, B. H. (2004). Conceptualizing an East Asian Popular Culture. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*. 5(2): 200-21.
- Cimigo. (2011). *Netcitizen Report 2011*.  
<http://www.slideshare.net/ngvdung/researchnetcitizen-report-2011en> [last accessed June 12, 2013].
- DiNucci, D. (1999). Fragmented future, *Print*, 53 (4): 32.
- Gere, C. (2009). *Digital Culture*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Hellokpop (2013) K pop dance cover artists that dance like your idols. [Http://www.hellokpop.com/2013/04/17/10-kpop-dance-cover-artists-that-dance-like-your-idols](http://www.hellokpop.com/2013/04/17/10-kpop-dance-cover-artists-that-dance-like-your-idols)[last accessed April 10, 2014].
- Iwabuchi, K.(2002). *Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Fans, Bloggers, Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*. New York: New York University Press.
- Lee, G.T. (2013). De-Nationalization and Re-Nationalization of Culture: The Globalization of K-Pop. Ph.D. dissertation, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA.
- McRobbie, A. (1993). Shut Up and Dance: Youth Culture and Changing Modes of Femininity. *Cultural Studies* 7, 406-

425.

- Mori, Y. (2009) Reconsidering Cultural Hybridities: Transnational Exchanges of Popular Music in Between Korea and Japan. In J. D. Mackintosh et al, (eds.). *Cultural Studies and Cultural Industries in Northeastern Asia: What a Difference a Region Makes*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. 213-230.
- Nguyen-Vo, T.H. (2008). *The Ironies of Freedom: Sex, Culture, and Neoliberal Governance in Vietnam*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Nhat-Anh, D. (2014). Interview by author. Ha Noi, Vietnam (24 February).
- Siriyuvasak, U. (2008 ). Consuming and producing post modernity: youth and popular culture in Thailand. In Y. Kim (ed.). *Media Consumption and Everyday life in Asia*. New York: Routledge.
- Straubhaar, G. D. (1991). Beyond Media Imperialism: Assymetrical Interdependence and Cultural proximity. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 8, 39-59.
- Toffler, A. (1980). *The Third Wave*. New York: Morrow.
- The Enemies of Internet. (n.d.). "Vietnam", <http://surveillance.rsf.org/en/vietnam/> [last accessed June 12, 2013].
- Thao, N. V. P. (2014). Interview by author. Ha Noi, Vietnam (12 February).
- Thomas, M. (2004). East Asian Cultural Traces in Post-Socialist Vietnam. In K. Iwabuchi, S. Muecke, and M. Thomas (eds.) *Rogue Flows: Trans-Asian Cultural Traffic*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 177-195.
- Tommy. (2014). Interview by author. Ha Noi, Vietnam ( January 26).
- Vietbao.VN (2012). Chạm tay ái, một số fan K-pop bỏ thi câu Văn hóa thành n tự ợng. <http://vietbao.vn/The-gioi-tre/Cham-tu-ai-mot-so-fan-Kpop-bothi-cau-Van-hoa-than-tuong-2131502144/475> [last accessed June 12, 2013].
- Vnexpress. (2012). Tâm sự của bà mẹ có con là fan cuồng nhạ c Hàn Quốc, <http://vnexpress.net/gl/ban-doc-viet/2012/03/tam-su-cua-ba-me-co-con-la-fan-cuong-nhac-han-quoc/> [last accessed June 12, 2013].

- Ziu. (2012) .Thư gửi i bà mẹ có con là fan cuồng K-Pop  
<https://www.facebook.com/notes/th%E1%BB%8Bziu/th%C6%B0-g%E1%BB%Adi-b%C3%A0-m%E1%BA%B9-c%C3%B3-con-1%C#%Aofan-cu%E1%BB%93ng-kpop/10150662887198431>  
[last accessed June 12,2013].
- Ziu (2013). Interview by author. Ha Noi, Vietnam (May 19).
- Zoie. (2014). Interview by author. Ha Noi, Vietnam (February 12).



Phan Thanh Thanh is a second year masters student in the International Development Program at the Regional Centre for Social Science and Sustainable Development, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University. Before joining the program, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in Sociology from Academy of Journalism and Communication, Ha Noi, Vietnam in 2010. Her research focuses on the transformation of Vietnamese youth identity through K-Pop Dance Cover Groups in Ha Noi. She is based in Chiang Mai, Thailand.