

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Context in Vietnam after Doi Moi

Since Doi Moi – the Vietnamese economic reforms introduced in 1986 – Vietnam has opened-up to the outside world. Vietnam joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007 (VTC News 2007). Among many countries Vietnam has established corporative links with; South Korea is an important partner for Vietnam during its recent development (www.vietnamembassy.com 2014). In this research, I have chosen to focus on how economic integration has led to changes in young people's way of life in relation to the flows of popular culture that have recently taken place from South Korea.

Vietnam first connected to the World Wide Web (internet) in 1991, but only in 1997 was the internet officially used and developed in Vietnam (VASS 2012). By 2011, the whole country had 26.8 millions netizens (VASS 2012) out of a total population of 91.5 million people, more than one-third of the population uses the internet and around 95% of those are between 15 and 24 years and live in urban Vietnam, mainly Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (Cimigo 2011). I use the case study of Vietnamese dance cover groups to examine the dynamics of development in Vietnam, those affecting the young people consuming Korean popular music and deploying fan networks on social media sites such as YouTube and Facebook.

According to Jin (2007) and Ko (2010), South Korean pop music (K-pop) including all genres of Western popular music such as pop, pop ballad, electronic, rock, American hip hop, R & B and some of J-pop visual elements etc has become a dominant flow of music in Southeast Asia since the 1990s. In 2010, Thailand and Vietnam were among the top ten countries in terms of viewing K-pop videos on

YouTube (Shim and Noh 2012). Vietnam has experienced strong user growth as part of a fast-expanding economy. More and more people are beginning to use social media to share daily news and circulate media-led cultural products. Significantly, Vietnam is experiencing fast-growing penetration of social media, and such a change in the media environment affects how Web users seek and share foreign cultural content through social media.

The Korean Wave, or *Hallyu*, was first used by the Chinese mass media in the late 1990s. This term is to describe a cultural phenomenon that has drawn the attention of Asian people, especially teenagers to South Korean popular culture with its diverse cultural products via television such as Korean dramas and reality shows and the Internet such as YouTube, online video sites, blogs and fan websites (Ko 2010, Leung 2012). These diverse media sources provide a cyber space for fans to contribute to the global K-pop fan community. Fairchild (2008: 9) observes this phenomenon, arguing that “the music and entertainment industries imagine their consumers as an inherently dissatisfied public. They exist to satisfy as many of us in as many ways as they can as often as possible.”

Since Korean Wave has come to Vietnam, Korean business has been making an effort to dramatically affect young people’s lifestyles in many ways, making them to become consumers of Korean products and services. Dator and Seo (2004) also argue that Korean artists have become the introducers of home-grown exported products, and these have had a big influence on fans overseas in terms of fashion, hairstyles and make-up (Hyundai heavy industries report on pop culture, January-February 2004). In 2001, during his state visit to Korea in 2001, former Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong commented that "In the streets of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, fashion conscious young Vietnamese have adopted the darker makeup colors, thinly shaved eyebrows, body-hugging clothes, and square-toed shoes of Seoul fashion." (AP Breaking News, February 3 2002, cited in Dator 2004). In Vietnam, the import of South Korean products such as cosmetics, fashion goods and electronics has become more popular due to the rise of Korean Wave (Ko 2010). For example, LG has “notched... first place in brand recognition among foreign cosmetic brands in Vietnam” (www.Joins.com 2001, cited in Shim 2006). In order to empower LG Electronics

products in Vietnam, the company even added free Korean dramas to Vietnamese TV channels, those with Vietnamese dubbing included (Nae-oe Economic Daily 2001, cited in Shim 2006). Moreover, online game is also a new product exported by South Korean companies to Vietnam (KOCCA News, September 3 2003, cited in Dator 2004). Besides selling culture, Korean businesses realized that selling semi-conductors or cars could even be more profitable (Shim 2006). If looking back at the relationship between Vietnam and South Korea over the last few decades, it can be seen that the spread of Korean pop culture in Vietnam has even had implications diplomatically, helping to normalize relations between the two countries, in addition to earning foreign currency (Shim 2006). During the Vietnam War, South Korea brought 30.000 soldiers to Vietnam (www.vietnamembassy.com 2014); however, since 1992 South Korea has become a strategic partner of Vietnam, and in 2007, South Korea was the second biggest investor in Vietnam, with total registered capital amounting to US\$8.54 billion (www.vietnamembassy.com 2014).

1.1.2 Background to the Popularization of K-pop

K-pop is an extreme case of hybridized global music, as it mixes both the West, the East and includes local cultural elements, all of which make its origins difficult to identify (Lee 2011). The aim of such skillfully complex hybridity is to meet the needs of various customer groups and maximize economic benefit (Jung 2011b). In general, a typical K-pop MV is set within a futuristic and fantastic set, to show-off the dancing skills of group members, instead of showing them playing instruments or singing, as happens with most Western bands.

Siriyuvasak (2008) has argued that the South Korean government invested in its entertainment sector with a hope that the sector could create more job opportunities for its people and more importantly, to renew the state economy after the economic downturn in the 1990s and the Asian economic crisis in 1997. Shim (2008) adds that to strengthen the capacity of the cultural industry in South Korea, since 1999, government laws have been changed to allow the business and private sectors to act more freely within the industry.

While the economic crisis that hit Korea in 1997 can be seen as the main reason for the development of the K-pop industry, Shim (2009) also describes the rise of Korean Wave is the way Korea responded to US market pressure and the forces of globalization. Shim (2011) and Chua (2012) further argue that the popularity of K-pop is closely related to the internet. Media corporations and star management companies have entered into a strong alliance with YouTube which was launched in 2005; to release their new songs and MVs. In South Korea, the major management companies, such as SM Entertainment, YG Entertainment and JYP Entertainment, are small and medium enterprises (SMEs) who have their own channels for this purpose. Leung (2012) adds that these are the representatives of the most powerful music management companies in South Korea.

As for my research, I am particularly interested in K-pop cover dance among Vietnamese young people, as this has recently become popular among Vietnamese youth K-pop fan society. The year 2011 marked the entry of K-pop cover dance into Vietnamese K-pop fan society. Coincidentally, this was also the year that the national examination for university entrance, set by the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, included a 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 highlighted both the influence of K-pop stars on Vietnamese fandom, and the concerns of the Government regarding the changes in identity occurring among urban Vietnamese young people. This was also the first time, Vietnamese K-pop dance cover groups had won prizes (included first prizes) at international K-pop Global Dance Cover contests organized by big media companies:

SM Entertainment¹, JYP² Entertainment and YG Entertainment³ and several other entertainment companies from South Korea on YouTube (Facebook pages of groups: YG Lovers Crew⁴, St.319⁵ and LYNT⁶).

¹ **S.M. Entertainment** is Korea's best known entertainment & media group, operating businesses in the fields of planning, production, distribution, and circulation of records, licensing, publishing, singer/actor management, agency activities, start-up marketing, Internet/mobile content, and education. The C.E.O is Kim Young-Min. The company was Established in February 14, 1995. Its major Field of Business are Planning/Production/Distribution of Records, Publishing, Licensing, TV Production, Advertising Agency, Agency, Entertainer Management, Event Management. This is home of SuperJunior, Girls' Generation,

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem and Justification

In Vietnamese society today, K-pop is thought to be for teenagers, who are young and materialistic. The Korean and other Asian media industries are systematically and collaboratively promoting a wider range of Korean popular culture for the routine consumption of young people in various markets across East and Southeast Asia, including Vietnam. So much so that the media form has become almost mundane in the globalized (urban) landscape of Hanoi. Recently, there has been an influx of K-pop music videos (MV)s on the internet, and there are many online pages among Vietnamese fans and international fans, hosting fan clubs of and information on their K-pop idols. However, research about K-pop fandom in Vietnam has been almost absent, while at the same time, the literature on this sub-culture over the past two decades has tended to look at subculture as the “culture of the poor”, ignoring the fact that middle class young people can also create a new form of subculture. This study; therefore, fills this void, to understand how K-pop consumption has shaped youth culture in Vietnam.

KANGTA, BoA, F(x), Dong Bng Shin Ki, Fly to the sky, H.O.T, Shinhwa, The Grace, TRAX, SHINee, Isak N Jiyeon, TVXQ, Lee Yeon Hee, Ara, Son Ji Chang, Oh Yun Soo, Yun Da Hun, Kim Min Jong, Hong Lok Gi, Pyo In Bong, Kim Kyung Sik, Lee Dong Woo, Lee Woong Ho, and more.<http://www.smtown.com/>

² **JYP Entertainment** is a record label and talent agency founded by J.Y. Park based in Seoul, South Korea. It produces and markets music recording/publishing, record manufacturing/sales, artist management, concert production, and new artist discovering/training. Once home to artists like Park Ji Yoon, Rain and G.o.d, the label's current roster of recording artists include Wonder Girls, Joo, 2AM, 2PM, miss A, Baek Ah Yeon, 15&, Sunmi and Got7. JYP Entertainment was originally found as Arion Corp, a company that made integrated circuit chips and computer data storage while offering servers. The company's established date is set as the day Arion Corp. was found. On January 29, 1999, the company changed its name to Bogang Media. Website: <http://english.jype.com/#/company/AboutJYP.aspx>

³ **YG Entertainment** maintains the capability for unmatched new development and production. Since 1996, YG Entertainment has produced the leading artists, such as Jinusean, 1TYM, SE7EN, BIGBANG, 2NE1, Lee Hi, etc., to the music world. Through the new casting potential, unmatched YG structured training, and world class in-house producing system, YG has been able to train artists to lead the global market. YG Entertainment has a desire to become the most preferred brand. Through the OSMU strategy, YG Entertainment is expanding its diversified contents business model. YG is leading the initiative for digital music that can be adapted to a variety of platforms and devices, going beyond the basic album and concert activities. Besides this, it is extending its diversified management business and making a business model for the world concerning advertisements, broadcasting, characters, games, etc. YG Entertainment is a pioneer in the domain of new contents business. YG Entertainment is aiming for the world. Through the joint venture with the top Japanese entertainment company AVEX in 2011, after already advancing into the Japanese market in 2007 by establishing YG Japan, YG was able to establish the solo label YGEX in an effort to more aggressively advance in the Japanese market. Once establishing their YG Asia headquarters in Hong Kong, YG was able to widen their influence to the larger mainland China and Taiwan. Through targeting the pop market's natives of the United States and Europe, tangible results can be envisioned by using a differentiated approach. Official website: <http://www.ygfamily.com/>

⁴ <http://vi-vn.facebook.com/pages/YG-Lovers-Crew/274731025881414>

⁵ vi-vn.facebook.com/st319dance

⁶ vi-vn.facebook.com/pages/LYNT/245159845506003

While there are several groups in Vietnam practicing K-pop cover dance who have sprung-up by themselves, without any support from recording companies in this research I am particularly interested in two groups: YG Lovers Crew, who cover K-pop dance for YG Entertainment and focus on Hip Hop, and St.319, who cover all the hit music videos from South Korea, and aim for a pop style. I chose these groups because of their fame in terms of K-pop cover dance, having fans both domestically and internationally, the competition between them, and the strategies they use to come out of the shadow of K-pop and create their own, new identities. These K-pop cover dance groups are based in Hanoi, and their members were born in the 1980s and 1990s. These groups have risen to fame, particularly among young Vietnamese, and have made their way through the use of online media sites such as YouTube and Facebook. (www.vnexpress 2012)

Cover dance is the imitation of the dance choreography of the original bands, together with cover the gestures and the customs of the original videos. This makes audience have the feeling that they are watching the real MVs or the real concerts. Because of covering the dance movements, the realness of steps, gestures, and timing are highly appreciated as fidelity to the original movement is emphasized (Kang 2012). Large Korean media agencies organize and run global K-pop cover contests, disseminating details about these contests via You Tube and the internet (Kim 2012).

The emergence of cover videos from different groups such as YG Lovers Crew and St.319 is linked to the developments that have taken place in Viet Nam since the economic renovation policies (Doi Moi) of 1986. Without these policies, Viet Nam would not have developed as it has, and would not have opened to the world and received new ideologies from capitalist countries. Without this, young people in Vietnam would not have copied the styles of other teens across the world. In other words, such a development has made these young people different from previous generations, those who had to live through the Viet Nam War (1956-1975). The social significance of this development (being born after Doi Moi 1986) is that with the changes in Vietnamese policy that started in 1986, young people now have more dreams, higher hopes for the future, and more confidence in what they can do. This fan practice is unique in the context of Viet Nam, which is still a Socialist country.

In the case of K-pop fandom⁷ in Vietnam, cover dance reinterprets and represents K-pop content which is cool, modern in the eyes of young people. However, by embracing an exotic foreign culture, young Vietnamese people are not simply revealing themselves as K-Pop fans, but actively and voluntarily appropriating, borrowing and recreating new kinds of pop culture, to satisfy their emerging desires in this new and modern digital setting. By examining *Hallyu* in China and Vietnam, Baek (2005) argues that in the process of renovating economy and moving into the world economy, the social-ideology has been adjusted to meet the new condition. *Hallyu* can be seen as a temporal alternative culture during the changing process (Baek 2005, Kim 2012, Nguyen-Vo 2008). Baek also notes that after the Doi Moi era, Vietnam is moving forward into a capitalist world, meaning its cultural identity is being modernized, and; therefore, people have chosen *Hallyu* as a temporary means to fill the cultural gap. Another reason for the influence of Korean Wave within this newly-constructed Vietnamese cultural identity, is the proximity of cultural traditions such as Confucianism (Baek 2005: 67).

Daisy Kim (2012) also studied K-pop cover dance in Vietnam, focusing on the consumption of K-pop dance in relation to international relations. Kim argues that the consumption of K-pop among young Vietnamese has political meaning, which she says is due to a weakening of the Socialist ideology of the Vietnamese government. The group Kim studies is YG Lovers Crew cover dance band which, in her view, do not just passively cover the dance moves of Korean pop stars, but actively resist the dominant power of the Vietnamese Socialist state by importing pop culture from capitalist countries. While my study looks at the same group of cover dance practitioners as Kim's research, I argue for the need to look at this group from a different perspective. Using macro-level analysis, Kim limits herself to the nation-state framework, and so ignores another kind of dominant power, which in this case is the global music industry.

⁷ The Oxford English Dictionary defines fandom as "the world of enthusiasts for some amusement or for some artist" (Oxford Dictionary Blog 2011). So, K-pop fandom can refer to fans who identify themselves as fans of K-pop and who are stimulated by K-pop culture.

Moreover, her methodology is questionable, as she uses an international relations approach, without interviewing the cover group's team members. Such an approach, in my view, is top-down and ignores the agency that exists on the part of the practitioners.

Hence, in my thesis I propose to examine the cover dance group YGLC, and also another cover group called St.319, from the perspective of fan culture, emphasizing the youth perspectives that exist in relation to both nation-state and global cultural capital. My argument is based on three groundings. First, we cannot equate dance reproduction – which is one of the emerging cultures among Vietnamese young people – with the original products from South Korea, as is Kim's argument. While the members of the groups do covers, they at the same time produce something new out of the original K-pop material. They have also created their own fan clubs, their own audiences and fans. Second, in my view, their practices do not simply resist the state, as is Kim's argument; their actions need to be looked at from the perspectives of youth culture and technology. It can be argued that the international contests for cover dance acts and the global YouTube channel, both of which have recently become available in Vietnam, provide ways in which young Vietnamese can break out and be a part of the globalized world. Thirdly, by practicing K-pop cover dance music, the members of YGLC and St.319 not only show their love for K-pop music and K-pop stars, but also wish to themselves enter the national music industry and entertainment sector. As a consequence, practicing K-pop cover dance can be seen as a first step in the path towards gaining fame, both domestically and internationally.

By focusing on fan culture, I agree with Jenkins' comments (2006b: 137), that "Fan communities have long defined their memberships through affinities rather than localities." Similarly, Appadurai (1996) argues that individuals of different backgrounds can nowadays access the same media sources, and that this democratizes people's imaginations; makes them a daily activity in cyber space, rather than a restricted space for elites. This lack of centralized control over the flow of information and meaning has made fan culture its own powerful, independent entity.

My research seeks to examine the reproduction of K-pop dance by groups of young Vietnamese, and my aim is to explore how this reproduction can help one

understand the identity of young Vietnamese people today, whose everyday lives are increasingly engaged with K-pop. In 'Modernity at Large', Appadurai (1996) talks about imagination as a social practice, arguing that the mass media can unleash new forms of desire and subjectivity, and make resources available for the production of cultural identity. In Appadurai's view, the mass media can have more powerful effects, for it no longer works only at the nation-state level. While Appadurai's thesis is based on the work of imagination", Jenkins (2006b) argues for the need to pay attention to fan culture in relation to new technology. Jenkins looks at the relationship between technologies, the music industry, markets, genres and audiences, and argues that fan participation not only strengthens fan communities, but also can influence the media and culture industries.

Combining Appadurai's "work of imagination" – which operates beyond the boundaries of the nation-state – and Jenkins's "participatory fan culture", my research seeks to examine how the members of K-pop cover dance groups imagine themselves through their consumption activities and their reproduction of K-pop music, as shown on YouTube. While the original K-pop dance music videos on YouTube are a product of South Korea's music industry, which has embedded within it the material and cultural values of Korean society, to understand how these ideologies are received, perceived and interpreted by dance practitioners is no less important than also trying to understand Vietnamese society. This research attempts to understand to what extent new media technology such as YouTube and Facebook provide K-pop fans with the idea of belonging to a consumerist community, as a result of which the idea of a national community gradually loses its importance. I hope that my ethnography of young Vietnamese groups' appropriation and reproduction of K-pop dance will contribute to a greater understanding of fan communities and collective identity formation; for these young people are socially bounded, nationally controlled and transnationally inbunded.

In this thesis, I will explore how K-pop cover dance in Vietnam demonstrates the ways in which today's pop content travels across cultural boundaries as a result of social media-empowered online cultural distribution. I focus particularly on three visible aspects of online fan practices through cover dance: performing immediate trans-

culturations, embodying K-pop and building intimacies. I look in particular at how young people in Ha Noi now embody these three aspects and play a key role in this trans-cultural pop phenomenon. With the help of different technologies, these young people have chosen K-pop to help them satisfy their desire to be part of a cool, modern pop culture. I do not wish to imply that the small sample groups described here represent all Vietnamese young people, even in urban Ha Noi, due to the many different backgrounds and class divisions that exist, and I acknowledge the diversity of the young urban population in Vietnam. The members of the groups that I will investigate are well-educated, middle-class urban consumers, and have access to advanced media technologies. Furthermore, they belong to a group of enthusiastic fans; they are not an ordinary consumer/audience group. By studying those specific groups, I intend to explore one of many cultural phenomena evident in the rapidly transforming media environment of contemporary Vietnam.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the research background already described, my research questions were as follows:

- 1.3.1** How do Vietnamese cover dance groups create social space in urban Ha Noi?
- 1.3.2** How does the practice of cover dance create social meanings and relationships among these groups, their fans and audiences?
- 1.3.3** How do these groups' practices reflect the changes taking place in the identity of urban young people across Vietnam today?

These questions had scientific importance, in helping to understand the issue. By answering these questions, I was able to establish a link between the media culture and fan culture in reality.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research study were:

- 1.4.1** To understand the dance cover groups' backgrounds, and their motivations for forming.

1.4.2 To examine the significance of cyber space in the active consumption of dance cover group products, in relation to their fans and online audiences.

1.4.3 To investigate the changes taking place in Vietnamese youth culture and identity, through the consumption of K-pop music and dancing.

This thesis aims to examine how the success of a specific popular culture, through the use of social networking and online media as a social space, has affected the young Vietnamese people, creating a productive activity in the form of K-Pop dance covers, and how it has impacted upon identity formation.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

I conceptualized my framework based on the theories and concepts reviewed below. I employed the following concepts: Asianization, Imagination, Fan Culture and Cultural Capital, and by exploring these concepts I hoped to expand my knowledge of the definition of youth identity, and also mass media consumption as a cultural space among young people.

Asianization: The concept of Asianization helped me to understand the consumption and reproduction of K-pop Dance culture among Vietnamese youth, between the groups of active participants and their fans. Young people practicing K-pop dance in Vietnam does not represent resistance against Western culture, but aims to narrow the development gap between Vietnam and the West. Young people consume K-pop, not only to be a part of an Asian community, but to strengthen their position and be recognized domestically, as well as develop their cultural capital (V-pop) and be known throughout the region.

Imagination: In this part, I drew from recent theoretical discussions on imagination and the new media technologies, to explore how web-based online communities have contributed to the new forms of K-pop fandom forming in Vietnam. Therefore, I suggest that the concept of ‘imagination’ plays an important role in setting the new stage for the dissemination of and dialogue on K-pop knowledge, through which particular forms and spaces of online fan culture are being created and sustained.

Fan Culture and Cultural Capital: The concept of fan culture and cultural capital were used here to investigate and understand how young people in Vietnam have shaped and been shaped their identity in relation to global and regional cultural flows from the outside world. Through this concept I explored how those people have constructed their identities to negotiate with the government and others; to express their new lifestyles through dancing. I also wanted to discuss the nature of cultural capital in relation to other capital forms, such as economic capital, to understand how much importance these forms of capital play among consumers and producers, and how individuals make use of them in different situations. Therefore, practicing dance covers gives these people the opportunity to affirm themselves among their sub-groups, and challenges these people to promote their images across the wider society.

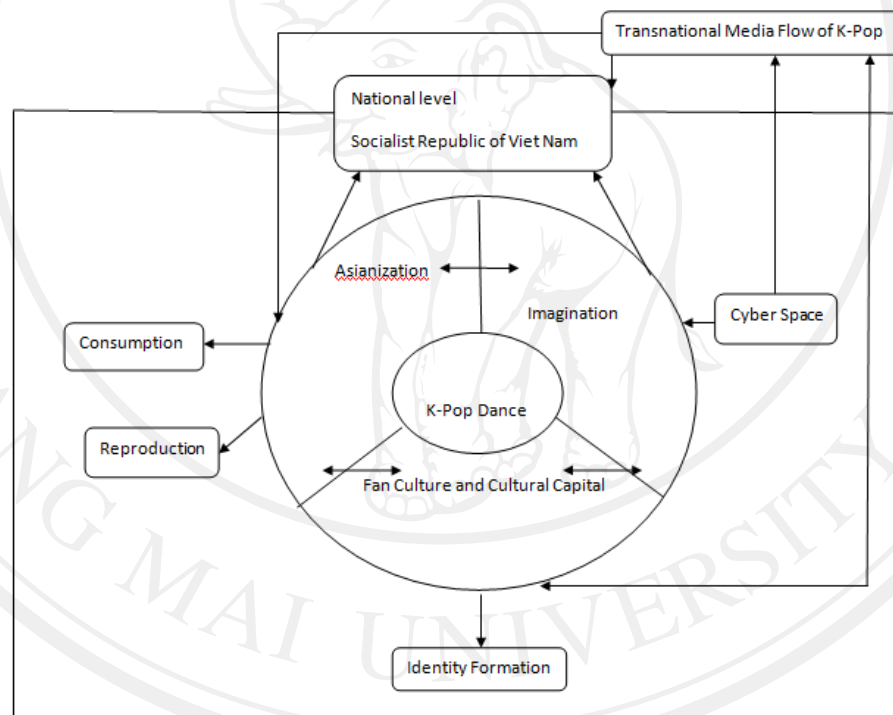


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework of the Study (by the author)

1.6 Research Methodology

Research site: In this research, I focus on two K-pop cover groups: YG Lovers Crew and St.319, both of which are based in urban Hanoi. However, the groups' members and fans are compartmentalized into ten districts of Hanoi, namely Ba Dinh,

Hoan Kiem, Dong Da, Hai Ba Trung, Cau Giay, Thanh Xuan, Hoang Mai, Long Bien, Tay Ho and Ha Dong. I met the groups in their private homes or schools, and for YGLC in two dance studios – at 25 Thai Thinh street, Dong Da district, and 12 Vu Ngoc Phan Street, Dong Da district. For St.319 I met them at 79 Hue Street in Hai Ba Trung District. Much of this research was based on face-to-face interviews, or on visual videos with YGLC, St.319 and their fans. Two internet sites, YouTube and Facebook, were critically important for liaising with and contacting group members, for everyday update activities and when searching for new information on the groups as well as my data collection activities. While I focused on interviews with group members, I also collected data and online information from other groups, also from their pages on YouTube and Facebook, for more analysis.

Units of analysis: In this thesis, I discuss K-pop fandom among young Vietnamese dance cover groups in Hanoi, Vietnam. The specific dance cover groups YG Lovers Crew and St.319, and their fans – both online and offline, are the units of analysis.

Level of analysis: In this study, global and national contexts are the fundamental elements used for studying the phenomenon described above. However, my level of analysis still includes sub-groups; to examine the phenomenon from the bottom-up point of view

Data collection: I used a combination of research methods in order to approach the cultural issues faced. I chose ethnography as a methodological framework, because I believe that ethnography, particularly participant observation, gave me an opportunity to examine the perceptions and activities I found in the field. I also used qualitative methods, both offline and online.

Secondary and primary data collection

Secondary data: This included a variety of published documents, including foreign books, theses, articles, the internet (Facebook and YouTube pages for the study groups). These were used to understand more about the development context in

Vietnam and young people in Vietnam; to find-out general information about the cover dance groups in Hanoi, their online audiences on YouTube and their fan clubs.

Primary data: This was collected in the field, using various methods, including observation, group discussions, key informant interviews and visual storytelling. The data was gathered from different groups, such as YGLC and St.319 members, fans of YG Lovers Crew, the fan club for St.319, and students at YG Lovers Crew and St.319 dance classes.

Participatory observation: I spent time observing and conversing with the groups, as an outsider; visiting the 11 official members of YGLC and the 25 official members of St.319. in their studios, at dance shows and at their homes/schools, in order to understand their identities and their cultural practices among different groups of people.

Group discussions: This method was used to explore the bands' and their fans' perceptions of popular music and the media. Specifically, these discussions were used to understand how they became K-Pop fans, their dancing practice activities, and what they think about the other youth groups in Hanoi, as well as their favorite types of music and social activities.

Key informant interviews: I applied in-depth interviews using a questionnaire (see Appendix A and B) to carry out unstructured interviews. The key people interviewed were the leaders of the groups, who know a lot about the other members, fan club members and other dance cover groups in Hanoi.

Visual storytelling: Besides writing analysis, I also captured the story behind the entire research process, including the interviews, on camera.

Data analysis: Similar to the data collection activities, data analysis focused on data about the groups YGLC and St.319 as participants, and their audience members as non-participants. The analysis process followed the conceptual framework shown above. All the data collection and fieldwork observations were classified and reflected

upon, and any explanations in this research are based on the research questions and objectives.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters, based upon main concepts of: (1) Asianization, (2) Imagination, and (3) Fan Culture and Cultural Capital. Each chapter in this dissertation deals with materials, processes, institutions and issues central to understanding K-pop cover dance in Vietnam. The introductory chapter provides a general background, to assist readers in comprehending the current popularity of Korean Wave in Vietnam, as well in Asia. It introduces the *Hallyu* phenomenon, K-pop dance cover groups and the importance of discussing them in Vietnamese context, as well as the key theoretical concepts and keywords addressed by the thesis and my research methods. I briefly discuss the related scholarly literature on Korean pop music, global and regional flows, and the construction of identity, in order to extend the argument more broadly to include the field of youth culture in Vietnam.

Chapter 1 here has provided important information about the context of the study, and has introduced the key terms used and discussed the research problem, research questions and objectives. The conceptual framework has also been presented, as has the methodology used and the organization of this thesis.

In Chapter 2 I will introduce the literature review and the theoretical basis of the study.

In Chapter 3, I will discuss the ‘Transnational flow of popular culture in Vietnamese society’. This chapter develops the main theoretical points introduced in Chapter 2, with a more expanded discussion of the relevant scholarship. It covers theoretical concepts such as the intertwining of national, regional and global flows before and after K-pop, and the Vietnamese context since Doi Moi, as well as the concept of Asianization and its importance in conceptualizing Asia as a region.

Chapter 4, entitled, ‘Imagination, Social Media and Cultural Capital’, discusses more key theoretical points introduced in Chapter 2, as well as the data I collected, in

order to describe and explain in more depth the relevant scholarship about cultural capital among young people, and the development of social media, which is turned into social capital (networks) as it offer a window to the world for young people, and lets the world know about them.

Chapter 5, ‘Youth Identity Formation as a New Desire’, also discusses the theoretical points introduced in Chapter 2; about the role of popular music in the construction of youth culture and tastes, through the borrowing of K-pop dance among young Vietnamese. It covers the major findings of the study, plus focuses on identity formation and the functions of K-Pop dance in contemporary Vietnamese society by examining Vietnamese attitudes and practices toward K-pop cover dance, the importation of music from different countries, and the impact of globalization on young Vietnamese people’s identities.

Chapter 6, the conclusion, reiterates the essential findings of the study. It also notes some of the study’s limitations, and addresses the significance of the thesis in terms of the current academic environment. I also briefly describe the future research that might be expected on the thesis topic.