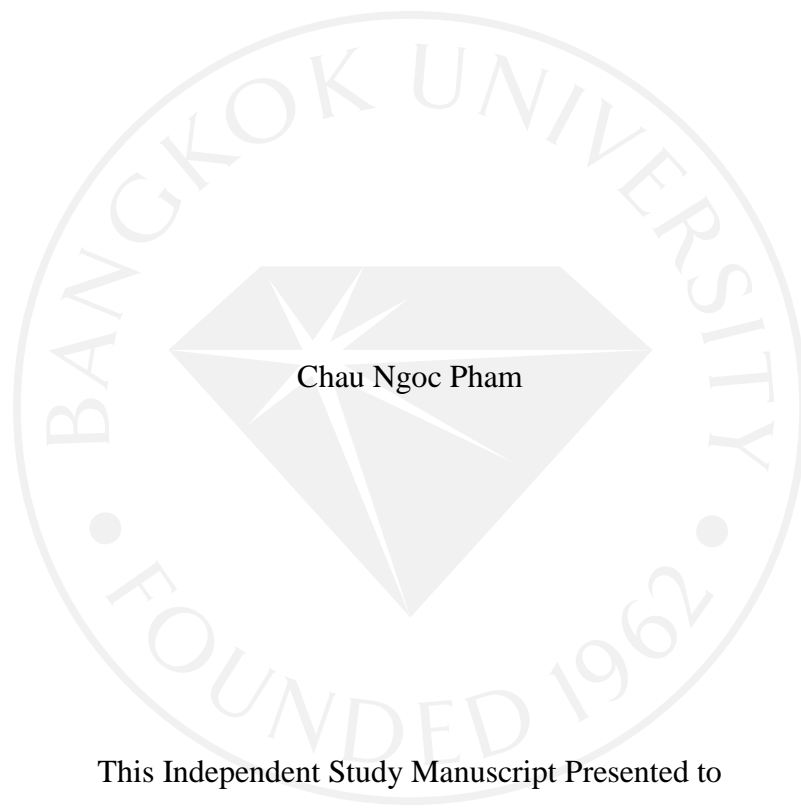KOREAN CELEBRITIES' IMAGE IN ONLINE TEEN MEDIA AND THEIR

EFFECTS ON VIETNAMESE ADOLESCENTS

KOREAN CELEBRITIES' IMAGE IN ONLINE TEEN MEDIA AND THEIR EFFECTS
ON VIETNAMESE ADOLESCENTS

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## ABSTRACT

Vietnamese adolescents enjoy freedom of exposure to exotic cultures, especially Korean Wave, which are portrayed on online teen media and they got affected. This research paper investigates the most frequently portrayed Korean celebrities' images on teen websites and whether the images and long exposure to such images have influences on teenagers' intention of emulating the celebrities. The four most frequently portrayed images of the celebrities, Physical Appearance, Fashion, Relationship, and Normal Life, were identified by conducting content analysis in which all articles about Korean Showbiz from a selected website, <u>www.kenh14.vn</u> – Channel for Teens in September 2011 and September 2012. A questionnaire was designed based on the four themes to test the hypotheses proposing that Level of Exposure to online teen media portraying Korean celebrities and Attitude towards those celebrities positively contribute to teenagers' intention of emulating the Korean stars. Statistical results revealed that Level of Exposure to online teen media portraying Korean celebrities' images has effects on both attitude toward the celebrities and intention of emulating them of the teenagers whereas teenagers' attitude alone cannot predict their intention. The findings reinforce the effects of long exposure to media in adolescence and encourage further studies on other predictors such as subjective norms and perceived behavioral control for better understanding about motivation behind teenagers' emulation of Korean celebrities.

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

**Rationale and Problem Statement**

Globalization, especially cultural globalization, helps accelerate the Korean Wave across the world and makes it more and more influential. Shim Doobo (2006) pointed out that "Korean popular cultural content has gained immense popularity in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and other East and Southeast Asian countries." Vietnam does not stand out of this queue, but the Korean wave has even been clearly observed there. It seems that images of Korean celebrities cover a considerable percentage of mass media in Vietnam. Both national television broadcast stations and local ones have at least one Korean series on air at the moment, and they also give favorable conditions to those imported Korean dramas by broadcasting at the prime time when the number of TV viewers is the highest. Newspapers and periodicals, especially entertainment magazines, have spent a lot of pages to talk about Korean actors and singers, to keep the Vietnamese audience updated of K-pop. The popularity of the Internet and its access significantly contributes to the spread of Korean Wave in Vietnam.

Parts of Vietnamese population visibly influenced by this trend are teenagers. Mass media in Vietnam keep them informed of almost every updates of Korean showbiz while they also report that the teenagers are being deeply influenced by the Korean celebrities. Vietnamese teenagers consider their favorite Korean stars their idols and they do their best to support and to imitate the idols. Hoang Phan & Nhat Anh (Vnmedia, 2010) observed a male student who is a fan of Super Junior (SuJu) boyband in South Korean and the student's hairstyle, fashion, and behaviors are copied from his idols (SuJu boyband). He uses the name of the boy band as his nickname on social networks. Vietnamese teenagers always describe their favorite Korean idols with beautiful words, all of which describe the appearance of those celebrities such as "handsome, fashionable, charming, cute, attractive, sexy, hot, good singer, good dancer, etc." (Hoang, 2010). That is the practice of how Vietnamese teenagers are being affected with Hallyu (Doobo, 2006). They dress in Korean fashion

style, eat Korean foods, use Korean cosmetics, watch Korean movies and listen to Korean music (Linh, 2011). Those still do not seem enough for them, they also like to have similar facial features with their idols (Joins.com, 2001; Straits times, 2002a & 2002b). They undergo a plastic surgery to make their eyes bigger, implant artificial eyelashes, dye their hair, etc. This is called a Korean wave in plastic surgery (Chul-joong, 2009). Influences seem not to stop. In 2010 when Super Junior was invited to perform in Vietnam, the event created a crisis in which people, especially teenagers, hunted tickets for the show. One journalist who writes for teen magazines would like to test the influence of this boy band on the youngsters by posting a note informing that he got some tickets and those who liked the band would bid. He got shocked when receiving a message from a girl of Generation Y that she would exchange one night stand to get a single ticket to attend the show. This hits the ceiling and places the situation on alert.

This practice is likely to affect the teenagers. Accordingly, it is interesting to study how Vietnamese teen online media have been portraying the images of Korean celebrities and whether they exerted any influences on teenager's self-image. Understanding this media phenomenon will help the concerned authorities and parents to come up with more appropriate measures to prepare and select appropriate media for teenagers, and equip them with media literacy.

**Objectives of the Study**

This study aims to examine to what extent Korean celebrities' images are covered in the online media for Vietnamese teenagers, and to investigate whether and how such coverage influences Vietnamese teenagers' self-image and their behavioral intention of emulating the celebrities.

**Research Questions**

**RQ1**: How do Vietnamese online teen media portray the images of Korean celebrities?

By answering this question, the researcher would like to know which aspects of Korean celebrities are normally covered in online teen media. The most popular themes are identified and used to develop the questionnaire in order to examine the potential influences of these themes on teenagers with high exposure to the media.

**RQ2**: To what extend are Vietnamese teenagers influenced by Korean celebrities' images portrayed in Vietnamese online teen media?

The answer of this question will inform us whether the teenagers who expose to the website have positive attitudes towards the Korean celebrities, and if the attitudes lead to their behavioral intention of emulating the Korean celebrities. This research question is posed as a research hypothesis.

**Scope of the Study**

This study selects to examine one of the Vietnamese online media, http://www.kenh14.vn – Channel for Teens, *STARS Column*. Various Korean celebrities' images that are portrayed by this website are counted. The study also refers to other online media for teens such as *2Sao*, *Zing News*, *Yeah1*, *IOne*, etc. to compare the most common themes of Korean celebrities that are presented in those websites. Two hundred and seventy senior high school students in Ho Chi Minh City were invited to participate in a survey designed to investigate if those students' self-image is being influenced by what are portrayed in those media and to evaluate the degree of the impacts.

**Significance of the Study**

The findings from this research would be useful since the results would show whether or not Korean celebrities' images were overly reported by online teen media. This would make the website administrator to be aware of its potential effects on teenagers based on the evidence that teenagers are easily influenced by mass media targeting their age and emulate the stars' lifestyle and behaviors with low filtering capability. The findings would also make parents and teachers aware of the practice

that their teenagers are being influenced unconsciously by the Korean pop cultural features, both appropriate and inappropriate to their age. This understanding would also raise a social awareness of the harmful adaptation of exotic cultures among teenagers, and would make more efforts to enhance their online media literacy.

**Definitions of Terms**

*Korean celebrities' images*

This term is defined as an audience's perception of Korean famous actors, singers, boy/girl bands as a consequence of repetitive exposure to a certain way of depiction by selected teenagers' online teen media in Vietnam.

*Online teen media*

The term specifically refers to websites that report news for teens and are mostly visited by teenagers.

*Vietnamese teenagers*

They are individuals aged 15 – 18 years old with a Vietnamese citizenship and/or born and raised by Vietnamese parents. They are also high school students of grades tenth to twelfth.

*Self-image*

Self-image is defined as how the teenagers view themselves in terms of physical appearance, fashion, relationship, and how they behave in their normal life. The definition is generated on the ground of a study by Offer (1984) to examine adolescents' self-image. There are nine components in the questionnaire proposed by Offer. However it was slightly adjusted to fit the study about online mass media as a contextual factor influencing adolescents' self-image.

*Attitude toward Korean celebrities*

According to Eagly & Chaiken (1993, p. 1), attitude is "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor." Later in 2005, Hogg & Vaughan further detailed the definition of attitude with components such as "beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies toward socially significant objects, groups, events, or symbols". Those components are well

organized and relatively endure. Attitude toward Korean celebrities is defined as teenagers' degree of favorable and unfavorable predispositions toward Korean celebrities after being exposed to their story (e.g., physical appearance, fashion styles, relationship, and normal life) covered by the selected Vietnamese online medium.

*Behavioral intention*

Behavioral intention is defined as teenagers' likelihood to emulate Korean celebrities in terms of physical appearance, fashion styles, relationship, and normal life as described in the selected Vietnamese online medium.
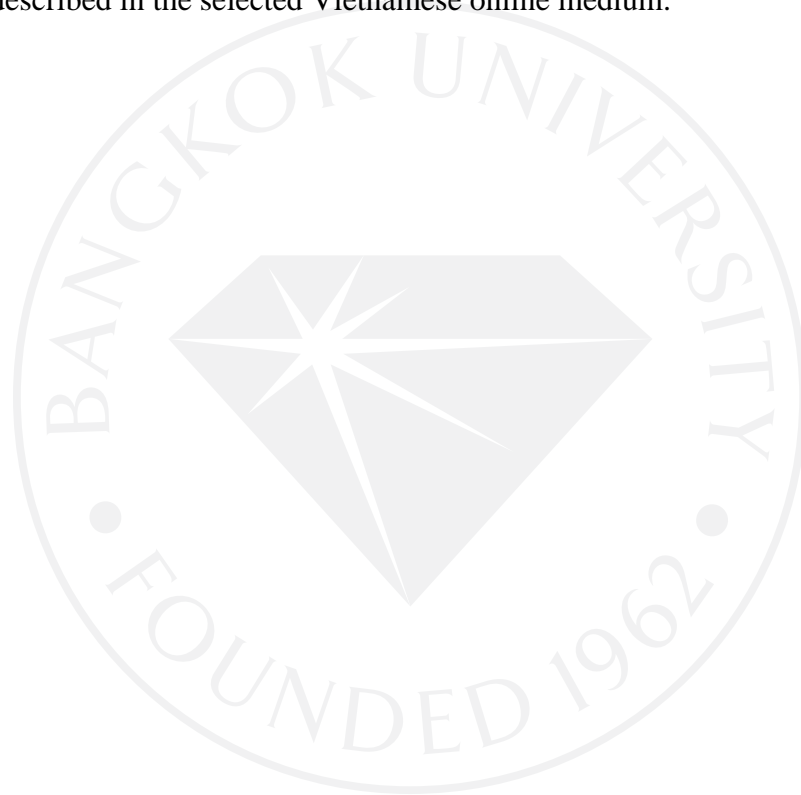
# CHAPTER 2
# LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter looks at some relevant literature, past research, and theoretical frameworks which address the research questions posed in the previous chapter, and the research hypotheses presented in this chapter. Hallyu: a regional trend, the Internet use practice among the Vietnamese youth, Hallyu on Vietnamese adolescents' media, adolescents' vulnerability to media portrayal of foreign culture, and adolescents' reception of *Hallyu,* are studied on the basis of this literature review.

## Related Literature and Previous Studies
## *Hallyu***: A Regional Trend**

Globalization, together with the technological revolutions especially the rocket development of media technology across the world in the past two decades, creates a lot favorable conditions for not only political and economic cooperation but also cultural exchanges. This trend reasonably elaborates on the existence of South Korean pop culture in Asia (Ryoo, 2009).  The Korean Pop Culture is called Korean Wave, or *Hallyu* (K-popped, 2007). *Hallyu* has spread across many Asian countries and territories including China, Taiwan, Japan and the Southeast Asia since the late 1990s; and it is also fanned by the Asian communities overseas, hence hits shores of other countries outside Asia including the United States (Jung, 2009). Korean Wave was remarkably initiated by dramas, and was joined later by movies and music expanding its regional influence and media coverage. CNN (2010) reported that the audience loves dramas, then music. "After that they [*the audience*] became fans of everything Korean: Korean food, Korean fashion, and Korean culture." They could even speak Korean language.

Korean Wave first hit Southeast Asian countries in around 1997 staring with Vietnam and then Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia (Suh, Cho, and Kwon, n.d). Vietnam is statistically considered the earliest destination of Korean Wave and receives the strongest influence (Cho, 2011). In the period between 1997 and 1999, 14

Korean dramas were on air simultaneously by many local Television Broadcast Stations nationwide (Lee, 2006). There are several researches explaining why Korean cultural products are publicly welcomed in Vietnam compared to the other three countries in the region [Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia]. Suh and colleagues' research on Korean Wave in Southeast Asia (not dated) reported that in spite of considerably different cultural backgrounds, Korean Wave still found its way to enter Malaysia and Indonesia. Vietnam is the country where Korean Wave's products gain the most success because the two countries enjoy high proximity in terms of nationalism, economics, religions, traditional values and languages. In general, Vietnam and South Korea have the highest degree of interactions especially in the field of economics with an increasing flow of Foreign Direct Investment from Korean enterprises. High economic interactions result in high socio-cultural exchange between the two nations, particularly the export and import of Korean cultural products to Vietnam.

**Internet Use Practice among the Vietnamese Youth**

According to a research on Vietnam Internet Index by Yahoo! Vietnam in cooperation with Kantar Media in 2011, the Vietnamese feel more convenient with online media and choose them rather than print media for their news updating (42% and 40%, respectively, 2011). The research was conducted in four most major cities in Vietnam such as Hanoi, Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh City, and Can Tho. The most popular online activity of Vietnamese Internet users is to read news (97%). The fourth popular activity with 80% of Vietnamese netizens subscribing to is "Reading Entertainment News." Especially, Internet is overwhelmingly welcomed by the youth. At the time of the survey, 91% of the respondents in the age group of 15-19 confirmed they had used Internet in the previous month while 89 percents of the age group of 20-24 had done so. This is a huge number if we convert it to the real population of Vietnamese netizens.

Yahoo! Vietnam was also interested in knowing what kind of media content that attracts the youth to get access to the Internet. The research introduced some indices to rank the media content which the 2 above-mentioned age groups read the most. As we can see in the Table 1 below, entertainment media content outweighed

others where the age groups get online to write and read blogs, listen to music, read entertainment news, and play games. The age group of 15-19 read more entertainment news than the 20-24 age group do. Not only that, the development of smart phones, PDA, tablets, and 3G Data Connection Platform makes the entertainment websites more accessible to those who would love to.

The research by Yahoo! Vietnam also revealed that the two youth age groups are the most dynamic in using social network where they can share whatever things they are interested in with their friends. As we observed when visiting the entertainment news websites, there is always a button under every article to share it on social networks such as Facebook or Twitter. The entertainment news websites which are also aware of this trend immediately create a fan page on the social networks to get connected with their readers twenty four seven.

Table 1: Media Contents that attract the Vietnamese Youth

| Media Content on Internet Portals | Total (%) | 15-19 (Index) | 20-24 (Index) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Entertainment News | 61 | *111* | 95 |
| Vietnamese Music | 57 | *126* | *117* |
| Social News | 52 | 97 | 98 |
| National/Local News | 51 | 72 | 91 |
| Amazing Photos/Videos | 45 | *125* | *105* |
| World Music | 45 | *138* | *117* |
| World news | 44 | 75 | 94 |
| Living Styles | 42 | 96 | 102 |
| Info on Movies, TV, Plays | 42 | *123* | *103* |

Table 1: Media Contents that Attract the Vietnamese Youth (continued)

| Media Content on Internet Portals | Total (%) | 15-19 (Index) | 20-24 (Index) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sports | 39 | 85 | 89 |
| Online Games | 38 | *152* | *115* |
| Tourism | 30 | 104 | 91 |
| Traffic Updates | 27 | 63 | 91 |
| Business News | 26 | 38 | 76 |
| Blogs | 24 | *150* | *124* |

## *Hallyu* on Vietnamese Adolescents' Media

Mass media are reported to be an increasingly important environment that influences the lives of young people. Statistics shows that American children and adolescents spend almost 8.5 hours a day on media-related activities such as watching television, listening to music, playing computer games and surfing the Internet. (Rideout et al., 2005). The media landscape in Vietnam between 1995 and 2007 with a lot of innovative changes offer favorable access to the youth: the number of newspapers increased more than double to 867 and 23.5% of the population in Vietnam are web users (Dang, 2009). Adolescents' information life has also been considerably improved. They enjoy their own magazines or periodical such as *2!, Hoa Hoc Tro*, *Muc Tim*, *VTM*, *Sinh Vien Viet Nam*, etc. According to a statistics in 2006, Vietnamese adolescents can get access to the Internet easily with 82% of the adolescent population are Internet-literate (Nguyen, 2010).

This phenomenon also contributes to the popularity of the *Hallyu* in Vietnam. Adolescents can find their favorite TV dramas from DVD shops in urban cities of Vietnam at very low prices as the copyright is not a very big issue here. They can watch online or even download HD-quality Korean series for free from many websites that feed their addiction, such as www.mysoju.com. Magazines specialized for adolescents also keep them informed of the latest news, even scandals, of Korean celebrities, their favorite actors and singers. Those publications such as *2!* or *Hoa Hoc*

*Tro* reserve some space only for Korean Popular Culture (K-pop) updates. Fantastically, they have an electronic version of their publication, not very inclusive but encouraging more readership. In the past 2 years, with the booming development of the Internet in Vietnam, numerous online media were established and claimed themselves as information channel for adolescents, such as www.kenh14.vn, www.ione.vnexpress.net, www.yeah1.com, http://2sao.vietnamnet.vn, or http://news.zing.vn etc.

News about Korean celebrities on those media can be categorized as profession-related and non-profession-related. Beside reporting on the celebrities' professional achievements such as awards or high rating products, those media spend quite a lot of space talking about non-profession-related issues such as relationship break-up, cosmetic surgery, or dressing mistakes, etc. of those celebrities. Significantly, this seems to become a trend and non-profession-related articles outnumber profession-related ones. Random daily counts conducted on these websites revealed that, beside the domestic artists, they mostly published Korean updates, including gossips or scandals. For example, on www.kenh14.vn on Jan 2, 2012, four out of ten updates of showbiz around the world are Korean celebrities, two of which describe how a female singer looks like without makeup and some celebrities that gain much weight [*non-profession related contents*]. On www.yeah1.com on Jan 02, 2012, seven out of ten updates of music are about K-pop.  By studying this phenomenon, this research is aimed to identify the most popular themes of Korean celebrities' images that are portrayed in the selected online teen medium. (Research Question 1)

**Adolescents' Vulnerability to Media Portrayal of Foreign Culture**

There are quite a number of research studies that explain why and how adolescents are influenced by new and imperial cultures and the media, which can be applied to describe the influence of *Hallyu* on the Vietnamese youth. Firstly, we take a look into the power of media, especially the "new media" such as the Internet and online media. Bryant and Oliver (2009) studied and concluded that people spend much of their spare time, sometimes working time, for media; and the media are transmitters of ideas, values, and behaviors that build up audience's  perception of

social reality (as cited in Lopez-Guimera, Levine, Sanchez-Carracedo, & Fauquet, 2010). Children and adolescent nowadays expose to mass media freely and considerably, with or without their parents' awareness and the influences of the media on them are becoming so obvious, hence alerted by many researchers in the field of social ecology, including communication (Wartella et al., 2009). According to Pham (2008), the young generations are in the very dynamic period of life in which they are influenced by a lot of foreign cultures due to the globalization. They are eager with anything new and they want to experience them, even sometimes they are not well-prepared for the experiences.

In addition, Jensen (2003) says that adolescent always grow up with diverse interactions with many people from other cultures beside their own culture. These interactions can happen either directly by first-hand experience or indirectly by vicarious experience through the media. Day by day, Korean artists are extensively covered by the media (Chua, 2010) and Vietnamese teenagers are fed with *Hallyu* features which always appear attractive and modern. They buy magazines and get access to online media to keep updated on their favorite dramas, actors and actresses, singers, new albums, new music videos, etc…Korean celebrities are considered role models of adolescents by themselves due to their good performances and their trendy and fashionable style.

The Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1977) proposed that individuals construct their own behaviors and attitudes by modeling the behaviors of others (as cited in Martin & Bush, 2000). This idea is also used by Anderson et al. (2001, p. 108) saying that "role models are one source through which children and adolescents acquire attitudes, values, and patterns of conduct" to explain why "adolescents believe that people in media representing ideals of appearance, behaviors, and lifestyles." Furthermore, the media, as cited in Eggermont (2005), are said to portray those role models so glamorous that adolescents are so attracted and tend to imitate them. Not only their significant professional capability, but Korean celebrities' looks also made deep impression on their audience. Each celebrity has their distinct image and they have attached it to every of their professional activities. As a result, "they affect who will become their fans and imitate their looks" (Park, 2011, p.24).

Body image is another domain that may be negatively affected in the course of social comparison when adolescents are exposed to the celebrity portrayal in mass media. Adolescents are reported to concern intensively with their body figures and physical attractiveness and the media cover a wide variety of celebrities, exemplars of cultural ideal beauty which is obviously difficult for most ordinary adolescents to attain (Anderson D, Huston, A., Schimitt, K., Linebarger, D., & Wright, J., 2001).

**Adolescents' Reception of *Hallyu***

Recently the society and some mainstream mass media have reported that Vietnamese teenagers who are fans of Korean Wave are influenced by their products. In the 2012 National University Entrance Examination, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) of the S.R. Vietnam gave an essay topic of "*Admiration for your idols is a beautiful cultural feature, but being crazy for them is a disaster,*" which is a sign that the authority is aware that the Vietnamese youth are culturally affected when being exposed to foreign cultures. The topic caused a very serious debate on many online forums that the authority is implying that K-pop fans are disasters. The topic by MOET did not specifically criticize any culturally-favored groups but raised social awareness of a serious phenomenon of cultural influence caused by mass media.

Vietnamese teenagers get crazy for Korean celebrities; they want to emulate them, and to be updated of every single movement of their idols, even personal issues. Both national and foreign media describe and comment on how the Vietnamese adolescents love Korean Wave. An article from www6.vnmedia.vn describes a phenomenon in which both Vietnamese adolescents and young artists emulate Korean Wave's performance and fashion style (Vnmedia, 2011). *Tuoi Tre*, one of the most popular newspapers in Vietnam, also wrote about Super Junior boy band's hot show in Vietnam in April 2010 and how teen audience struggled to find their tickets (Tuoitre, 2010). Being interviewed by the *Korean Herald*, one *Hallyu* fan said that "Korean Wave will never die in Vietnam" (West, 2008). The article also commented that "today, on the streets of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, it is easy to spot girls wearing clothes, makeup, and hairstyles popularized by Korean actresses."

Actually these media only describe adolescent's behaviors as a social phenomenon with few scientific researches to examine the trend and fully understand

whether adolescents are truly affected by Korean Wave. Dang (2009) says that the "modern image" that is portrayed in Korean dramas, movies, and music attracts Vietnamese young viewers. They admire the dynamic and developed lifestyles presented by Korean celebrities. According to Lockwood and Kunda, the young people are inspired to emulate the role models' self-images and lifestyle patterns (as cited in Bush et al., 2004). Another idea by Suh and colleagues (not dated) was that "the young generations in Vietnam are blindly following the Korean performers to quench the thirst for new culture … stage costumes and related fashion has made considerable impacts on the teenagers in Vietnam." For some crazy fans, they even want to purchase exactly the same outfits as their role models from the shows or real life (Park, 2011). Based on the described scenario that adolescents imitate Korean celebrities' images portrayed in teen magazines and online media, this research is aimed to examine whether there are influences of the online media portrayal of Korean celebrities on adolescents' self-image (Research Question 2).

**Past Studies and Related Theories**

Media content has been studied in a systematic manner to gain deeper knowledge on potential effects of mass communications on their audiences; or explaining why the audiences are interested in certain media content. Early studies of media content revealed that portrayal of crime, violence, sex in popular entertainment was really a concern. In addition, several studies indicated that mass media are used as a means of propaganda, prejudices and biases in media have been reported to raise social awareness. There has been a debate among communication scholars that the content of the message is originated purely from the sender while others believed that the receiver did not necessarily fully understand the message from the sender. As a result, studying media content becomes more complex and challenging.

Different types of media content may have different impact on different groups of audience. Or even the same type of media content influences differently on members of the same group. That happens because different groups or individuals have different needs and backgrounds. However, when studying media effects on users, time spent on the investigated media vehicle is focused rather than its content. Bari (2007, p. 8) proposed that "there were countless ways to categorize media

content such as *audience appeals* (highbrow/lowbrow), *particular social effects* (prosocial/anti-social), *the medium used* (television, radio, print), and *sexual content* (pornographic/non-pornographic), etc." Harold Laswell's communication model is one of the most popular approaches in studying the media content and its effects (as cited in McQuail & Denis, 2000). Laswell defined three important social functions of communication: (1) *surveillance* of the environment; (2) the *correlations* of parts of society in responding to the environment; and (3) the *transmission* of social heritage from one generation to another. *Entertainment* has been lately added to the list. The most pertinent functions that have been applied to the study of magazines, print media as well as its online versions were *transmission* and *entertainment*. The perceived norms of society are found in all forms of media content in some ways.

Pletsch et. al. (1991) did an amazing large scale research on adolescent's self-image by using Offer Self-Image Questionnaire for Adolescents developed by Offer, Ostrov, & Howard (1982) to understand how adolescents reflect themselves in the course of many changes happening around them such as (1) biological changes of puberty influencing body image, (2) psychological and social changes, and (3) roles and relationship changes: family and school. This is a complete study in all aspects of an adolescent's self-image, which pretty much falls into the field of psychology. Within the field of communication, this study intends to examine how mass media, specifically online media that are designed for teens, affect adolescents' self-image in terms of role model preference and body image. This will add more empirical evidence regarding Vietnamese adolescents' self-image.

### *Uses and Gratifications Theory*

Nowadays it is much easier for adolescents to have access to online media and get updated about their favorite celebrities. Thanks to the speedy development of the Internet. The media can satisfy their needs of information on Korean actors and singers. In their spare time, they spend less time on reading books and mainstream print newspapers, but selecting the media that cover more topics in which they are interested. Although they select the media that can quickly provide them with updated information they desire, they are unconsciously influenced by what are being reported

or portrayed in those media. This description is similar to what are discussed in the 'Uses and Gratifications Theory' by Blumler & Katz (1974). Media users, adolescents in this case, are goal-oriented and are active in choosing particular media that can satisfy them. This theory is used to pose a research question, to what extent the adolescents are gratified with the information they find from their favorite media and whether they consume the media as a habit.

### Social Cognitive Theory

Adolescents tend to accept the ideal images portrayed in the media as perfect examples of the world. According to Bandura (1994), attention and retention are processes of learning and viewing. The information once perceived would endure even with "behavioral manifestation" not around until environmental or individual cues happen which lead to its expression. Repeated recalls and/or exposure in real life will make the information ready for activation (Bandura, 1977). People tend to model others' behaviors; and which behaviors enjoy rewards will be continued while punished behaviors will be adjusted (Bandura, 1986). When adolescents emulate Korean celebrities' styles or behaviors, they enjoy peer admiration and they know those styles and behaviors are reported by the media, which means they are accepted by the public. Brown (2002) comments that when role models are considered attractive, the imitation process will happen even faster. The theory also discusses about self-regulation capability, which is considered not high during adolescence.

### Information Processing Theories

According to Information Processing Theories, Huesmann (1986) and Huesmann & Miler (1994) proposed that children's perception was much influenced through using media, especially television. They learn about one's behaviors, consequences of those behaviors, and acceptable solutions to social problems. The Korean entertainment environment and its actors and actresses are presented with amazingly physical attractiveness and as affluent people. These theories were originated from studies on television, the most influential media vehicle which attracts

the most researches on its effects on young audiences. However, with the rapid development of media technology and the mushroom of new media, I would like to extend the logic of the aforementioned theories to the effects of entertainment information websites to which teens frequently are exposed.

These two above theories are interrelated because "while the Uses and Gratifications Theory posits needs, the Social Cognitive Theory proposes behavioral incentives" (LaRose & Estin, 2004). One explains why adolescents use the media and another one describes how their behaviors will be influenced by those media.

### *Agenda Setting*

Agenda setting can also be applied to provide additional theoretical ground for developing research questions and hypothesis of this study. Developed by Water Lipmann, it theorizes that the transfer of salience of the information pictured on mass media to pictures in one's mind frames. The core idea of the theory was that "elements prominent in media picture became prominent in audience's picture" (Bari, 2007). The hypothesis was that the degree of emphasis that was placed on issues in media (Lipmann, 1960) would have influence on the public's priority of those issues. Agenda setting theory is also compatible with and complimentary to various social science concepts and theories. Incorporated concepts included status conferral, stereotyping, image-building and gate keeping. Water Lipmann's hypothesis stated that people did not usually perceive the universe and things around them from direct observation and firsthand experience but their perceptions which were resulted from secondhand information mostly derived from mass media images and reports (McQuail, 2000). Due to the prominence of issues the mass media present in the audiences' mind frame, audiences' perception of individuals or groups of people are likely to be influenced by media portrayal of those people.

Based on the above review of literature and theories, this paper hypothesizes the relationship between the teenagers' level of exposure to entertainment news websites portraying Korean celebrities and their behavioral intention of emulating those celebrities' image. As a result, the first research hypothesis is proposed:

**HP#1: Teenagers' level of exposure to online teen media portraying Korean celebrities positively contributes to their intention to emulate Korean celebrities' image.**

*Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)*

TPB is a model that was developed by Icek Ajzen in 1985 for higher accurate prediction of behavior from attitudes. TPB has been also very well supported by a lot of empirical researches since its birth.

Figure 1: Model of Planned Behavior Theory



Source:http://publichealthnerds.blogspot.com/2011/06/theory-of-planned-behavior.html
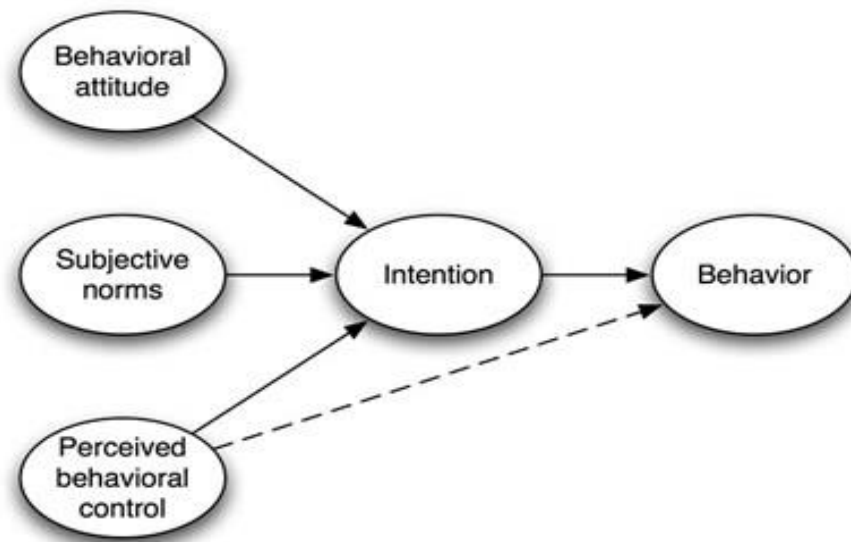
According to TPB Model, there are three major factors (behavioral attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) that influence individuals' behavioral intention. The first independent variable is behavioral attitude which refers to favorable or unfavorable feelings toward the behavior under consideration. The second independent variable is subjective norms which refer to social support of performing or not performing the behavior. The third independent variable is perceived behavioral control which refers to the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior.

The general operation rule of these variables is that the more favorable attitude towards the behavior, the stronger subjective norms, and the greater perceived behavioral control, the more likely an individual to perform the behavior in question. However, the magnitude of each independent variables' impacts on the behavioral intention varies across behaviors and intentions. In other words, these three factors may have their independent contribution to the prediction work of behavioral intention. In some contexts, attitude can be the most accurate prediction factor of the behavioral intention; in other situations subjective norms may result in behavioral intention; and in some cases perceived behavioral control is sufficient to forecast the intention.

As the TPB proposes that individuals' behavioral attitude is one of the three significant predictors of their behavioral intention, the second research hypothesis is proposed:

**HP#2: Teenagers' attitude towards Korean celebrities' image portrayed in online teen media positively contributes to their intention to emulate Korean celebrities' image.**

**Conceptual Framework**

The two hypotheses are combined into a model which is the conceptual framework of this study. In the model, two independent variables which are Level of Exposure to online teen media portraying Korean celebrities and Attitude towards Korean celebrities' images on those media have significant effects on Teenagers' intention to emulate the celebrities. The conceptual framework of this study can be graphically presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Level of Exposure to online teen media portraying Korean celebrities

Intention to emulate Korean celebrities' images

Attitude towards Korean celebrities' image
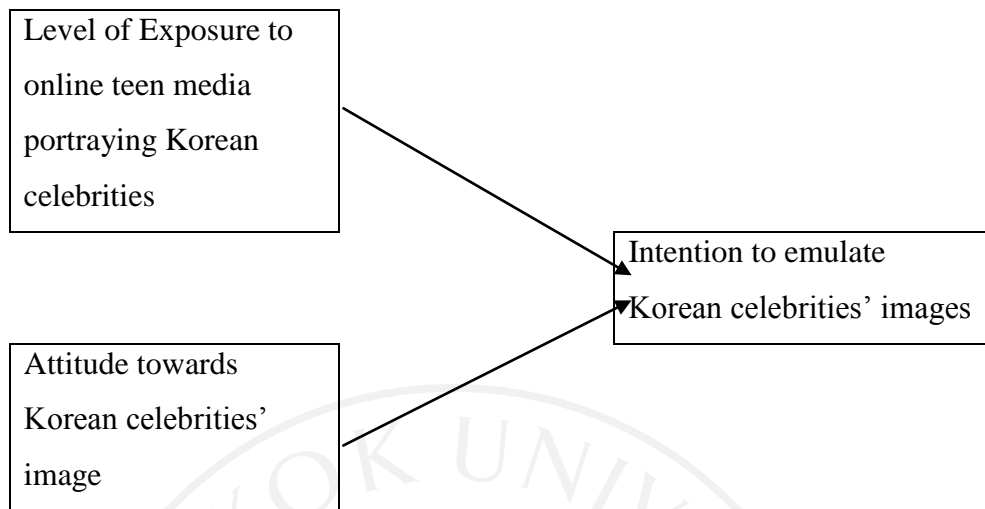
# CHAPTER 3
# METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research design in detail. A brief explanation has been given about the research population and sampling method. This chapter provides a basis for the development of the self-administered questionnaire. This chapter also describes research procedure, its rationale, and how data were collected. Data analysis is explained at the end of the chapter.

**Research Design**

The research is divided into two phases: (1) content analysis of a selected teenagers' online magazine, www.kenh14.vn – 'Channel for Teens,' among a variety of websites that provide teens with entertainment information of Korean showbiz to identify the most common themes covered by this media vehicle; and (2) survey of teenagers' level of exposure to online teen website and attitudes towards Korean celebrities portrayed in the website, and their behavioral intentions of emulating the Korean celebrities' image.

The first phase of the research was conducted with the use of content analysis by counting frequency of media coverage of Korean celebrities' images in the selected website. The focus is on news of celebrities around the world. Two report periods of September 2011 and September 2012 were selected as the samples of the online news articles. The content of Korean celebrities was then analyzed against a set of criteria to be mentioned in the measurement section.

The survey in the form of self-administered questionnaire was conducted for the second phase of the research by examining whether Vietnamese teenagers' level of exposure to online teen magazine and attitude toward celebrities' image portrayed in such medium significantly affect their intention of emulating what those celebrities do with little consideration whether it is appropriate or not.

**Population and Sample**

For the first phase of the study, the online teen magazines in Vietnam were considered the target population of the content to be analyzed. The website www.kenh14.vn – 'Channel for Teens' was selected as the sample of online teen medium since it is administered by Vietnam Communications Corporation (VCCorp) and recognized as the most popular entertainment website for Vietnamese teenagers (Bao Moi, 2012). According to the Marketing Vietnam Website (2012), Kenh14 possesses the following characteristics:

- Subscribers: 9,113,123

- Monthly page view: 185,087,146

- Visitors: 5,664,073

- Time on site: 10 minutes 1 second

- Age of viewers: 14 – 25 years old.

This website allows archiving function by which the content of the website can be retrieved backwards. The "Stars/Celebrities" columns of the website as the focused content related to Korean celebrities were analyzed to identify most common themes.

For the second phase of the study, the target population of the survey is Vietnamese teenagers. Due to limited time and access to the target population, a purposive sampling is used to recruit research participants for this study. Based on the estimated sample size by the G-Star program, a sample size of 270 is recommended. Therefore, 270 high-school students who are currently studying at the Quang Trung Nguyen Hue Private High School in District 5, Ho Chi Minh City were requested to participate in the survey. The sample represented all three grades -- 10th, 11th, and 12th.

**Data Collection Procedure**

The questionnaire was completed and ready to be delivered on November 11, 2012. The research assistant contacted the Principal of Quang Trung Nguyen Hue

Private High School, who is the mother of the researcher's friend. The Principal agreed for the research assistant to distribute the questionnaire to her students. As the key investigator was in Bangkok Thailand while the respondents were in Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam, a soft copy of the questionnaire was sent via email to a research assistant who is his brother for photocopying 300 copies (the sample size is 270 and 30 copies are extras). The research assistant visited the high school on November 12, 2012 to present the questionnaire to the Principal who complimented on the content of the questionnaire. She thought the survey suited her students' interests. The research assistant explained briefly to her how the survey would be conducted. The Principal requested the research assistant to leave 300 copies in her office so that she would ask form-teachers of 9 classes, 3 classes from each school grade, to deliver to their students when meeting them at the weekend. The Principal promised that all the questionnaires would be completed within a week.

The form teacher of each class, after delivering the questionnaires to the students in their class, would give them a brief instruction on how to fill out the questions in the survey. The students were instructed to read the questions carefully before providing the answers. All questions are multiple-choice in which the students will circles the options that describe them the most. The students were encouraged to ask their form teachers in case they found any questions unclear or ambiguous. It took the whole class 10 to 15 minutes to complete the survey.

On Monday November 19, 2012, the research assistant came to Quang Trung Nguyen Hue high school to pick up the questionnaires. After counting the copies, the research assistant confirmed with an administrative officer of the school that he got 270 questionnaires. The administrative officer informed the research assistant that before having those questionnaires submitted, all form-teachers in charge had checked through all the documents and made sure that no questions were missed. The research assistant expressed her deep gratitude for the tremendous support from the teachers at the high school.

With the use of the SPSS program, the data entry was conducted by the research assistant in Vietnam, and the file was sent via email to the key investigator in Bangkok.

**Measurement: Content Analysis**

All news of Korean celebrities in the Star column of September 2011 and September 2012 issues were carefully reviewed by the major investigator. The total number of news reported in the September 2011 issue is 253 news articles whereas that of news reported in the September 2012 issue is 444. The most common themes of Korean celebrities' images covered in "Channel for Teens" were identified through a content analysis, and then each theme was counted for its frequency.

**Measurement: Survey**

The self-administered questionnaire was developed to include four sections: ***General Information***, ***Behavioral Attitudes***, and ***Behavioral Intention***. The General Information section measures respondents' gender, grades, favorite websites, and level of exposure to the website on a daily basis. The second and the third sections of the questionnaire are constructed based on the four most common themes identified by the content analysis to evaluate the teenagers' attitudes towards the Korean celebrities' images that have been portrayed on the website and whether they tend to behave in accordance with their attitudes or not. The third section involves behavioral intention whereas the last section of the questionnaire involves referral. Measurement of each variable is reported below.

*Grades:* As the research conducted by Yahoo! Vietnam in 2011, the age group of 15-19 is one of the most dynamic internet user groups. High school students of grade $10^{th}$, $11^{th}$, and $12^{th}$ are at the age of 15 to 18 that are the target population of the research. There are three options for the students to select the best description of themselves: 1 – Grade 10, 2 – Grade 11, and 3 – Grade 12.

*Favorite Website*: A list of five most popular websites for entertainment news for teens is provided. The list is identified by using Google search engine with the key word "*Trang thông tin giải trí dành cho giới trẻ*" (Website for entertainment news for teens). The respondents were also provided with a blank space to report their own favorite website.

*Level of Exposure to Online Teen Media*: one question asks the respondents to report the amount of time spent on reading updates about Korean celebrities in one day. Three choices were provided -- *Light Viewer* (who spend less than 30 minutes visiting the websites), *Medium Viewer* (who spend from 30 to 60 minutes visiting the websites), and *Heavy Viewer* (who spend more than 60 minutes visiting the websites). According to Gross, Juvonen, & Gable (2002), adolescents spent an average of 46.6 minutes online on a daily basis. Nowadays, there are a lot of new media technologies that enhance the Internet users' experience; as a result, the average exposure to online media would increase accordingly. Vietnamese teenagers normally spend 8 hours at school, from 7:00am to 4:00pm. In the remaining time of the day, they have to do homework, so there is little time left for entertainment. That is the reason why the research identifies three types of online media viewer among the teen population.

*Attitude toward Korean Celebrities' Image:* Respondents are asked to report the level of agreement for two types of statements (*supportive* and *critical) of each theme* describing Korean celebrities with a four-point scale (*1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree).* For critical statements, the score would be reversed (*1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree).* All critical statements are marked with an asterisk for recoding the variables in SPSS program (Appendix A).

*Behavioral Intention*: Respondents are requested to estimate the extent to which they will emulate the Korean celebrities. A six-point scale is used to obtain the answers (*1 = Very unlikely* versus *6 = Very likely).*

**Instrument Pretest**

To ensure that the research instrument is valid and reliable, the first draft of the questionnaire was pre-tested on November 9, 2012 by 30 high school students who represent the target population, 10 persons from each school grade of tenth, eleventh, and twelfth. The research assistant had the questionnaires distributed to students around her neighborhood and asked them to deliver the questionnaires to their classmates. Reliability of the instrument is reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliability of the Research Instrument

|  | Cronbach's Alpha | No. of Items |
|---|---|---|
| Attitudes toward Korean Celebrities' Image | .71 | 16 |
| Behavioral Intention | .88 | 16 |

The Cronbach's Alpha was rather good for both variables – Attitudes toward Korean celebrities, and Behavioral Intention (.71 and .88, respectively). As a result, there would be no modification to any questions in the questionnaire.

**Data Analysis**

For the 1st phase of the study, the key investigator visited the website www.kenh14.vn, using the retrieval tool of the website to check all the articles about celebrities around the world in the two report period. All news articles about Korean celebrities were recorded in a notebook for classifying later. After finishing counting the proportion of news about Korean celebrities on the website, the content of news was then analyzed by classifying into common themes that are frequently reported on the website.

For the 2nd phase of the study, after all the raw data were entered into the SPSS program, descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were computed to provide basic information regarding the variables under study. In terms of inferential statistics, Multiple Linear Regression, One-Way Analysis of Variance, and Pearson's Correlation were used to identify relationship between independent and dependent variables which are proposed in the two hypotheses.

This chapter thus gives a complete explanation of how this study was actually carried out; right from designing research, sampling, describing the research procedure, methods adopted for data collection and statistical techniques used for analyzing it.

**CHAPTER 4**

**RESULTS**

This chapter discusses the descriptive statistics of the sample and the variables that are examined in this study. This chapter presents the results of Content Analysis which was conducted on the selected online teen website, "Channel for Teens". This chapter also presents the results of the survey describes research procedure, its rationale, and how data were collected. Data analysis is explained at the end of the chapter.

**Descriptive Statistics**

*Demographics of Respondents*

Among 270 high school students participating in the survey, there are 90 students from each grade, $10^{th}$, $11^{th}$, and $12^{th}$. In terms of gender, there are slightly more female than male respondents.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Gender

|         | Frequency | Percent |
|---------|-----------|---------|
| Male    | 131       | 48.5    |
| Female  | 139       | 51.5    |
| Total   | 270       | 100     |

*Frequency of Exposure to News Websites*

The website www.kenh14.vn gains the highest frequency of exposure among teenagers with 66.7% of them refers to the website for updates of Korean celebrities. The second most frequent one is www.yeah1.com.

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Exposure to Website

|  | Frequency | Percent |
| --- | --- | --- |
| www.kenh14.vn | **180** | **66.7** |
| www.yeah1.com | 21 | 7.8 |
| www.ione.vnexpress.net | 2 | 0.7 |
| http://2sao.vn | 5 | 1.9 |
| http://news.zing.vn | 46 | 17 |
| Other | 16 | 5.9 |
| Total | 270 | 100 |

*Level of Exposure to Online Media*

  The respondents were classified into three groups based on level of their online media exposure. 'Heavy viewers' consume online media higher than 1 hour a day, 'medium viewers' consume more than 30 minutes but less than 1 hour a day, whereas 'light viewers' consume less than 30 minutes a day. Only 13.3% of the respondents are heavy viewers (36 students) whereas 20.7% of them are medium viewers (56 students). The majority (178 students) is light viewers accounting for 65.9%. This is not surprising because after 8 hours at school, the students have to go to extra curriculum classes in the evening at their teachers' houses. As a result, 30 minutes a day reading online news about Korean celebrities on the websites can be considered huge. (Table 5)

Table 5: Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Level of Media Exposure

|  | Frequency | Percent |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Light viewer | 178 | 65.9 |
| Medium viewer | 56 | 20.7 |
| Heavy viewer | 36 | 13.3 |
| Total | 270 | 100 |

Means and standard deviations were computed for all variables under examination. Details are provided in Table 6 and 7.

Table 6: Means and Standard Deviation of Variables

| Variables | Total Scores | Mean | SD | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attitude toward KC's Physical Appearance | 4 | 2.07 | 0.55 | 270 |
| Attitude toward KC's Fashion | 4 | 2.59 | 0.48 | 270 |
| Attitude toward KC's Relationship | 4 | 2.49 | 0.48 | 270 |
| Attitude toward KC's Normal Life | 4 | 2.35 | 0.52 | 270 |
| Overall Attitude toward KC | 4 | 2.38 | 0.37 | 270 |
| Intention toward KC's Physical Appearance | 4 | 2.84 | 1.32 | 270 |
| Intention toward KC's Fashion Style | 4 | 2.44 | 1.29 | 270 |
| Intention toward KC's Relationship | 4 | 3.00 | 1.33 | 270 |
| Intention toward KC's Normal Life | 4 | 3.12 | 1.14 | 270 |
| Overall Intention toward KC | 4 | 2.85 | 1.06 | 270 |
| General Trust on the Websites | 4 | 2.53 | 0.71 | 270 |

Table 7: Means and Standard Deviation of Respondents' Behavioral Intention among Different Level of Media Exposure

| | N | Mean | SD | Std. Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Light Viewer | 178 | 2.67 | 0.99 | 0.07 |
| Medium Viewer | 56 | 3.05 | 1.04 | 0.14 |
| Heavy Viewer | 36 | 3.44 | 1.16 | 0.19 |
| Total | | 2.85 | 1.06 | 0.06 |

**Results of Content Analysis**

*Most Common Themes Identified in the Online Teen Media*

In September 2011, there are 69 pieces of news reporting Korean showbiz among 253 articles, accounting for 27.27%. There are four emerging themes about

Korean celebrities in this report period which are *Physical Appearance*, *Relationship*, *Fashion* and *Normal Life* (see frequency of each theme in the Table 8)*.* The remaining 24.64% is shared among many other news related to Korean showbiz performers.

Table 8: Frequency of Media Coverage on Korean Celebrities

| Themes | Number of Articles (Percentage) September 2011 | Number of Articles (Percentage) September 2012 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Physical Appearance | 17 (24.64) | 20 (35.72) |
| Relationship | 14 (20.29) | 12 (21.43) |
| Normal Life | 11 (15.94) | 8 (14.28) |
| Fashion | 10 (14.50) | 7 (12.50) |
| Others | 17 (24.64) | 9 (16.07) |
| Total | 69 (27.27) | 56 (13.52) |

In September 2012, although the number of Korean-related articles slightly decreased in comparison with September 2011 (56 out of 444 articles, accounting for 13.52%), the four themes similar to the previous report period is recorded.  The reason for this reduction is that The Voice 2012 – Vietnamese Version was launched for the first time in the country and attracted a lot of media attention. Furthermore, The Voice Vietnam 2012 at that time had some scandals of arranged results between competitors and production team, which occupied quite a lot of space on many entertainment online media. Twenty articles of **Physical Appearance** are reported, accounting for 35.72%. **Relationship**, **Fashion**, and **Normal Life** have 12 articles (21.43%), 7 articles (12.5%), and 8 articles (14.28%), respectively.

In the theme of **Physical Appearance**, most articles discussed the beauty and handsomeness of Korean celebrities. Some doubted whether the celebrities undertook any cosmetic surgeries to enhance their look. A lot of photos are shown in these articles to evidence their claims of the celebrities' plastic surgeries, make-up mistakes, digitally-altered photos, or simply to keep the viewers updated about the

celebrities. In the *Fashion* theme, the news mainly reported the celebrities' dressing code, dressing mistakes, provocative outfits of actresses. Korean artists are fashion trendsetters who have quite a lot of influence on how the Vietnamese youth form their own dressing style. Especially, the website reported positively on some events where male Korean actors and singers wear women costumes. These "cross-dressers" were complimented that they were even cuter than girls.

The third theme, *Relationship*, is about love affairs of these celebrities which also attracted a lot of media attention. They presented photo-documentaries about off-camera relationships, marriage, wedding, break-up, divorce and so on. They satisfied the desires of the viewers who are eager to know love stories of their idols in real life. The last theme discussed in this paper is *Normal Life* of the celebrities. All information about the event they attended; what scandals they got involved, personal stories, suicide, etc. This theme covers almost all other aspects of the celebrities' both profession-related and non-profession-related life.

**Results of Survey**

**HP#1:** Teenagers' level of exposure to online teen media portraying Korean celebrities positively contributes to their intention to emulate Korean celebrities' image.

The Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was conducted to predict whether Vietnamese teenagers' level of exposure to websites portraying Korean celebrities' images predicts their overall intention of emulating Korean celebrities' image. The analysis result reveals that Vietnamese teenagers' online media exposure is a significant predictor of their intention of emulating Korean celebrities' image, $R^2 = 0.069$, $F(1,268) = 19.79$, $p < 0.05$. In other words, 6.9 percent of variances of Vietnamese teenagers' behavioral intention can be explained by their level of exposure to online news media. Therefore, the first hypothesis is supported (see details in Table 9).

**HP#2:** Teenagers' attitude towards Korean celebrities' image portrayed in online teen media positively contributes to their intention to emulate Korean celebrities' image.

Based on the Multiple Linear Regression analysis regarding the overall attitude towards the celebrities' image, the results indicated that the predictor explains only 1.4% of the variance, $R^2$=0.014, $F(1,268) = 3.76$, $p > 0.05$. In other words, Vietnamese teenagers' overall attitude toward Korean celebrities' image is not a significant predictor of their intention of emulating the image. Therefore, the second hypothesis is not supported (see details in Table 9).

Table 9: Summary of Regression Statistics Indicating Predictors of Behavioral Intention

| Predictors | $N$ | $R^2$ | $\beta$ | $F$ | $t$ | $df$ | $p$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attitude toward Korean celebrities' image | 270 | 0.014 | 0.118 | 3.76 | 1.94 | 268 | **0.054** |
| Level of media exposure | 270 | 0.069 | 0.262 | 19.79 | 4.45 | 268 | **0.000** |

In addition, the results of Pearson's Correlation also support the significant relationship between Vietnamese teenagers' level of online media exposure to Korean celebrities' image and their intention to emulate the image, r=0.262, $N$=270, $p$=0.000 In similar vein, the results of Pearson's Correlation also confirm the non-significant relationship between Vietnamese teenagers' attitude toward Korean celebrities' image and their intention to emulate the Korean celebrities' image, r=0.118, $N$=270, $p$=0.054

Table 10: Pearson's Correlation of Variables

| | | Level of Exposure | Overall Attitude toward KC |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Behavioral Intention toward KC | Pearson Correlation | 0.262 | 0.118 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.054 |
| | N | 270 | 270 |

*. $p< 0.05$, **. $p<0.01$

In order to learn more whether different level of online teen media exposure significantly affects Vietnamese teenagers' behavioral intention,  the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare the effect of different level of media exposure on behavioral intention among three groups of viewers -- Light, Medium, and Heavy Viewers. Interestingly, it was found that there was a significant effect of different level of media exposure on teen audiences' intention of emulating celebrities' image at .05 level for the three conditions, $F(2,267) = 9.86$, $p < .000$ (See further details in Table 11).

Table 11: One-Way ANOVA results of Respondents' Behavioral intention

|  | df | F | p |
|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2 | 9.86 | 0.000 |
| Within Groups | 267 |  |  |
| Total | 269 |  |  |

The post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean scores of behavioral intention of light viewer (M = 2.67; SD = 0.99) was significantly lower than that of medium viewer (M = 3.05, SD = 1.04) and that of heavy viewer (M = 3.44, SD = 1.16). However, medium viewers' score did not significantly differ from heavy viewers' one (see Table 12).

The results of the One-Way ANOVA suggest that Vietnamese teenagers' different level of exposure to online teen media portraying Korean celebrities do have a significant effect on their intention of emulating the Korean celebrities' image such that those with higher level of exposure are likely to emulate Korean celebrities' image to higher extent than those with lower level of exposure. That is, the effect can be observed more clearly among heavy viewers.

Table 12: Results of the Tukey HSD Test on Behavioral Intention

| I | J | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Light Viewer | Medium Viewer | -0.39 | 0.16 | **0.037** |
| | Heavy Viewer | -0.77 | 0.19 | **0.000** |
| Medium Viewer | Heavy Viewer | -0.38 | 0.22 | **0.190** |

In summary, the findings indicate that heavy and medium viewers of online teen media portraying Korean celebrities are likely to have higher intention to emulate the Korean celebrities than light viewers. However, Vietnamese teenagers with positive attitude toward Korean celebrities' image are unlikely to have higher intention to emulate the Korean celebrities' image than those with less positive attitude.

# CHAPTER 5
# DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings and limitations of the study. Implications for practitioners and government offices responsible for youth well-being and mass media together with recommendation for future studies are also presented in this chapter.

## Result Summary

Based on the content analysis of the selected online teen medium, the four most covered themes of Korean celebrities' images are Physical Appearance, Fashion, Relationship, and Normal Life. As for the survey, the findings supported the first hypothesis postulating that teenagers' level of exposure to online teen media portraying Korean celebrities positively contributes to their intention to emulate Korean celebrities' image. However, the second hypothesis stating that teenagers' attitude towards Korean celebrities' image portrayed in online teen media positively contributes to their intention to emulate Korean celebrities' image was not supported.

## Discussions

The four main themes of Korean celebrities that were identified on one of the most popular websites for teens, www.kenh14.vn, reflects that teenagers are really interested in knowing about their idols' updates of physical appearance, fashion style, love life, and normal life. If looking further after the end of each article, there is button to click 'like' for the article and 'share' it on social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. However, sometimes the contents of those articles are not really relevant to their target readers. For examples, some articles talked too much about unfaithful loves, betrayal, breakups, while others included numerous of celebrities in provocative clothes with inappropriate wordings for teenagers. Such online media contents was proven to have impacts on teenagers rather than the sheer amount of time they expose to the media (Wilson, 2008).

The findings from the survey also confirmed the first hypothesis regarding the effects of media exposure on the viewers' behavioral intention, especially teenagers who are attentive to glamorous and exciting things. The more the teenagers are exposed to online media that portray Korean celebrities' images, the higher intention of emulating those celebrities. In other words, media exposure does not only influence behavioral intention but also the attitudes toward the behaviors in consideration. This finding is consistent with several previous researches on the effects of media exposure. For example, media exposure has significant influence on lecturers' purchase intention of green electrical products (Suplico, 2011), sexual media contents do have impacts on adolescents' attitudes and behaviors (Escobar-Chaves, Tortolero, Markham, Low, Eitel & Thickstun, 2005), media violence leads to an increase in real-world violence and aggression (Huesmann, & Taylor, 2006), and media exposure can also have positive effects on social campaign and family planning attitudes and practices in Uganda (Gupta, Katende & Bessinger, 2003).

As proposed in the conceptual framework of this study, it is also hypothesized that teenagers' attitudes towards Korean celebrities' images portrayed by online teen media is a predictor of their intention to emulate the celebrities. However, this second hypothesis is not supported. In other word, Vietnamese teenagers' attitudes toward Korean celebrities' image do not have significant effects on their behavioral intentions. This unexpected finding may result from the fact that the respondents have merely slightly positive attitude toward Korean celebrities' image (M = 2.38), and this slightly positive attitude may not be sufficiently powerful to influence their intention to emulate the celebrities' behaviors.

In some situations, it was found that the respondents tend to emulate Korean celebrities' fashion and make-up styles, which are not very difficult for them. Korean fashion shops and Korean cosmetics boutiques are easily found in Vietnam and the students can afford to get those stuffs by saving their breakfast. But it would be very difficult for high school students to emulate other things such as plastic surgery, love life and normal life of the celebrities since they do not have favorable conditions to do so.

When considering the *gender* difference in terms of level of media exposure, it was found that female respondents were exposed to the relevant websites to higher extent than the males do (1.63 versus 1.31 respectively). Table 13 depicts the mean and standard deviation of media exposure among the sampled male and female students. The result of Independent T-Test indicates that the average exposure to the websites is significantly different between males and females, $t(268) = -3.83$, $p < .01$.

Table 13: Mean and Standard Deviation of Level of Exposure between Genders

|  | Gender | N | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level of Media Exposure | Male | 131 | 1.31 | .631 |
|  | Female | 139 | 1.63 | .763 |

The difference in terms of level of exposure to online media portraying Korean celebrities' images between male and female Vietnamese teenagers can be easily understood because of the differences in characteristics of the two genders. Females are likely to follow interactive information from mass media with their favorite celebrities and enjoy to be updated of the news regarding their favorite ones (Subrahmanyam, Kraut, Greenfield, & Gross, 2001).

Furthermore, the *grade* difference was examined in terms of level of media exposure, overall attitude toward Korean celebrities' image, and overall behavioral intention. It was found that Grade 10 and 11 respondents have the highest exposure score (M = 1.48, followed by Grade 12 (M = 147). Grade 10 respondents have the highest attitude score (M = 2.47), followed by Grade 11 (M = 2.34) and Grade12 (M = 2.32) respectively. Grade 10 respondents have the highest intention score (M = 2.93), followed by Grade 11 (M = 2.92) and Grade 12 (M = 2.70) respectively (See details in Table 14).

Table 14: Mean and Standard Deviation of Variables among Different Grades

| Variables | Grade | N | Mean | SD | Std. Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level of Media Exposure | Grade 10 | 90 | 1.48 | 0.707 | 0.074 |
|  | Grade 11 | 90 | 1.48 | 0.722 | 0.076 |

(Continued)

Table 14 (Continued): Mean and Standard Deviation of Variables among
Different Grades

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Grade 12 | 90 | 1.47 | 0.737 | 0.078 |
| | Total | 270 | 1.47 | 0.720 | 0.044 |
| Overall Attitude toward Korean Celebrities' image | Grade 10 | 90 | 2.47 | 0.31 | 0.03 |
| | Grade 11 | 90 | 2.34 | 0.39 | 0.04 |
| | Grade 12 | 90 | 2.32 | 0.40 | 0.04 |
| | Total | 270 | 2.38 | 0.37 | 0.02 |
| Overall Behavioral Intention | Grade 10 | 90 | 2.93 | 0.95 | 0.10 |
| | Grade 11 | 90 | 2.92 | 1.16 | 0.12 |
| | Grade 12 | 90 | 2.70 | 1.06 | 0.11 |
| | Total | 270 | 2.85 | 1.06 | 0.06 |

The results of One-Way ANOVA reveals that grade difference exists only in terms of overall attitude toward Korean celebrities' image, $F(2,267) = 4.25$, $p < .05$ (see details in Table 15).

Table 15: ANOVA Results of Overall Attitude among Different Grades

| | | df | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Attitude toward KC | Between Groups | 2 | 4.25 | **0.02** |
| | Within Groups | 267 | | |

The Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for Grade 10 (M = 2.47, SD = 0.31) significantly differed from Grade 12 (M = 2.32, SD = 0.40). However, there was no significant difference between Grade 10 and Grade 11 (M = 2.34, SD = 0.39) and between Grade 11 and Grade 12. In brief, the higher grade the teenagers are in, the less positive attitude towards Korean celebrities' image they have (see details in Table 16). This can be explained that students of higher grades are more mature and they tend to view celebrities in more realistic way than students of lower grade.

Table 16: Results of Post hoc Tukey HSD Test among different Grades

| | | | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Attitude toward Korean celebrities' image | Grade 10 | Grade 11 | 0.12 | 0.06 | 0.07 |
| | | Grade 12 | 0.15 | 0.06 | **0.02** |
| | Grade 11 | Grade 12 | 0.03 | 0.06 | 0.87 |

*\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.*

As the conceptual model presents that viewers' level of online media exposure and attitude toward Korean celebrities' image are the two key predictors of their intention to emulate Korean celebrities, but the data analyses revealed that attitude toward Korean celebrities' image was not a significant predictor. Therefore, it is interesting to examine whether both predictors are correlated. Mean scores of the attitude toward Korean celebrities' image among three levels of exposure showed that heavy viewers had slightly higher attitude score than other groups (See details in Table 17).

Table 17: Mean and Standard Deviation of Attitude toward Korean Celebrities' Image

| Variables | Level of Media Exposure | N | Mean | SD | Std. Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Attitude toward Korean celebrities' image | Light Viewer | 178 | 2.33 | 0.38 | 0.03 |
| | Medium Viewer | 56 | 2.44 | 0.34 | 0.05 |
| | Heavy Viewer | 36 | 2.48 | 0.34 | 0.06 |
| | Total | 270 | 2.38 | 0.37 | 0.02 |

The One-Way Analysis of Variance was conducted to examine whether viewers' different level of media exposure result in different attitude toward Korean celebrities' image. Its result showed that level of online media exposure has a significant effect on overall attitude toward the Korean celebrities' image, $F(2,267) = 3.37$, $p < .05$ (see details in Table 18).

Table 18: ANOVA results of Overall Attitude toward Korean Celebrities' Image

| Variables | | df | F | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall attitude toward Korean celebrities' image | Between Groups | 2 | 3.37 | 0.036 |
| | Within Groups | 267 | | |
| | Total | 269 | | |

Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD Test indicated that the mean score for *light viewer* (M = 2.33, SD = 0.38) was significantly different from *heavy viewer* (M = 2.48, SD = 0.34). However, there was no significant difference between *light viewer* and *medium viewer* and between *medium viewer* and *heavy viewer*.  In sum, these results suggest that high level of exposure to online teen media portraying Korean celebrities do have an effect on their overall attitude toward the celebrities' image (See details in Table 19).

Table 19: Results of Post hoc Tukey HSD Test among Different Viewer Groups

| Variables | (I) | (J) | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Attitude toward Korean celebrities' image | Light Viewer | Medium Viewer | -0.10 | 0.06 | 0.18 |
| | | Heavy Viewer | -0.15 | 0.07 | **0.02** |
| | Medium Viewer | Heavy Viewer | -0.05 | 0.08 | 0.81 |

*\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.*

**Limitations of the Study**

Firstly, only one teen website was selected for the content analysis. It is possible that other websites contain different themes. This limitation may reduce the quality of measurement. Secondly, samples were drawn from only one private high school in Vietnam. Different types of schools and those in other parts of the country would provide additional insight into effect of online teen media on youth's behavioral intention.  In addition, the majority of the samples are *light viewers* whereas significantly smaller number of samples was *medium* and *heavy viewers*. The equal proportion of viewers with different level of media exposure seems to make the comparison of media exposure effects more insightful. Due to the scale of this paper, only the behavioral attitude, not all three influential factors of individual's behavioral intention which are proposed in the Planned Behavior Theory, was included in the conceptual framework. This becomes another limitation of the paper.

**Implications for Practitioners and Government Offices**

According to Wilson (2008), exposure to media contents causes much more effects on children and teenagers than the sheer amount of using the media. From the findings of this study regarding how online teen media portray Korean celebrities, it is recommended that journalists of online teen media should be careful when selecting news and photos to post. Adaptation of exotic cultures is also a beautiful characteristic of world culture, but appropriateness with selected adaptation must also be considered, especially when teenagers are exposed to those contents quite frequently and freely. As the viewers cannot control what to be post and they are also curious about "shocking" headlines about their favorite singers or actors/actresses, online journalists should be responsible for the contents of the news they are going to post on the page because it has effects on teenagers who expose to the media frequently.

For education authorities, programs and activities with cultural education purposes should be further integrated into the syllabus to enhance students' awareness of the Vietnamese traditional culture and how to adapt good things from exotic cultures. Exotic things are always interesting and attractive but do not necessarily fit the Vietnamese traditional norms. Furthermore, Department of Information and Communication should apply some tools to ensure healthy online media available for teenagers. This will help them develop comprehensive and become cultural literacy, i.e. the teenagers may love Korean celebrities and their cultural products but only copy the cultural patterns that are relevant to their own cultures and norms.

**Implications for Scholars**

Based on the research findings on the significant impact of viewers' level of media exposure on their attitude toward Korean celebrities, the conceptual framework of this study can be revised as below:

Figure 3: Revised Conceptual Framework
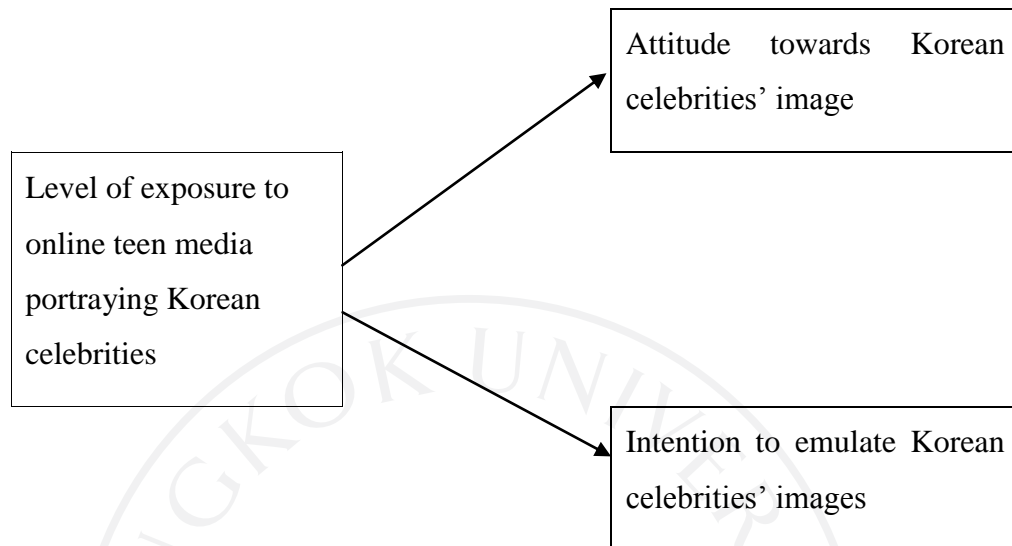


**Recommendation for Future Research**

Due to the limitations stated above, future studies should include *subjective norms* and *perceived behavioral control* in order to gain full understanding of teenagers' intention to emulate the Korean celebrities. Furthermore, different data collection methods such as depth interview and focus group should also be used to get more insights of the Vietnamese teenagers regarding the extent to which they have intention to emulate the celebrities' image.

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**APPENDIX**
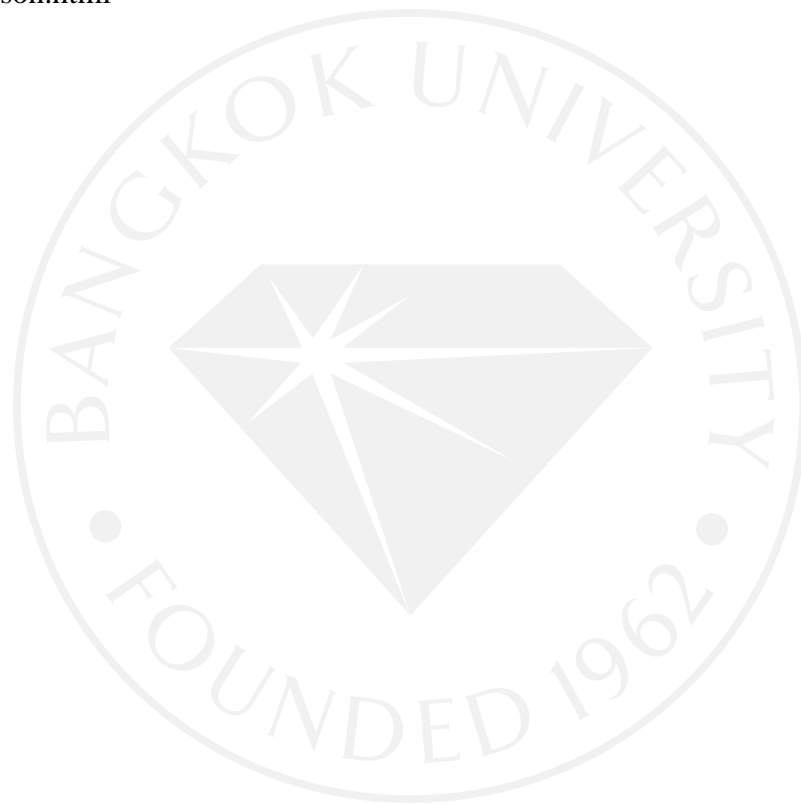
# QUESTIONNAIRE



This survey research is part of an individual research project required for Bangkok University students in Master of Communication Arts (International Program) who have enrolled for *ICA 599: Independent Study* in the 1st Semester of Academic Year 2012. Data collected from this questionnaire shall be used with utmost discretion and for academic purposes only. Any reproduction must be approved by the researcher, his academic advisor, and Bangkok University Graduate School. Please answer all questions in the 4 sections to support the student in completing his graduate study.

**Background Information**

**I. Circle the answer that best represents you:**

| 1) Gender | 1. Male | 2. Female |
|-----------|---------|-----------|

| 2) Year | 1. Grade 10th | 2. Grade 11th | 3. Grade 12th |
|---------|---------------|---------------|---------------|

**3) I usually get updated about Korean celebrities from: (select the most visited website)**

| 1. | www.kenh14.vn – Channel for Teens |
|----|-----------------------------------|
| 2. | www.yeah1.com – Entertainment World for Vietnamese Teens |
| 3. | www.ione.vnexpress.net – An info page for the youth. |
| 4. | http://2sao.vn – Entertainment Info Page |
| 5. | http://news.zing.vn – News and Entertainment Page |
| 6. | Others. Please specify _____ |

**4) Average time spent on the website to get updates of Korean showbiz:**

| 1. | Less than 30 minutes a day |
|----|----------------------------|

| 2. | 30-60 minutes a day |
|---|---|
| 3. | More than one hour a day |

**Respondents' Attitude toward the 4 emergent themes: Physical Appearance, Fashion, Relationship, and Normal Life**

**II. Do you agree with these statements that describe the Korean celebrities that you know from the website: (Mark X)**

| Item | Descriptions of Korean Celebrities | Strongly Agree 4 | Agree 3 | Disagree 2 | Strongly Disagree 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5) | 1a. Korean celebrities possess natural beauty/handsomeness | | | | |
| 6) | 1b.* Korean celebrities have undertaken cosmetic surgery to enhance their physical appearance. | | | | |
| 7) | 1c.* Photos of Korean celebrities on the website have been digitally altered. | | | | |
| 8) | 1d.* Korean celebrities are not that beautiful without makeup. | | | | |
| 9) | 2a. Korean celebrities are dressing in style. | | | | |
| **Item** | **Descriptions of Korean Celebrities** | **Strongly Agree 4** | **Agree 3** | **Disagree 2** | **Strongly Disagree 1** |
| 10) | 2b.* Korean actresses are wearing provocative clothes. | | | | |
| 11) | 2c.* Korean actors are wearing so girly. | | | | |
| 12) | 2d. Korean actors that wear female costumes are cute. | | | | |
| 13) | 3a. Korean celebrities' love stories are romantic both on screen and in real life. | | | | |
| 14) | 3b.* Korean celebrities frequently change their lovers. | | | | |
| 15) | 3c. Korean celebrities' weddings are as beautiful as dreams. | | | | |
| 16) | 3d.* Korean celebrities' love is part of a PR plan. | | | | |

| 17) | 4a.* Korean celebrities are involved with scandals of sex, drugs and rumors of homosexuality. | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18) | 4b. Korean celebrities often participate in social campaigns such as charity and blood donation. | | | | |
| 19) | 4c.* Korean celebrities share their shocking private life to catch audience's attentions. | | | | |
| 20) | 4d. Korean celebrities' life is so stressful that some of them have committed suicide. | | | | |

**Respondents' Behavioral Intention resulting from their attitudes above**
**III. Select the answer that reflect yourself the most: (Mark X)**

| Item | Behavioral Related Questions | Very likely | 6 5 4 3 2 1 | Very Unlikely |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21) | 1a. I want to have the beauty/handsomeness like Korean celebrities'. | **Very likely** | 6 5 4 3 2 1 | **Very Unlikely** |
| 22) | 1b. I will do beauty enhancement if I can. | **Very likely** | 6 5 4 3 2 1 | **Very Unlikely** |
| 23) | 1c. I have my photos digitally altered before posting on social networks. | **Very likely** | 6 5 4 3 2 1 | **Very Unlikely** |
| 24) | 1d. I will wear make up like Korean stars. | **Very likely** | 6 5 4 3 2 1 | **Very Unlikely** |
| 25) | 2a. I will copy Korean celebrities' fashion style. | **Very likely** | 6 5 4 3 2 1 | **Very Unlikely** |
| 26) | 2b. I will wear provocative clothes to display my figure. | **Very likely** | 6 5 4 3 2 1 | **Very Unlikely** |
| 27) | 2c. I'd like to dress up as a prince/princess in a fairy tale like Korean actors/actresses. | **Very likely** | 6 5 4 3 2 1 | **Very Unlikely** |
| 28) | 2d. I want to try costumes of different sex. | **Very likely** | 6 5 4 3 2 1 | **Very Unlikely** |
| 29) | 3a. I'd love to have a relationship like Korean romance. | **Very likely** | 6 5 4 3 2 1 | **Very Unlikely** |
| 30) | 3b. I find changing lover is sympathetic. | **Very likely** | 6 5 4 3 2 1 | **Very Unlikely** |
| 31) | 3c. My wedding in the future will be the same as the Korean celebrities'. | **Very likely** | 6 5 4 3 2 1 | **Very Unlikely** |
| Item | Behavioral Related Questions | Very likely | 6 5 4 3 2 1 | Very Unlikely |
| 32) | 3d. In my opinion, planned love | **Very** | 6 5 4 3 2 1 | **Very** |

| | stories of celebrities are acceptable. | **likely** | | **Unlikely** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33) | 4a. For me, scandals of sex, drugs and rumors of homosexuality are not a big issue. | **Very likely** | **6  5  4  3  2  1** | **Very Unlikely** |
| 34) | 4c. I love doing charity and donating blood. | **Very likely** | **6  5  4  3  2  1** | **Very Unlikely** |
| 35) | 4d. I love to share my personal secrets with others to attract their attention. | **Very likely** | **6  5  4  3  2  1** | **Very Unlikely** |
| 36) | 4e. Committing suicide is one of the ways to end a stressful life. | **Very likely** | **6  5  4  3  2  1** | **Very Unlikely** |

Thank you for your kind assistance!

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

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    Interpreter – NJPT Association

    Immigration Assistant – UKBA, British Embassy

    Communication Project Manager – MOV Communications Corp.