

# Current status and competitiveness of K-pop Korean Wave on the Southeast Asia

Quoc Trung Pham<sup>1</sup>, Jong Won Yun<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> HCMC University of Technology (VNU-HCM), Vietnam

<sup>2</sup> Changwon National University, Korea

**2020 K-WCEB International Symposium**

*(“Building Business Relationships between World Chinese Entrepreneurs and Korea”)*

*13-14/11/2020 - Online Conference - Changwon National University Studio*

# Contents

1. Introduction
2. Current status of K-pop on the Southeast Asia
3. Competitiveness of Korean wave in Vietnam
4. Future trends & Suggestion
5. Conclusion

# 1. Introduction

- ❑ In digital society, entertainment and creative industry becomes one of the most important sectors of any country.
- ❑ Since 2000s, the Korean Wave or K-pop evolved into a global phenomenon, carried by the Internet and entertainment technologies.
- ❑ The Korean wave has spread the influence of aspects of Korean culture including fashion, music, TV programs, cosmetics, games, cuisine, web-toon and beauty.
- ❑ K-pop or Korean wave could be used as a strategy of Korea to improve its national brand and to support cultural products exportation.
- ❑ Some challenges for K-pop development in the future include:
  - ❑ The competition with J-pop, Western music and other cultural trends
  - ❑ The impact of Covid-19 pandemic
  - ❑ A change in policy of South Korea Government toward the Indochina Peninsula
- ⇒ **A need to review the current status and the competitiveness of K-pop in the Southeast Asia region**
- ⇒ **A suitable policy to raise the impact of Korean wave in this region and to support the further development of Korean and regional economy.**

## 2. Current status of K-pop on the ASEAN (1)

▶ Top 5 countries spending most time for K-pop idols in 2020 include: 1/ Indonesia, 2/ Thailand, 3/ Vietnam, 4/ Malaysia, 5/ Brazil (Yan.vn, 2020)

### ▶ *Singapore*

- ▶ There is a thriving K-pop fan-base in Singapore, where idol groups, such as 2NE1, BTS, Girls' Generation, Got7 and [Exo](#), often hold concert tour dates.
- ▶ Korean-style "straight eyebrows" have become quite popular among many Singaporean females and males of Chinese, Malay and Indian descent.
- ▶ On August 5, 2017, Singapore hosted the 10th Music Bank World Tour, a concert spin-off of Music Bank, a popular weekly music program by South Korean broadcaster KBS.

### ▶ *Malaysia*

- ▶ In Malaysia, K-pop and Korean movies and TV series have become popular among all three ethnic groups (Malay, Chinese and Indian), which Malaysian firms have capitalized upon.
- ▶ The popularity of K-pop has also resulted in politicians bringing K-pop idols to the country in order to attract young voters.
- ▶ After the BlackPink concert organized in Malaysia, Korean wave become one of the most favorite things of Malaysian people and they spend about 20 hours a month for their K-pop idols (Yan.vn, 2020).

## 2. Current status of K-pop on the ASEAN (2)

### ▶ *Indonesia*

- ▶ K-pop along with Korean TV series and movies has turned into a popular culture, especially among the young generation of Indonesia.
- ▶ In Indonesia, imitation groups such as SM\*SH, Hitz Indonesia and Super 9 Boyz also rose to stardom with their releases of K-pop style songs like, I Heart You (2010), Yes Yes Yes (2011) and ACDC (2012).
- ▶ Another Indonesian boy band, Hitz, adopts the formula of Korean boy band by further casting one Korean singer member, Lee Jeong Hoon, in the idol group.

### ▶ *Philippines*

- ▶ Korean telenovelas were aired locally in the Philippines starting in 2003, marking a further expansion of the Korean wave. K-pop took longer to catch on;
- ▶ Super Junior held a concert in the Philippines in 2010. Then, XLR8 group, the Philippine version of Super Junior due to the great resemblance between the two bands, was formed.
- ▶ Because of the popularity of K-pop, Philippines popular music receives support from the local K-pop fans.

## 2. Current status of K-pop on the ASEAN (2)

### ▶ *Thailand*

- ▶ Southeast Asia became one of the film's settings when the film's Korean production crew moved to Thailand to do location shooting.
- ▶ The nationalization of Korean popular culture strengthens the economic power of media content for regional media/film producers to create for cultural export.
- ▶ In 2020, Thailand is considered the 2nd country where youth spending most of their time with K-pop idols

### ▶ *Lao*

- ▶ In 2008, female K-pop band Baby V.O.X. Re.V gave a New Year's concert at the Lao International Trade Exhibition and Convention Center, the largest venue in the country.
- ▶ In April of 2008, South Korea's web portal Paran gave a concert to an audience of ten thousand at the national football stadium in Vientiane to celebrate Tigo's anniversary.
- ▶ A statistics reported that over 50% of all music programming on Lao Star TV channel consisted of Korean pop (Ainslie, 2016).

## 2. Current status of K-pop on the ASEAN (2)

### ▶ Vietnam

- ▶ Currently, 51% of Vietnamese like South Korean pop music and 68% like South Korean TV serials. Korean cuisine was favored by 58% of respondents. Some popular dishes include kimchi, kimbap, and topokki.
- ▶ Over 70% of Vietnamese having positive feelings about South Korea. Among the most popular K-pop artists are BTS, Big Bang and G-Dragon.
- ▶ In 2018, V Live and RBW Entertainment Vietnam launched special monthly mini-concerts called "V Heartbeat Live", inviting both V-pop and K-pop stars to perform, such as [Winner](#), [Momoland](#), [iKon](#), [Sunmi](#), and more.



### What comes up for Korea?

Korean cuisine, especially kimchi is a Korea's signature in Vietnamese's perception.



Korean cuisine 42%



Kimchi 28%



K-Pop 21%



Korean movies 11%



Beautiful landscape 10%



Friendly / beautiful 6%



Q. When you hear Korea, what comes up on your mind?

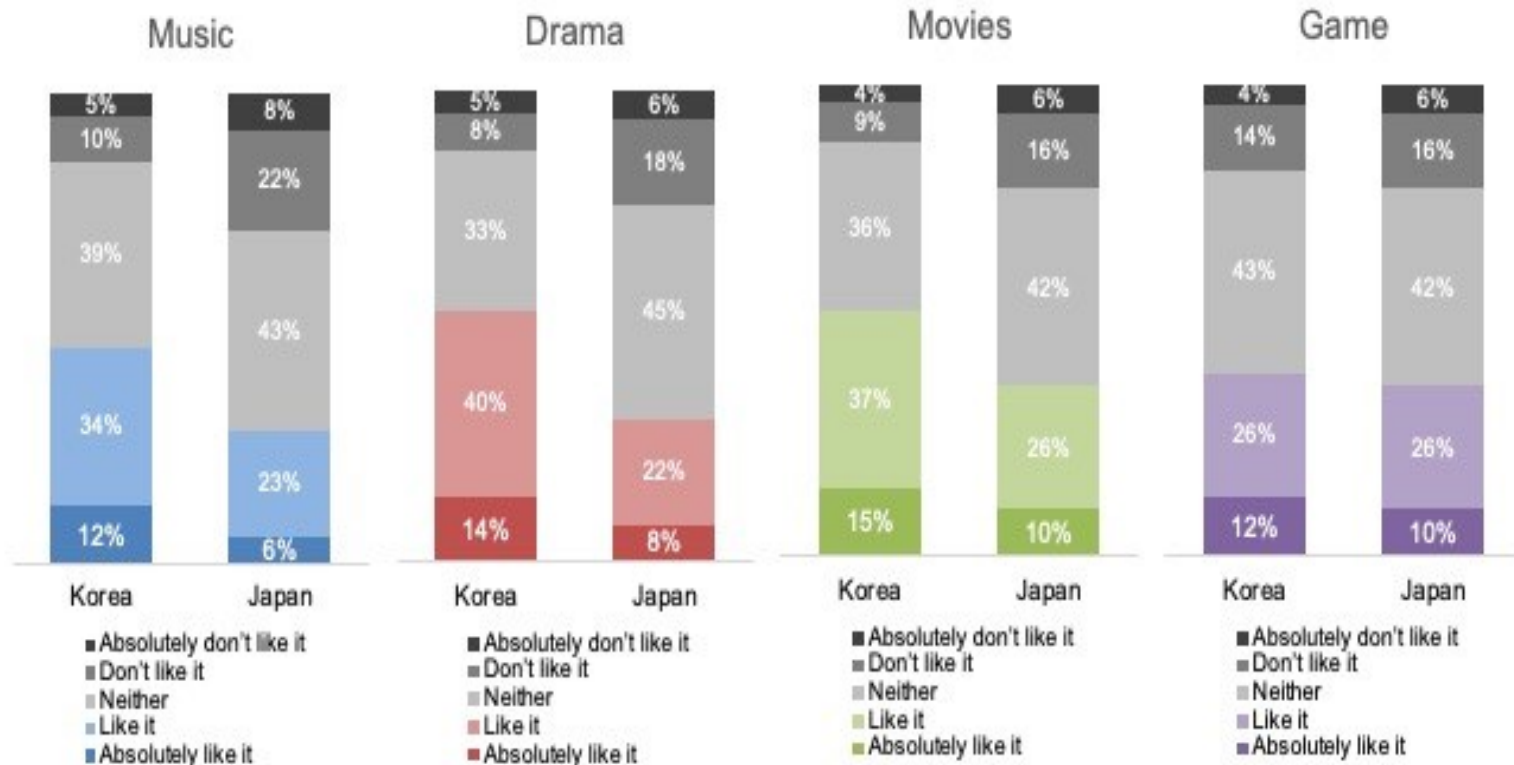
# 3. Competitiveness of K-wave in Vietnam

- ❑ The process of consuming Korean products relating to Korean wave could be identified in 4 potential stages:
  - (1) The first stage: using the cultural (content-based) products of Korean wave such as K-movie, K-pop;
  - (2) The second stage: buying the products connecting to K-movie or K-pop such as film posters, pictures of Korean actors and actress, Hallyu tours...;
  - (3) The third stage: buying “Made in Korea” goods such as clothing, cosmetics, electronic accessories...;
  - (4) The fourth stage: Having a passion for Korean culture, economy in general (Phan, 2016).
- ❑ Currently, Vietnam can be classified in between of 3rd stage and 4th stage.
- ❑ According to a survey was conducted by Asia Plus Inc. (2020), based on a sample of 600 Vietnamese males and females of the age 18-39, Korean entertainment contents are more popular than Japanese ones.



# 3. Competitiveness of K-wave in Vietnam

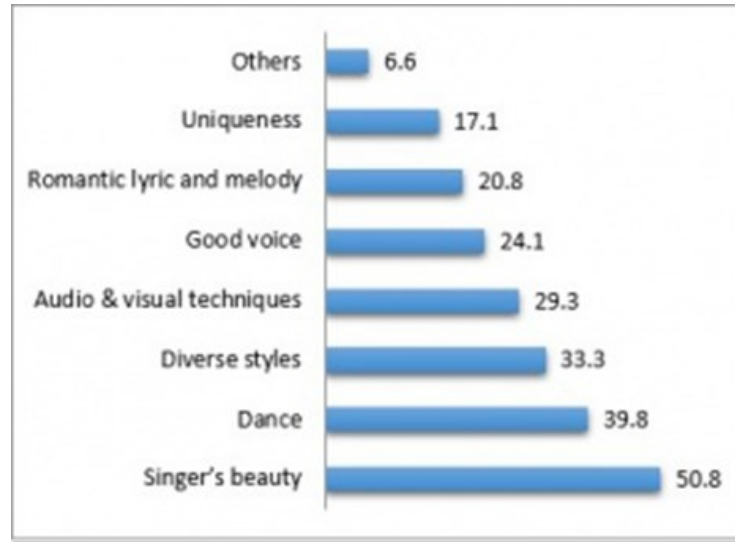
## Entertainment content likeness - Details



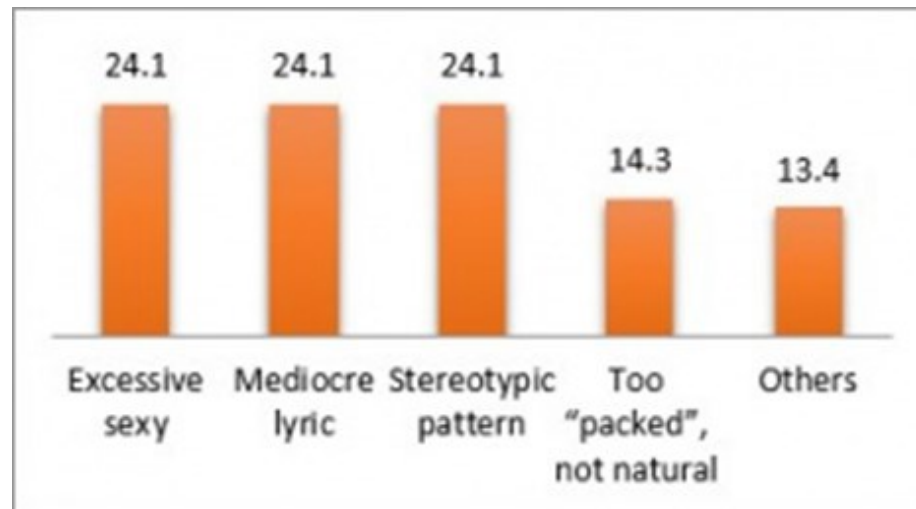
Korean entertainment has better popularity in all aspects, except for the games where Korea and Japan is neck to neck

# 3. Competitiveness of K-wave in Vietnam

## Strength of K-pop

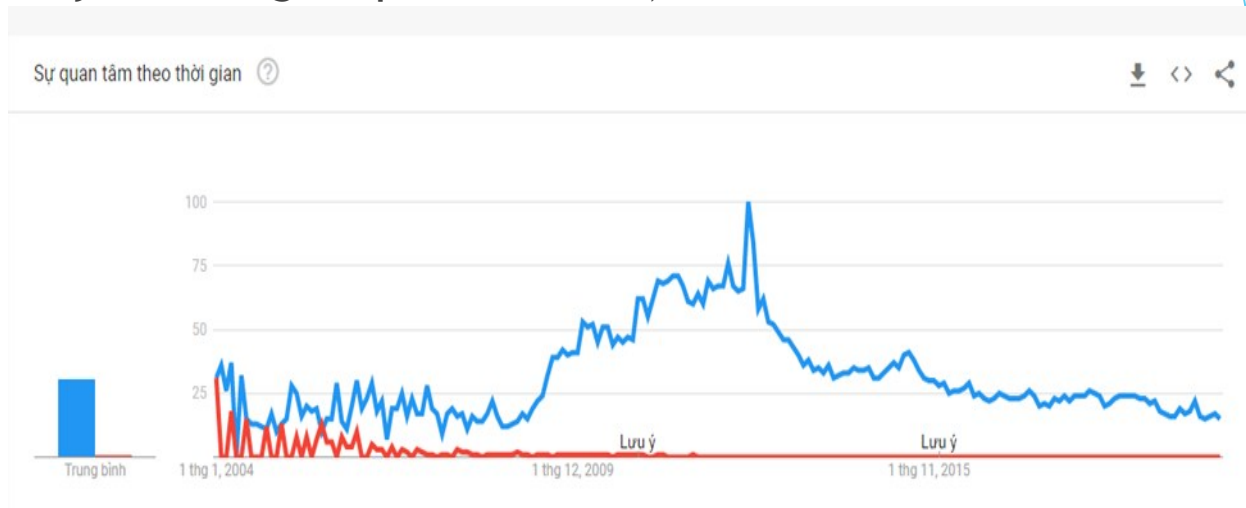


## Weakness of K-pop



## 4. Future trends & Suggestions (1)

- ▶ Searching for “K-pop” keyword is higher than “J-Pop” during 2004 till now (especially reaching its peak in 2012).



- ▶ In details, web searching in Vietnam for “Korean Fashion”, Korean Food”, “Tours to Korea” have suddenly increased recently and higher than for Japanese ones.
- ▶ However, Japan is more successful than Korea in its attraction of cultural content. E.g., web searching “Japanese Culture”; “Learning Japanese”; and “Japanese Studies” are higher than for Korean ones.

## 4. Future trends & Suggestions (1)

- ▶ Developing an integrated culture between East and Southeast Asia.
- ▶ *Boosting digital transformation process* and applying entertainment technologies, such as: Facebook, Twitter, Youtube...
- ▶ *Organizing some cultural exchange activities*, such as: cultural tourism, cultural exchange events, language studies, super star visit...
- ▶ *Encouraging various forms of collaboration between businesses* in Korea and in Southeast Asia countries

# 5. Conclusion

- ▶ In general, impact of K-pop in Southeast Asia region in various aspects: increase of fan clubs, idol visits, tourism, cultural products exports, and even some other forms of collaboration and exchange.
- ▶ Korean wave is also realized to have a better competitiveness in comparison with Japanese wave and Western cultural wave.
- ▶ However, K-pop should try to improve some of its weaknesses, such as: excessive sexy, the mediocre lyric, and the stereotypic pattern.
- ▶ To strengthen Korean wave competitiveness, Korean media companies must try to connect K-pop with other cultural events.
- ▶ Some suggestions include: support culture flow, take advantage of new technologies, facilitate cultural exchange, set up collaborative framework.
- ▶ Some limitations of this paper, such as: using secondary data, lack of a theoretical framework, and not include all countries in Southeast Asia region.

# References

- ▶ Ainslie, M.J. (2016). Korean Overseas Investment and Soft Power: Hallyu in Laos, Korea Journal, 56 (3) (autumn 2016): 5-32.
- ▶ Asia Plus Inc. (2020). Entertainment contents likeness: Korea vs. Japan. Retrieved from: <https://qandme.net/vi/baibaocao/so-sanh-cac-noi-dung-giai-tri-nhat-ban-va-han-quoc.html>
- ▶ Chen, S. (2016), Cultural technology: a framework for marketing cultural exports— analysis of Hallyu (the Korean wave), International Marketing Review, 33 (1). Permanent link to this document: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IMR-07-2014-0219>
- ▶ Chung, P. (2013). Co-Creating Korean Wave in Southeast Asia Digital Convergence and Asia's Media Regionalization, Journal of Creative Communications, 8 (2&3), 193-208.
- ▶ Jang, W. & Song, J.E. (2017). Webtoon as a New Korean Wave in the Process of Glocalization, Kritika Kultura, 29, 168-187.
- ▶ Kim, S. M., & Park, M. J. (2020). Evaluation of cross-national global market segmentation and strategy: The case of Korean Wave for ASEAN countries, Asia Pacific Management Review, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmrv.2020.04.001>
- ▶ Mang, H.K. (2017). Webtoon Hallyu 'Will win over global comics market.' Hankookilbo Korea Times, Retrieved from: <http://www.hankookilbo.com/v/7a33b9e49ba14b0f83f22b283977d8da>
- ▶ Pham, Q. T., & Tran, N.K.P. (2020). The impact of incentive mechanism and knowledge sharing motivation on the satisfaction of fanpage's members on Facebook in Vietnam, International Journal of Entertainment Technology and Management, 1 (1).
- ▶ Phan, T.T. (2014). Asianization, Imagination, Fan Culture and Cultural Capital of Vietnamese Youth: A Case Study of K-pop Cover Dance Groups in Hanoi Vietnam, AIKS Korean Studies Conference Proceedings, vol. 1.
- ▶ Phan, T.T.H. (2016). The Strength and Weakness of Korean Wave in Vietnam (In Comparison with Japanese one). CefiaWiki. Retrieved from: [http://cefia.aks.ac.kr:84/index.php?title=THE\\_STRENGTH\\_AND\\_WEAKNESS\\_OF\\_KOREAN\\_WAVE\\_IN\\_VIETNAM\(IN\\_COMPARISON\\_WITH\\_JAPANESE\\_ONE\)](http://cefia.aks.ac.kr:84/index.php?title=THE_STRENGTH_AND_WEAKNESS_OF_KOREAN_WAVE_IN_VIETNAM(IN_COMPARISON_WITH_JAPANESE_ONE))
- ▶ Q&Me. (2019). What comes up for Korea? Retrieved from: <https://qandme.net/vi/baibaocao/muc-do-pho-bien-cua-van-hoa-han-quoc-tai-viet-nam.html>
- ▶ Sunmi, S., & Thongdee, K. (2016). The Impact of Korean Wave on the Purchase Intention of Korean Cosmetics of Thai People in Bangkok and Chonburi, Thailand, PSAKU International Journal of Interdisciplinary Researchm, 5 (2), 76-83.
- ▶ Tanik, P., & Nuananong, P. (2019). The Korean Wave in Thailand: The Influence of South Korea's Entertainment Culture on Thai Students' TV and Film Consumption Behavior, Proceedings of RSU Research Conference.
- ▶ UNESCO. (2016). THE GLOBALISATION OF CULTURAL TRADE: A SHIFT IN CONSUMPTION International flows of cultural goods and services 2004-2013. UNESCO Institute for Statistics.
- ▶ Vox.com (2018). How K-pop became a global phenomenon. Retrieved from: <https://www.vox.com/culture/2018/2/16/16915672/what-is-kpop-history-explained>
- ▶ Wikipedia. (2020). K-pop. Retrieved from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K-pop>
- ▶ Yan.vn. (2020). Ten countries love K-pop the most. Retrieved from: <https://www.yan.vn/10-quoc-gia-chim-dam-trong-kpop-nhat-indonesia-top-1-viet-nam-top-3-238740.html>

**Thank you!**

---

**Q & A**