

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

As technology advances, the impact of the accelerating globalization process becomes increasingly apparent, with the connections and interconnections between nations worldwide becoming increasingly apparent, across social, economic, and cultural dimensions. The ongoing globalization process does not preclude the influx of foreign cultures into Indonesia. The foreign cultures popular among Indonesia's younger generation today originate not only from Western countries like North America and Europe, but also from East Asia.

One of the foreign cultures that has successfully penetrated Indonesia with quite a significant influence is the Korean wave, which originates from South Korea. According to the official Korean.net website, Korean wave *Hallyu*, or Korean drama, is the phenomenon of the global spread of Korean culture. The term first emerged in the 1990s, when the Korean drama "What Is Love" became the second most popular imported series in China of all time during its broadcast on China Central Television. In Indonesia, the emergence of the Korean wave was marked by the broadcast of the drama "Endless Love" on a local private television station in 2002 (korean.net).

In addition to films and drama series, the spread of the Korean wave phenomenon has also been bolstered by the influence of another product of the South Korean entertainment industry: Korean pop music, or K-Pop. K-Pop is a subgenre of South Korean pop music identified with groups of artists such as boyband and girlband *which* is under the auspices of an agency. According to Nisrina (2020:79), the massive popularity of K-pop in Indonesia began with the popularity of the song "Nobody" by Wonder Girl was released in 2008. After that, many other second-generation K-Pop groups began to enter and become famous in Indonesia. Currently, K-Pop's popularity in Indonesia has entered its fourth generation, dominated by several groups such as Stray Kids, ATEEZ, TXT, TREASURE, ENHYPEN, SuperM, (G)I-dle, ITZY, Aespa, and New Jeans. (validnews.id).

The emergence of K-pop in Indonesia has given rise to a loyal fan base ranging from teenagers to young adults. K-pop fans are members of a fandom. According to Dewi, et al. (2022), *fandom* falls into the subculture category, which refers to fan groups formed due to an interest in a common object. In the context of K-pop, this attraction is the band idolized by each fandom. The success of K-pop in Indonesia is inseparable from the idolization culture carried

out by K-pop fandoms. The idolization culture in question includes several activities, such as interacting with idols' and fellow fans' posts on social media, regularly streaming newly released songs on streaming service providers, participating in award-winning events, purchasing music and official merchandise, attending events such as fan gathering or meet and greet, as well as buying tickets and attending concerts. This idolization culture is what helps build hype and fan loyalty. Loyal fans will not hesitate to contribute to the long-term sustainability of the group's activities. Reported by Luminate Data, the top 100 K-Pop artists globally in 2023 had a total of 90.4 billion On-Demand streams (audio and video on YouTube, Spotify, and other platforms). The total number of on-demand streams in Indonesia reached 7.4 billion, making Indonesia the third largest contributor to K-Pop artist streaming figures worldwide (luminatedata.com).

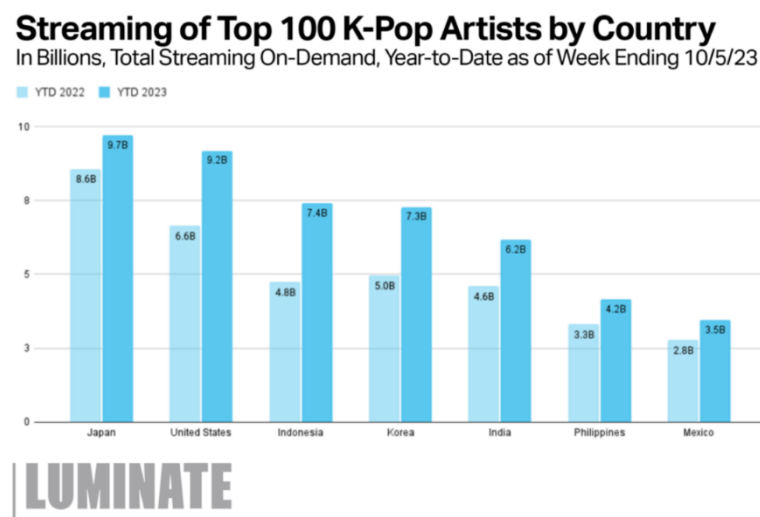


Figure 1.1 Streaming Data of Top 100 K-Pop Artists by Country
(Source: <https://luminatedata.com/blog/mapping-out-k-pops-global-dominance/>, accessed on 19/9/2024)

The massive influence of K-pop fandom culture in Indonesia has given rise to the phenomenon of parasocial relationships between fans and their idols. According to Horton and Wohl, as cited by Liebers (2019), parasocial interaction is a one-way relationship between the audience and a figure who plays a role in a media (celebrity, fictional character, or social media influencer). Horton and Wohl describe parasocial interactions as interactions that are “one-sided, non-dialectical, driven by the nature of the media, and do not allow for reciprocity.” In the context of K-pop, these parasocial relationships are characterized by interpersonal connections that arise from a false sense of intimacy between fans and K-pop idols. Fans feel as if they know their idols through the personas they portray. This can create a sense of

attachment that is typically found in two-way social relationships. These parasocial relationships are not only strengthened through interactions between K-pop fans and their idols, but also through interactions between K-pop fans. Thanks to the development of social networks like Twitter, these interactions can be conducted through accounts. Fanpage and K-Pop bases, where every K-Pop fan who joins can send anonymous public messages to their entire fanbase and express their love for their biases or favorite groups, and frequently tweet reactions to their idols' activities. In addition to frequently updating their idols on their activities, many fans express their desire to meet, take photos with, hug, kiss, and even marry their idols.



Figure 1.2 Streaming Data of Top 100 K-Pop Artists by Country
(Source: Personal documentation)

Giles and Maltby (2006) used the Celebrity Attitudes Scale, a questionnaire introduced by McCutcheon, Lange, and Houran (2006) to measure levels of parasocial relationships in a large-scale survey. At the end of the survey, they identified three levels of parasocial relationships: *Entertainment-Social*, *Intense-Personal*, And *Borderline Pathological*. At the first stage, *Entertainment Social*, celebrities/media characters are merely sources of gossip and entertainment. Most people engage in parasocial relationships at this stage. The second stage, *Intense-Personal*, is the stage where the audience has a stronger emotional attachment to the celebrity/media character, reflecting intense feelings, or even compulsive thoughts about the celebrity/media character they idolize. At this stage, the audience develops an intense emotional connection and bond with the celebrity/media character. Like the attraction or liking that arises in general, the audience is not completely able to control these feelings towards the celebrity/media character. However, the audience still has enough self-awareness to know that their relationship with the celebrity/media character is one-way. The third stage, *Borderline-Pathological*, Audiences tend to have obsessive, even aggressive, fantasies and behaviors associated with celebrities/media characters beyond their control. At this level, a person

worships the celebrity to the extreme, has obsessive fantasies about the celebrity, spends large sums of money on memorabilia, and may engage in illegal activities such as stalking. At this level, people also typically believe that if only they were given the chance to meet their favorite celebrity in person, their feelings would be reciprocated.

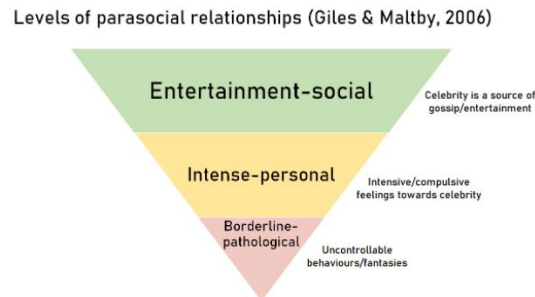


Figure 1.3 3 Levels of Parasocial Relationships according to Giles and Maltby (2006)
 (Source: <https://www.simplyneuroscience.org/post/getting-real-with-parasocial-relationships>, accessed on 18/10/2024)

Based on the results of the questionnaire in this design, 67.5% of K-Pop fans in Indonesia fall into the category *Entertainment-Social* and 30.8% of them fall into the category *Intense-Personal*. However, there are also some cases of fandom wars and cyberbullying where fans show obsessive and aggressive behavior that occurs at the *Borderline-Pathological* stage. According to Lestari (2023), the phenomenon of fandom war is a dispute between fans and other fans in an effort to defend their idols. Based on search results on Twitter, one of the famous fan ware cases is of a cyberbullying case by K-Pop fans in Indonesia is the Safa Space case, where Safa, a minor, experienced bullying initiated by fans of the K-Pop group NCT because they were considered to have committed hate *speech against* the members of the NCT group. Safa was forced to join a live space on Twitter, initiated by the account @Beflowerr, a 29-year-old woman who claims to be a representative of Na Jaemin and Huang Renjun even though she has no connection with the two idols.

The real negative impacts of parasocial relationships are not only felt at later stages. Based on surveys and interviews, some K-Pop fans involved in parasocial relationships have experienced difficulty controlling financial spending, experienced problems in establishing interpersonal relationships, and developed an unrealistic perception of the ideal romantic relationship. Based on survey results and research from various sources, some of the negative impacts of parasocial relationships include depression, excessive anxiety, *compulsive buying*, aggressive behavior, obsessions and addictions, and loneliness and self-isolation.

This parasocial relationship phenomenon has a significant impact on teenage and young adult K-Pop fans. According to Utami (2020), adolescence is a time when teenagers are searching for their identity and are highly impressionable due to their unbridled desire to learn and try new things. Therefore, teenagers are easily influenced by trends and pop culture like K-Pop. However, the number of K-Pop fans in the young adult age range is also quite large. Based on research from (Triadanti, 2019), the number of K-Pop fans in Indonesia in the 15-20 age group reached 38.1%, and in the 20-25 age group it was 40.7%. Although young adults have a more mature mindset and mental readiness, the pressures experienced at these ages, such as the quarter-life crisis, cause young adults to seek support and entertainment in various forms.

Despite the widespread occurrence of parasocial relationships, according to a questionnaire, 62 of 120 respondents (51.7%) were still unaware of parasocial relationships and their impact on daily life. Eighty-one respondents (67.5%) also agreed that education about parasocial relationships and their impact on daily life was necessary.

Therefore, appropriate educational media is needed to explain the dangers of parasocial relationships among K-Pop fans in Indonesia. In this era of globalization, along with rapid technological developments, the intensity of digital media use in daily life is also increasing. Generally, K-Pop fans interact extensively with audio-visual digital media such as Music Video (MV) and recordings of idols during concerts made directly by fans (*fancam*s). Based on the results of the questionnaire, K-Pop fans also spend a lot of their time interacting with websites that provide video sharing such as YouTube and TikTok. The types of content watched by K-Pop fans vary widely, from entertainment to educational content, as long as the videos are related to their idols. Currently, there are many educational media in the form of videos that use 2D animation with a distinctive narrative style to attract viewers' attention. Furthermore, 2D animation is also easily digested by a wide audience. Considering these factors, it can be concluded that one suitable alternative educational media has the potential to become a means of educating about the dangers of parasocial relationships among K-Pop fans in Indonesia. The design of this 2D animation video is expected to provide education, both to K-Pop fans and non-K-Pop fans, about the dangers of parasocial relationships among K-Pop fans in Indonesia and how to prevent them.

1.2 Identification of problems

1. Based on the background of the increasingly prevalent parasocial relationship phenomenon in this social media era, it is known that excessive parasocial interactions have several significant impacts on young adult K-Pop fans, such as consumer behavior,

the phenomenon of loneliness, aggressive behavior, obsession and fanaticism, and others.

2. Many K-Pop fans still lack insight into parasocial relationships. According to the questionnaire, 48.3% of respondents were unaware of what a parasocial relationship was before taking the survey.
3. Based on questionnaire responses, parasocial relationships among K-Pop fans have a significant impact on their daily lives. Many respondents exhibited the following characteristics: *Intense-Personal*: 73.3% of fans depend on idols for their happiness, 90.8% of fans use idols as a form of support for escapism, 63% of fans are willing to take action to defend an idol's good name, and 55% are willing to spend most of their money on idol merchandise if given the opportunity. Furthermore, during their time as K-Pop fans, 12.5% of respondents admitted to having difficulty managing expenses, 33% developed an unrealistic perception of ideal relationships, and 12.5% experienced difficulties in interpersonal relationships. Some of the respondents admitted to having experienced compulsive buying, depression, anxiety, and antisocial behavior while being a K-Pop fan.
4. Technological advancements have encouraged the use of digital media as a means of educating people about the dangers of parasocial relationships among K-Pop fans. 69.2% of questionnaire respondents admitted to frequently using video-sharing sites. 46.7% use TikTok to watch videos and reels, and 36.7% use YouTube. The most frequently watched videos include music videos (MV's), *fancams*, vlogs, memes, and animation. Therefore, the appropriate educational media is animated educational videos with sufficient length for YouTube and TikTok. Animated videos were chosen because they are easy to access and popular.

1.3 Problem Formulation

The problem formulation that can be concluded based on the background and identification of existing problems is "How to design a 2D animation video that is able to explain the dangers of the parasocial relationship phenomenon of K-Pop fans and its prevention for young adults aged 18-22 years"

1.4 Problem Limitations

1. This design focuses on designing an educational animated video packaged with a fictional storyline that discusses the meaning of parasocial relationships, its phenomenon in the world of K-Pop, the negative impacts caused by this phenomenon

in everyday life, and its prevention.

2. This animated video is designed in general for both K-Pop and non-K-Pop fans without cornering any fan segment of any group.

1.5 Objectives

1. Providing insights into the existence of the parasocial relationship phenomenon that occurs among K-Pop fans.
2. Helping raise awareness among young adult K-Pop fans who are trapped in unhealthy parasocial relationships.
3. Creating interesting and informative educational media about the dangers of unhealthy parasocial relationships, their impacts, and prevention in everyday life in the form of 2D animated videos that are able to convey strong and impressive information to K-Pop fans, especially those aged 18-22 years.

1.6 Benefits

1. For university institutions, this design is a form of utilizing 2D animation media as a modern educational tool that is interesting, informative, with visuals that are easy to understand, and its suitability in the digital era, where video sharing platforms are often used to spread new insights by the public, including young adult K-Pop fans.
2. For the public, this project is expected to raise awareness of the phenomenon of parasocial relationships and their dangers if left unchecked, especially among K-Pop fans. This way, K-Pop fans can be wiser and gain more control over their parasocial relationships, preventing them from falling prey to their negative impacts. If they do fall into a parasocial relationship, this video is expected to help K-Pop fans recognize the severity of the symptoms before seeking professional help.
3. For students, this design is an effort to improve their skills and creativity in order to create attractive and effective 2D animation visuals in communicating new messages and insights.

1.7 Planning Framework

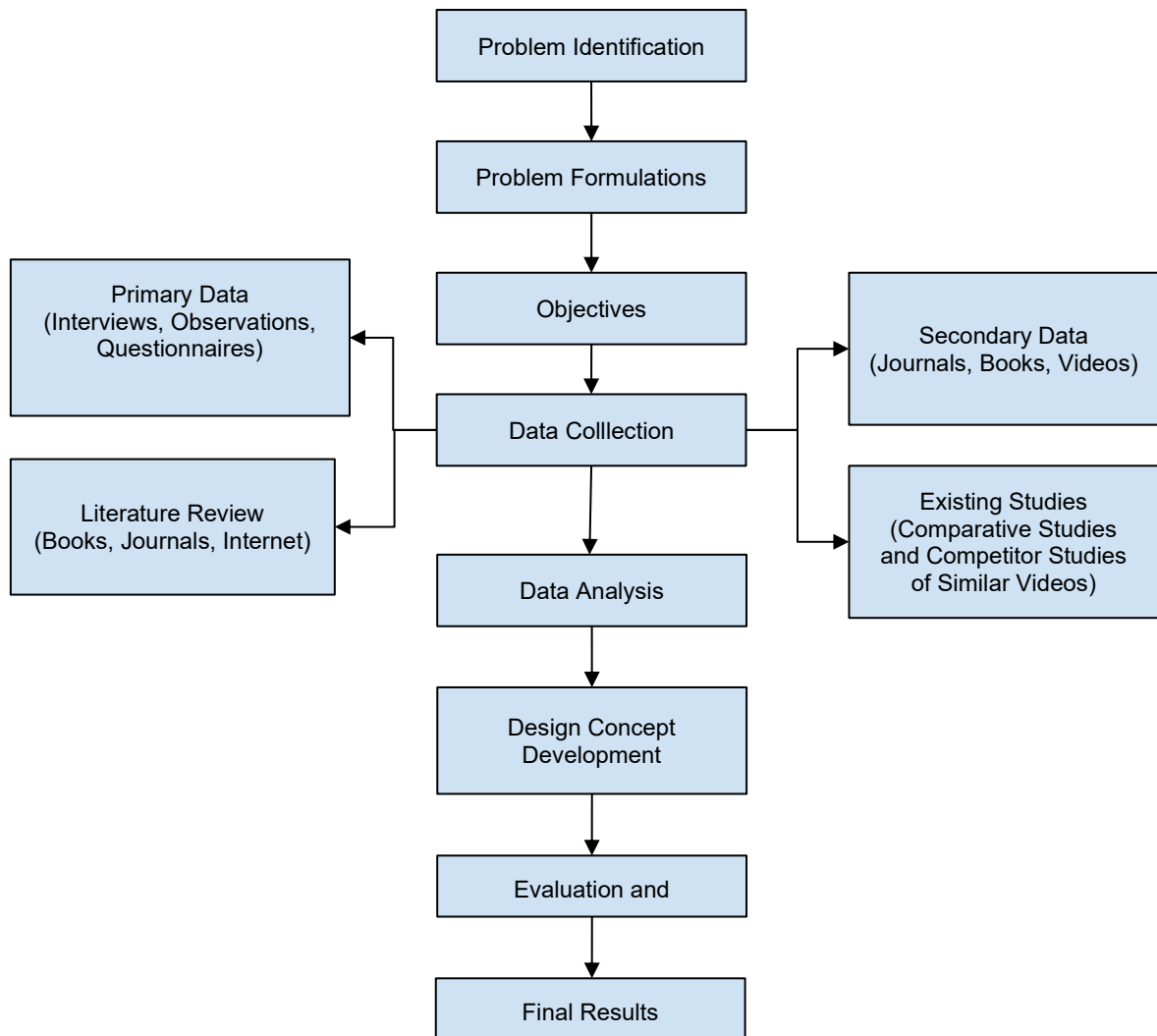


Figure 1.4 Planning Framework
(Source: personal documentation)