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# Factors Facilitating Foreign Amateur Musicians earn Popularity on YouTube Worldwide:

# A Case Study of Global and Local Identities of Thai Amateur Musicians

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## Abstract

Since YouTube has been introduced to the music industry, it has played the important role for amateurs or unknown musicians to establish their own music careers while being independent from record labels. YouTube is recognized as one of freemium streaming music services helping musicians to publicize and increase their popularity in global audiences. However, not every musician would be popularly successful on being YouTubers or widely known enough. It leads to the questions what factors facilitating those musicians around the world became popular in this platform are. One of the most interesting factors is Globalization which means conducting business according to local and global considerations. Therefore, this research will focus on YouTube musicians in a country where a national identity is strong like Thailand which can be penetrated very well in this high competitive international market like YouTube. This research studied factors facilitating foreign musicians earn popularity on YouTube worldwide and how Thai amateur musicians succeed on YouTube. Quantitative data surveyed from a sample of 540 Thai who have experienced music via YouTube. Partial Least Square (SmartPLS) software was conducted to analyze Structural Equation Model (SEM). This study found that Culture Domination and Globalization are the highest two impact factors respectively towards YouTube popularity by foreign musicians.

Keywords: YouTuber, Globalization, Culture Domination, Hybridization, SEM

JEL Classification Code: L10, M10, M30

## **1. Introduction**

Tomlinson (1999) suggested one of the characteristics of globalization which is 'Complex Connectivity.' It appears that rapid development of digital technology and internet increase more connectivity by creating global media (Wisktrom, 2009)

These phenomena affected the chang of music business. Base on developing of internet, three new characteristics are introduced by Wikstrom (2009) less control more connectivity, products became services, and increasing of amateur musicians.

The beginning of new music business model occurred from free sharing of digital music through the internet which makes record rapidly lose control from selling tangible music like CD or cassette. The solution to survive from internet piracy was to value free music area by creating the streaming music services base on internet platform like Spotify, Apple Music, etc. Those streaming services allow musicians.

or singers promote their music to global audiences and be generated without signing any contract with

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According to Cayari (2011, p.24), YouTube recognized as one of the global medias reflecting all characteristics of online music business models. YouTube allows people to upload their videos and change the way audiences and musicians consume, create and share their music.

Influenced by YouTube, Milgram firstly introduce the concept of 'Small World' which reflect 'Connectivity.' He stated that 'the principle that people are linked to all others by short chains of acquaintance (Milgram, 1967 cited by Cheng, Dale, and Liu, 2008: 213)'.

Verge (2015) claimed that the world's largest streaming music service was YouTube. Its functions also supported amateur musicians to start their own music business in several aspects. As a consumer, YouTube uniquely offers special services like free listening while watching a music video. As a content creator, musician can use YouTube to promote their music and it act like a space for establishing their own music business by generating income from YouTube.

In the corner of YouTube advertisement and

compensation, Zach Pinnell (2015) revealed YouTubers including amateur musicians would be generated at \$ 0.80 per 1,000 views by banner advertisements or \$5-\$8 per 1,000 views by rollout (Commercial advertisements advertisements appearing before playing a content.) With a content creators, YouTube share their advertisements compensation approximately 45%. Clicked by a viewers, the compensation of advertisement would be collected. This collecting revenue process based on advertisements is called 'Cost Per Click' or CPC. In addition, the compensation from advertisement can be collected by 'Cost per View' or CPV also. Jason Alleger (2014) clarified the collector will be generated among \$0.1 - \$0.3 depending on higher or lower ends of each advertisement, and the owner of channel could withdraw cash from YouTube when the revenue reach every \$100. Analysing from their big data, YouTube and Google will pick up interesting advertisements that guarantee the highest possibility for viewers to click (Pinnell, 2015). To be generated and settle business with YouTube, the popularity on YouTube Channel is necessary.

YouTube helped channel creator increase their fanbases in global level. In other words, amateur musicians build up fanbases and gain more popularity which increase CPC and CPV. The idea of connectivity among musicians and their audiences has changed following YouTube usage. Its functions such as live, comments, or inbox, encourage communication among creators and consumers.

Cyari (2011) observed a successful amateur musician called Wade Johnston, and explore how he settle music business in YouTube platform. Three strategies make Wade Johnston video became more and more popular. For the first strategy, doing cover on popular songs releasing from giant record labels will help to rapidly increase popularity and subscribe. Moreover, it has a chance that the coverer will gain more fanbases from original artists. After covering 'I'm Your' by Jason Mraz, Johnston found that only one night viewers had been increasing from 1,000 to 25,000 and continually to 200,000 in a couple month. To expand fanbase, this strategy could be suggested as the first gate for an amateur musician since popular songs from giant record labels influence large amount of global audiences. With this strategy, it will be easier to compose his own songs and promote later.

The second strategy is about high quality of music production mainly focusing on complex and creative videos. Motion pictures or film are the most completed form of art media including storytelling performing, aural and visual presentation (Cayari, 2011, 3). Because of industry revolution and technology development, film has been able to transform into digital video which allow similar arts to be consumed and produced by computer (Cayari, 2011, 4). With YouTube, musicians not only have chances to show their music and arrangement skills, they also present their visual creativity into the same production. As a complex multitask video, 'I'm yours,' covered by Wade Johnston was combined between six distinct videos and audio tracks together.

Third strategy making new YouTube get more popularity is featuring with other YouTubers. YouTube Christmas Extravaganza 2008 was a special project conducting by Wade Johnston. He invited other YouTube musicians to sing Christmas songs. There are several advantages from their collaboration. Since those musicians help each other to promote their channels, they gain more subscriptions from fanbase sharing and enhance new creativity and characteristics into each video.

Lastly, since creator can use special effects in their videos, some audiences question about real talents of music YouTubers. This is a reason why live performance was still important to Wade Johnson and other music YouTubers. His concert was promoted through his YouTube channel increasing diversity in his channel.

In Thailand, musicians also use YouTube to their songs and establish their own music business. Promoting through this platform, a lot of amateur musicians are born and being successful from YouTube. Some audiences pay attention on quality of production, while some focused only on contents. However, not every music YouTuber will be successful in this platform. The factors of success and failure become one of the most interesting topic to explore. It surprises that sometime 'cultural identity' become one of the factors that making amusicians became popular in global area or not. In term of cultural heritage, to include local culture into music or video productions is somehow suggested. In the other hand, local identity such as languages or local music become limitation for global audiences to understand. It means those YouTubers could generate fans only in their countries and that would limit the chance to go worldwide. How to preserve and present local culture in music and video production while being successful in global space is a precious question for musicians or YouTubers in a country who has strong national identity like in Thailand. The situation obviously reflects dilemma between arts and business.

# 2. Literature Review

## Globalization

'Globalization is 'a situation in which available goods and services, or social and cultural influences, gradually become similar in all parts of the world' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). According to Tomlinson (1999), cultural imperialism has come with globalization. In other word, some strong culture is going to dominate other culture and turn to be hegemonic culture. In Thailand, globalization enhance western music dominance toward Thai local music (Primrose). Therefore, 'cultural imperialism' will be one of the social theories using to explain how music industry is formed from globalization.

#### Americanization

According to Tomlison (1999), United States of America started spreading their culture and products from Europe to other countries around the world. Since America culture was showed in European products and media, Europe admit that their culture such as arts, folk music, and traditional working or practices were threatened by Americanization (Hebdige (1981) cited by Negus (1996-2008:165)). To prevent European identity, they came up with several policies to limit the influences from the United States such as media policies in 1990s (Morley and Robin, 1995), and Stalinist's policies in Eastern Europe, former Soviet Union, and Nazi policies in German. Those policies were used to balance hegemony from the United Stated, preoccupied by EU scholars during 1930s to 1950s. Not only in Europe, but American corporations had also influenced in Japan and Latin America (particular in Chile) after Second World War. American started its icon in other countries from products to giant corporations such as Hamburgers, T-Shirts, Coca-Cola, Micky Mouse and Disneyland (Tomlison: 1999, 80). The local products had been replaced by industrial products and it proved that American image was better than local at that time. Westernization

Westernization refers to non-western culture that had been impacted and commanded by the western culture far and wide. According to Latouche, 1996, Westernization world-broadly attempted to institutionalize their ways of life around the globe. Not just European language strength (specific English), non-western societies turned to be the shoppers of western free enterprise including dietary, dressing fashion, architectural design and musical trend. Their way of life was ruled by broad communications or mass media. Indeed, even in term of disposition, non-western societies likewise receive several attitudes toward the social qualities and contexts, for example, individual freedom, sexuality and so on. At that point, western culture turns into the notoriety human progress framing thought of worldwide innovation and attempts to culturally universe non-westerners. This prompted propensity to overlook the cultures of nonwesterners regardless of whether it was their own way of life. Be that as it may, despite the fact that it has been to a great extent overwhelmed nonwesterners, the culture of western itself is ruled by singular country or states like US of America.

#### Hybridization

As indicated by Negus (1996:175), the

additional phenomena of globalizing in music is 'hybridization' (some of the time known as a hybrid) alluding to music making from persistent cooperation of 'Third World' and 'Western' music. Straubhaar (1997) claims, hybridization is made to acquaint the practice of global culture with to local society. Since the culture of western music was adjusted into culture of Thai music industry, (for example, electric instruments with Thai verse in 1930), Thai mainstream music was composed in 'Hybrid' style mixing with western music structure and instruments. Madpupet Studio, one of music YouTube Channel, rearranges and covers Thai popular music as the core contents. In the present Thai popular music component comprise with western music culture including instruments and practice except 'Thai Lyrics.' Thai music culture is by all accounts subdominant and fringe culture of western music mastery which shows the phenomena of hybridization in Thai popular music.

#### Transnational corporate culture domination

According to Schiller (1991) cited in Negus (1996), not only Americanization or Westernization reflecting national and cultural dominant, he phenomena proposed another of cultural imperialism which is 'transnational corporate culture domination.' It refers to Global companies or worldwide organizations relating with countries, however not legitimately countries (Negus, 1996), culturally influence world. After items and culture of US had ruled in different locales, a portion of those country or area additionally turned into the pioneer of private enterprise (Negus, 1996). The advancement of private enterprise had made the main entrepreneur countries begin supporting their own ventures and economies to rival different countries. A serious is battle between significant industrialist countries and their organizations. It drove those countries to grow companies and found the benefit from oversea domains. For well-known music chiefly driving music industry, Japan, USA, Northern European, and giant organizations have been looking for various domains in other lands, extending their music activities. From the viewpoint of transnational corporate culture control, it could state that worldwide well known music culture productions and practice are institutionalized from fundamental gigantic record labels like Warner Music Group, Universal Music Group, and Sony Music Group. Thailand additionally adjusts those transnational corporate societies to create core value of music industry of Thailand. On the direct, Thai famous music was made yet then again, it diminishes the estimation of Thai conventional music.

#### New Culture Imperialism Phenomena: Music Cover Culture and Production on YouTube

In YouTube cover music culture, 'Kurt Hugo

Schneider', an American music YouTuber, influences and standadized Thai cover music YouTubers such as Madpupet Studio and Billbilly01. Schneider has 12.8 million subscribers, 3,173,592,146 videos, \$5.3K - \$85.5K for monthly pay and \$64.1K - \$1M for daily pay. His prosperity ensures the nature of his music creation and systems. In the corner of production, he additionally adjusts extraordinary strategy of music video, for example, 'diagetic'. For his production, Kurt Hugo Schneider likewise utilize three techniques that Cayari (2011) considered from Ward Johnson: 1) Start covering popular songs, 2) Make confounded and high caliber of production, 3) Featuring with different music YouTubers. Those procedures and music production styles result in culturally standardizing on how to do cover music on YouTube, and since other Thai music YouTubers like Billbilly01 and Madpuppet Studio received those influences, cultural imperialism from American YouTubers was set on some Thai music YouTubers.

## Sub Culture

Maryprasith (1999) referenced that global mainstream music is developed from local music therefore global music is hybridized before going worldwide. Transnational organizations culture control from huge record labels like Sony, Universal, Warner music groups appears to impact on the cultural practice of music industry in Thailand. Not only the industry, it appears as though Thai mainstream music is adopted global music cultural practice excessively and it doesn't have a lot of effect when present Thai mainstream music creation to worldwide crowd. Additionally, Thai verse likewise restrains language malediction and articulation for non-Thai worldwide crowds.

## **Global Cover Music Culture**

Music productions of Madpuppet Studio, for Madpuppet Studio's music creations, despite the fact that they need to make something new on their creation and turned into the icon of youthful performers in Thailand, they likewise embraced the act of worldwide music culture characterized as 'worldwide music spread culture' portrayed by Kurt Hugo and Schneider into their creation. In context of Thai local crowds, Madpuppet Studio accomplishment to present new attribute of music spread in Thai well known melody; be that as it may, their creation motivated by Kurt Hugo Schneider isn't make diverse for YouTube worldwide crowds and just Thai local will feel increased in value.

For one of the samples to acquire worldwide crowds, Madpuppet Studio may need to make and present new style of music creation which pull in enthusiasm of worldwide crowds by special creation until those crowds disregard the restriction of local language in Thai well known melodies. The music video of Gangnam Style on YouTube could be the genuine guide to draw consideration from worldwide crowd by general comical inclination and fun moving that crowd could imitated and feel partook of music video. At long last, Gangnam Style picked up the most worldwide watchers of YouTube without confinement of Korean Language in tune.

Though, it is obvious that most videos featured on the channel are based on Thai music, works tend to be in the international styles with the rearrangement that fits to the international ears and eyes. Some of the clips are subtitled with English translation when the songs were sung in Thai. It is seen that many videos contain not just comments in Thai, but also in different languages as well.

Therefore, after the literatures were sufficiently reviewed, the researcher developed and proposed the conceptual framework and its hypotheses to get a deeper understanding of the relations amongst the variables in this research as a measurement to understand the relevant variables facilitating those musicians around the world became popular in this platform and the relationship of each variable between them. (Kitcharoen & Vongurai, 2020).

## **Proposed Research Model and Hypothesis**



Figure 1. Proposed Model

## 3. Research Methods and Materials

#### Sample and Data Collection

Sample size suggestion usually depends on how the model is complicated, but typically ranges between 5 to 20 questionnaires per observed variable, with entire sample size should exceed 200 cases (Hair et al, 2006). Therefore, a ratio of 20:1 is acceptably reliable for a structural equation model analysis (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Thus, the study's sample size of 540 individuals for 27 observed variables (27 x 20 = 540) was highly reliable. The questionnaire was administered to 540 Thai individuals who have experienced and watched music via YouTube. The sample of this research was selected by the non-probability sampling method and the selection was done by the purposive technique. The questionnaire was established from the theories and related reviewed literature as a tool to measure the proposed research model.

#### Measurement

Five experts in the music and entertainment industry were asked to check the questionnaire's reliability to ensure that the prospective questionnaire's responders can be collected with reliability and consistency according to the method of the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), the screening of the survey questions. If the result of  $\sum x/n$  is above 0.5, it will be considered as valid. There were 54 questionnaires were responded as a trial prior to the actual survey to check as samples if the questionnaire has a tendency of reliability and consistency. The reliability value was calculated by using Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (Cronbach, 1951) to ensure internal consistency within the items. According to Best and Kahn (1998), when calculating Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ), if it ranges from 0 to 1 and a value of  $\geq$ 0.70, it reflects good reliability of the questionnaire. According to the pre-test, Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) averaged 0.936 and indicated the reasonable reliability (Hair et al, 2006). All questionnaire items used a 7-point agreement scale response format (Likert, 1972), with 1 representing the manager strongly disagrees with the item's statement, while 7 representing the participant strongly agreed with the item's statement.

#### Statistical Analysis Overview

The researchers adopted the survey method for data collection, whose hypotheses were investigated by the use of the structural equation modeling software SmartPLS (Partial Least Square) 2.0 to examine the general fit of the proposed model with data and to identify the overall casual relationships among proposed constructs. Measurement and data collection implies an evaluation of the measurement model, which for the study included: 1) the individual item reliabilities, 2) the model's convergent validity, and 3) discriminant validity.

## 4. Results and Discussion

According to the analysis result of scale validity and reliability, scale investigation has been conducted using internal consistency measurement coefficient Cronbach's alpha to calculate the average value of the correlation coefficient. It was found that alpha coefficients ranged from 0.7436 to 0.9533 and the total is 0.8661. The corrected item to total correlation (CITC) was used in the data collected to purify items. The researcher suggested the items with a CITC score of higher than 0.5 are acceptable. Individual item reliability was examined by looking at the loadings, or correlations, of each indicator on its respective construct. For reflective indicators, it is generally accepted that items must have a factorial load ( $\lambda$ ) of 0.707 or above (Table 1) below (Hair et al, 2006).

Items/Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Loading	t-stat
YouTube Popularity (YOP)	0.920	0	
YOP1		0.931	71.232
YOP2		0.930	78.484
YOP3		0.924	74.181
Globalization (GLO)	0.868		
GL01		0.865	49.915
GLO2		0.912	82.609
GLO3		0.892	54.951
Culture Domination (CUD)	0.891		
CUD1		0.893	60.987
CUD2		0.926	103.198
CUD3		0.900	72.705
Americanization (AME)	0.847		
AME1		0.841	39.002
AME2		0.883	58.263
AME3		0.902	62.999
Westernization (WES)	0.953		
WES1		0.940	67.532
WES2		0.967	189.842
WES3		0.962	185.539
Hybridization (HYB)	0.744		
HYB1		0.784	23.371
HYB2		0.862	53.814
HYB3		0.778	19.703

Table 1. Convergent validity of the latent variables

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Items/Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Loading	t-stat
New Culture Imperialism (NCI)	0.836		
NCI1		0.865	46.755
NCI2		0.869	39.300
NCI3		0.869	48.528
Subdominant Culture (SUC)	0.856		
SUC1		0.896	70.276
SUC2		0.909	72.604
SUC3		0.835	37.295
Global Cover Music Culture (GCM)	0.880		
GCM1		0.892	53.750
GCM2		0.926	98.673
GCM3		0.876	50.482
Total	0.866		

Factor analysis results affecting manufacturers' e-waste management intention with the Composite Reliability (CR) greater than 0.50 with the AVE values also greater than 0.50. Hooper et al. (2008) indicated that items with low multiple R<sup>2</sup> values ( $\leq$  0.20) should be removed from an analysis as this is an indication of very high levels of error. Hair et al. (2006), used higher criteria and suggested that the

 $R^2$  values should be greater than 0.25, representing the reliability of the measurement (Lauro & Vinzi, 2004; Henseler et al, 2009) Reliable measurements can be found in the column of interest which is higher than the cross construct correlation values in the same column shown in Table 2 and Figure 2 below.

Table 2. Statistics showing the discriminant validity

Construct	CR	$\mathbf{R}^2$	AVE		Cross Construct Correlation							
Collstruct		ĸ	K AVE	AME	CUD	GCM	GLO	HYB	NCI	SUC	WES	YOP
AME	0.9077		0.7664	0.8743								
CUD	0.9324	0.425	0.8214	0.5488	0.9063							
GCM	0.9260		0.8066	0.3853	0.5001	0.9623						
GLO	0.9193	0.4022	0.7915	0.5838	0.4769	0.3246	0.8897					
HYB	0.8498		0.6541	0.5440	0.4478	0.5400	0.4972	0.8088				
NCI	0.9012		0.7525	0.7053	0.5600	0.4360	0.5991	0.4873	0.8674			
SUC	0.9121		0.7759	0.6242	0.5391	0.3973	0.6831	0.4439	0.6792	0.8809		
WES	0.9699		0.9147	0.4019	0.2695	0.3858	0.4241	0.5611	0.3674	0.3687	0.9564	
YOP	0.9495	0.4254	0.8623	0.4908	0.6215	0.4398	0.4703	0.4973	0.4914	0.4928	0.3616	0.9286

Remarks: The diagonally listed values are the AVE square roots of the variables

An Influence of each of the variables that affect the popularity on YouTube by amateur musicians is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Direct (DE), Indirect (IE), and Total (TE) Effects of the Independent Variables

Variables	R <sup>2</sup>	Effect	Independent Variables								
Variables			AME	CUD	GCM	GLO	HYB	NCI	SUC	WES	
YouTube Popularity (YOP)	0.4254	DE		0.514		0.225					
		IE	0.096		0.147		0.041	0.140	0.124	0.034	
		TE	0.096	0.514	0.147	0.225	0.041	0.140	0.124	0.034	
Globalization (GLO)	0.4022	DE	0.424				0.181			0.152	
		IE									
		TE	0.424				0.181			0.152	
Culture Domination (CUD)	0.4250	DE			0.286			0.272	0.241		
		IE									
		TE			0.286			0.272	0.241		

All hypotheses had statistical significance which is considered to have high reliability (Table 4) by  $|t| \ge 2.575$ , means significance at  $p \le 0.01$  (Lauro & Vinzi, 2004; Henseler et al, 2009).

Table 4. Results of hypotheses testing	
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Hypotheses	coef.	t-stat	Results
H1 :Americanization directly influences Globalization	0.424	7.327	Supported
H2 :Westernization directly influences Globalization	0.152	2.834	Supported
H3 :Hybridization directly influences Globalization	0.181	2.827	Supported
H4 :New Culture Imperialism directly influences Culture Domination	0.272	4.192	Supported
H5 :Subdominant Culture directly influences Culture Domination	0.241	3.874	Supported
H6 :Global Cover Music Culture directly influences Culture Domination	0.286	5.649	Supported
H7 :Globalization directly influences YouTube Popularity	0.225	4.357	Supported
H8 :Culture Domination directly influences YouTube Popularity	0.514	10.678	Supported

## 5. Conclusion

From the quantitative result, it showed that the culture domination is the highest factors facilitating the foreign YouTubers to be popular, while Americanization ranked second. YouTube is a global media giving the new opportunity for amateur musicians who want to establish their own music business. From this research, it is shown that there are 8 factors would affect the popularity on YouTube of amateur musicians especially from foreign countries, which are Americanization, Westernization, Hybridization, New Culture Imperialism, Subdominant Culture, Global Cover Music Culture and Globalization. However, Culture Domination is the highest impact factor towards the popularity and Globalization is the second highest one in which both factors also act as mediators of other exogenous variables indirectly affecting the YouTube popularity. Therefore, all exogenous variables should be encouraged by musicians who plan to expose and penetrate themselves to an international level with the mixed of the local and global identities.

As indicated by the investigation, three procedures, spread well known tunes, make complex creation, and team up with different artists, may ensure the effective variables of music business on YouTube. In any case, one of the variables that makes novice artists turned out to be less effective is music culture causing neighborhood beginner artists may leave their personality and show just worldwide character for their business fruitful. The approach to advance neighborhood music culture from government may be perceived as one of the answers for make music culture notable for worldwide crowd and battle the centrality of its incentive among neighborhood individuals. With this perfect, ideally the novice performers could convey their music personality and furthermore got effective in worldwide setting trough YouTube. At long last, those novice artists will be the delegate of their music societies to worldwide crowds.

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