

THE IMPACT OF JAPANESE POPULAR CULTURES TO INDONESIAN YOUNGER GENERATION: A CASE STUDY OF PUNICO

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ABSTRACT

The research probed into the influence of Japanese popular cultures on the Indonesian-younger generation in Cikarang, West Java, Indonesia. Japanese popular culture had been famed among the younger generation in Indonesia through the increasing popularity of anime. Indonesia, with 1.400 ethnic groups, had a variety of cultural diversity, but the younger generation seemed to be fonder of this foreign culture which in this case was Japanese popular culture. Through the expansion of this Japanese popular culture, Japanese culture could slip into it and could invade their local culture. This cultural expansion could have an impact on how the younger generation would preserve their local culture. Globalization also played a massive part in this cultural expansion; through the internet, it was easier to find something with foreign culture in it. The research used phenomenology research about the Japanese popular culture club of President University Nippon Community (PUNICO) in Cikarang. The research applied a qualitative approach with phenomenology methods. Data collection was done by asking the respondents questions regarding the matter. The respondents were ten members of PUNICO. The research result indicates that Japanese popular culture has been in the respondent's life long enough to change their habits and lifestyle. However, the respondents still care and have the volition to preserve their local cultures.

Keywords: Japanese popular culture, local culture, young generation

INTRODUCTION

Currently, there has been an increase in the popularity of several Japanese *anime* or animation movies. For example, the *anime Kimetsu no Yaiba* is popular because of the film that has just been released in Indonesia recently, or *Attack on Titan*, whose popularity is booming among the Indonesian-younger generation because there is a new season that aired this year. This increases the popularity of Japanese popular culture and attracts many new fans, especially from Indonesia, most of whom are the younger generation. Furthermore, the research is going to focus on how the impact of Japanese popular culture on local Indonesian culture is.

Pop culture (or popular culture) is the culture of people who dominate society at one time. Popular culture is characterized by interactions between

people in everyday activities and informed by the mass media, for example, the use of slang, dress styles, greeting procedures, and food. Sources of popular culture are mass media such as popular music, films, television, radio, video games, books, and the internet (Kusumawardhani & Sari, 2021). In this case, the research will delve into some of the most famous Japanese popular cultures, such as *anime* and *manga*.

Among the youth in Indonesia, Japanese popular culture is quite popular and well-received. Many people love and have an interest in Japanese popular culture. Indonesia, as a country, has a lot of different cultures and ethnicities. Indonesia ranks fourth in the world's most populated nation, with more than 270 million people as in the 2020 census program, and with over 17.000 islands, it is the home to more than 1.400 ethnic groups (Auwalin, 2020). However, even with these numbers, it seems the Indonesians,

especially the younger generation of Indonesian, are still not content and pleased with the many cultures that the country has to offer. Indonesians are projected to become individuals who are tolerant of other people with different religions, social, and cultural values (Putra, Rochsantiningsih, & Supriyadi, 2020). This can be why Indonesians are very easily exposed to foreign cultures. Some groups and circles in Indonesia have an interest in other cultures outside Indonesia. Furthermore, this can become an issue since the younger generation in Indonesia is not preserving or even know their own culture but can praise another culture from another nation. It is worried that the knowledge of the local culture of the younger generation can be eroded and more admire foreign culture, especially in Indonesia. Japan is one of the nations with a strong culture that is already familiar in Indonesia. The researchers would like to know the impact of this cultural exchange between Japanese popular culture and local Indonesian culture in the mind of Indonesian people, especially the younger generation.

Japan is known as a developed country that is still strong with its traditional culture and famous for its popular culture (Yuliani, Mulyadi, & Adji, 2021). Japan has achieved a lot, from the rapid advancement of technology to successfully preserving its cultural heritage. Japan is one nation that still preserves its cultural heritage, from something as small as its traditional clothes to its enormous festivals. Even though their advancement has grown substantially, they are not letting go of the past that made them what they are today. Furthermore, Japan also has some pretty distinguishable and renowned popular cultures worldwide, such as *anime* or animation movies, *manga* or Japanese comics, cosplay or costume play, and J-Music or Japanese music that has its fanbase all over the world (Pratama & Puspitasari, 2020). The Japanese government also relies on the existence of *anime*, *manga*, drama, and J-Pop music as the marketing foundation for traditional Japanese culture. This can be seen in the many Japanese anime shows that include traditional Japanese culture, from drinking tea to the emergence of various traditional Japanese foods and hot springs (Putri & Indrawati, 2020). The research will focus on *anime* and *manga* because both are intertwined forms of entertainment. Sometimes, an *anime* is created from a *manga* because the *manga* has reached some popularity, and vice versa.

It is undeniable that Japanese popular culture has attracted the attention of various public and has spread throughout the world. Several factors make Japanese popular culture, such as *anime* and *manga*, well-received by the wider community and public, not only in Japan. For example, Japanese popular culture has a high level of creativity and quality. Japanese people always express their high creativity while maximizing quality. The explored themes in some *anime* or *manga* are very diverse and unique. They usually have well-crafted and detailed character depictions and story developments that are very interesting to watch or

read (Prabowo, 2017).

This popular culture from Japan can also contain references from the original Japanese culture. An example is the behavior of Japanese people who have the habit of bowing when greeting or saying “*ittadakimasu*”, which has the same function as “*Bon Appétit*” or, in English, “Let’s eat” when Japanese people want to start eating their food. Not only cultural behavior, but Japanese popular culture can also add references from their traditional culture; for example, *anime* called *Kimi no Na wa*. It elevates traditional Japanese values and cultures, such as *Kuchikamizake*, which its literal meaning is ‘mouth-chewed sake’ that is made through traditional of making sake or alcoholic beverages in the Japanese language by using mold saliva or human saliva to break down rice starch into sugar as fermentation process. This traditional Japanese culture is shared by depicting the ritual held in the shrine in the *anime*. This traditional sake becomes one of Japan’s earliest forms of alcoholic beverage. Often the theme of the story from *anime* and *manga* revolves around the cultural value of Japan itself to spread Japanese culture around the world (Kadafi & Utami, 2021).

All of this Japanese popular culture is spread throughout the world, and Indonesia is one of the countries that embrace the globalization process of spreading Japanese popular culture. Not only embracing the Japanese popular culture in itself, but some Indonesians tend to be fond of Japan. Japan has succeeded in Indonesia in terms of cultural diplomacy and has attracted Indonesian people to Japanese popular culture (Mubah, 2019).

Japanese popular culture was first introduced in Indonesia in the late 1980s through *anime* and Japanese drama broadcast on Indonesian television. At that time, these products could only be enjoyed in Indonesian because all *anime* shows and Japanese dramas broadcasted on national television in Indonesia were translated into Bahasa Indonesia (Wahidati, Kharismawati, & Mahendra, 2018).

Today, information technology has developed at a swift pace. The use of internet technology, which used to be only known by certain circles, has become a facility that can be used in almost all parts of the world, including Indonesia. Through the internet, the younger generation can easily access the information they need. In addition, various media such as movies or music from abroad can be enjoyed easily and cheaply through the internet. Fans of Japanese popular culture also feel this convenience. Since the internet is discovered, the Japanese popular culture connoisseur is becoming more popular than ever. Now, they can enjoy various products, from *anime* to *manga*, in the original Japanese language version.

With easy access to various Japanese *anime* and *manga*, it is worried that there will be an alteration in values accepted by the younger generation, who still need a strong identity due to the values embedded in the Japanese *anime* and *manga* storyline. A filter is needed for different values that are good and bad for

young people (Hatami, 2018). In *anime* and *manga*, many cultural references from Japan can influence the teenager's perspective. Moreover, with the increasing viewer's number of Japanese *anime*, it is feared that the sense of love for the local culture of young people can be eroded and admire Japanese culture even more, especially in Indonesia. Some Japanese popular culture enthusiast in Indonesia often unites and collect themselves and form an association in which they have shared hobbies and goals.

Japanese popular culture in Indonesia has created some circles that converge Japanese culture enthusiasts to share their hobbies for the culture and care about the culture itself (Venus & Helmi, 2017). There are many circles ranging from *anime*-only circles that usually are a medium for fanbase towards anime series like *One Piece* and *Naruto*, *manga* drawing circles, cosplaying circles that usually get together to make or use cosplay when there is a Japanese themed event, and Japanese music fans circles. Even a circle of people interested in Japanese traditional culture exists in Indonesia. Within these circles, Japanese popular culture is increasingly widespread among young people. Not only that, their love of Japanese popular culture is increasing because of the many interactions between members that strengthen their awareness and knowledge of Japanese culture.

One of the examples of this circle is President University Nippon Community, abbreviated PUNICO, which locates in Cikarang, West Java, Indonesia. The member of PUNICO has the same goals and hobbies, and that is sharing their knowledge between members about Japanese culture, especially about Japanese popular culture. PUNICO was established in 2008 and still standing as a club today. They share the same love for Japanese culture and share insights and knowledge about it. The research is going to take a look at the influence of the popular culture that spread from Japan to Indonesia among PUNICO members and what impact it has on the local culture.

METHODS

The research applies a qualitative approach with phenomenology methods. Phenomenological studies explore individuals' life experiences of certain phenomena and provide a greater understanding and awareness of the meanings that individuals attribute to their experiences (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). Data collection is conducted by interview, asking the respondents questions regarding the matter. The respondents are ten members of President University Nippon Community or, in short, PUNICO in Cikarang, Indonesia with the age of the respondents being around 18-22 years old. PUNICO is a club for Japanese popular culture enthusiasts that gathers people who like Japanese popular culture and share their love for Japanese popular culture. PUNICO has three circles inside of it; there are *manga*, *anime*, and Japanese music circles.

First, the researchers want to know how long they have been exposed to Japanese pop culture and how it has affected their ways of life, such as habits, changes in behavior, or even the way they live. Then, the information is elaborated on and concluded with the help of the theories from the literature review.

The next step is to know about the respondent's knowledge of the local culture in their hometown in Indonesia. It can be historical culture, hereditary culture, or even traditional cultures such as rituals and traditions passed down. And then, the researchers want to know about the importance of preserving the local culture from the respondents' point of view. Lastly, the researchers want to ask the respondents about their opinion on how the younger generation preserves their culture. Then, it can be concluded that form the research and extract the inference that has been done to answer the research question.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Nowadays, the younger generation has been exposed to the flow of globalization, resulting in mixing foreign cultures into everyday life. This can result in the erosion of cultural values instilled by our ancestors. In this case, Japanese culture has been woven into the everyday life of the younger generation by spreading Japanese popular culture, especially among PUNICO members who have been exposed to Japanese popular culture since childhood.

Based on the results of the interviews that have been conducted, findings show that, on average, PUNICO members have known Japanese pop culture since the age of 12-15 years. Moreover, they first encounter Japanese popular culture through *anime* broadcasted on Indonesian television. This can have various impacts on how they see the world and interact with their surroundings since they have been exposed to Japanese popular culture since they were young. Japanese popular culture has variously affected their way of life.

The first question they have to answer is how Japanese pop culture affects their lives. There are 10 out of 10 respondents have said that exposure to Japanese popular culture has affected their lives because they have already been exposed to it for more than a while now. Japanese popular culture can significantly impact their lives, and some even have changes in their social life. Two respondents have said that the central circle of friends is influenced by Japanese pop culture, meaning their friends also like Japanese popular culture. That is why they can be friends because they share the same hobbies and interests. A respondent also has said that because of Japanese popular culture, he changes his behavior to become more like Japanese people because he often sees Japanese behavior in the media he consumes. Such as being more polite towards elders and not littering, and it has become a habit until now.

Not only social life but the exposure to Japanese

popular culture also changes their hobbies and interest. Three of the respondents have said that they have developed new hobbies such as drawing, cosplaying, or even playing drums because of Japanese popular culture. They have said that these hobbies are directly influenced by Japanese popular culture. The drawings are influenced by the Japanese artists drawing style from the *manga* they read; the cosplay is inspired by some *anime* characters that they love watching and have started playing music or even musical instruments such as drums, affected by the media they consume. Some have also been interested in the Japanese language and are keen to learn more about it.

A few are also affected by Japanese popular culture, which changes their perspective on how they see the world. Five respondents have said that watching *anime* and reading *manga* change their perspective because of the message conveyed in the media. The appearance of Japanese popular culture in their lives can also motivate them to be better because they love the characters of the *anime* or *manga* they consume. They are motivated because they want to be like the characters they love. Characters in *anime* can be symbols for some people, and in anime, there are so many different types of characters that it is easy to find a recognizable and relatable one (Hassan, Sallehuddin, & Aziz, 2018).

This shows that Japanese popular culture exposure changes their way of life to some extent. Popular culture plays a big part in shaping society's cultural identity (Levin & Mamlok, 2021). Popular culture is a key to the formation of identities, for the ways in which it makes sense of the world and locates itself within it. This can be justified because, according to the respondents, it shows that exposure to Japanese popular culture can change a person's identity. This is also backed up by research done in 2021 that said the current globalization, or in this case, the spreading of Japanese popular culture, has penetrated so quickly into society, especially among young people (Agus & Zulfahmi, 2021). The influence of globalization has made many of the young generations lose their personality as Indonesians.

Regardless, PUNICO members, as Indonesian, still have to know their own culture and practice to preserve local culture. The researchers want to know their knowledge about culture in their hometown or homeland because the respondents have origin from various cities and villages in Indonesia, which has a variety of cultural diversity, starting from Aceh, Jambi, Cikarang, and even from Pontianak and Bali. The question they have to answer is what is the local culture they know or their knowledge of their hometown. Based on the research conducted, it is found that the younger generation's knowledge of local cultures in Indonesia is still quite knowledgeable. 7 out of 10 respondents have knowledge of their cultural heritage in their hometowns, such as the history and myths, the rituals, the language, or even the arts like traditional dance and folk songs.

This shows that even though Japanese popular

culture has shown itself among the younger generation, they still know their own culture. According to Szmelter (2020), the process of cultural conservation begins with recognizing its values, which includes identifying the values of each separate object that should be properly defined at the outset. This means that the younger generation still conserves and understands the culture of their hometown or homeland.

The research responses are various, but most of them still know and understand the local culture they have from their hometown or family. Even though they are exposed to Japanese popular culture so much, they still have knowledge of their own local culture, and this is a good sign that even with the globalization era, some of the young people still have knowledge of the old and traditional cultures that still or have been existing. This can impact the mission to keep and preserve our local culture.

With knowledge about the local culture and beliefs, the respondents still have a sense of responsibility to maintain and preserve the local culture. The next question for them is the importance of preserving the local culture for them. 10 out of 10 respondents have said that preserving the culture is very important because local culture is the identity that makes them different from each other. This is what differentiates Indonesian from Japanese people. Moreover, one very alluring statement quoted from one of the respondents saying, "How can we respect other people's culture if we do not respect our own culture?". This shows that they still pay attention and are concerned about the local culture.

Out of the opinion that the respondents have stated, preserving the local culture is still important in their eyes. After all, the younger generation still has some responsibility to do, which is to maintain local culture because it is what makes identity that belongs to them. Therefore, Indonesians must treasure it as an appreciation for those who came before.

Then, when asked about what they should do to preserve their cultural heritage, some of the respondents have said that the modernization of traditional culture or making traditional culture more modern in a way that can pique the interest of the younger generation, such as merging traditional culture with popular culture. Another respondent has said that by doing the culture itself first to keep it. One respondent has said that his/her school system needs a revamp to introduce the next generation to the more local culture. One even has said that government plays a big part in introducing cultural heritage. Hence, if the young generation wants to preserve the local culture, it is easier if they become a part of the government first. As the next generation will pass the culture on to their children and grandchildren, this way of thinking about how to preserve the culture can be a small step for them to do the real thing.

From the data that has been processed, it can be concluded that even though they have been exposed to Japanese popular culture since childhood and have learned many things from Japanese culture

itself, which has affected the way of life of younger generations, they still have a sense of responsibility towards their own culture and still thinking about how they will preserve it. This can create some impact on the sustainability of the cultures in Indonesia.

CONCLUSIONS

Japanese popular culture in Indonesia has gained much attention, especially from the younger generation. Some examples of Japanese popular culture are *anime* or animation, *manga* or comics, and J-pop or Japanese pop music. With the globalization process, or in this case, the spreading of Japanese popular culture is easier to gain knowledge about it from the internet or television. Therefore, the impact will be even more significant as more people are exposed to and know about this Japanese popular culture, especially the people that are fond of it because it can change their life in various ways.

This addition of cultural value encompasses their own culture. Indonesia as a nation has so many different cultures, and the younger generation has to preserve and bequeath these cultures, so it does not lose. To preserve our own culture, we have to know the culture itself first, and even though our younger generation is too exposed to foreign culture, which in this case is Japanese popular culture, they still have knowledge and understanding of their own local culture.

Indonesian younger generation still cares about the existence of the local culture. Even though their lives have been heavily influenced by Japanese popular culture, they still think about how to preserve their own local culture, for example, by making the traditional culture more modern to pique interest by merging traditional culture with popular culture. This can be a good sign for the continuity of the local cultures that still exist in this modern world.

The research is expected to create awareness about Indonesian culture by looking at another culture that is more popular and well-received by the public. The limitation is that the respondents come from various origins, so the gathered data can be too general. It is hoped that future research can benefit from this writing by showing the general problem. Future research can reduce the scope of the research to be more specific in terms of the cultures and respondents to be researched.

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