

JAPANESE LITERATURE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE ON WEEABOO WHO HAS AN IMAGINARY COUPLE *WAIFU/HUSBANDO*

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of waiifu/husbando, originating from Japanese pop culture, permeated society and became a compelling subject of interest. The research delved into the perspectives of people who had a relationship with fictional characters. Data collection was done through interviews with eight students in Japanese Literature across Java Island. The research drew upon insights and data to unravel the societal perceptions surrounding waiifu/husbando enthusiasts. The research applied a qualitative approach, so the analysis produced descriptive data in the form of words. The findings highlight a nuanced form of discrimination and labeling. Contrary to common assumptions, the prejudice faced by those with waiifu/husbando connections is not rooted in a mere appreciation for fictional characters but extends to a broader bias against anime enthusiasts. Individuals who proudly profess their love for anime by adopting waiifu/husbando are often stigmatized with the label of weeaboo, illustrating a broader societal bias against this subculture. The distinction between these two categories sheds light on the complex interplay of societal attitudes towards fantasy relationships rooted in different cultural realms. The research contributes to a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics surrounding waiifu/husbando culture and challenges prevailing stereotypes by emphasizing the role of broader societal biases against anime enthusiasts.

Keywords: Japanese literature, student perspective, weeaboo

INTRODUCTION

Popular culture is a form of practice and belief in a social system, including media objects, entertainment, fashion and trends, linguistics, and others (Kidd, 2018). Japanese popular culture, with its worldwide idol, drama, tokusatsu, and anime, has entered Indonesia. Pratomo (2013) has explained that a person knows Japanese culture through television media, which contains Japanese cultural programs (Gusri, Arif, & Dewi, 2021). One of the Asian countries that is famous for its traditional and modern culture attached to its citizens is Japan.

Japanese culture has spread to many countries, and some of the most popular are anime and manga. Japanese culture has been popular in Indonesia since the early decade of 2000. Japan has carried out cultural diplomacy in Indonesia through manga and anime. This is evidenced by the many Japanese anime that

appear on Indonesian national television (Islamiyah, Priyanto, & Prabhandari, 2020). In addition, modern or J-pop music, such as bands or singers, is well-known in other countries, including One Ok Rock, AKB48, Ayumi Hamasaki, Duo Garnidelia, and others (Bellyanto, 2020).

Because of this, fans are born. Namely, people who are obsessed with something like music, movies, or TV programs, from whose creativity they create works that indicate that it is a form of proof of their active participation in the popular cultural texts they consume (Jenkins, 2018; Rinata & Dewi, 2019). Fansirling is a label to describe a feeling of excessive or extreme excitement towards a certain group. Fansirling is taken from the word fansgirl, while fanboy refers to male fans. From this fan culture, various new phenomena are born, one of which is usually called weeaboo. Weeaboo is a word that is often used to describe people who like Japan.

According to Lacuesta and Fallon (2020), weebos come from the word 'Wapanese' (or Wannabe Japanese), which means someone who is not Japanese but hopes to become Japanese and is usually a fan of the CGDCT (Cute Girls Do Cute Things) genre. Weebos in generations Z and Y are formed from the culture of language, fashion, expressions, accessories, make-up, attitudes, and other preferences that are oriented toward Japanese culture. The existence of weebos is the result of an adaptation and acculturation of intercultural communication; when viewed from a socio-economic perspective, weebos are people who become fans of a brand that is a traded cultural product. They are known as extreme communities because of the unique attributes and values they display (Hidayat & Hidayat, 2020). According to the weebos community, it is a subculture formed from the results of acculturation in intercultural communication, which occurs because there is a closeness between the two primary cultures where a new culture is born (Lacuesta & Fallon, 2020). Watching anime is considered a weebos activity, even without considering the characteristics that are attached to it.

Weebos have a very unique behavior. One of these unique behaviors is that they have imaginary boyfriends like *waiifu* or *husbando*. According to Ellsworth (2018), *waiifu* and *husbando* come from English and Japanese, and female and male characters have special meanings in one's heart. The character does not have to be a husband or wife. Usually, this *waiifu* or *husbando* status is applied to any character that people choose, such as 2D, 3D, Sci-Fi, original people, and others (Zeng, 2022). *Waiifu* is a female character that is widely liked and emerged as a result of the well-known media in Japan, namely anime, and *husbando* is a 'male counterpart' of *waiifu*. *Waiifu* comes from the English word wife in the form of slang. *Waiifu* is the desired wife in an anime and is a preferred character because of her uniqueness and characteristics in the anime and manga series. *Waiifu* is an anime fan gag word used to refer to fictional women in video games, manga, and anime. Native Japanese speakers will never use the word *waiifu* and usually use "妻". *Husbando* is the male version of *waiifu* (Ellsworth, 2018).

The beginning of *waiifu* is the Japanese entertainment industry. The Japanese economy declined in 1990, and one of the ways to recover the economy is by popularizing idol culture (Galbraith, 2021; VanHaecke, 2020; Wing-Fai, 2014). Idols are marketed to look like innocent girls trying to be in a relationship, and their audience is Otaku (VanHaecke, 2020; Wing-Fai, 2014). Idols are most likely related to *waiifu* in the sense that they are made to be perfect. According to Galbraith (2018), the lives of *otaku* are shallow enough that they believe that their idols are at a much higher level than them; this belief leads to the birth of a form of idol worship and is normalized as the idea of *waiifu*.

The 2D animation is a 2-dimensional animation known as flat animation (Lu et al., 2021; Sousa, 2016). The 2D anime are two-dimensional characters made

of ink on paper and do not have biological organs that function like humans. In other words, 2D characters are not alive and move through human-made visual media technology. Anime is a process of recording, creating illusions, and continuously playing back a number of static images to produce a sequence called a sequence. Anime itself is an absorption word from English, namely animation, which means to move actively (Sousa, 2016).

However, this imaginary girlfriend phenomenon is popular among anime lovers, even to the point of marrying a 2D couple. In 2019, a Japanese man named Akihiko Kondo married a character named Hatsune Miku; he turned away from real life and was obsessed with games and anime (BBC News, 2019).

The research discusses fandom behavior that makes 2D characters imaginary girlfriends. The researchers suspect that there are quite a lot of weebos in Indonesia, especially among Japanese literature students.

In conducting the research, a literature review is carried out on several previously published academic articles. The first is research by Puspitasari and Khasanah (2019), which discusses the perception of 2D anime female characters in the form of what is felt, heard, and seen by Indonesian anime lovers. The sample used in the research is 124 people, and the data are obtained using a purposive sampling technique. The results show that the behavior of Indonesian anime lovers is influenced by the preferred 2D anime female character, and 11.3% of 100% of the respondents think that the female character in the 2D anime is their *waiifu*. The reason anime lovers like 2D anime female characters is because of the nature of the character itself, the beauty of her face, and her distinctive voice. According to some Indonesian anime lovers, 2D women are more attractive and in line with their criteria. They express their love for 2D anime characters by buying character knick-knacks and collecting objects such as *dakimakura*, posters, and others related to the 2D anime characters they like.

The next research by Vo (n.d.) discusses the history of the Japanese entertainment industry and society and the way in which *waiifu* is made.

As anime and related subcultures continue to gain more popularity, the stigmatization and discrimination faced by individuals engaged in these fictional relationships have become more pronounced. The research addresses an important gap in understanding how these biases not only affect personal identity but also contribute to broader cultural misunderstandings. Exploring this issue is crucial for fostering inclusivity, reducing prejudice, and challenging stereotypes in an increasingly globalized and culturally diverse world. The results of the research answer the simple reason why people want to have a *waiifu*, namely because they feel comfortable having it; the *waiifu* character is formed with a personality they really like. According to Vo (n.d.), when the world hates them, *waiifu* is the most appropriate choice for them to become someone they can trust. The research says that having a *waiifu*

is not a problem if it does not become an excessive obsession, so *waiifu* should be considered normal to complete the formation of one's romantic interest.

By agreeing to some of these studies, the researchers use the information as a reference to direct the direction of the research. The similarity between the research and these two studies is that they both discuss *waiifu* as an object that is liked by fans. The difference in the research is from the focus and sources. These two studies focus more on the motivation of anime lovers to want to have a *waiifu*, explain *waiifu* and its history, and tend to take sources from weeaboo itself. Meanwhile, the research conducted by the researchers directs the topic to the views of Japanese literature students regarding whether or not there is a negative stigma among weeaboos who have 2D anime *waiifu*, and the researchers take sources from Japanese literature students who are Indonesian citizens.

From these two studies, there still needs to be an explanation about how the general public treats weeaboo who have *waiifu* and the factors that cause discrimination, so the researchers decide to do this research. Data on research regarding the history of *waiifu*, what *waiifu* is, and weeaboo's motivation for having a *waiifu* become data contributions for this research and help the researchers to create and develop new research, namely the view of Japanese literature students on weeaboo who has a 2D anime imaginary girlfriend.

From these explanations, it is found that the objectives of the research on the *waiifu/husbando* phenomenon are: (1) the perspective of Japanese Literature students on weeaboos that have *waiifu/husbando*. (2) Discrimination of weeaboos who have *waiifu/husbando* according to the perspective of Japanese Literature students. (3) The labeling of someone who has a *waiifu/husbando* according to the perspective of a Japanese Literature students.

METHODS

The research collects data using interviews with Japanese Literature students on Java Island, Indonesia. The researchers also apply a qualitative approach so that the analysis produces descriptive data in the form of words. The analysis does not use data in the form of numbers as in quantitative research.

To obtain information and data regarding the negative stigma of society on weeaboos who have *waiifu/husbando*, the researchers employ a purposive sampling method to select Japanese Literature students from various universities across Java Island, Indonesia, as the primary respondents. The selection is based on the specific characteristics that align with the research objective: understanding societal stigma towards individuals involved in *waiifu/husbando* culture. Eight respondents, consisting of five men and three women, are chosen, ensuring diverse perspectives. The respondents are from universities in different regions: one from a university in the northern part of Depok,

one from a regional university in East Jakarta, two from a university in Kemanggisan West Jakarta, one from a university in Sumedang West Java, one from a university in Sleman Yogyakarta, and one from a university in the Coblong area of Bandung West Java. The sample consists of 6th and 8th-semester students, all over the age of 20, who are verbally communicative and capable of providing detailed responses. This method ensures that the sample represents a range of views within the specific subculture being studied.

The data analysis follows a qualitative descriptive approach. After conducting interviews, the researchers systematically classify and sort the data to identify patterns and relevant themes. The data is not numerical but consists of verbal insights, allowing for deep, descriptive analysis. The analysis focuses on exploring connections between the empirical data collected from the respondents and the theoretical concepts outlined in the literature review. This involves multiple stages of review, where the researchers examine the compatibility between theory and practice. The process concludes with categorizing respondents' statements and drawing brief conclusions for each category. These categorized insights are then synthesized into the final conclusions of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this discussion, the researchers try to summarize and seek the respondents' opinions regarding the negative stigma of Japanese Literature students who have *the waiifu/husbando* phenomenon. The following statement contains what they think about *the waiifu/husbando* phenomenon and how people think about the people who have *the waiifu/husbando* phenomenon.

Based on that statement, the researchers assume that the stigma about Weeaboos among the public is inadequate and embarrassing. Weeaboos present too many hobbies in the community and hope they will be accepted; this may be the cause of the emergence of the negative stigma. So, it can be concluded that the actual stigma of the community does not really lead to the *waiifu/husbando* phenomenon. However, because the behavior of people having a *waiifu/husbando* is part of the weeaboo activities, from the beginning, the stigma has been negative. Finally, these actors are discriminated against by the community.

This is related to previous research, which shows that common people or people who do not understand popular culture fans will still see weeaboo as something negative. Maybe that is why, from the results of this interview, the researchers assume that the interviewees do not dare to post their status, use *waiifu/husbando* profile photos, and show their *waiifu/husbando* wallpapers because the general public's stigma against weeaboo is still negative. Weiss et al. (2014) have said that weeaboo is privacy and that only fellow fans of Japanese popular culture are allowed to call each other the word weeaboo. This is supported by

statements from respondents that they only use *waifu/ husbando* profile photos on social media that are used to carry out their fandom activities.

People who make real human actresses/actors their *waifu/husband* will not be stigmatized by society because being like a 'real-life life person' is considered normal, so stigma will only lead to someone who has *waifu* anime 2D. People who like K-pop are considered more normal. It has been stated in previous research (Adhitama, 2022) that watching anime is considered a weeaboo even without considering the characteristics that have been attached to a weeaboo. In this way, the experience of discrimination from the respondents will be continued in the next point.

The respondents' perspective of people who have *waifu/husbando* is acceptable as long as it does not cause any disruption. First, they think it is not a problem because they do not bother anyone else. In November 2009, CNN featured a Japanese man under the pseudonym Sal9000, who married the Nintendo video game character Nene Anegakasi from Love Plus. Instantly, *waifu* culture was born and grew increasingly popular among the *otaku* community at that time, which is estimated to be the beginning of the negative connotation of *otaku* (Garg, 2019). The researchers connect this question with a statement from Gushiken and Hirata (2014) and Tilton (2016), which says that the negative connotation of *otaku* comes from *otaku's* preference for watching anime, while the activity of having a *waifu/husbando* is part of the activity of watching anime. This negative connotation has lasted until now, and the researchers ask sources to comment on this *waifu* phenomenon as a whole. Respondents' answers regarding this matter are quite diverse; seven out of eight respondents argue that having a *waifu* is a normal thing if it is still at a level that is not excessive and does not interfere with other people because it is a form of one's hobby. These are the statements from the respondents.

Respondent 1:

"Erm, I think it's normal, but being too overbearing and disturbing other people is like a freak. Please don't! Maybe it's like hearing people talking about their *husbando* or *waifu*; it sounds like... 'OK, stop, don't shout. Thank you.' It seems a bit annoying, it's a bit cringe, if it's too much, if it's normal, it's normal."

Respondent 5:

"Actually, it's like almost everyone has a *waifu/ husbando*, well, but if they're just like, 'ah, this is my *husbando* or my *waifu*', but it is like I'm not being outspoken and not bothering me, I'm okay, the proof is that many of my lecturers still have *waifu* I see, but for example, if it has come to annoy you like hating other people or other characters, I don't think that's good enough."

Respondent 6:

"Actually, *waifu* means imagination, right? People like it; maybe I used to think it was weird; it just seems like everyone's okay, as long as it doesn't bother you; for

example, if he has a *waifu* and keeps making himself, it's okay, as long as it isn't annoying. Now, if it bothers him, for example, he sees a character cosplaying, then that's his *waifu* character, then if he does strange things to the person who is cosplaying, that's just not allowed."

Based on these respondents' statements, they think having a *waifu* at a reasonable level, such as not disturbing and not endangering others, is not a problem. There will be problems when talking about *waifu/husbando* in a loud voice in the general public, insulting other people's favorite characters, and doing bad things to other people who are cosplaying their favorite *waifu*. It can be concluded that a person should be reasonable in liking his favorite character and must be wise in carrying out his fandom activities.

Second, they realize their behavior tends to be labeled as negative. Respondent 4 has its own unique expression when responding to people who have *waifu* and behave fanatically and excessively. He has a friend who talks to *Dakimakura* (a pillow with pictures of anime characters); all the *waifu* accessories are carried excessively (bags attached with lots of pins) to school without shame, and he collects everything about *waifu*. Respondent 4 thinks this phenomenon is quite excessive for him because loving 2D characters looks pathetic, and it seems he cannot be saved anymore. However, because it is part of a hobby, he makes this phenomenon a little natural. The researchers ask the responses of Respondent 4 regarding the positive or negative tendencies of the phenomenon.

Respondent 4:

"If I respond like that, I'm sorry, maybe for me it's a bit too much until what I think is, is this person not looking for real-life women who are the opposite sex who are really human, why do they want to be like that in 2D? I see it really sucks.... It's just too bad that's the case."

Respondent 4:

"The negatives are actually, if people have stereotypes like that, yes, in my own opinion it's really bad, bro, it doesn't seem like it can be saved. It's like, it's just a pity, it's like there's no future like that; I mean, he wants to get out of his comfort zone or not, if he likes being in his comfort zone, then he's just like that, but I'm not the one making fun of it, bullying all kinds of things not really, because it's part of his hobby too, yes, it's okay to call him a fanatic, because I also don't know what part of the inside he is, he likes real girls too, but he's just so fanatical."

Respondent 4:

"For example, if you have *husbu* or *waifu*, it's like you talk constantly, or don't you, like, for example, every time you go anywhere, you always bring your *husbu* or *waifu* doll with you, even to formal places."

The researchers ask about some of the unique experiences of the respondents who experience

discrimination because they have *husbando/waifu*.

Respondent 3:

“Yes, maybe it’s more of an insult, bro, because I myself have experienced something like that in high school if none of my friends liked anime, but I myself in my class like anime, so I feel like I’m being insulted like, ‘weeaboo-weeaboo’ by my classmate, so I’m afraid of being bullied bro, that’s why I don’t have the courage to say anything about Japan to people who don’t like Japanese pop culture.”

Respondent 5:

“I have been bullied because was caught liking anime. So, it’s like the discrimination is not from liking one character, but really because you like the anime. The problem is back to the stigma that if you watch anime, you must be watched *hentai*, you know.”

Hearing this statement, the researchers again ask questions such as whether Respondent 5 has experienced such discrimination.

Respondent 5:

“Bullying was like being bullied verbally or indirectly, so for example, it happened when I was in high school; I am a member of (*Nihon Kurabu*) then, at that time, it happened that I was chosen to be the head of the club when I was 11th grade. So, then the people in that class immediately said, ‘Heii, she is a leader now, that means we can watch *hentai* together in class.’ Like that, or not like we are called a ‘bunch of perverts’ even though we don’t watch anime in the class, we just learning kanji.”

Respondent 6:

“Wow, if it’s the easiest thing to say, ‘eww you like this kind of thing??’ or at least they said hallucination, at least it’s still verbal.”

Respondent 7:

“When I was in middle school or high school, I was bullied; even when I was bullied, maybe it was like someone was drawing for fun on the blackboard or something... at least the bullying just like that.”

The researchers again ask questions such as whether the writings drawn on the blackboard bully Respondents 7.

Respondent 7:

“For example, it is written like (name of respondent), and the name of the character uses a heart symbol on the blackboard in front of the class; that’s how it used to be.”

Based on these statements, it can be concluded that discrimination in the form of verbal bullying actually occurs to the respondents. Although it looks trivial, it is very possible to give the person an unpleasant experience. However, from the other statements, it is found that bullying does not lead to bullying because the respondent likes a character

as a *waifu/husbando*. The respondents are being bullied because they enjoy Japanese popular culture, especially anime, as evidenced in the statements of Respondents 3 and 5. Bullying, because they like one character, is only felt by a minority of respondents, especially respondent 7, whose name is written on the blackboard along with her favorite character by her friend. From this, the researchers conclude that there is a separate labeling for these sources, and this labeling will be discussed in the next point.

Weeaboos often reveal themselves to the general public if they are Japanese fans. A weeaboo will not be ashamed to show his/her identity to people who do not understand Japan. From this interview, the researchers try to determine whether the respondents cover up their behavior to the public and ask why they do. The researchers categorize it into several classes.

First is the profile photo used by the respondents. Based on these statements, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents feel that using their *waifu/husbando* profile photos on social media for professional needs such as studying and working is unprofessional. They only put *waifu/husbando* profile photos on social media accounts for personal needs. Using a *waifu/husbando* profile photo on social media for professional needs is not a good idea. The statement indicates that this is shameful, so sources often hide this behavior from people. Even from the statement of Respondent 8, he only uses the profile photo on his second social media account with a name that is not real; this already shows that the source does not want his identity to be seen by others.

The respondents only use profile photos on social media accounts such as Discord, Facebook, and Twitter if they become social media for fun and their fandom needs. However, even though the majority of respondents think that they are ashamed to post anime profile photos, there are still two to three sources who think that posting *waifu/husbando* photos is a normal thing.

Second is the wallpaper used in these devices. It can be concluded that *waifu* wallpaper is sufficient for privacy and should not be shown too much to the general public. Almost all of the respondents think that way. Apart from not being suitable for formal events, not everyone can accept and understand this hobby of this Japanese popular culture fandom. In accordance with the statement given by Respondent 3, the stigma of weeaboo in society is not good enough, so verbal discrimination often occurs. So, according to the source, it is better if anime wallpapers, especially *waifu/husbando* wallpapers, are not shown to the general public but only to closest relatives and friends who understand Japanese popular culture.

Based on the respondent’s statement, putting up a status with the name of a favorite character, especially *waifu* or *husbando*, is something to be ashamed of. This is because it is possible to be seen by anyone, so this should not be published, or if it is published, then like the statement of Respondent 2, it should be to people who are already close relatives and

not shown to people who are not too close. In fact, Respondent 5 has said that if the name of the *waifu* installed is obvious, she would feel embarrassed, so it is better to use the name *waifu/husbando*, which does not come from a Japanese name. Through statements, it is proven that the sources think that showing *waifu/husbando* through status is something other than what should be done.

The researchers try to identify the courage of the respondents to show their *waifu/husbando* to the public through social media and the wallpapers they use. Before asking about this, it is necessary to know what social media sources use for their professional and personal interests, and it is also necessary to know whether they have ever put their *waifu/husbando* photo as wallpaper. The results of the interviews show that five out of eight respondents mostly use the WhatsApp application for their professional interests, such as college or work needs. Respondent 1 uses WhatsApp for college, Respondent 2 uses WhatsApp and Line, Respondent 4 uses Line and WhatsApp for college, and Respondent 8 uses Line and WhatsApp for professionalism, which is very important.

Based on respondents' statements, students use WhatsApp and Line social media applications for professional purposes such as their college and professional needs. In addition to social media for professional needs, the researchers ask which social media sources are used for personal interests. The interview results reveal that most respondents use Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook applications for their personal needs.

Respondent 2:

"FB, Twitter. Instagram, not really."

Respondent 4:

"Instagram and Twitter."

Respondent 5:

"Hmmm, for personal things, maybe FB. Twitter is usually just for downloading pictures or ideas or anything like that, but never talking about personal things or anything."

Respondent 6:

"FB just commented; the rest were Instagram, Twitter, Line."

Respondent 8:

"*Sosmed* (social media), I share my hobby; I only have 1-second account, Instagram. FB has been rare since Corona rarely has a handle."

From these respondents' statements, it can be concluded that students use social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to explore their hobbies. The researchers also assume that social media is used as a tool to carry out fandom activities for the respondents. The researchers can also suspect that the respondents will most likely use their profile photo on

social media to do their hobby, which means the image of having a *waifu/husbando* does not want to be shown to the general public, especially on social media which incidentally is not only the surrounding environment but the people in Indonesia even abroad can see it.

In addition to asking about what social media the respondents used, the researchers also ask whether they collect photos or pictures of their favorite characters to ask further questions. The results of the interviews show that six out of eight interviewees download pictures of the characters they like.

Respondent 2:

"Yes, collections, to be honest, there are so many if I want to mention that there are 16604 photos, it's not just anime, there are memes too, we just assume these are anime pictures because the majority, I can say, 90% of these are anime pictures. Downloads are usually FB, Pixiv, and Twitter. Twitter is an HD anime pic download tool; if FB and Line are broken, it could be better. Pixiv had to sign in to an account, and it was really lazy."

Respondent 5:

"Hmm, yeah, in the past, I used to really see the save right away, but now, since I've become a content creator, it's more like I respect you; if you look at the profiles of Japanese artists like that, many of them don't like it. If the picture is saved, it's like enjoying it but trying not to save it; it's like saving a picture made by a friend, I keep giving it to me, then I save it, but like if a random picture, I rarely save, but if it's an official picture, of course, it's saved."

Respondent 7:

"Yes, Google, Zero-chan, Pinterest sometimes, Pixiv, that's all."

To prove more about the respondents' preferences towards their *waifu/husbando*, the researchers try to ask the respondents about the use of *waifu/husbando* wallpapers on each resource's device. Four out of eight respondents use their *waifu/husbando* wallpaper on their respective devices.

Respondent 2:

"Yes, make it a wallpaper, cellphone; if previously I used to live 80% of my cellphone, there would have been anime and my *waifu* too; if I used wallpaper chat, I use it now or not because I'm confused. If it's a PC, yes, there is a *waifu* and a view, which is pleasing to the eye; there is a *waifu*, there is a general wallpaper, the general is a view of 1-2 characters."

Respondent 3:

"I made wallpaper, home screen, my pc wallpaper this also happens to be a photo of Kaori. My chat wallpaper is also installed."

Respondent 5:

"Until now, hmmm, PC anyway."

However, there are also some respondents who use more than just their *waifu/husbando* wallpaper. In the past, they used their *waifu/husbando* photos, but for now, these respondents do not use their *waifu/husbando* photos; instead, they use the general anime wallpapers they like.

Respondent 4:

“For now, it’s just random wallpaper; for example, there are good characters like in *Tokyo Revenger*, and there’s Draken, for example. Wow, there are good ones that can be used as wallpapers, so I’ll look for them either on Google or on Pinterest, just a collection, at least for example. This can be used as wallpaper, I’ll make wallpaper. If *waifu* doesn’t exist now, it used to exist.”

Respondent 7:

“Wallpapers, for sure. I think I used to have *ikemen*, but now my wallpapers are more general characters that I like; my desktop wallpaper is just like all *Nanatsu No Taizai* members, so the general ones are.”

Based on these statements, the majority of respondents put their favorite character wallpapers, especially their *waifu* and *husbando*. The majority of respondents, on average, install the wallpaper on a PC. The wallpapers are not only their *waifu/husbando*, but some also have general anime wallpapers; for example, Respondent 4 puts up the *Tokyo Revenger* wallpaper, or Respondent 7 puts up a wallpaper containing all the characters of *Nanatsu No Taizai*.

Therefore, the respondents assume that because the personal computer is only seen by people in the surrounding environment, no one would even see the computer, so the respondents dare to install their favorite *waifu/husbando* wallpaper. This is inversely proportional to the social media described above; it is possible for the respondents to only post their *waifu/husbando* profile photos on social media for their hobby needs.

Labeling theory, proposed by Edwin M. Lemert, says that a person is given a label because of the deviation he does (Alshiban, 2018). This labeling theory postulates that a person is labeled as a deviant, and that person can never escape the role of the deviant. For example, a person who frequently gets drunk is labeled as an alcoholic, someone who steals because he is labeled a thief, someone who does crazy acts is labeled as psychotic, etc.

Respondent 4:

“First people who watch anime will be automatically called weeaboo. Ordinary people will judge the weeaboo, but I already have a lot of friends from the *uchi* and the *soto*; I also understand, so I conclude the opinions of these two groups; I see their attitude is weird.”

Respondent 5:

“Weeaboo already has hmmm...the vibes are already bad? like that from some people, like being labeled,

ooh you weeaboo you must be watching *hentai*.”

The researchers ask the respondents questions, such as whether someone who likes female characters from *tokusatsu* would be labeled as a weeaboo.

Respondent 6:

“Maybe there are people who say weeaboo, like ordinary people. But if this is a school, then weeaboo is more of a person who likes anime.”

Respondent 3:

“People who don’t understand Japanese culture label those who love anime as weeaboo; maybe if you like Japan, they say weeaboo; if you like anime, they say weeaboo. Everything we like about Japan; the common people think we are weeaboos.”

The researchers ask questions from several sources, such as whether having a *waifu* or *husbando* is a sign that someone has become a weeaboo.

Respondent 4:

“Yeah.”

Respondent 5:

“It’s true, hehe, it is true if that’s the case. Actually, it’s in the middle, too; only some realize that he has a *husbando* or *waifu*. For example, they don’t like anime, for example, they like *Assassin’s Creed* or *Watch Dogs* games or something, and for example, they like it same with the main character, I really like Ezio, being my girlfriend, that indirectly said that they wanted Ezio to be their husband, but they didn’t know the term so they didn’t say they had a *waifu* or *husband*, they just said I love this character.”

Respondent 7:

“It depends; if, for example, 2D, it’s definitely weeaboo, but if it’s 3D, it’s not. The thing is that sometimes we don’t know if the 3D one is weeaboo or not, like, for example, he posted a photo of K-popers or something; now I hear that a lot of K-popers like anime too, even if I’m not mistaken, Korea has already started producing anime or manga. Cool, I admit. It’s just how it is; sometimes, that’s not necessarily the case; he puts up K-pop photos, and maybe he likes K-pop, not anime or manga. Meanwhile, if, for example, the PP is 2D, the 2D is Japanese anime, or maybe at least the Korean anime or Chinese anime is sure to find out that it’s weeaboo.”

Respondent 8:

“I really agree because you can’t possibly know *waifu* if you’re not weeaboo.”

The researchers also asked questions about Respondent 1’s fears when the public sees their *waifu/husbando*.

Respondent 1:

“The main thing is that I’m just afraid to be labeled as web, and then I’m embarrassed.”

From these statements, five respondents agree that someone with a *waiifu/husbando* is labeled a weeaboo. However, as said by Respondent 7, someone will be said to be a weeaboo if their *waiifu* or *husbando* is a character from a 2D anime; Respondent 6 also has the same opinion that the labeling of weeaboo is given to someone who likes anime. This is reinforced by Respondents 2 and 8 statements that someone who likes people from the real world does not get a negative stigma from society.

From all the respondents' statements, the researchers point out the labeling society gives to someone with a *waiifu/husbando*. Someone who has a 2D *waiifu/husbando* is labeled as a weeaboo. Weeaboo is labeled as someone who definitely watches *hentai*. People who like anime will be labeled as weeaboo.

It can be concluded from three sections that people with a fictional relationship with a fictional character are not being treated negatively because of their behavior, but it is caused by the negative stigma of weaboo.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the interviews of eight Japanese Literature students who have *waiifu/husbando* has found that Japanese literature students have various views about the weeaboo phenomenon that has *waiifu/husbando*. Seven out of eight respondents have stated that having a *waiifu/husbando* is normal. However, it will be judged negatively when the behavior is excessive. Because there are several respondents who feel optimistic about having a *waiifu/husbando*, one of them is being more productive. However, if the behavior of having *waiifu/husbando* is excessive, even to the point of harming others and making others feel uncomfortable, then this phenomenon has become a negative thing.

The interview analysis also proves that there are forms of discrimination against sources. Discrimination is carried out by verbal bullying and experienced by the respondents themselves. The discrimination factors are quite diverse; most respondents receive verbal discrimination because they like watching anime. Meanwhile, few of the respondents experience verbal discrimination because they like a character of the opposite sex, such as their *waiifu/husbando* from the anime. It can be concluded that discrimination does not occur because of the *waiifu/husbando* phenomenon itself, but rather, the discrimination occurs because the respondents really like watching anime.

The labeling theory analysis shows that most respondents think someone with a *waiifu/husbando* is definitely a weeaboo. However, someone labeled as weeaboo is a person who has a *waiifu/husbando* from anime or 2D characters. The stigma of society tends not to lead to people who have genuine human *waiifu/husbando*. The result of this analysis with labeling is that people who like anime will be labeled as weeaboo, and weeaboo are labeled as people who definitely

watch *hentai*.

Then it can also be concluded that the actual stigma of the community does not really lead to the *waiifu/husbando* phenomenon, but because the behavior of having a *waiifu/husbando* is a part of weeaboo activities, which from the beginning, the stigma has been negative, in the end, the *waiifu/husbando* phenomenon itself indirectly becomes involved negative. However, it is inseparable from the objective thought that having a *waiifu/husbando* is natural as long as it is within reasonable limits and does not harm or disturb others. Based on the conclusions from the data analysis, the *waiifu/husbando* phenomenon is embarrassing for the general public. This is evidenced by the fact that the majority of respondents do not want to show the identity of their *waiifu/husbando* ownership to the general public through social media and the surrounding environment.

Based on the results of the research, there are problems that are still unsolved, and there are several messages that the researchers want to give to the readers of this research. These suggestions include, although the *waiifu/husbando* phenomenon tends to be negative, it should be noted that as a good person, it is better not to discriminate both verbally and non-verbally to people who have *waiifu/husbando* anime. It should be understood that someone must be wise when he/she likes something and should not overdo it, especially to the point of harming and hurting others.

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