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ANALYSIS OF THE LIFESTYLE OF ANIME AND MANGA FANS IN SURAKARTA CITY

Adam Zulkarnaen Hidayatullah¹, Dr.rer.nat. Nurhadi, S.Ant., M.Hum.², Yuhastina, P.hD³

¹⁻³Eleven March University, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the phenomenon of the emergence of Otaku who are fans of Japanese sub-culture in the form of anime and manga in Surakarta City. How is their behavior or lifestyle and what are their reasons for identifying themselves as Otaku. This research will describe the lifestyle of Otaku and how they interpret anime, manga and themselves as Otaku. This qualitative research uses an ethnographic approach in which data sources are events, informants and documents. This study used a purposive sampling technique in which researchers conducted interviews, observations and documentation while researching. The data validity technique was carried out by triangulating data from documents with interview results. This study found that some otaku interpret anime and manga as more than just entertainment.

¹ Corresponding author: Adam Zulkarnaen Hidayatullah

E-mail addresses: adamzh241296@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

December 10, 2017 is a date that is hard to forget for some Indonesian people, especially Doraemon fans. Because at that time the last Doraemon film was released. Many fans from various age groups enthusiastically came to the cinemas in their respective cities to watch the animated film. This is evidenced by the expiration of pre-sale tickets six days before the release date, this phenomenon occurs in Indonesia and 56 other countries.

Doraemon is one of the many anime from Japan which has many fans around the world. Anime (アニメ; Japanese animation) has gone from being a mere work of art and entertainment medium to a global phenomenon. Such as the Gross National Cool (GNC) concept which states that Japan is no longer relevant to be called a super-power country in the context of Gross National Product (GNP), like Japan in the 1980s. Japan is more suitable to be called a cultural-super-power country in the context of Gross National Cool (GNC) (McGray, 2002).

Researchers from the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) Kyoto University stated that Japan was very successful in spreading its popular culture because in the last two decades, Japanese popular cultural products have been exported, traded and consumed on a large scale throughout East Asia and Southeast Asia. (Otmazgin, 2007).

Apart from anime, one form of Japanese culture that is popular in Indonesia is manga. Manga is a comic in Japanese, while for outside Japan the word manga is used to refer to comics originating from Japan. Indonesians can access manga online from the internet or buy it in bookstores, although more people read online, because of the ease of access and the number of manga that is printed and officially sold is quite small.

Anime and manga are examples of Japan's success in cultural expansion. In Indonesia, apart from watching anime and reading manga, Otaku also show their existence in everyday life such as forming communities, to holding Japanese cultural festivals (J-Fest). This is in accordance with Storey's statement that consumption of a popular culture will always give rise to groups of fans, fans are the most visible part of the audience of pop culture texts and practices (Storey, 2006: 157).

Otaku activities as fans of Japanese popular culture are not limited to what they do on the internet such as downloading anime or reading manga. This is in accordance with Hapsari's statement citing Jenkins' conclusion that fan culture is a culture of consumption and production,

fan groups do not only carry out consumption activities but also cultural production activities such as texts, songs, videos, etc. (Hapsari, et al., 2018).

J-Fest itself is no longer just a routine activity held by anime and manga fan communities but as a place to show their existence. Various merchandise, food, skills or knowledge about Japanese culture, especially from anime and manga, were all displayed in this activity.

From what can be found in the J-Fest event, we can explore the activities of anime and manga fans in Surakarta City about how they socialize, what activities they do in their daily life as a form of their existence as fans.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study on the process of Otaku socialization, especially among adolescents in the city of Surakarta. Therefore, researchers conducted a study entitled Lifestyle of Anime and Manga Fans in Surakarta City.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study aims to reveal the lifestyle of adolescent fans of anime and manga and self-determination as an otaku. The method used to reveal these two aspects is a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach.

This qualitative research process involves important efforts, such as asking questions, collecting specific data from participants, analyzing data inductively from specific themes to general themes, and interpreting the meaning of the data. The final report for this research has a flexible structure or framework (Creswell, 2009: 4).

The essence of ethnography is an attempt to pay attention to the meanings of the actions of events that happen to the people we want to understand. Some of these meanings are expressed directly in language and among the meanings received, many are conveyed indirectly through words and actions (Spradley, 2007: 5).

In this study, data sources will be used consisting of events in the form of a Japanese cultural festival (J-Fest) event which took place in Surakarta City, informants who are divided into 3 categories, namely anime and manga fans, merchandise traders and J-Fest committee, documents which contains data that supports the research will also be used.

In exploring deeper data for key informants, researchers used a purposive sampling technique, namely a technique to obtain samples by selecting individuals who are considered to know information and problems in depth and can be trusted to become data sources.

Data collection techniques were carried out by interviewing informants, field observations and documentation in the form of documents, printed materials, graphs and recordings obtained.

In qualitative research it is necessary to carry out validity in observing the data, the validity test method consists of a credibility test (internal validation), transferability test (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity) (Sugiyono, 2013: 366).

As for the forms of ethnographic qualitative research data analysis to look for cultural themes, namely domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, and componential analysis, analysis of cultural themes (Sugiyono, 2013).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study will analyze data obtained from observations of Japanese cultural festivals (J-Fest) held in Surakarta City and its surroundings from 2019 to early 2022, interviewing several visitors and merchandise sellers. In addition to observations and interviews, this research also uses documents in the form of reports, photos and news as the necessary data.

The results obtained from this study used interview techniques with informants as a source of data which the researchers then analyzed. This analysis focuses on youth in the age range of 18-21 years. According to Haditono (Ali & Asrori, 2010) during late adolescence, individuals focus on aspects of values, morals, outlook on life and social relations.

How do young fans of Japanese culture interpret Japanese popular culture such as anime and manga so that it influences their lives, from anime and manga culture can move individuals and even groups so as to create a social system (Setiadi, 2013), in the view of social sciences, the social system is defined as the relationship between the parts in the life of society, especially human actions, social institutions, and social groups that influence each other.

1. Anime and manga in the view of youth in the city of Surakarta

Anime and manga as popular culture gave birth to a fan phenomenon, from what was originally just a means of entertainment to becoming a special attraction. In Indonesia, many anime fans enjoy anime on television. Anime that aired on television in the 2000s such as Doraemon, One Piece, Naruto, and others have a target audience of children. Meanwhile, when this research was conducted, they were aged between 13-22 years.

From watching anime and manga, various values and meanings can be drawn, such as the behavior of wanting to imitate a character's appearance which is then called cosplay, some form communities to bring together people with the same hobbies as Otaku Solo Raya (OSR),

Surakarta Itasha Community (Suikomu), Japanholic Solo Raya, etc. There are also fans who enjoy anime and manga only as entertainment.

2. Social interaction

Humans are social beings who cannot live alone, humans need other people to be able to communicate so that good relationships are established. As is done by someone who wants to start a cosplay hobby, he needs to ask friends or the community. Forms of interaction between otaku can be found in Facebook groups, discord channels, or when they attend Japanese cultural festivals. Buying and selling behavior, discussions, posting the latest information are some of the activities that can be found in the Otaku community on the internet.

The social interactions that occur are not only between fellow Otaku but can also be with individuals or the general public. Such as when holding a Japanese cultural festival, it is necessary to contact the venue provider, the police for licensing and security, etc.

3. Lifestyle

Otaku can be classified into two types namely fanatical and casual otaku. Fanatical otaku are those who make anime and manga a part of what they do in everyday life such as cosplay, being active in the Otaku community, selling merchandise. Meanwhile, casual otaku are those who only consider anime and manga as entertainment or sometimes also buy merchandise.

Even so, both fanatical and casual Otaku can still release their Otaku attributes in society such as at school, work, socializing. These Otaku do their hobbies or hobbies in the portion of time they have set.

4. Self identification

The development of adolescent identity can be seen as an adaptive outcome. Identity is the adjustment of adolescents regarding special skills, abilities, and strengths into the society in which they live. From the results of this study it is known that adolescents who identify themselves as Otaku do not happen instantly. Some start from watching anime, reading manga, having friends with similar interests, or even demands from work.

Regardless of the background of adolescents identifying themselves as an Otaku, their lifestyle which is reflected in various identities and activities is clear evidence that anime and manga are Japanese popular culture that have gone worldwide and they are not just entertainment for children. This research shows how fans interpret stories in anime and manga that are full of philosophical content and settle in their mindset, becoming a source of inspiration and even certain philosophies which are then applied in life.

CONCLUSION

Teenage anime and manga fans in Surakarta City have watched anime and read manga before identifying themselves as fans of this Japanese sub-culture, otherwise known as Otaku. Apart from television, Otaku watch anime from the internet. Likewise with manga, apart from bookstores or libraries, they also usually access it from the internet. So in terms of time, watching anime and reading manga does not interfere with their main activities or work because they can be done anytime and anywhere. Meanwhile, for business actors, watching anime and reading manga is like looking for information or references for their products.

Otaku love watching anime and reading manga because of the mix of interesting pictures with exciting stories. For Otaku, anime and manga provide many positive things such as entertainment that is available at any time, sometimes appropriate or even provides answers to the problems they experience in life, attracts curiosity about the continuation of stories in anime or manga which sometimes exist in the novel version so that they can increase interest in reading, even anime and manga can move these Otaku to behave productively such as cosplay, bands, communities, to participate in producing anime and manga merchandise for commercial purposes.

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