



Imitation Behavior of Fans of Popular Japanese Anime Among Students of Sociology Education Study Program at FKIP Untan

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Abstract

This research examines the phenomenon of anime imitation behavior among students in the Sociology Education program at Tanjungpura University, Pontianak. The purpose of this study is to understand the motivations and meanings underlying such imitation behavior. The research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data is gathered through observation, interviews, and analysis of relevant documents. The research informants are students who are anime enthusiasts and engage in imitation behavior. The analysis of research findings indicates that motivations in anime imitation behavior are influenced by factors such as the influence of friends or anime fan communities, the pleasure and satisfaction derived from the activity, and the inspirational characteristics of anime. The influence of friends or anime fan communities plays a crucial role in shaping imitation behavior and providing social support. The enjoyment and satisfaction experienced in watching and imitating anime also serve as strong motivators. The characteristics of anime, portraying characters with specific qualities, spirit, and prowess, attract interest and inspire imitation. In conclusion, understanding the motivational factors and meanings behind anime imitation behavior among Sociology Education students is essential for comprehending the dynamics of popular culture. Max Weber's social action theory provides relevant insights into explaining imitation behavior and the role of social interactions, value choices, and societal acceptance in influencing such behavior. It is recommended to further this research by involving a broader sample and considering other influencing factors on anime imitation behavior.

Keywords : Social Action, Imitative Behavior, Anime, Students, Motivation

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1. Introduction

Society creates new cultures from the cultures they absorb through the information they obtain from the presence of global media. In the current situation, the influence of mass media in society cannot be overlooked. With easy access to various cultures in the world. Popular culture is one of the effects of globalization that is related to everyday life. Pop culture will change and emerge without being contained in various times and places that form complex currents and vortices and values that influence society and its institutions in various ways. Pop culture is greatly helped by the presence of mass media as a form of globalization so that it becomes increasingly popular. This culture gave birth to a new lifestyle among the community.

Lifestyle is a form of characteristic of a certain group that describes how their lives are (Hendariningrum & Susilo, 2008). Meanwhile, in modern society, lifestyle is a form of definition of behavior, quantity, amount of income as well as position that causes individualistic traits, personal appearance, and self-awareness to have style influenced by foreign cultures that enter (Cleopatra, 2015).

One of the foreign cultures that entered Indonesia that influenced the lifestyle is Japanese culture which is popular among Indonesian teenagers with a fairly high level of fans. One of these cultures is the entertainment media industry known as anime. Anime is a visual animation created by Japan as a means to heal the trauma of the Japanese defeat in World War II in the form of a colorful arrangement of pages with thousands of pages that show unique characters with various types of viewers, both children and adults and enjoyed by viewers around the world (Toi, 2020).

Bolton (2018) suggests that the word "anime" comes from the word animation, which will later be abbreviated in Japan. The creation of anime actually aims to entertain children, but recently adults have also enjoyed anime because of the increasingly varied development of anime genres to be enjoyed by various groups. Anime has its own uniqueness as a product of popular culture that combines valuable cultural traditions such as Kabuki, a form of theatrical art, and Ukiyo-e, woodcut art. In addition, anime also integrates knowledge about artistic traditions in film and photography in the 20th century. Anime not only entertains its viewers fundamentally but also moves the mindset along with contemporary issues that cannot be achieved by other media.

The love of Anime has become a social phenomenon in Indonesian society. One of the consequences that emerged in the phenomenon of Anime fans is the emergence of imitative behavior carried out by its fans. Gerungan (2019) states that imitation is a social action of imitating the behavior, activities, manners, or physical appearance of someone. Imitation is also one of the factors that influence social interaction. After watching anime, fans become interested and start following the things that are done in the anime show that they enjoy, such as language, characteristics, fashion, and even food. Nowadays, we often hear "Gomenasai", "Arigatou", "Ohayo," and so on, which are spoken by both anime fans and non-anime fans. The popularity of Japanese food in anime shows is also the center of attention for fans. Japanese-style food is already very easy to find around us, such as ramen, sushi, and so on. According to Miller and Dollard in Olson and Matthew (2015), this can become a habit.

According to Ortez-Arevalo (2022), anime for many people has become a way to express themselves, discuss topics, ways of interacting and conditions that are culturally and socially relevant. This is widely seen after the events of World War II, which led to the emergence of many animators and mangaka (comic artists), such as Hayao Miyazaki, Satoshi Kon, Masashi Kishimoto, and Osamu



Tezuka. After the end of World War II, Japan faced a major homework, namely how to rebuild its country from the devastation by taking steps to revitalize education, humanities to public diplomacy, especially in the field of culture. The humanities are deeply embedded in the identity of the Japanese people, besides that, the aspect of culture is also something that they prioritize. One thing that is interesting for researchers to discuss this phenomenon is one of the Japanese cultural products, namely anime. In fact, this Japanese animation is the same as the visual work of the film discipline with the characteristic of the depiction of objects that look comical. However, what makes anime seem different is the product of culture, until a few years later outside the scope of this thesis, this national identity includes a variety of media platforms, aesthetic values, social values, and of course the behavior of the actors of Japanese popular culture itself. There is a dynamic relationship between cultural products and the actors involved with the culture in question to the point where anime becomes more than just something to be watched (Lamarre, 2010).

The researcher found that in the Education Program in Sociology at Tanjungpura University, many students are fans of anime and are often seen watching anime in between lectures, either by themselves or with friends. These fans often use anime language and wear accessories of their favorite anime characters. In addition, they often have their own social circles. Some even have difficulty communicating with other students because they feel different. The researcher is interested in conducting research on the meaning and motivation of the imitative behavior of anime-loving students based on Max Weber's theory of social action.

2. Method

The research approach used in this study is qualitative research with a descriptive research method. This method is used because in this study, the data is presented in the form of sentences and descriptions. Sugiyono (2019) defines qualitative research as a research method based on the philosophy of postpositivism. This method is used to investigate the natural conditions of the object of research, in contrast to the experimental method. In qualitative research, the author becomes the key instrument, data collection is carried out through triangulation techniques, data analysis is inductive/qualitative, and this research emphasizes understanding meaning rather than generalization.

The data sources in this study consist of student informants from the Sociology Education program who are enthusiasts of anime. Those providing information are CU and IR as students from the 2021 cohort, and informants K and RL as students from the 2019 cohort. The researcher himself will serve as the key instrument in this study. The researcher obtained research data using observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and relevant documents. Throughout the observation process, the researcher conducted in-depth analysis to ensure that the obtained data align with the expectations. Subsequently, the data was synthesized and processed based on the sources from which the data was obtained.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Motivation in Imitative Behavior on Anime by Students

Max Weber in (Ritzer & Goodman, 2010) defines sociology as the study of social institutions. According to Weber, sociology focuses on social behavior. He emphasizes a shift towards beliefs, motivations, and goals in individuals' actions within society, giving meaning and shape to their



behavior. Weber uses the term "action" to refer to actions that have subjective meaning for the actor. Individuals aim to achieve a goal or are driven by specific motivations. Weber states that social action is related to social interaction, categorizing social interaction as a type of social action. Social action is a process in which actors make subjective decisions about the means and ways to achieve their chosen goals.

Motivation in imitative behavior towards anime is influenced by several interconnected factors. These factors include the influence of friends or communities, the pleasure and satisfaction derived from watching and imitating anime, and the characteristics of anime portraying characters with specific qualities, spirit, and prowess.

Firstly, the influence of friends or communities plays a crucial role in shaping the motivation for imitative behavior. Peer influence and anime fan communities introduce and influence individuals to like and imitate anime. Mihardja & Paramita, (2019) mention that a fan is an individual with great enthusiasm and love for something, often forming fan groups collectively. These fan communities serve as places for fans to seek information about their idols and communicate with fellow group members who share the same interests. Anime fan communities provide support and acceptance for imitative behavior, creating a sense of belonging where individuals feel understood in their interests and hobbies. Miller and Dollard, as cited in (Sarlito, 2012), categorize imitative behavior into three categories, one of which is Copying Behavior, where individuals directly imitate or copy the behavior of others. This aligns with Max Weber's social action theory, stating that individuals tend to imitate behavior considered normal and accepted within their social group.

Secondly, the pleasure and satisfaction derived from watching and imitating anime also serve as motivation for imitative behavior. Individuals enjoy the complex storylines, captivating graphics, and intricate characters in anime. They imitate behaviors that provide satisfaction and enjoyment, adjusting their motivation to imitate actions that bring benefits or inspiration to their daily lives. This aligns with Max Weber's social action theory, emphasizing that individuals choose values or goals as the basis for their behavior.

Thirdly, the characteristics of anime portraying characters with specific qualities, spirit, and prowess also serve as motivation for imitative behavior. Individuals are interested in imitating the attitudes and spirit of anime characters they admire because they perceive them as positive and inspiring traits. These characteristics are considered examples of behavior acknowledged and respected by a specific social group, especially the anime fan community. Max Weber's social action theory explains that individuals tend to imitate behavior considered positive or inspiring by the social group to which they belong.

Overall, motivation in imitative behavior towards anime is influenced by the influence of friends or communities, the pleasure and satisfaction derived from it, and the inspirational characteristics of anime. Individuals are interested in imitating behavior considered normal and accepted by their social group, adjusting their motivation based on the values and benefits inherent in imitative behavior. In this context, Max Weber's social action theory provides an understanding of the importance of social interaction, value selection, and acceptance in understanding the motivation for imitative behavior towards anime.



3.2. Meaning in Imitative Behavior on Anime

Based on the analysis of research findings conducted on students in the Sociology Education program exhibiting imitative behavior towards anime, it can be seen that Max Weber's theory of social action can provide a relevant understanding of the phenomenon. Max Weber's social action theory (Ritzer & Goodman, 2010) explains that individual social actions are influenced by the selection of values, goals, and norms within their social group. In this case, imitative behavior towards anime by the informants can be understood through the concepts of formal rationality and social context.

Firstly, through the analysis of research findings, it is evident that informants have rational reasons and recognized goals in their imitative behavior, (Karmini et al., 2023). For example, informant IR wants to imitate the character Johan Liebert from the anime "Monster" because the character's traits align with the conditions and situations often experienced by the informant. This reflects the selection of values and goals deemed relevant in the informants' lives. Max Weber's social action theory emphasizes that individuals tend to imitate behavior considered positive or inspiring by the social group to which they belong. In this case, informants choose anime characters with traits deemed relevant and beneficial to their lives.

Secondly, the analysis of findings also reveals that the social context, such as the influence of friends or anime fan communities, plays a crucial role in the motivation for imitative behavior. For instance, informant CU invites friends to engage in anime cosplay while wearing hijabs and sharing photos of their cosplay with characters they like. Cosplay is an illustration of social interaction and the influence of the anime fan community on imitative behavior. Max Weber's social action theory states that social actions are related to social interaction, and individuals tend to imitate behavior considered normal and accepted within their social group. In this case, the influence of friends or anime fan communities provides support and acceptance for imitative behavior, creating a sense of belonging where individuals feel understood in their interests and hobbies.

Furthermore, the analysis of findings also reveals that the pleasure and satisfaction derived from watching and imitating anime are motivating factors in imitative behavior. For example, informant K likes several anime characters and wants to imitate their attitudes and spirit. This aligns with Max Weber's social action theory, explaining that individuals tend to imitate behavior that brings them satisfaction and pleasure. Informants feel connected to the anime characters they like and find inspiring values in their daily lives.

In this context, Max Weber's social action theory provides an understanding of the importance of social interaction, value selection, and acceptance in comprehending the motivation for imitative behavior towards anime. Individuals choose to imitate behavior deemed relevant and beneficial based on the selection of values and goals within their social group. Additionally, the influence of friends or anime fan communities, as well as the pleasure and satisfaction derived, also plays a crucial role in the motivation for imitative behavior.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of research on imitative behavior towards anime among students in the Sociology Education program, it can be concluded that motivation in imitative behavior is influenced by several interconnected factors. One significant factor is the influence of friends or anime fan communities, where students are inclined to imitate anime behavior as a form of social identification and a desire for acceptance in a similar environment. Furthermore, the pleasure and satisfaction derived



from watching and imitating anime also serve as a strong motivational factor. Students experience joy and emotional engagement when imitating anime characters they like, providing satisfaction and enhancing their sense of personal identity. The characteristics of anime portraying characters with specific qualities, spirit, and prowess also serve as a major motivation in imitative behavior. Students are interested in imitating anime characters considered to possess admirable qualities, strong spirit, or inspiring abilities.

In this context, Max Weber's social action theory provides essential understanding. The theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction, value selection, and acceptance in comprehending the motivation for imitative behavior towards anime. Social interaction with friends or anime fan communities can influence the selection of values that form the basis of imitative behavior, while acceptance within these communities plays a crucial role in validating and strengthening the motivation for imitative behavior by students. Overall, understanding the motivational factors in imitative behavior towards anime among sociology students is important for comprehending the dynamics of popular culture and viewing it in a broader social context. It is recommended to conduct more in-depth research on imitative behavior towards anime and its impact on students. This research should involve a broader population and consider other variables that can influence motivation in imitative behavior through both quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

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