

## "Otaku" As a Part of Japan Cultural Hegemony in Otaku Community on Indonesian Twitter Base

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**Abstract:** *Many new elements are present in life in Indonesia, especially in a culture that is increasingly influenced by a new, manipulating culture. Such a unique phenomenon occurs in Indonesia, namely anime lovers or familiarly referred to as Otaku. This study aims to find out the process of Japanese culture's hegemonization in the life of JPFBASE (Indonesian Twitter base of the Otaku community). Researchers used qualitative research methods, and the paradigm used is critical because it is considered relevant to find meaning and understanding related to the phenomenon under study. The study was conducted regarding analyzing tweets on the JPFBASE Twitter base. The researchers used the semiotic analysis method of Charles Sanders Peirce's meaning triangle to obtain descriptive data. Researchers found that the hegemony of Japanese culture in Indonesia affects several aspects, including mindset, dress style, language, and food references.*

**Keywords:** *Hegemony, Japanese culture, Otaku*

### Introduction

Many new elements are present in Indonesia, especially the culture increasingly influenced by the new manipulating culture. These elements impact the order of people's lives, especially habits and characters that are dominated by new cultures due to fanatical craze, especially in the modern era, which is increasingly concentrated on influencing renewal. Of course, it can affect the mind between real and unreal, but it is really done like a unique phenomenon that occurs in Indonesia, namely anime lovers or familiarly known as excessive Japanese film lovers, referred to as Otaku.

Otaku is a heavy lover of Anime and Otaku, on average, comes from children to teenagers who can know hundreds of types of Anime because of the femininity that influences the brain to think and memorize.

The notion of hegemony, according to Gramsci in Juditha (2018), is something that can initiate other things by accepting everything that is dominating. Hegemony is formed because of the power that dominates by forming a mindset that can affect many audiences, which is assumed to be accurate and should be followed or avoided. The existence of new cultural hegemonies that emerge in Indonesia can affect Indonesian society's general habits, such as how to speak, dress, think, and so on. Due to the new culture that emerged due to the dominance of the influencing craze, a new dimension replaced the old one.

Seeing the phenomenon of love for Japanese culture, the researchers assumed that there was a hegemony of Japanese culture through Otaku, who liked Japanese culture so much

because they felt attracted to a new dimension with various factors that could be a convenient stopover for them to escape from reality.

Otaku's love for Japanese culture featured in Anime and manga raises the question of whether this ultimately endangers their cultural existence and identity as a younger generation of Indonesians. From this point on, researchers are interested in delving deeper into the issue of how Otaku became part of the manifestation of Japanese hegemony in Indonesia in a study entitled "Otaku as Part of Japanese Cultural Hegemony in Indonesia."

This study aims to explore the definition of the term Otaku, find out the factors that cause the emergence of Otaku so that Japanese cultural hegemonization occurs in the Indonesian Otaku community on Twitter, and find out the process of Japanese cultural hegemonization in the life of the Indonesian Otaku community based on Twitter, and find out aspects -aspects affected by the hegemony of Japanese Otaku culture.

### **Literature Review**

Linguistically Hegemony comes from the Greek (egemonia), which is to control the nation over other nations. According to (Siswati, 2018), the term proposed by Gramsci, hegemony is a concept that is influenced by the acceptance of the ideology proposed by those who metaphorize something that is hyped up so that it can make an unsure follow the influencing element. Hegemony is an element that is often associated with the realm of the political field because it underlies influencing society in behavior because of the influence of the dominant audience in it.

According to Anggraeni & Wijaya (2019), hegemony is also a study studied by a politician in the world of politics, namely Lenin and Antonio Gramsci, so this hegemony is closely related to politics.

Hegemony can be formed when society accepts and imitates an ideology from a concept that has been dominated. According to Gramsci, this hegemony will create obedience to something without involving various questions about the ideology being formed. Cultural hegemony in the Marxist philosophical view is the domination the ruling party carries against a society that has a diverse culture by creating, constructing, or manipulating the culture that exists in society.

Cultural domination that is carried out can reach aspects of beliefs, perceptions, traits or values, and customs (rules or systems or arrangements of behavior that are eternal or difficult to shift and continue to be passed down from one generation to the next, becoming a relic that can result in the mingling of dominating forces with the diversity of behavior of the audience.

The perception of a group can move into rules that are used as a cultural guide in general without coercion. The general norms that have been created eventually become ideologies (an understanding or way of thinking) that are recognized and dominate society authentically and without any generally accepted doubts.

In addition, these general norms validate the status quo in the economic, social, and political realms as a matter that is natural, inevitable, eternal and contains a beneficial impression on many people. However, the perceived benefits tend to benefit the dominating ruling group (Bullock et al., 1999).

In an article written by Permana & Suzan (2018), entitled "The Experience of Communication and the Construction of the Meaning of "Otaku" for Fans of Japanese Culture

(Otaku)," it is stated that Grassmuck describes the term Otaku that workers initially loved at television stations, anime creators, and computer game creators with a specific purpose as a term used to refer to newly known colleagues. This continues with the increasing popularity of the term Otaku among anime fans in the realm of manga (comics) and interpretations of computer games. However, the term Otaku is interpreted today to have different meanings and refer to negative connotations. Therefore, during its development, Otaku's interpretation underwent many changes and now has a similar meaning to the term 'nerd' in America.

The various characteristics of Otaku are the following: There is an interest in contexts that smell of fiction, forcing to realize an object in the form of fiction to help a person obtain a sense of love, towards fictional objects have various basic tendencies in thinking to make them sexual objects (Restu & Agustina, 2017). Later, the Oxford dictionary inputted the term Otaku as "Teenagers who have an obsession with computer devices or aspects of popular culture to the point of undermining their sociability."

In terms of specificity, the community can be recognized perceptively in two types: traditional communities with online communities. According to (Herlambang, 2014) traditional community is a collection of people who have their interests by sharing the environment and have the same goals. Indirectly, we often find traditional communities in the surrounding environment, such as the association of cadets or the community that cares about the environment.

Meanwhile, an online community is an association of people in a group with the same goals and interests while forming from the following four factors: Communicate and share stories related to common interests. The ones in it are shoulder to shoulder. Determine the right place to share stories and knowledge—same habits. Branding is a thing, and members become involved with each other (Herlambang, 2014).

In online communities, people are more likely to represent themselves as if they stand in the same place as other members by talking about relevant and sustainable topics to their interests. However, this online community is more interested in social media groups such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and many more.

According to Laudon and Traver (Herlambang, 2014), online communities can be divided into several groups by dividing several groups of members into several parts, including the General Community: a community whose members are from various quarters with no specific topic specifics in it, which has more dominance into the topics of everything. Practice Communities is a community that focuses more on focusing on online discussions by helping each other. Interest Communities define a group more into the same interest. Affinity Communities is an incorporated into a shared identity between members. Sponsored Communities are communities created by governments or companies to promote products or things directed by a broad audience (Herlambang, 2014).

Culture is a system that results from social behavior patterns and connects a human community with its ecology. Cultural areas include technology, economics, social grouping forms, political organization, and religious beliefs and practices. Then the concept of culture undergoes a simplification of meaning into a pattern of behavior that is bound by certain groups and is called "customs" or "way of life (Keesing, 2014).

More broadly, culture is defined as a system of behavior peculiar to a population. According to Koentjaraningrat, culture is classified into three forms (Setiadi et al., 2017): An abstract form lodged in the realm of the minds of the citizens of society. It can be referred to as behavior, regulating, controlling, and directing human behavior as good manners, commonly known as customs Tangible as a social system. This form can be documented and observed because it contains human activities interacting with other humans in everyday life. It is concrete with the form of behavior and language. Its form is in the form of human works or physical culture that can be palpable, seen as large and small. It has a form of materials/artifacts such as temples, particular cloth motifs, building procedures, or building foundations.

Based on research from the journal J-Litera entitled "Positive Psychological Studies of the Concept of Ikigai in Emperor Akihito in the Akihito Tennou Monogatari Manga" by Harahap et al. (2021). The research uses a descriptive-analytical method which is carried out by describing several facts and then analyzing these facts. Etymologically, description and analysis have the meaning of deciphering. However, open analysis means deciphering facts and presenting a good understanding and exposure. The research was conducted to explain the relationship between the concept of ikigai and eudaimonic happiness along with the psychological health condition of Emperor Akihito.

A previous study entitled "Otaku Communication Behavior in Social Interaction (Phenomenological Study on Members of the Japanese Community Soshonbu Bandung)" written by Yulian & Sugandi (2019), explained that the limitations of conversation topics and limitations of movement (including verbal and nonverbal communication) are the causes of associative or dissociative behaviors both with Otaku and those who are not Otaku. The study uses the observation method as one of the instruments in obtaining information so that there is a detailed discussion about the behavior of people classified into Otaku, and how they respond when interacting with others, ranging from expressions to movements that Otaku has described. The causes of each response are diverse and obtained using the interview method.

In a previous study entitled "The Experience of Communication and the Construction of the Meaning of "Otaku" for Fans of Japanese Culture (Otaku)" written by Permana & Suzan (2018), it was explained that Otaku dedicates itself to a series of hobbies that revolve around Japanese popular culture.

## **Methodology**

This research uses qualitative methods. Qualitative research is based on going exploring, which involves in-depth and case-oriented studies of several cases or single cases (Fadli, 2021).

This research method is natural and holistic, showing life, behavior, history, organizational functionalism, and social movements of society. This method emphasizes the meaning behind social phenomena, and research results are usually used to develop theoretical concepts. This study uses qualitative methods to analyze the influence of cultural hegemony on the JapanFess community in the Indonesian Twitter base. This method was chosen by finding answers to a phenomenon studied through the application of scientific procedures systematically from primary data and existing secondary data, then re-examined by researchers (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019).

Data collection in this study uses the method of literature study / bibliographic study/literature study/documentary study, which according to Marsalis in Mirzaqon & Purwoko

(2018), in its implementation, there is information or data obtained by examining and reviewing a series of materials in the library, such as documents, books, magazines, historical stories, and so on. The object of this study focuses on the role of cultural hegemony towards the subjects of the JapanFess community in the Indonesian Twitter base. These data sources must certainly be relevant references to support, direct, and assist in completing the research. In addition, the author also obtained data by making observations on Twitter social media, especially at the Otaku community base in Indonesian Twitter.

In addition, according to Sarwono in Mirzaqon & Purwoko (2018), using the literature study method, researchers can also obtain information or data by studying the results of previous studies that align intending to obtain theoretical foundations related to the problem to be studied.

According to Sugiyono in Mirzaqon & Purwoko (2018), literary studies can be classified as theoretical studies, references, and other scientific literature related to culture, values, and norms, which develop in the social conditions studied.

The literature review steps that will be carried out in this research include determining the subject and related topics that become the framework for the research discussion first, tracing or digging up information, and determining the focus or center or main element of the research. Collects several sources of related information and data, organizes, or classifies related sources of information and data, and compiles reports on data sources that serve as material.

The current document is one of the essential and unavoidable parts of qualitative research methodology because there is awareness and confidence in the growing new support among researchers. Information or data is packaged into documents and artifacts so that the recovery of data sources by utilizing document studies can help solve problems in the qualitative research process.

This research uses the text content analysis method defined according to Pasha as a qualitative content analysis that is orderly according to the system uses analysis and is not rigid as quantitative methods. This study used the semiotic analysis of Charles Sanders Peirce. Meanwhile, according to Peirce, semiotics is an action, influence, or cooperation of three subjects: signs, objects, and interpreters.

The triangle theory of meaning has main elements: signs, objects, and interpreters. Signs are everything that has a physical form and can be processed by the five human senses. Signs can also identify something other than the sign itself. According to Peirce, symbols, Icons, and Indices are the sign's forming components.

## **Findings & Discussion**

Based on the study results, the factors that caused the emergence of the Otaku community include the development of Japanese popular culture in Indonesia through cultural globalization. From 1980-1990, the popularity of Japanese culture was growing. In 2000 the spread of Anime and manga itself had gone quite a long way when viewed from the increase in public interest in manga and anime (アニメ; Japanese animation) (Erwindo, 2018).

Now, Anime and manga have become part of international commodities and global phenomena, no longer just limited to entertainment platforms and works of art. The problem of anime globalization began in the 1960s through Cool Japan.

Cool Japan is a line of direction and part of Japan's diplomatic strategy. By involving the government and the private sector, it takes its way through popular culture and the creative industry (Yudo Prakoso, 2013). Cool Japan was used for marketing Japanese soft power and was formally marketed at the World Cosplay Summit 2008 in Nagoya (Muhammad, 2015). Through it, the Japanese government seems to want to show globally that the country is full of peace, sound and rich in traditional culture and famous cultures such as Anime and manga.

Base or autobase is a combination of the words "Automatic" and "Fanbase," which has a function as a place for their followers to send questions via Direct Message according to specific topics that are anonymous (Mardiana & Zi'ni, 2020).

Twitter users can send questions or statements in the form of tweets or tweets anonymously through an automatic account called base according to its types, such as a base that specifically discusses topics around food, beauty, and certain popular cultures ranging from western, Korean, to Japanese.

One of the autobases devoted to discussing Japanese pop culture is @jpfbase. Twitter users in Indonesia often use this base to ask questions about topics that have elements of Japanese popular culture. The @jpfbase account has generated 179.9 thousand tweets with 318.3 thousand followers since it was created in August 2020. Through this account base, users can send questions and statements about everything related to Japanese pop culture to followers and non-followers.

The process of cultural evolution is a protracted process of change, and its impact on culture will be seen through the massive changes that exist in it. This terminology arose due to Dawkins' assumption of Darwin's Theory that its scope was too universal only to be deluded to the role of genes. Darwin's Theory of Evolution also involves evolution beyond biology, such as language and socio-culture (Kango et al., 2015).

According to Williams in *Marxism and Literature* (1977:121-127) in the study "Understanding the Evolution of Urban Cultures" (Budiman, 2017), there are three interlocking cultural categories that influence cultural evolution. The three classifications are residual culture, dominant culture, and emergent culture. Residual culture is the subject of thought, implementation, behavior, and institution from the past culture that has dominated. However, the culture has been sidelined by more modern cultures. This culture that has gone through its golden age does not mean that it has disappeared immediately, although some of its components are no longer implemented.

Japanese culture occupies a position as dominant in Indonesia during the colonization of 1942. This process of cultural evolution can occur due to the development of the human mindset so that the culture changes (N. Anggraeni et al., 2021).

One of the changes is seen through the role of the media. Media causing an impact of systematic change, as well as with the support of technology, as the basis of forces that intentionally or unintentionally enter specific social conditions and thus has accelerated the process of maintaining the distance between microsocial and macrosocial as between macro-cultures and micro-cultures.

**Figure 1**

*Opinion of Japanfess members regarding the impact of Otaku's existence*



The picture above is a tweet by a member of the JapanFess community sent through the JapanFess Twitter account. One form of cultural hegemonization through the process of cultural evolution formed from changes in mindsets, personality, and attitudes can be seen in the picture above, which mentions the effect of chuunibyou on him after watching particular Anime.

Chuunibyou is a Japanese slang term that describes a person who tends to look down on others, preferring to be unique in an attempt to look 'cool' (Crawford, 2016).

A person's attitude and personality will determine their chosen lifestyle. The emergence of the desire to follow the nature and style of fictional characters in Japanese Anime that he considers cool reflects that there is a change in the mindset that the behavior and nature of fictional characters are better than the behavior and nature of the self that already existed, so it is worthy of being used as a reference for self-change.

Based on previous research, that cultural hegemony is the background for the emergence of different mindset domains, and this hegemony allows the emergence of some of the resulting impacts on oneself for what was thought before (Hasibuan, 2020).

The impact of hegemony caused by the existence of the Japanese Otaku cultural hegemony is to cause an attitude of following the attitude of the culture itself. Like the japanfess community on Twitter base in Indonesia, which is highly obsessed with various kinds of Anime or manga.

The existence of an ongoing obsession has a drastic impact, namely changing the thinking patterns of his followers, one of which is in Japanfess's tweet. Not only does otaku cultural hegemony affects the thinking patterns of members of the Japanfess twitter base, but the lifestyle they have also changed, one of which is that the attitudes imposed by Japanfess members tend to be more relaxed, and there is not much debate. With the influence of controversial Anime, the lifestyle of japanfess members has changed drastically.

**Figure 2**

*Tweets about Otaku's role in changing lifestyles*



The tweet above is equipped with a meme in which a 'sign' or 'sign' is found in the form of a cigarette on the right hand that is being lit on the meme, with the 'object' of the female anime character smoking. The interpretation obtained based on the meme above is that cigarettes are a form of relaxed feeling, and not caring about their surroundings complements the opinions of JPF members.

Researchers interpreted that the sender intended to affirm his concern for the weeb's call to himself and attach importance to his pleasure when watching Anime.

The readers expected by the sender are insecure with weeb calls that tend to be identified with people who like to watch Anime. The topic at issue is the indifference to weeb calls from people. This is one of the proofs that cultural hegemony can influence a person's preferences in responding to how a person views himself.

**Figure 3**

*Tweets about the role of Otaku in influencing dress style*



In the tweet above, you can see a 'sign' in the form of an Itadori Yuuji character from the Jujutsu Kaisen anime that is worn by an 'object,' namely one of the Indonesian influencers, Reza 'Arap' Oktovian, who has a following of 693.8 thousand on Twitter. The resulting interpretation, namely the clothes used, is a form of Reza's love for the anime character because he likes to wear them in front of an audience or public spaces.

The researcher interpreted the meaning of the sender's tweet as their excitement that one of the Indonesian influencers was wearing clothes from one of the anime characters and the sense of pride that arose with the assumption that he and the influencer had a shared hobby or interest. It can be seen how the sender changed the name of the actual anime character Itadori Yuuji to Itadori Arap as an affirmation that Reza 'Arap' in this photo resembles the character.

The readers expected by the sender are people who are happy with the Jujutsu Kaisen anime to feel the same pride as the sender.

**Figure 4**

*Tweets about the role Anime plays in food preferences.*



In the tweet above, the 'sign' formed on the image of a half-eaten omurice that comes from the Anime Charlotte, which is the 'object' of the sender's tweet, which acts as an object that changes preferences for food in real life. The resulting interpretation is that the 'object' of the tweet, a piece of omurice image from the Anime Charlotte, influenced the sender's interest in Japanese food.

Researchers interpreted the sender sent the tweet because the craving factor influenced it for food triggered by the Anime watched, namely the charlotte anime, which featured visuals from omurice as if it were perfect.

Based on the study results, it can be concluded that a Japanese cultural hegemony occurs towards Otaku on JPFbase Twitter base so that it affects various aspects including mindset, style of dress, language, and references to various Japanese specialties that some Indonesian people feel. The characteristics of Japanese cultural hegemony formed on JPFBASE's Twitter base can be seen in the followers and senders who send tweets obsessed with matters related to Japanese popular culture. With this research, it is hoped that readers can find out the role of cultural hegemony in aspects of people's lives that are affected.

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