THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF JAPANESE POP CULTURE IN SINGAPORE

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ABSTRACT

Singapore has many advantages that can be exploited by Singapore. One of them is with popular culture. Now popular culture is one part of the culture that is being loved by the younger generation. This relates to the younger generation who are advanced in technology and novelty. One of them is from Japan. Japan is now progressing in terms of popular culture, although in general it is still quite low. This discussion will discuss the history of popular culture in Singapore. Then discuss what events can be part of Japanese popular culture in Singapore. The economic and cultural impact also has an impact on the development of Japanese popular culture in Singapore which further shows that Singapore is one of the countries that can be relied upon and spread to the Southeast Asia region.

KEYWORDS: development, pop culture, Japan, Singapore

INTRODUCTION

Popular culture has become one of the cultures loved by people today. An era where many people have enjoyed foreign cultures from anywhere and along with the times, many cultures from outside come in and seek followers and market share in the world, so this is something that can influence and turn many people into people who become people. many things have their own culture and their own followers. This has become a lot of people who like and explore the culture that is there, so it becomes interesting to discuss and see from how much culture is what brings culture forward and developing. This is not far from Southeast Asia which is a region that tries to maintain their culture while global and modern culture enters and tries to influence the culture in Southeast Asia, so that the name of traditional culture in Southeast Asia remains, but can still carry out and incorporate modern culture and global in the eyes of Southeast Asia.

One of them is Singapore. Singapore is a developed country full of progress and development of a modern society, advanced, hardworking, and willing to sacrifice for the sake of the country and a good job in Singapore. Singapore has become a developed and modern country thanks to government assistance and the hard work of various communities in advancing the State of Singapore, so that it can become a developed country. In addition, Singapore has cooperated and sent many human resources abroad. The goal is to become one of the countries that compete internationally and align Singapore as a country that can advance its own society and country, so that one thing that can be seen by the people of Singapore is that they can progress and be independent in any matter and culture, what they bring will continue to exist and even allow culture from outside and its people to enter and seek market share that can be an advantage in Singapore.
In addition, Singapore is also one of the keys in dealing with modern culture and dealing with popular culture in Singapore, so that Singapore is a place in Asia that spreads popular culture the fastest in Asia.

One of them is popular culture originating from Japan. Japan has become one of the investment and cultural destinations of Singapore. In addition, the economic progress and the condition of Singapore's people who accept diversity in cultural matters and openly accept popular culture is what makes Singapore a very good destination for Japan. In addition to economic problems that can make progress, cultural issues that are almost the same are one of the factors in cooperation with Japan.

Japan, with its popular culture that is very loved by young people in Singapore, has made the country one of the most important destinations in building fans in Singapore. The existence of anime, manga, cosplay, and events in Singapore has brought benefits and is one of the things that can strengthen the relationship between Japan-Singapore. In addition, this is one of the growth of Japanese culture in Singapore.

In this study, the study will discuss the history of the entry of Japanese popular culture in Singapore, what is included and what is popular from each field, what is the future of Japanese popular culture in Singapore, and the advantages and disadvantages of the inclusion of Japanese culture in Singapore. poplar Japanese in Singapore. This can be one way of knowing how to find out Japanese popular culture in Singapore, so that you can find out and see how Japanese popular culture in Singapore can be one of the things that is considered in Japan and internationally related to Japanese popular culture.

DISCUSSION

History

The history of the entry of Japanese popular culture in Singapore began during the Japanese colonial era in Singapore. Colonization that lasted from 1940-1945 has become an area of Singapore or British Malaya became a colony of Singapore. Since then, the cultural relationship between Japan and Singapore has existed through the Japanese army and Japanese music, most of which have experienced development and the music they bring is from the big band culture originating from the United States and makes this one of the early spread of popular culture. Japan in Singapore. (Shiraishi, 1993:16)

After the World War ended, so did the colonialism in Singapore. But Japan still strives to be good and acceptable in the eyes of the world through culture. According to Ogura (2008), this was due to the fact that after Japan lost to its allies during World War II, Japan tried to be accepted back into the Meiji period where progress was being made overseas. One way is through culture. This culture will lift Japan to be better and can be included as a good country in the eyes of the world.

Singapore tried to become an independent country after separating from Malaysia in 1965. Therefore, the Singapore government and prime minister Lee Kuan Yew did a lot of cooperation with Japan in economic and cultural terms in advancing the State of Singapore and making Singapore as one of the things that can advance the country. in any field. So Singapore can be a
very lucrative market for the Japanese and Singaporean governments. In addition, Singapore also allows Japanese entertainment to enter Singapore in the midst of competition with Mandarin Pop and Indo-pop which are loved by the Peranakan and Malay communities in Singapore. (Lam, 2007:350)

Then in the 21st century, the Japanese government through the Ministry of Culture launched a program called Cool Japan. Cool Japan is a program carried out by the Japanese government to increase Japan's income from culture and sports. One of the most profitable is Singapore. Why Singapore? Because Singapore is a developed country in Southeast Asia and Singapore is considered to be an intermediary that can benefit both countries. (Michisita:2015)

**Distribution and Explanation**

Japan has cooperated with Singapore since the British colonial era in Singapore. Although the relationship had experienced a split in World War II, this did not reduce the relationship that exists between Japan and Singapore, so this can be done until now. So there is a division of fields and problems in Singapore.

First is anime. Anime is animation that originates from Japan and is made in Japan. Anime stands for animation which means animation. Anime is actually the same as cartoons in the world. But what makes anime different is that anime is heavier in stories that tend to be liked by young people, especially teenagers and adults, and the graphic side which has its own characteristics and special style that causes many people to like this anime. (Craig:2000,139-140)

This anime was already in Singapore in the 1970s with an anime series entitled Mobile Suit Gundam which was successful in attracting fans in Singapore, although it failed in Japan. This series became one of the beginnings of the spread of anime in Singapore. Then along with the development of the times and the quality of anime, more and more anime are coming to Singapore and getting big profits in showing anime in Singapore. Call it Sailor Moon, Dragon Ball Z, One Piece, and Naruto, making these anime one of the most popular anime in Singapore. Nowadays, popular anime are Sword Art Online, Attack on Titan, Tokyo Ghoul, and Demon Slayer or Kimetsu no Yaiba. (Brenner:2007,206-207)

Along with the times, Anime has become one of the biggest advantages in Asia, especially in Southeast Asia. For example, in Indonesia the profit from showing anime is $59.5 million from DVD and physical sales, so Singapore gets $60 million from selling the same in Indonesia. This is due to DVD sales and screenings in Singapore. In addition, Singapore has made its country an intermediary for anime broadcasting in Singapore. Therefore, Singapore is dubbed as the anime center in Southeast Asia. If you look at the number of fans, indeed Singapore is still inferior to Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia. But from the number of advantages and event problems, Singapore occupies the first position in Southeast Asia.

The spread of anime in Singapore is actually the same as in countries in Southeast Asia, which includes young Singaporeans. But experiencing challenges from the older generation who prefer C-Pop to J-Pop. This is exacerbated by the Japanese atrocities in World War II. So this is a significant difficulty and challenge for Japanese popular culture. Then the younger generation tried to find new fans through anime. One of them is through streaming services. Streaming has become one of the most popular services. In fact, this service makes Singapore one of the intermediaries
that are carried out in Japan to be opened in Singapore. There are several things that have experienced the procurement of a youtube account that discusses or broadcasts anime in Singapore, then spreads it throughout Asia. One of them is the Muse Asia channel which is one of the most popular things in Singapore. In addition, there is Ani-One, Animelog, and Muse Indonesia.

This has already discussed anime, now let's talk about one area that is almost the same as anime, but slightly different, namely manga. Manga are comics used in Japan, Manga is actually the same as comics. It's just that the difference is the different depiction style and its own style in Japan (Brenner:2007,207). The history of manga in Singapore has existed since 1990 with the name Chuang Yi as a distributor and exporter of Japanese manga. Along with the development of the times, more and more are filling the distributors of Japanese manga in Singapore. In 2013, Chuang Yi was disbanded and replaced with a company called Shogakuan Asia Ltd as the distributor in Singapore. (Anime News Network:2014)

Then the first manga in Singapore manga is Dragon Ball and Slam Dunk. So in the times, many have developed and published many manga not only in English and Japanese, but also printed in Mandarin and Malay so that there is a diversity of languages in manga. In addition, many manga are attracting attention in Singapore, so that the fans are very large, although those who read not as much as anime viewers in Singapore.

However, manga in Singapore has made local manga makers in Singapore excited and want to produce manga similar to those in Japan, so that they are not inferior to manga makers spread all over the world, especially in Japan, where manga is founded. One of them is the work of On Yong Hwee and Koh Hong Teng entitled Ten Sticks and One Rice. This manga managed to get an award from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and reached 1000 copies. In addition, they also make a series of manga with local flavors such as; Monsters, Miracle, and Mayonnaise. This led to many successful and continued manga writing in Singapore. This shows that many people are willing to try or adapt manga styles into local or everyday stories in Singapore.

In addition, the writing and drawing of manga in Singapore has been held by the company Shogaukan Asia Ltd, which not only publishes manga from Japan, but also from China and Singapore. The most popular manga are Detective Conan, Pokemon Adventure, Mobile Suit Gundam Thunderbolt, and Doraemon. After that, many people liked manga because the story was more complete than anime, so many people liked manga. So it can be said that many want to read manga better than watch anime.

After that, what is more important in Japanese popular culture is cosplay. Cosplay is an activity that wears anime costumes to be similar and the same as someone in the anime (Ashcraft and Plunkett:2014:6). Cosplay has been around in Japan since the 1990s and is still growing today. Therefore, many are willing to spend a lot of money to make cosplay costumes. For Singapore, cosplay has been around since the 2000s and has reached an extraordinary stage of development in Singapore. Therefore, the issue of cosplay and cosplay hosting in Singapore already exists and shows something good and proud for Singapore. Especially with the Cool Japan program, which makes Singapore more open and proud of Singapore in the eyes of the world, especially in the field of cosplay.

Regarding cosplay in Singapore, many people join groups or individuals who can become the pride of the group and Singapore in the eyes of the world. An example is a cosplayer from Singapore named Kiko Cosplay. Kiko Cosplay is a Singaporean cosplayer of Chinese descent who
has become one of the most popular cosplayers in Singapore. In addition, many people already know about Kiko Cosplay with a following of 300 thousand followers. Therefore, many people want to become followers of Kiko Cosplay. Therefore, many want to make Kiko Cosplay a role model in cosplay issues and how to become a cosplayer from the start to become successful and famous.

Apart from that, there is something that has caught the attention of anime fans and cosplayers in Singapore. This is because there is a group of cosplayers who have made Singapore's reputation good and famous in the eyes of the world. The name of the group is the Singapore Cosplay Club group. The Singapore Cosplay Club is a group of members who are passionate about cosplay and making clothes and accessories similar to anime characters in Singapore.

The Singapore Cosplay Club also conducts events related to Japanese culture, especially Japanese popular culture. The group performed at Cosfest in Downtown East, Halloween Town Yokai Festival in Downtown East, Anime Festival Asia at Expo, and most notably the World Summit Cosplay in Japan. Therefore, the Singapore Cosplay Club is already well-known and many want to join this group.

However, there is something interesting in the cosplay discussion, namely the cross dress problem that usually occurs among cosplayers. Crossdressing is a cosplay where every cosplayer can act as the desired anime character, even having to change in this case the appearance and character in this cross dress (Ashcraft and Plunkett:2014,8). Cross dress issues are actually commonplace and respond casually in this matter. But the problem is when this has started to be done to the general public. What happened? They will be deceived and advise others not to participate in the performance through crossdressing.

Then there is the term kigurumi. Kigurumi is a type of cosplay that transforms cosplayers into anime characters with latex cloth all over their bodies and large masks that cover the cosplayers (Grape:2020). Kigurumi are usually only available at events related to Japanese popular culture. As a result, kigurumi is not well received by cosplayers in Singapore. Apart from the problem of high prices, kigurumi demands that cosplayers always stay still and move according to the anime characters they are playing. Therefore, many prefer crossdresses over kigurumi.

Singapore also has another thing that is very proud of in Japanese popular culture, namely events or events that discuss or host Japanese popular culture, such as anime and cosplay. Singapore is a very lucrative and lucrative host. This is because the money income that flows in the event can be one of the factors supporting the economy in the progress of the Singapore state. In addition, many people who come and enjoy the event cause the number of visitors from coming to the event to increase income.

There are several reasons that make Singapore one of the best places to host anime and cosplay-related events in Singapore. These factors are because many people want to waste time attending these events. In addition, the location of Singapore, which is at the center of world shipping, has made Singapore one of the countries that hold many Japanese-related events. The last is about cooperation and the many benefits that can be obtained by the Singapore government and private companies that oversee anime. So that Singapore is also known as the center of Asian anime or The Mecca of Anime.

Singapore has hosted many events related to Japanese events or Japanese popular culture. For example is Sakura Matsuri, Anime Garden. This event is an event about organizing anime in
Singapore. Usually happens on a small scale, but still feels Japanese in Singapore. Then there is a bigger event, namely the Cosfest event in Downtown East. Cosfest is an abbreviation of Cosplay Festival which is a festival that discusses or contains cosplay in Singapore. This is where the Singapore Cosplay Club group and various cosplays also participate in the event. There is even a contest of its own and the prize is S$1000 for the winner of the cosplay contest.

Next is SG Con which is an event that discusses games, anime, and manga. In addition, it also discusses Western popular culture, which is no less good than Japan. Therefore, many people came to discuss and enjoy the performance. Usually occurs in December. Usually brings many actors, comic makers, games, and voice actors in a character. Therefore, this has become a well-known factor for Singapore in terms of popular culture in the world, especially Southeast Asia.

The last one is about the biggest festival in Asia, namely Anime Festival Asia which is held by AFA in Singapore. AFA is a host that really dives into the world of Japanese popular culture, such as anime, manga, and cosplay. This festival is a festival that can unite all those who love Japanese popular culture into one extraordinary thing. In addition, this event was also attended by many people in this case people actually in the field of Japanese popular culture. Such as voice actors, singers, cosplayers, and so on. Therefore, many take this as one of the unparalleled pride for Japanese popular culture. (The Straits Times. 2016)

Impact

From the explanation above, it can be said that the development of Japanese popular culture in Singapore has an impact on the state and society of Singapore. This can be seen from the Singaporean people who know and talk about Japan. Therefore, look at the impact of popular culture on Singapore, so as to understand and see the direct impact of Japanese popular culture.

The first is that more and more Singaporeans know, like, and even want to go to Japan. Events in Singapore related to Japanese popular culture can be one of the entrances to Japan in terms of Japanese popular culture. So many people want to come to the event to share and experience the joys of Japanese popular culture.

The second is the increasing number of international events that relate to Japanese popular culture and can bring benefits to Singapore. Apart from the economy, which will certainly have an impact on Singapore's foreign exchange, this will also have an impact on more and more people from abroad who come to attend these events.

The event that is most in demand by people from outside Singapore is the Anime Festival Asia which usually takes place at the Expo, Singapore. Its location which is close to the city center, easy-to-reach MRT transportation, and close to Changi Airport causes many people to attend AFA Singapore.

In addition, the number of artists and singers from Japan also enlivened the AFA Singapore event. This is because many come from their favorite anime that fills the songs in the anime. For example, LiSA, Aimer, L-arc en ciel, T.M Revolution, and so on (Anime News Network:2015). Then the arrival of voice actors such as Maaya Uchida, Megumi Nakajima, Tokui Sora, Mikako Komatsu, and so on has made fans come and watch the anime voice actors live. They are even willing to pay a special price to be able to see it. So it's not surprising, AFA Singapore has succeeded in attracting attention to the world community, especially anime lovers and cosplayers.
Both in terms of economy and the number of spectators who attended the event.

The third is that more and more people are coming to Japan to see and feel the sensation of Japanese culture which is thick with tradition and technology. In addition, this also allows Singaporeans to enter Japan without having to use a visa. Likewise vice versa. Therefore, both countries can enter each other without any obstacles.

Fourth, Singapore is the best place for business in terms of business and economy in the world. This has caused many companies related to Japan to easily enter and develop into one of the companies that can see the potential of Singapore. This company will bring Japanese community for develop and reach the audience not just for Singaporean, but also for Asian community, especially from Southeast Asia. For example from many viewers and subscribers in Malaysia, Indonesia, Phillipines, and Thailand.

Regarding Japanese popular culture in Singapore, the most famous are from television stations in Singapore. There are two television shows about Japan in Singapore, Gem and Animax. They are a television station based in Singapore and are under the same company, namely Sony Television Asia, which is based in Singapore and broadcasts televisions such as AXN, Animax, Gem, and One.

Animax is a Japanese show channel located in Singapore. Unlike One which is direct from Singapore, Animax comes from Japan which then spreads all over the world, one of which is in Singapore for broadcast to Southeast Asia (Anime News Network:2003). Animax broadcasts anime programs that are indeed the same as Animax in Japan. Even when there is a new anime, they will broadcast the anime at the same time as Japan, so that the broadcasting occurs simultaneously. Animax was founded in 2006 and still exists today. Animax is the first television channel to broadcast anime entirely to Southeast Asia. Therefore, Animax has become popular among Japanese enthusiasts in Southeast Asia. Even so successful, Animax also held a concert in Singapore. This is as a thank you to the fans who have watched Animax and are still watching until now.

Animax is also broadcast newly and lastest anime show directly from Japan at the same time. For example: The Seven Deadly Sins, Orient, The Irregular in Magic High School, Fruit Basket, etc. Animax highlight many cosplayer from Asian country. This is the sign that Animax also care and looking forward a popular culture beside the anime. This also inspire many fans and people who interesting in cosplaying a character and anime at one broadcast channel.

Then the channel from Youtube, There is no doubt that Youtube changing the way of people watching. It transform from convetional TV to Youtube who can choose whatever you want
to watch. Youtube also an application where people make creative video and money from that. It no surprise that many people including company and celebrity also starting make channel and money from that channel.

One on them is Muse. Muse is anime streaming who come from Taiwan to watch anime in Asia. Singapore become hub and center to English Channel and even become Muse Asia watching anime in English Subtitles. The reaction from viewers so successful, that Muse Asia continue to develop to other country, From Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Phillipines. However it shows that Muse Indonesia now become most subscribers in Southeast Asia, with 6.28 millions. More than Muse Asia with 4.75 millions. Follow by Malaysia with 504 thousand and Phillipine with 150 thousand. (Lee, 2020)

But thanks to Singapore as hub of culture and economic in Southeast Asia, Indonesia become one of most advantage and advance in how they attract many viewers to watch anime at Youtube. Even Muse Indonesia become pioneer of legal anime streaming in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, due lack of legal anime streaming. Mostly people in Southeast Asia watching anime by illegal anime streaming and still exist now. So Muse Asia open their eye about how to watch anime with legal and help their animator in Japan who lacks of money and support from studio. Usually the money gives to voice actor (seiyuu) and producer of anime.

Fifth is increase the people in Singapore who watches Singapore. In recent year, the people in Singapore like to watch anime. This is due a pandemic that forces everyone to work from home (WFH) and find the entertainment in home to prevent a boring day. It also impact to increase number of streaming, from Youtube to Netflix, thanks for increase number of watching. According to survey from Yougov.sg, 52% Singaporean like and watch anime, but only 15% is frequent watch anime. While 48% is watching anime according to interesting watch (https://business.yougov.com/content/42090-anime-singapore-popularity-2022). This is show that Singaporean like to watch anime, even when the pandemic is still ongoing. Therefore this is amazing that the Singaporean still have activity to something relaxing.

Lastly, Singapore is one of the hubs for Japanese popular culture events to Southeast Asia. This is because Singapore has a similar economic and work system to Japan, so they are willing to invest in Singapore. The result is that the more people who want to broadcast the program, the more this television show spreads across the country. So far, more and more countries in Southeast Asia are releasing the event from Singapore, so that Singapore has become the hub or liaison for Japanese entertainment to Southeast Asia.

CONCLUSION

From some of the existing discussions about Japanese popular culture in Singapore, it can be concluded that there is something interesting in this discussion. Many feel that Japanese popular culture will not change and remain in conventional culture, but what has happened is that something has changed externally in Japanese popular culture. This culture has brought many extraordinary benefits and the large number of visitors has made Japanese popular culture abundant and growing. In addition, this culture also brings benefits and deep cooperation with Japan, thus facilitating communication and deep relations with Japan.

Then there are various world-class events that cause Singapore's self-esteem to rise to the
world level. In addition, Singapore also invites other countries to enliven and succeed in events related to Japan. So that it has an impact on more and more people coming to Singapore and famous artists want to come there to welcome the fans.

The economic impact also plays an important role in the Singapore economy. As Singapore advances in the technology and entertainment economy, it can become a hub for Japanese entertainment to the Southeast Asian region. Singapore can help and spread the event to Southeast Asia and help the Singapore economy, especially in the popular culture and technology economy. So that Singapore will get more and more activities and events that add to Singapore's profits.

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