

Contemporary Communication Behavior in the Cosplay Lampung Fun Community

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Abstract

Indonesia's rich and diverse culture continues to adapt amidst the currents of globalization, including the influx of Japanese popular culture that influences the younger generation. One form of this adaptation is seen in the phenomenon Cosplay, which is the practice of wearing fictional character costumes as a form of self-expression. In Indonesia, Cosplay has grown rapidly since the late 1990s and formed special communities such as Cosplay Lampung Fun in Bandar Lampung. Through Cosplay, individuals can explore alternative identities that influence their communication behavior, both in public and private spaces. This phenomenon is reinforced by the use of social media, which expands interactions between community members. This study aims to examine contemporary communication behavior within the community. Cosplay Lampung Fun focuses on how social identities are constructed and displayed. The research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods, through interviews and participant observation, to gain an in-depth understanding of the communication dynamics that occur. The findings of this study are expected to enrich communication studies, particularly in the context of popular culture and social identity formation.

Keywords: Cosplay, Communication Behavior, Social Identity, Community, Popular Culture



INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's rich and diverse culture is the result of centuries of interaction between various ethnicities, traditions, and values. In today's era of globalization, local cultures are not only preserved but also adapted to external influences. One interesting development is the rise of interest in Japanese pop culture, particularly among the younger generation. One form of this acculturation is evident in the younger generation's increasing interest in Japanese pop culture. Anime and Cosplay, the practice of impersonating fictional characters through costume and acting. According to The Japan Foundation, in 2023, 711,732 Indonesians were currently studying Japanese as a foreign language. This data demonstrates widespread interest in Japanese culture and the potential for cross-border cultural practices.

Culture Cosplay it first appeared in Japan at a fashion show in Ashinoko, Kanagawa Prefecture in 1978, in the form of a masquerade ball at the 17th Nihon SF Taikai science fiction convention. Mari Kotani, a science fiction critic, attended the event dressed as a character from the story. A Fighting Man of Mars by Edgar Rice Burroughs. In addition, the Director of the animation company Gainax, Yasuhiro Takeda, appeared in a unique costume taking the theme of the character Star Wars. They are both figures who have an important role in the existence of Cosplay in Japan (Widya Ayunita Sari & Arief Sudrajat, S.Ant., 2021).

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, Cosplay it started to be known around 1998, although it was not as popular as it is now (Rohimah et al., 2024). Anime began to enter Indonesia in the 1970s, starting with the broadcast of "Wanpaku Omukashi Kum Kum" on TVRI (Raudha et al., 2024) and became popular after the University of Indonesia held a Japanese Degree in the early 2000s, which attracted the attention of the youth community (Mardiharto, 2017). Since then, Cosplay is growing rapidly, with many costume exhibitions held almost every month in big cities like Jakarta, Bandung, and Yogyakarta. The people who wear these costumes are then called Cosplayer or coser (Kusumadewi & Hastasari, 2020). In 2012, several Cosplayer Indonesia even managed to achieve success at the international level by becoming third place in the World Cosplay Summit (WCS) held in Nagoya, Japan (Haes & Pratiwi, 2019).

Initially, Cosplay in Indonesia is very Japan-centric, with a focus on the characters from Manga and Anime. However, as time went on, new variations emerged that included local characters such as Si Buta dari Gua Hantu and Wiro Sableng. This shows the existence of cultural acculturation, where local elements began to be incorporated into costumes and themes Cosplay. Furthermore, identity Cosplayer it is interesting to study because of the transformation between everyday identity and identity when Cosplay. Identity Cosplay this can be temporary, but it has a



significant impact on how individuals express themselves and interact. Therefore, questions arise about how self identity is formed. Cosplayer formed and recognized, both when wearing costumes and in everyday life. Do they have identities that are only temporary, that is, only valid when they are cosplay. Or do they have their own characteristics that show the difference cosplayer and those who are not when dressing normally in society. Some people still do not know and understand the identity of a person cosplayer.

This Japanese phenomenon has become a significant element in pop culture worldwide, including in Indonesia. The rise of teenagers embodying fictional characters in real life is a social phenomenon that can be scientifically analyzed. This phenomenon can be understood as a condition indicating an unusual event within the social order. It can be observed, felt, or witnessed by individuals within the community, thus presenting an interesting aspect for scientific study (Bevani et al., 2023).

The emergence of various conventions and festivals that focus on Cosplay This demonstrates the high level of public interest in subcultures, allowing them to form communities over time to serve as a platform for their fans. Communities are formed by individuals who have close, personal, and heartfelt relationships, forming a community or association to carry out cooperation or share a shared vision and mission (Ginting et al., 2023). One such community cosplay the largest community in Lampung is Lampung Fun Cosplay They also frequently share photos, costume tutorials, experiences, skills, and knowledge across various platforms, both in person and through social media.

In subsequent developments, social media played a significant role in this community's communication. Through platforms like Instagram and TikTok, the Cosplayer can share work, discuss, and build self-image. Thus, communication that takes place within the community cosplay not only interactions that occur directly in the real world, but also occur in the digital world which reflects the characteristics of the era contemporary. Contemporary communication in the community Cosplay is also influenced by technological developments. The interactions that occur are not always in the form of information. This situation creates a dynamic environment, allowing community members to continuously develop themselves and adapt to various changes.

Contemporary communication phenomena in the community Cosplay also reflects broader social changes. Today's society is increasingly open to diversity and self-expression, which is reflected in the way community members interact with each other. However, although much research has been done on Cosplay and subcultural communities, there is still a lack of understanding regarding the causes of contemporary communication behavior within them.



Previous research has often focused more on aesthetic and cultural aspects. Cosplay, without delving deeper into the communication dynamics that occur in individual social identities. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing how Cosplayer build and display their social identity in the community Lampung Fun Cosplay as part of contemporary communication behavior.

In the context of this research, it is important to analyze how factors such as individual motivation, social norms, and technology interact to shape communication behavior. A better understanding of constructing and displaying social identities as part of contemporary communication behavior is expected to provide insights for community members in improving their social interactions. Furthermore, the findings of this study can also contribute to the development of communication theory, particularly in the context of subcultures. This research uses a qualitative approach, with data collection methods that include in-depth interviews and participant observation as a means of obtaining information. Through this approach, it is hoped that the information obtained will have a higher level of accuracy and depth regarding communication behavior that occurs within the community Cosplay. Thus, it is hoped that the results of this study can reveal more comprehensively how contemporary communication behavior is in the community Cosplay.

RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena in depth through contextual exploration of meaning, experience and perspective of subjects. The data is descriptive, non-numerical, and interpreted. According to Bogdan & Biklen (1992: 21) in (Fiantika et al., 2022), this data can be in the form of written narratives, oral speech, or directly observed behavior, which is then analyzed to obtain a complete understanding. The phenomenological approach is a research method focused on understanding the deep meaning of individual life experiences. Researchers explore participants' views, beliefs, and interpretations of their experiences. The main objective of this approach is to identify the essence or core meaning of experiences that are considered to have similar perceptions between individuals.

OVERVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY COMMUNICATIONS

Contemporary Communication comes from two syllables: communication and contemporary. In general, the term contemporary refers to things that are contemporary, modern, or occurring at the same time as current conditions. Thus, contemporary communication can be



defined as a form of communication that has developed along with the influence of modernization. Contemporary communication is often associated with virtual communication, namely the process of conveying messages via the internet or cyberspace. Communication is understood as a virtual reality that takes place in cyberspace through the use of the internet.

Virtual communication is the process of exchanging messages between a communicator and a receiver interactively via the internet. Virtual communication can be accessed from anywhere, making it easier for us to work and interact with others around the world. The development of human civilization is currently very rapid, one factor being the smoothness, speed, and uncontrolled flow of information. In today's modern era, various types of information can be easily accessed through various media, ranging from conventional media such as newspapers and magazines, electronic media such as television and radio, to new media such as online platforms and social media. This third medium, known as information and communication technology or contemporary communication, has a significant influence on changing the way humans transmit information (Syarif, 2019).

DRAMATURGY THEORY

Erving Goffman's dramaturgical theory views social interactions as a theatrical performance, where individuals act like actors, playing roles to shape their self-image according to the situation and audience. Social identity is formed through self-presentation adapted to the context. According to (Hastuti et al., 2018), there are three main aspects to role playing:

1. Actors and Audience – Actors must immerse themselves in their roles to make a positive impression on the audience.
2. Expression and Impression – Communication aims to form impressions that can influence or manipulate other people's perceptions.
3. Setting or Stage – Consists of three parts:
 - Front Stage (Front Stage): The place where actors officially present themselves to the public. There are elements personal front (appearance and attitude), settings (physical background), and expressive equipment (visual and symbolic aids). In the context of cosplay, this is when cosplayers appear at events or on social media.
 - Backstage: A private space where actors prepare and reveal their true identities. Here, everything necessary for the front stage performance is prepared without the public's knowledge.



- Off Stage: The most private area where a person shows his or her true self, not even visible on the backstage because it can damage the self-image that has been formed.

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Social Identity Theory was developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s. This theory states that an individual's identity is formed through involvement in social groups. Social identity is rooted in one's awareness of membership in a particular group, including the values and emotional meanings attached to that membership. Individuals form their identity by absorbing the values of the group and comparing them with those of other groups.

Social identity plays an important role in shaping an individual's behavior, thoughts, and emotions, which are reflected in the collective values within the group. Relationships between group members are regulated by social norms and a sense of dependency. Tajfel and Turner put forward three main processes in the formation of social identity (Lubis, 2024):

1. Social Categorization – Individuals group themselves based on characteristics such as hobbies or status, for example: cosplayer, non-cosplayer, beginner, senior, etc.
2. Social Identification – Individuals internalize group values and norms, demonstrating emotional involvement such as participating in community activities and supporting fellow members.
3. Social Comparison – Group members compare their community with other groups, in order to strengthen self-esteem and solidarity, for example by feeling proud to be part of a solid and active cosplay community.

RESULT

This study examines how contemporary communication behavior is formed and developed within the Lampung Fun Cosplay community, particularly in relation to identity, social media, and global cultural practices. The findings suggest that the interest of Indonesian youth in Japanese popular culture is influenced by early media exposure, active involvement in activities such as cosplay, and identification with fictional characters from anime and games. This process reflects the occurrence of cultural globalization, where Japanese culture is not only consumed but also reinterpreted and becomes part of local identity expressions, as proposed in John Tomlinson's theory of cultural hybridization.

Cosplay itself serves as a medium for authentic self-expression, a place where individuals



can explore their personal and social identities. Based on Erving Goffman's dramaturgical theory, this activity becomes a kind of social stage where individuals consciously play roles, manage impressions, and construct identity narratives through a creative, interactive, and reflective process. In the Lampung Fun Cosplay community, this takes place in a supportive and safe space, allowing its members to present themselves as ideal versions of themselves without the pressures of everyday social norms.

Furthermore, the practice of cosplay in this community also demonstrates an integrative process of cultural acculturation. Japanese popular culture is selectively adapted and combined with local Indonesian values, creating a new, distinctive cultural practice that reflects a dual identity—both global and local. This aligns with John W. Berry's theory of acculturation, which shows that community members do not simply imitate, but also mix and absorb the values they adopt.

Cosplayers' communication behavior also reflects the dynamics of social identity formation as described by Henri Tajfel. Community members construct their identities through stage names, visual appearances, and social interactions based on shared interests. This process not only demonstrates impression management in the social space as described in dramaturgical theory but also reinforces a sense of togetherness and exclusivity within the group, which sometimes gives rise to identity conflicts with the outside world.

The Lampung Fun Cosplay Community serves as an inclusive social space where interpersonal and group communication practices take place dynamically. This community provides a platform for identity exploration, self-confidence building, and social skill development through collective interaction. With adaptive communication both online and offline, this community is able to adapt to the needs of the times and its members. Its open and participatory communication structure makes this community a friendly, supportive place, allowing every member to feel accepted.

Social media plays a crucial role in supporting community activities, not only as a technical communication tool but also as a symbolic space for expressing identity, strengthening social relationships, and shaping interaction patterns appropriate to the contemporary context. As Nancy K. Baym argues, social media, in this context, is not passive, but actively shapes communication dynamics and social structures within the community. WhatsApp and Instagram are the primary means of disseminating information, sharing cosplay documentation, and creating a space for mutual encouragement and self-expression.

Cosplay activities also significantly increase the self-confidence of their members. By



appearing as their favorite characters, individuals feel freer to express themselves and gain recognition from those around them. This sense of acceptance and recognition is a crucial factor in the formation of social identity, which occurs through emotional communication, reciprocal interactions, and collective involvement in various community activities.

Finally, the synergy between social media and direct communication is seen in various The stages of group formation as explained in Bruce Tuckman's theory. Social media plays a major role in the forming and norming stages, while direct communication dominates the performing stage, particularly during offline events. Both complement each other in building adaptive, inclusive, and resilient communities in the face of social and technological challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that communication behavior within the Lampung Fun Cosplay community reflects complex cultural and social dynamics. The younger generation's interest in Japanese pop culture is a result of globalization, which has given rise to symbolic forms of identification through anime, manga, and cosplay. Cosplay activities become a meaningful medium for self-expression and creativity, enabling individuals to authentically construct alternative identities. This community also demonstrates an integrative process of cultural acculturation, combining local and global elements within a single social space. Communication within the community shapes identity representation through interaction styles, stage names, and visuals, while simultaneously strengthening social solidarity. Lampung Fun Cosplay serves as a platform for self-exploration and building supportive social bonds, supported by adaptive online and offline communication. Social media plays a crucial role as a space for identity representation and strengthening social connections, particularly during the community's formation and organization stages. Participation in this community contributes to increased self-confidence and self-acceptance among its members. These dynamics demonstrate that cosplay is not merely an entertainment activity but also a contemporary communication medium that actively shapes personal, social, and cultural identities.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made. The Lampung Fun Cosplay community is expected to maintain an inclusive and supportive space for its members and begin documenting its activities more systematically through social media or blogs to reach a wider audience. Furthermore, strengthening soft skills training, such as interpersonal



communication and conflict management, is important to enhance community professionalism. For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct further studies. Comparative studies between cosplay communities in various regions are needed to examine differences in social and cultural dynamics, and to consider quantitative approaches to measure psychological aspects such as self-confidence or group identity. Further research could also explore the influence of social media algorithms on how cosplayers represent themselves. Meanwhile, for observers of culture, education, and media, cosplay activities can be used as a model for creative learning in arts and culture education, and need to be supported by the media and cultural institutions as a medium for promoting local culture in a modern and popular way.

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