

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **I.1 Background of the study**

Humans are social creature and each have their own identity as well as collective custom and cultures in life. Culture extend to all forms including social, ideological, religion, arts, and objects, all of which are inherited socially (Jacobs, Stern, 1984). According to Edward B. Tylor however, “Culture is a complex whole, that it contains the knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of society” (Barker, 2004, p. 44). From those 2 definitions, we can assume that wherever humans live they each have their own distinctly unique values, beliefs, customs, and even arts be it learnt or inherited by being a member of a cultured society.

Nowadays we live in a Global Village. Global village is a term coined by Marshall McLuhan to describe the phenomenon of the world’s culture shrinking and expanding at the same time due to pervasive technological advances that allow for instantaneous sharing of culture (McLuhan, Fiore, 1968). We use technology to participate in a digital community in which we are not physically connected yet we can be mentally connected with one another regardless of geographical stand point. The internet can act as a platform to allow people to express themselves and share information through the

global village. With the advent of technology and internet, it has become easier to disseminate culture across the globe now that our world has become a global village. This also allows pop culture to penetrate into various aspect of society. To understand the impact of pop culture, we must first understand what is a pop culture beforehand. According to Storey (2015, p.6), in his book *Cultural theory and popular culture* he described it as “Pop culture is folk culture, something that arises from the people rather than imposed upon them: pop culture is authentic (created by the people) as opposed to commercial enterprises”. Storey also adds that Pop culture is negotiated as pop culture itself is partly press upon the lower class by the above class. The above class are able to make culture but it is up to the lower class whether they keep or discard (Storey, 2015). From those 2 definitions we can assume that pop culture is a trend that distributed by the dominants through the mass media and accepted by the people yet the authenticity and commercial aspects are blurred.

The rising of Pop culture influence is a phenomenon that penetrate and cross the border of nations all around the world. With the advancement of technology and how easy it is for information to spread through media today makes it easy for audience all around the world to be able to know, learn, adopt, and embodied a foreign culture that came along through the medias to serve as part of their lifestyle.

Foreign cultures can penetrate other culture at any time through any media in the form of pop culture such as famous songs, movies, novels, books, etc. Which can affect audience’s perception, resulting in change of behavior and mindset. How it affected

the audience's depend on the foreign cultures and how the audience's respond to it. There are influences that can positively affected the audience, but there are also negative ones. In addition, Media has an imporant role and massive power in Shaping, Spreading and Updating cultures. Through this, cultures give birth to trends within society. This trends is further shaped into a more popularized version that people called "Pop Culture". Pop Culture is born and shaped depending on what the society likes. In order for a trend to be considered a Pop Culture, it has to fulfill the essentials requirement. It has to be made based on what the people and the society likes, it has to be on trend, has business purposes, and has to be repetitive. Often identified and associated with Lifestyle, Hedonism, Consumerism, as well as considered a product of the media. It is created by the media in order to gain profit and affection of the audience in a long period term. The example of Pop Culture product are Movies, Video Games, Fashion, songs, Cosplay and many more that are popularized and spread by the Media.

The Pop Culture that is going to be the focused of this paper is Cosplay. Pop Culture builds false consciousness to the minds of the audience and Cosplay is one of the product of it. Cosplay is one of the recently rising trend of Pop Cultures. It has gain the love and become the trend of nations all around the globe like Japan, America, Europe, Taiwan, and even Indonesia.

Cosplay is the contraction of the words "Costume & Play". It is a term that first invented in Japan by a Japanese Reporter, Nobuyuki Takahasi, back in 1984 when he attended an event in Los Angeles called WorldCon. At first the term was called

“Masquerade” but the reporter thought that it sounded too “old fashion” and unfit to describe the event for the Japanese audience so latter used the term “Cosplay” to describe it instead. In general, cosplay is a well-liked by teenagers because they can act like their favorite character from fantasy world, giving them a chance to escape from reality and temporarily gave them a new identity (Robin S. Rosenberg, 2012) Cosplay is a performance act that involve someone wearing the costume, accessories, and equipment of a fictional character from a Pop Culture such as Comic, Movies, Manga, Video games, and Anime.

An individual who do a cosplay act is called a Cosplayer. Cosplayer usually identified themselves by transforming into fictional characters by wearing the outfits of the said characters. Cosplayer usually wear wigs, excessive make ups and costume, and carry equipment like swords and guns of the character that they are cosplaying. The costume that cosplayers wear will often seem odd, bizzare, and peculiar in the eyes of most people. Not only that, Cosplayers also try mimic the body gesture, pose, way of talking as well as reenact a scene that of the character that they are cosplaying as in order to resemble as close as possible to the character. Cosplayer will often gather with other cosplayers as well as a fan of cosplay and the character in a specific related events such as Comic Con, Anime Expo, and Anime Festival Asia. Where there are cosplay competitions being held. This common love and interest results in the creation of Cosplay Communities and Cosplay Team such as Cosplay Circle, COSURA, Machipot, etc.



**Figure 1** Machipot cosplay team:

source: Machipot cosplay team - [getcookie.com](http://getcookie.com)

A Cosplay Team is a group consisting of cosplayers who gather and share a common interest and goals of participating in cosplay competition, doing a photo session together, and cosplaying a certain series together.

There are also many forms of cosplay such as Gothic Cosplay, Crossplay, Armor Cosplay, Original Cosplay, and Hijab Cosplay. Cosplayers do cosplay because they want to bring their favorite character to reality. They can dress up as many characters, including characters from a manga character (e.g. Detective Conan), anime character (e.g. Naruto), comic books (e.g. Batman) and movies (e.g. Spider-man). Cosplayers mimic the character that they are cosplaying, leaving behind their own character. Through research was made in order to have a closer look and understanding at communication behavior in cosplay activity.

## **I.2 Problem identification**

Cosplay is a popular activity among pop culture fans who enjoy bringing their favorite character from Video games, anime, manga, and comics to life. The act itself is not only popular for teenagers and kids but also among grownups and with the growing emergence of Super Hero movie trend, cosplay community has never been bigger.

This is interesting to observe due to cosplay activity is unique in its sense that it may has contribution in forming a cosplayer's identity as cosplay is an act that not only dress up as a character, but also adopting character traits and personality as a whole. Cosplayers also often done cosplay in a group or team making it a collective act where they shared their collective imaginary world together and live in it as not themselves but another identity. Cosplay is also a worldwide phenomenon. Although it is really popular in japan, its popularity also reached and pierce through in an international scale even to Indonesia. This is proven from many yearly events held such as Anime Festival Asia, World Cosplay Summit, Anime Expo, Comic Con, etc. these reasons make cosplay interesting to observe in order to see how the act is able to connect many fanatics where they shared their collective imaginary world. Cosplayers are real people who put a lot of effort and time in order to reshape not only their looks, but also their personality to be that of fictional people. Its almost as if they are reborn into and assuming another identity of their chosen character.



The researcher's reason to conduct this research is because cosplay is an act of embodiment and has been linked and associated with the presentation of self. Cosplay activity itself may have an influence to how an identity of individual is constructed. This becomes a theoretical problem because cosplayers have the choice to determine their identity. The identity that is built in the community through cosplay is actualized in physical appearance and behavior with the goal of acknowledgement and judgment from others. This paper will look to explore how cosplayers themselves perceived their own individual self and how they negotiate their fictional identity through the act of cosplay.

### **I.3 Statement of the Problem**

1. How Cosplay hold a significant role in shaping cosplayer's identity?

### **I.4 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is:

1. To analyze how identity negotiation, occur among cosplayers among Jakarta cosplay community
2. To provide an understanding of self-presentation in cosplay through the process of transforming one -self into a fictional character

### **I.5 Significance of the Research**

Every good research will certainly benefit other parties than the researcher themselves. The significance of the study is:

1. Academic Purpose: the theoretical benefits of this research is to contribute and give a further learning in the interpersonal communication, group communication, and psychology of communication.
2. Practical Purpose: to give communication science a unique example on research about a mixture of interpersonal communication, presentation of self, group cohesiveness, as well as identity negotiation.
3. Social Purpose: this research served as an additional knowledge for the society about the y Cosplay community, why cosplay should be treated as a form of art, as well as cosplay as a part of pop culture in general.

## **I.6 Organization of the Study**

### **I Introduction**

Chapter one will begin with the background of the study where the researcher explained about the topic and the problem from which it was initially chosen from. It is then followed by problem identification, statement of the problem, Purpose of the study, and then the significance of the study itself so that it is clear as to why the researcher decided to choose this topic.

### **II Research Object**

The Second chapter details the study object of this research which will be the history of cosplay as well as providing information about the object of the research. The limitation will also be stated within this chapter.



### **III Literature Review**

The Third Chapter will be the literature review where the researcher will explain theories and concepts that are used in this research. This chapter will also include past researches of similar study as well as a theoretical framework.

### **IV Methodology**

The fourth Chapter will explain the methods that are used within this research. This chapter will also include data gathering techniques that are used for this research.

### **V Research Findings and Discussion**

The fifth chapter consists of all of the data that has been gathered and analyzed as well as evaluate with the theories and concepts used.

### **VI Conclusion and Suggestion**

This chapter provide the conclusion of the research as well as suggestion for the future related or similar research and studies.