

## POPULAR CULTURE AMONG STUDENTS AS *FUJOSHI* IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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### **Abstrak**

*Budaya populer adalah budaya yang diciptakan oleh orang-orang yang menikmati budaya tersebut. Salah satu budaya yang paling populer di kalangan orang-orang tertentu disebut genre Boys Love. Orang yang menyenangi genre ini disebut Fujoshi. Fujoshi tersebar di seluruh dunia, termasuk Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui asal usul mahasiswa sebagai Fujoshi di program studi Sastra Inggris Universitas Muslim Indonesia mengetahui tentang genre Boys Love dan faktor-faktor mengapa mereka menyenangi genre ini. Peneliti menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dan studi etnografi sebagai metode penelitian. Terdapat dua sumber data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini, yaitu data primer dan data sekunder. Peneliti mengumpulkan data primer melalui wawancara mendalam dengan informan dan memperoleh data sekunder dari media kepustakaan seperti buku dan artikel dalam jurnal, langsung atau tidak langsung diperoleh dari website melalui media internet. Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti menemukan asal usul Fujoshi yang mengetahui tentang genre Boys Love dan faktor-faktor yang membuat mereka menyukai genre ini. Peneliti menemukan bahwa dua orang Fujoshi pertama kali mengetahui tentang Boys Love melalui website fanfiction.net, dua di antaranya melalui Facebook, dua melalui Youtube, dan salah satunya melalui aplikasi Whatsapp. Adapun faktor yang menyebabkan Fujoshi menyukai genre Boys Love, yaitu faktor internal; rasa ingin tahu, bosan dengan genre 'straight romance' yang monoton, dan tidak menyukai karakter wanita yang lemah. Disisi lain, yaitu faktor eksternal; karena tersedianya berbagai macam konten 'Boys Love', yaitu Anime, Manga, Fanfiction, dan Drama series. Peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa semua Fujoshi mengetahui tentang Boys Love pertama kali adalah melalui media internet. Adapun faktor yang menyebabkan Fujoshi menyukai genre Boys Love, yaitu faktor internal yang berasal dari Fujoshi itu sendiri dan faktor eksternal yang berasal dari luar.*

**Kata Kunci:** *budaya populer, Fujoshi, boys love, sastra*

### Abstract

Popular culture is a culture that created by the people who enjoy that culture. One of the most popular cultures among certain people called Boys Love genre. The people who enjoy this genre called Fujoshi. Fujoshi are all over the world, included Indonesia. This study aimed to determine the origin of students as Fujoshi in English Literature of Universitas Muslim Indonesia discover about Boys Love genre and the factors of why they like this genre. The researcher used qualitative research and ethnography study as the research method. There are two data sources used in this study, namely primary data and secondary data. The researcher collected the primary data through in-depth interview with the informants and obtained the secondary data from literary media such as books and articles in journals, direct or indirectly obtained from website through internet media. In this research, the researcher found out the origin of the Fujoshi figured out about Boys Love genre and the factors that make them like this genre. As the result of this research, the researcher found out that two Fujoshis discover about Boys Love for the first time through website fanfiction.net, two of them through Facebook, two of them through Youtube, and one of them through WhatssApp application. As for the factors that cause Fujoshi liking Boys Love genre, there are internal factors; curiosity, bored with the monotonous romance straight genre, and dislikes female characters who are weak. For the external factors; various kinds of Boys Love contents, which Anime, Manga, Fanfiction, and Drama series. The researcher concluded that all of the Fujoshi discovered about Boys Love was through internet media. As for the factors that cause Fujoshi liking Boys Love genre, there are internal factors, which come from the Fujoshi themselves and external factors, which come from outside.

*Keywords: popular culture, Fujoshi, boys love, literature*

### INTRODUCTION

The improvement of globalization era influences personal and community life in the worldwide. Almost everything is available through advanced technology, even just one click on computer. However, internet connection is required to access the information. The convenience of internet makes it easier for cultures from all over the world to spread to another countries. The growth of globalization process encourages the independence of the economic and cultural sectors. Culture is a characteristic of a country. With the development of technology, culture is constantly evolving and adapting to the current state of society. One of the most culturally recognized countries in the world is Japan. As Japanese popular culture develops, it is consumed not only by Japanese society but also by the world's communities. Various products of Japanese popular culture such as Anime and Manga are becoming the national identity of Japan. Since 1990, Japan has been transformed into a country that concentrates economic income through media culture with a target market in European- American countries. Japan is able to compete with other industrialized countries and get a good response through media such as Anime and Manga. Since then, Japan has declared media culture as "Brand Nationalism" or a new resource for economic development (Iwabuchi 2010).

Anime is a collection of moving images or animations/cartoon from Japan which manufacturing process is drawn by hand or using computer technology. The word Anime (pronounced: a-ni-me, not a-nim) written in Japanese is one of the Japanese words taken from the English word 'animation' (pronounced Animeshiyon by the Japanese) which refers to all types of animation. The word Anime appears in written form in three katakana characters (アニメ).

Manga (漫画) is a comic made in Japan, the word is used specifically to talk about Japanese comics according to style developed in Japan in the late 19th century. The term Otaku or Anime lover and Manga began to appear a lot among men and women. Especially among Otaku women there is a small difference with male otaku in their favorite Anime or Manga genre. Between that small difference is, some of these female Otaku like Anime and Manga genres with the theme of romantic or erotic relationships between two men or what is called Boys love (abbreviated BL) and Yaoi. Female Otaku called *Fujoshi* (腐女子) means rotten girl. *Fujoshi* comes from two words, namely Fu (腐) meaning rotten, and Joshi (女子) means woman or girl. *Fujoshi* itself is actually used for the girls' fan of Manga or Anime featuring love scenes or romantic relationships between men. The presence of the Yaoi or Boys Love genre in Japanese popular culture seems to be a form of public acceptance and acceptance of homosexuals. In fact, homosexuality in Japan is taboo. Homosexual behavior does not cause a hot reaction from the public, provided that it is not shown to the public. Otherwise, they will get a response and rejection behavior from the community, especially the family (Scneider & Silverman, 2006).

The researcher presents some related research related to the title of this study. Those are as follow: the number of Boys Love Manga fans in Indonesia is numerous. Despite Indonesia being a civilized country, this *Fujoshi* phenomenon is not spared from Indonesia. The difference is that this problem has not yet been revealed and has become a public discussion. This Indonesian Boys Love Manga fans was researched by Yueni Andri Ani (2018) entitled *Fujoshi* Ala Indonesia dalam Penciptaan Komik in a journal *Penciptaan dan Pengkajian Seni*. Yueni used a method namely design thinking, which is empathy. At this stage, observations were with a direct approach by using empathy in collecting data. In this stage, information was collected into one, both from the object side and outside the object. Hasyim, I., Syarifuddin, S., (2021) stated that the most impactful was the world of entertainment. In the past, entertainment could only be enjoyed through television or radio, now with the freedom of the internet, entertainment can be enjoyed anytime and anywhere.

Another study that discusses BL Manga fandom is researched by Matthew Thorn, the BL Manga fandom that grows through the formation of a community among young girls in Japan, occurred in the comic market, one of the centers of development of various Manga genres in Japan, BL Manga is no exception. In his discussion about the comic market, Thorn also explains about Doujinshi, a term that refers to amateur Manga and cosplay (costume play) with the theme and characters from BL. Matthew Thorn's article entitled *Girls and Women Getting Out of Hand: The Pleasure and Politics of Japan's Amateur Comics Community*. Muhajir, (2018) explains the existence of an amateur Manga fandom in Japan known as Doujinshi. The Doujinshi genre that is the focus of the discussion in this article is Yaoi Doujinshi or boys love. Yaoi Doujinshi, which is phenomenal from a general point of view, is well-liked among people female fans of the BL genre in Japan and is also related to issues of feminism, gender, sexuality, and homosexuality that are developing among Doujinshi and Doujinshi fans BL Japan. The approach used in this article is cultural studies, in order to explore representations of gender and sexuality among the BL Doujinshi fandom. In this article Matthew Thorn describes the relationship of a fondness for this homoerotic themed Manga or fiction with a good social, cultural, and economic background in Japanese and American society. This article is relevant in this research to explain the state of the BL Manga fan community in English Major at Universitas Muslim indonesia.

Boys Love Manga fandom apart from Japan and Indonesia also occurs among Korean female readers. This Korean BL Manga reader fandom was researched by Suen Noh (1998) in

an article entitled - Reading Yaoi Comics: An Analysis of Korean Girls Fandom, published in the Korean Society for Journalism and Communication Studies Annual Meeting, Fall (Vol 27). In this article, Suen Noh talks about the BL Manga fandom among female readers in Korea. Suen used a cultural studies approach to explore the connotative meaning of Korean women's activity in reading Yaoi Manga as a unique aspect of female Manga fandom. This article specifically focuses on the concept of textual productivity, meaning that these Yaoi Manga fans not only enjoy reading but also reconstruct existing Manga texts by including new dialogues that are different from the original text. In the researcher's opinion, this article is very relevant to the researcher's research as a comparison of how the activities and productivity of fans and fandoms in Korea are articulated through their perspective on Japanese popular culture.

Meanwhile in Indonesia, according to the study report from Kementrian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak, Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of Indonesia, Indonesian society consider the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) community as a deviant thing due to the fact that it is against religious beliefs. Indonesian society still commits very severe discrimination against LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) people and all their activities. At the same time, in Universitas Muslim Indonesia, who upholds morals and intellectuals based on Islam, it turns out that there are students who are *Fujoshi*. Background difference history and culture raises a question in the researcher's mind, what makes Boys Love genre acceptable and well-liked by Otaku women, especially *Fujoshi* in English Major of Universitas Muslim Indonesia. The numbers of subjects in this research were 7 persons. This was because researcher considers these 7 persons to represent research to explore and understand the phenomenon in this research. The characteristics of the subjects in this research were *Fujoshi* from English Literature of Universitas Muslim Indonesia who are 22-23 years old. This study aimed to determine the origin of students as *Fujoshi* in English Literature of Universitas Muslim Indonesia discover about Boys Love genre and the factors of why they like this genre.

## METHOD

This research used qualitative research and ethnography study as the methods of the research. Qualitative research is open and not rigid. There are plenty of varies to make data collection of qualitative research, it is adapted to the problem of research objectives and the nature of the object of the research (Poerwandari, 2009). Ethnography is the work of describing a culture based on understanding a view of life from the point of view of the natives. To put it another way, ethnography is to understand the native's point of view, its relationship with life to earn their view of the world (Spradley, 2007). There are two kinds of data sources, primary data and secondary data. In this research, the primary data was the result of the interview. As for the secondary data, it was obtained from literary media such as books and articles in journals, direct or indirectly obtained from website through internet media.

The researcher used this technique to help complete the data primary so that the data obtained completed. Observations and interview results were the key to processing data in research of qualitative method. To make it easier to collect the data, the researchers used tools that able to help the researcher. Researcher used voice recorder (voicerecorder application from researcher's cellphone) and interview guidelines. The researcher was equipped with a tape recorder used to record all interviews (Sulaiman, R., Muhajir., 2019). The use of a voice recorder must seek consent from the subject during the interview process. Interview guidelines were used

to help remind researchers about discussed aspects. The interview guide was also a checklist regarding relevant aspects that have been discussed or asked (Poerwandari, 2009; Syarifuddin, S., Hasyim, I., 2021). In this research, the researcher used instruments to collect the data of the research, they were in-depth interview and observation. In-depth interviews are the process of obtaining data or information by asking questions face to face with an informant. Interviews in qualitative research are not very using interview guidelines. Although there are guidelines, it was not the main research standard. The types of questions used in the interviews are open ended question, which is a question that allows the subject to give a correct answer and talk more about the topic without being directed to give desired answer. In this research, the researcher observed everyday life of the *Fujoshi* and the influence of their hobbies. The method of observation can be done directly, which the researcher involved in the daily life of the informant, as well as observing the informants' social media.

Data analysis is a way for researcher to process the data obtained in the field. In this research, the data analysis used was data analysis qualitative. The data obtained in the field transferred in the form of field notes. Field data is data obtained through interviews and observations. The data that has been obtained classified according to the research questions. Researcher also re-checked the data obtained. Furthermore, the data strengthened based upon observation and interview, then to fulfill the compliment of research questions, research has related by various literature studies about the life of the *Fujoshi* in Indonesia, Japan, Korea, and America. Last, researcher concluded the whole result of analysis based on research questions.

## FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### The Origin of *Fujoshi* Knowing Boys Love Genre

For 2 months, the researcher observed and interviewed 7 students in English Literature of Universitas Muslim Indonesia used ethnography method, by meeting face to face and by following their social media personal accounts. Those informants are:

No.	Informants' Name	Age	Status
1.	Shizuka	22	Student
2.	Vivi	22	Student
3.	Anita	23	Student
4.	Chika	22	Student
5.	Caca	22	Student
6.	Ais	22	Fresh Graduate
7.	Mika	22	Fresh Graduate

From these informants, some information was obtained about *Fujoshi* in English Literature of Universitas Muslim Indonesia, those are follows: The first is the average age of *Fujoshi* are 22-23 years old (some are younger), some of them are active students and the rest was recently graduated. Active in social media and majority have experience joined anime community and K-Pop community. The difference of *Fujoshi* and ordinary anime & K-Pop fans is not obvious, except the fact that *Fujoshi* prefer contents about romance relationship between men. However, it is possible that they also like straight romantic contents. As a child that born in muslim environment, most of them have a homophobic parent so that they hide their hobby as *Fujoshi*



from them. All of them have a few friends who know about their identity as *Fujoshi* but it was only for close friends or friends with the same hobby. Some of them discover Boys Love contents accidentally on internet media, through website and social media, which fanfiction.net, Facebook anime community, Youtube videos, and friend's WhatsApp story content.

### **The Factors that cause *Fujoshi* Liking Boys Love genre**

The internal factors why *Fujoshi* liking Boys Love genre is because the method of deployment is quite easy. Some of these *Fujoshi* claim to like Boys Love (BL) contents because accidentally stumbled upon an illustration or sentence with Boys Love elements from a site, out of curiosity they began to find out. When figuring this out sometimes a sense of curiosity arises. Second, some of them become *Fujoshi* because initially offered (lured) by friends in the social circle. After that almost all of the informants said that at first, they were uncomfortable with Boys Love but from their curiosity arose which continued to carry over until finally they are addicted to BL. The development of a *Fujoshi* begins gradually. A *Fujoshi* newbies are usually those who are just starting to experiment. Most of these beginners have high curiosity. There are some newbies who are hesitating then chose to stop, and some still continue. Those who continue curious, later became an active *Fujoshi*.

The second internal factor is because *Fujoshi* disliked the female characters on straight romance (boy girl) who are weak. The straight romance genre which is boring for *Fujoshi* mostly has a soft female character and sometimes cannot do anything without their man. Women described as delicate and gentle creatures, for that they should behave sweetly, politely, and of course must be obedient. Although the words can be said are suggestions that almost exist in Asian countries, not everyone likes that statement. The *Fujoshi* were originally a woman who liked the usual contents that had female characters. Not infrequently some of them like romance straight genre of Anime, Manga, Fanfiction, and Drama Series with teenage romance themes. It's just that the main female character in this genre often has a character that is too naive and innocent. This sometimes makes many people hate them, including the *Fujoshi*.

The third internal factor is because the straight romance genre (boy girl) is a genre that is quite often found in Anime, Manga, Fanfiction, and Drama Series. This love story of straight couple has a cliché story where a girl falls in love with a handsome and perfect boy. Sometimes this makes people bored, including my Informants. Although some of the researcher's informants liked this genre at first, as the time goes by, they could predict the ending of the story and it makes the excitement become less. Unlike with the Boys Love genre which has many choices, although the Boys Love contents has a story theme that is not much different from the couples on straight romance, it is not uncommon for the Boys Love genre to have a heavy and dark story that is liked by many *Fujoshi*.

Another reason that makes this *Fujoshi* easy to grow in Indonesia is a result of the impact of increasingly easy and free internet access, lack of supervision both from parents and those in charge of the media, industry regulators entertainment that thinks too much about profit without considering the impact of the show them to their audience and much more. In the creation of this work, the ideas and concepts used are in the form of a way to convey a message to the public about the existence of *Fujoshi* in English Literature and its impacts. With the aim that people understand and can decide how to deal with it. As for the external factor, the cause of *Fujoshi* liking BL is because there are various kinds of the media that they could select based on their references, these media include fanfiction, manga, anime, and drama series.

1. Fanfiction: Stories written by fans featuring characters, settings, and plots from their favorite, pre-existing TV, novels, manga, movies, and other media.
2. Manga: Japanese comic
3. Anime: Animation made in Japan
4. Drama series: A written work that tells a story through action and speech and is acted out of real people.

The *Fujoshi* favorite sites to visit are fanfiction.net, 'MangeHere', 'MangaPark', Wattpad, and GMMTV channel.

1. Fanfiction.net

The most popular *fanfiction* sharing site. This site allows users to publish *fanfiction* in the various *fandoms* provided. Because of the many *fandoms* to choose from, *fanfiction.net* groups them into nine fandom groups, namely *Anime* and *Manga fandoms*, books, cartoons, American comics, games, films/movies, TV series, stage play, and the last group is a *fandom* group that cannot be categorized in the previous eight fandoms. The weakness of this site is that it is forbidden to make *fanfiction* about real people.

2. MangaHere

An online *manga* reading illegal site that provides *manga* in English. This site is not a special site that provides only Boys Love *manga*, just that their collection of Boys Love *manga* is quite large. MangaHere is sometimes difficult to access if we use government-owned Internet providers such as *IndieHome* or *Telkomsel's Prime card*. But this site can be easily accessed if use the Internet Provider owned by a private company.

3. MangaPark

Like MangaHere, MangaPark is an English-language *manga* reading site that provides all genres of manga without any specialization.

4. Wattpad

Wattpad is a Smartphone application that allows users publish their works of fiction or read them online, both original fiction and *fanfiction*. Wattpad could also be accessed via browsers such as Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox

5. GMMTV

A talent agency company from Thailand focused on making drama series, songs, and music videos. But most of the contents are Boys Love drama series.

## CONCLUSION

The rapid development of popular culture in Indonesia has created a lot of hobbies related to anime, manga, and drama series. One of the most popular genres in Indonesia is Boys Love and its fans are called *Fujoshi*. Boys Love is a genre about homosexual romance created by women and aimed at women. The Boys Love genre is clearly unacceptable in the midst of Indonesian society that highly upholds religious values. Even so, *Fujoshi* still exist in the society, although most of them hide this hobby of them. Because this genre could not enter Indonesia, the *Fujoshi* chose internet media as a media to look for Boys Love contents. The internet has become a part of *Fujoshi's* life because that is where they get boys love content such as anime, manga, fanfiction, and drama series. Their love of Boys Love genre is also because of how easy it is in getting the contents they want because now there are many sites that provide it. In addition, there are also international forums that really help them in finding the kinds they like. In addition, the Boys Love genre also has many different story themes or subgenres that *Fujoshi* can choose to

their liking according to their preferences. The themes or story settings vary from school life to mafia life. There are even historical and fantasy themes that are served to make *Fujoshi* never get bored with their reading or watching hobby.

Communication within the family, especially parents, has a great influence in these times. Today many parents are too busy to be negligent, even to share opinion, to give them an understanding of sex and promiscuity still feel taboo. Whereas teenagers who are dissatisfied with the information they get in the family will switch to looking for information from the outside world, where the association free exists. And can't be blamed if they end up being affected from the outside world. It's like being a *Fujoshi*. The last and most impactful, is the world of entertainment. If in the past, entertainment could only be enjoyed through television or radio, now with internet freedom, entertainment can be enjoyed anytime and anywhere. The world of entertainment that increasingly has no boundaries and only cares about the advantage of the message conveyed is the trigger for the development of the phenomenon uncontrollable. The influence of bad outside culture, growing out of line with the benefits presented. Entertainment workers and social media users need to make improvements because after all they also have a role in giving a mindset to the audience, readers, and the wider community.

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