



PUSAT PENELITIAN KEMASYARAKATAN DAN KEBUDAYAAN

LEMBAGA ILMU PENGETAHUAN INDONESIA

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27 Pro & Cons: The Rise of Hijab Cosplay in Indonesia

JUL Author: Ranny Rastati (Hijab Cosplay Researcher)

Post-World War II, Japan recovered their international outlook by building diplomatic relations with many other countries, including Indonesia in 1958. Among those efforts is cultural diplomacy which was started in 1974, when Japan founded a cultural institution named the Japan Foundation that aimed to improve relations through cultural approach (Lam, 2013). This cultural diplomacy conducted through drama, manga, and anime. Eventually, these developments of Japanese popular culture are well accepted among Indonesian society.



Saraswati, a makeup artist in Malaysia as Spiderman (Source: <https://www.instagram.com/queenofluna/?hl=en>)

One of the most popular Japan cultural products in Indonesia is *cosplay* (an abbreviation of costume play). It is an act where people use costume and imitate their favorite characters from anime, manga, film, or games. *Cosplay* phenomenon are introduced to Indonesian public in mid 90s. It was started when Japan Studies student of University of Indonesia held the first Japan festival called *Gelar Jepang* in 1994 (Rastati, 2015). Not only introduce Japanese traditional cultures such as Kimono (traditional clothes) and Ikebana (flower arrangement), *Gelar Jepang* also familiarized *cosplay* during the festival. However, it took more than one decade from the first festival before the first *cosplay* group was initiated in Indonesia. One of the first groups is The Endless Illution that was formed in 2004. One of the reason of this late development was because costume-making materials were expensive.

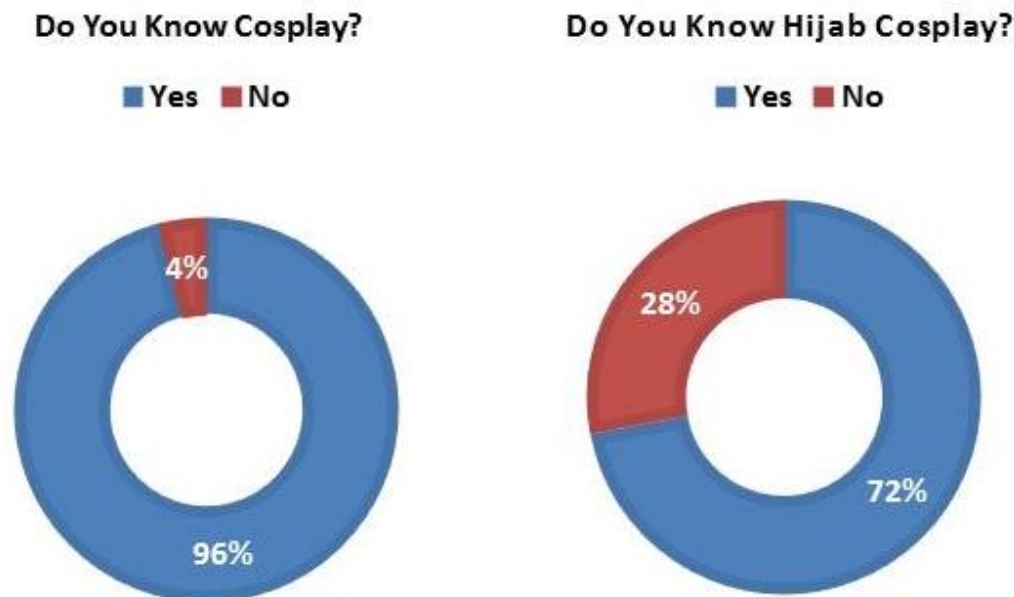
From time to time, *cosplay* phenomenon grew into various interesting developments. Several phenomena occurred such as, *Crossdress* (male *cosplaying* female character, vice versa) which was started in 2004 to 2009, *Indocosu* (*cosplaying* Indonesian manga and anime characters) in 2009 to 2010 and *Hijab Cosplay* (*hijabi cosplaying* character without releasing the hijab) in 2011-2012 until present. The latter phenomenon actually is not only happened in Indonesia, but also in Muslim majority countries such as Malaysia and Middle East.



Cosplay and Hijab Cosplay on the same anime character. Ange Putri, from Indonesia doing hijab cosplay as Sailor Moon (Source: The Hall Hijabi <https://id.pinterest.com/aisarete/hijabi-cosplay/?lp=true>)

One of the biggest *cosplay* groups in Indonesia that accommodated *hijab cosplay* is the Islamic Otaku Community (IOC). IOC was established in 2014 with more than 5.000 members that spread in Jakarta, Sumatera, Makassar, Malaysia and United Kingdom. IOC uses social media to reach the audience and introduces the *hijab cosplay*. On Facebook, IOC have page with more than 4.600 Likes, in Instagram with more than 1.500 followers and also website. Furthermore, as a group IOC activities is not limited on attending Japan festival and doing *hijab cosplay*, but also expanding their influence through Islamic manga and charity events.

In 2016, I conducted online open survey about perception on *cosplay* and *hijab cosplay*. The respondent amounted to 50 people with a ratio of 60% female and 40% male, with ages between 36 to 19 years old. Roundly, 96% respondents mentioned that they know about *cosplay* and only 4% claimed not knowing about it. Meanwhile, data becomes different when asked about *hijab cosplay*. In contrast, 28% stated do not know about *hijab cosplay* and only 72% declared know about it.



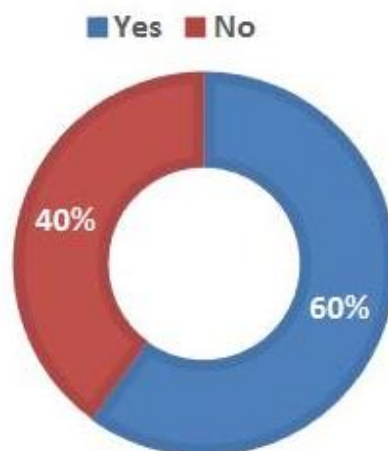
Perception on *Cosplay* and *Hijab Cosplay*

Source: Data processed (Ranny Rastati)

More surprisingly, 40% respondents do not agree on *hijab cosplay* and only 60% expressed their approval on it. Several reasons appear to come up behind their answers. Disagreeing group mentioned that *hijab cosplay* is not in accordance with sharia or Islamic instruction on women's clothes. For them, hijab's purpose is to cover awrah not for other purpose such as *cosplay*. Furthermore, they stated that *hijab cosplay* is only ruining manga and anime character because the way the *hijab cosplayer* appropriate hijab is perceived as not suitable.

Meanwhile, the agreeing party contended that *hijab cosplay* may be accepted as long as the player covering their awrah. Respondents who are pro-*hijab cosplay* argued that Muslim girl have a right to do *cosplay* and it became a proof that no boundary in creativity in Islam. *Hijab cosplay* also a solution for hijabi who wants to do *cosplay* without removing their veil. Moreover, *hijab cosplay* can be one of the medium of *da'wah* or preaching Islam and make Islam known to the whole world especially for Japanese lover community. To accommodate two views on *hijab cosplay*, IOC have a rule for *hijab cosplayer* in accordance with the sharia such as not posing excessively, not wearing tight costume and hijab must covering the chest.

Do You AGREE WITH HIJAB Cosplay?



Agreement on Hijab Cosplay

Source: Data processed (Ranny Rastati)

As conclusion, not only IOC become the place for *cosplayers*, IOC also accommodate hijab *cosplayers* to do their hobby without neglecting their Muslim identity. Social media help IOC to spread information about Islam especially hijab *cosplay*. Through social media, IOC wants to give a message that hijab does not restrict anyone's creativity. (Editor: Ibnu Nadzir)

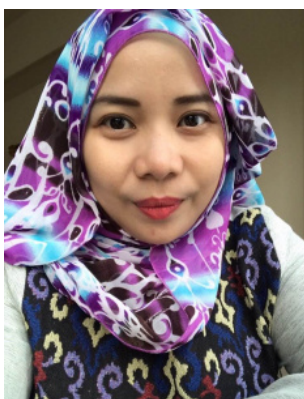
*) Part of the paper presented at the 5th Bi-Annual International Conference of the Japanese Studies Association of Southeast Asia (JSA-ASEAN) titled "Islamic Otaku Community: Creative Da'wah through New Media and Hijab Cosplay" in Cebu City – Philippines on 15-16 December 2016

***) Link for further reading (available in Indonesian language) -> <http://jmb-lipi.or.id/index.php/jmb/article/view/326>

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About the Author



anny Rastati, often called Chibi, is a Researcher at Research Center for Society and Culture-Indonesian Institute of Sciences (PMB-LIPI). She received her bachelor's in Japanese Studies at University of Indonesia and master's in Communication Studies at University of Indonesia. Publications include popular books such Ohayou Gozaimasu (2014) and Korean celebrity: Daehan Minguk Manse (2015); articles journal on hijab cosplay (2015), cyberbullying (2016) and Islamic manga (2017). Her research interests include cosplay, Japan and Korean pop culture, also media studies. She also manages a nonprofit organization for social activity and voluntary service, Chibi Ranran Help Center (www.chibiranranhelpcenter.com), since 2013. Her works can be viewed via personal blog rannyrastati.wordpress.com. She can be contacted at ranny.rastati@gmail.com.

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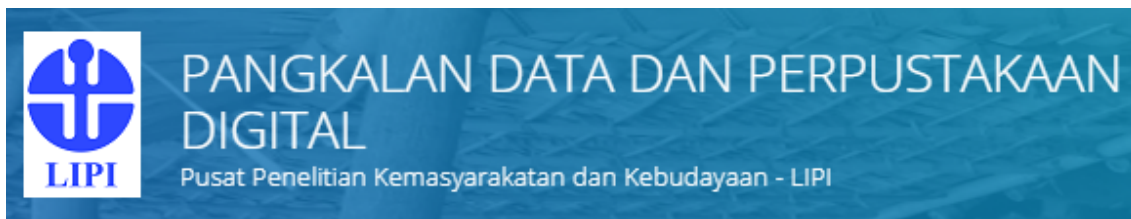
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