AFFIRMING WIBU’S STEREOTYPES THROUGH YOUTUBE VIDEOS

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ABSTRACT
In 2022, based on Google Trends tools, Indonesia is ranked third as the country with the most searches related to Japanese anime. Wibu is a term that refers to someone who is outside Japan but likes and even tends to be obsessed with the culture of that country. This research aims to explore how stereotypes of Wibu in Indonesia are constructed by digital media, specifically YouTube. Research findings show that Wibu in Indonesia is stereotyped as "smelling of onions", "Wibu Nolep", "perverted Wibu" and "psycopath Wibu." By conducting textual analysis on YouTube videos that are related to Wibu content, we argue that the construction of Indonesian Wibu’s stereotypes are done through narrative and visual elements in the videos. Based on this research, researchers discovered the role of YouTube in affirming the stereotypical construction of Wibu in Indonesia with ambiguous representations.

KEYWORDS: Popular Culture, Representation, Stereotypes, Wibu, YouTube.

INTRODUCTION
Wibu is a term used to describe fans of Japanese culture. According to Winge (2018), the term Wibu was first introduced in the Perry Bible Fellowship newspaper and webcomic by Nicholas Gurewitch. Weeb is a term that refers to the Wapanese abbreviation of 'Wannabe Japanese' which means 'want to be Japanese' (Gardiner, 2019). Based on this, “wanting to be Japanese” refers to people who geographically live outside Japan but are fans of Japanese popular culture. In Indonesia, the most popular Japanese popular culture is anime, 'typical Japanese animation' (Winge, 2018). In October 2022, the word Wibu has been used so often that it has been in KBBI (the official dictionary for Indonesian language). In the dictionary, Wibu is defined as “a person who is obsessed with Japanese culture.” In Indonesia, the majority of Wibu are in the age range 15-29 years (Afiuddin, 2019). In this age range, consumption and use of social media is quite high.
One of the social media that is the most influential one is YouTube. According to data.id based on survey results, since 2022, YouTube is considered the most informative digital media by Indonesian people. As the most informative digital media, YouTube is a space for communication, promoting identity, spreading ideology, and expressing views on various issues. YouTube and the dissemination of information about Wibu are two things that could not be separated. In 2017, a Youtuber named Erico Lim uploaded a video about Wibu which caused quite a stir in the virtual world. Erico uploaded a video that was approximately fifteen minutes long. Unfortunately, the video has been deleted because it contains harsh words and was reported by many people. However, there are still many clips or snippets of the video circulating on the Internet, one of which is in the video entitled "Troublemaker in Wibu Cosplay" which was uploaded by Daeng Cimba. In the video, Erico interviews several Wibu in an event. The interesting and shocking thing about the video is the emergence of the term "Wibu smell of onions". The term Wibu smelling of onions, which is still popular today, could be seen from the comments and various discussion in the uploaded videos affirming stereotypes of Wibu in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, the meaning of Wibu is often equated or confused with Japanese Otaku. Even though both have the same meaning, namely fans of Japanese popular culture, there are quite different characteristics, namely geographical characteristics. The similarity in construction meaning between Wibu and Otaku generally makes it difficult for people to differentiate between the two. If interpreted simply, Wibu is specifically aimed at those who enjoy Japanese popular culture but live outside Japan. According to Mcgee (2012), based on its origin, Wibu is a nickname for westerners who are too fanatical and obsessed with Japanese popular culture. In Indonesia, Japanese cultural products related to Wibu are anime and manga. Permana (2018) argues that Wibu could be described as those who like and engage in various activities related to anime and manga. In 2018, Permama said in his research that someone who consumes anime, manga and so on will easily form a new self-image which is widely known as a Wibu. This is line with Agustina’s argument (2015) that states consumption of Japanese popular culture constructs the formation of new identity representations among anime and manga fans in Indonesia. The formation of the Wibu identity is influenced both from external aspects, such as social interactions, and from within a person based on the results of knowledge obtained personally.

Previous research has shown how Wibu is stigmatized with negative stereotypes. For example, the fanatical nature and inability of a Wibu to communicate makes them called strange and synonymous with the term “no life” or in slang noltep (Wardhana, 2023). The emergence of Wibu's negative characteristics which have a bad influence on the social order was triggered by animation from Otaku culture (Chao, 2020). According to Mcgee (2012), the negative construction of Wibu is closely related to the stigma that Wibu wears dirty clothes, has the potential for criminal behavior. Furthermore, Wibu is considered anti-social, lazy, and lack of discipline. This is the impact of a lack of social interaction and the mistake of adopting Japan freak culture (Agustina, 2020). How Wibu's identity is socially constructed is related to anime production. A Wibu will enter a new rationality that places themselves as part of the anime they like. In other words, anime takes advantage of Wibu's dissatisfaction with life so that anime becomes an escape from life to find happiness (Lacuesta, 2020). Japanese popular culture is used as an escape for Wibu because psychologically, Wibu are afraid of social reality making it difficult for them to communicate (Ulama, 2023).

This article looks at how YouTube constructs the Wibu stereotype as well as becoming a medium for negotiation in Indonesia. YouTube also actively plays a role as a media for negotiating the construction of the Wibu stereotype. There are many different
views and perceptions regarding the Wibu phenomenon in the comments and discussion columns on YouTube videos which are used as case studies for this research. Most discussions are connected by the same key words, namely predicates or terms aimed at a Wibu. These keywords refer to the stereotype of a Wibu. Based on the explanation above, the research question in this study is: How are Wibu stereotypes affirmed and negotiated in YouTube videos and comments columns as part of the meaning making process of Wibu in the context of Japanese popular culture fandom in Indonesia.

**METHOD**

To be able to describe the construction process of the Wibu stereotype, researchers analysed data sources and their relationship to literature from several books, articles and research related to the construction and reconstruction of the Wibu identity. The method used is a textual analysis of videos and comments on YouTube. Data was obtained based on search results on YouTube which were then categorized according to the themes and issues that most frequently emerged in the process, including ambiguous or conflicting data. The next stage is that the categorized data was analysed based on several common threads of common themes. The final stage of the research is drawing conclusions regarding the research results with existing cultural phenomena. The primary data used in this research consists of (a) posts in various forms (images, videos and sounds) related to Anime and Wibu on YouTube and (b) Wibu-related comments on the chosen YouTube videos.

**Construction of Wibu’s Identity in Indonesia: Affirmation of Anime Fans Stereotypes**

Through YouTube, Wibu's identity are constructed as the following stereotypes: Wibu smelling of onions, Wibu nolep or anti-social, perverted Wibu, and psychopath Wibu. These four stereotypes are constructed through narrative and visual aspects in the videos which are then affirmed through comments from video viewers. In Indonesia, stereotypes of anime fans, such as smelling of onions, anti-social, geeky, perverted and so on have become common knowledge and have even become adjectives used specifically for people to denote anime fans. From the data collected, researchers categorized the stigma that was constructed through these videos. In this section the researcher tries to explain the meaning of several stigmas affirming the construction of Wibu stereotypical identity in Indonesia through YouTube.

**Smelling like Onions: Stereotypes of Wibu’s Physical Conditions**

The first stereotype that is being constructed by the videos is the “smelling like onions” stereotype exemplifying the overly obsessive behavior of Wibu on Japanese culture particularly anime. One of the YouTube videos was uploaded in Geby Kun's YouTube account summarizing the characteristics of a Wibu through the lyrics of a song which he entitled "Song of a Wibu". The song is a parody of Billie Eilish's famous song "Bad guy." "A Wibu's Song" was uploaded on YouTube in 2020 and has been watched 227,629 times and received 925 comments (data was taken on January – December 2023). The claims are that a Wibu does not care about personal hygiene so he or she "smells of onions." In the lyrics "watching anime, I like staying up late," the diction chosen refers to the daily activities and depiction of Wibu's life which is visualized through the animated character of a man wearing blue hoodie and loose trousers.

In addition, by choosing the word "I," this indicates a first-person point of view. This shows that Geby Kun positions himself as a Wibu. This could also be concluded from his other videos. For example, in the song Wibu 2.0, he also sings a song with the
lyrics "I will be a Wibu until death awaits". Visually, Geby Kun does not show himself on screen but through an animated character of a boy wearing a hoodie. The animation used could typically be found in Japanese animations. Geby's depiction of Wibu tends to lead the audience into constructing Wibu's identity which confirms the stereotype of fans of Japanese popular culture. These findings are in line with the statement from Wicaksono (2023) that the stereotypes and labels are given by society to Wibu such as smelling of onions, anti-social, and being classified by society as abnormal individuals. In this song, it could be concluded the stereotype of Wibu as an obsessive fan of Japanese popular culture with negative stereotypes are constructed through visuals and text. With these findings, we argue that there is an ambiguity because on one hand, he admits that he is a Wibu. However, he also explicitly affirms stereotypes of Wibu and basically attach those stereotypical attributes to his own identity as a Wibu.

Based on researchers' observations, in Indonesia, the construction of the “Wibu smelling like onions” stereotype was first popularized on YouTube by Eriko Lim, who is a YouTuber, in 2017. This stereotype also went viral on other social media, such as Facebook, when there was discussion about Eriko Lim's video. In the video, Eriko Lim went to an anime-themed festival and interviewed a random Wibu. The Wibu who was interviewed was a teenager who, if you look closely, looks worn and sweaty. During the interview, Eriko Lim spontaneously said that all Wibus smell like onions. The popularity of the term Wibu smelling of onion became even clearer when we found 5,490 videos on YouTube that used the keyword “Wibu smelling of onion” from January to December 2023. This is in line with what was stated by Stuart Hall (1997), that the media plays an important role in representing reality. According to Hall (1997), representation is the ability to describe or imagine. Representation is important considering that culture is always formed through meaning and language, in this case, language is a form of symbol or a form of representation. The reality regarding the stereotype of a Wibu is constructed by what Eriko Lim says in his video. Therefore, those who watch the video who might not know about Wibu will assume what is conveyed is reality.

Research findings show that most YouTubers in the videos affirm the stereotype of Wibu smelling of onion. The results of the analysis show that these videos construct that the cause of the Wibu's unpleasant odor is because a Wibu does not care about personal hygiene. Enrico Jo in his video entitled "Wibu, The Smell of Onions Will Be There Forever?" said that "I will start from the aroma, because that will end in our ridicule, namely Wibu smelling of onions … the first solution is to take a shower..." (Jo Enrico, 2019, 2:09) From the video quote above, it can be concluded that Enrico Jo attaches the characterization of "rarely bathing" to a Wibu. It is also said that someone is too focused on their hobby of watching anime and neglect their personal hygiene. Apart from "rarely bathing," another construct is that they also rarely use perfume and soap.

Based on the data collected, it could be seen how these videos construct a Wibu who does not take care of themselves, does not use perfume and deodorant and does not change their jackets so that the smell of sweat accumulates on the jackets they wear almost every day. Apart from that, based on the data above, it also explains the relationship between the smell of onions and the cosplay events they participate in. Wibu usually gather and dance according to the chants from the anime they follow. The video explains that this activity is one of the reasons why they are smelling like onions.

Apart from these findings, in the comment’s column of the videos above, findings were also found in the form of affirmations regarding the smelling of onions stereotypes by Wibu and non-Wibu. Most comments affirm what is constructed by the videos and are associated with what Eriko Lim mentioned in his videos. For example, the account @ikhlashulamalhadipulungan5937 commented "This is cool... it describes a reality that I
can't deny" and the account @Zender85 commented "Even though I'm not a Wibu, these lyrics are 100%".

Thus, it could be concluded that the construction of the smelling of onions stereotype is the first and most popular one related to Wibu, which was pioneered by Eriko Lim. Based on the results of the analysis, the construction of a Wibu’s stereotype particularly the smelling of onion stereotype is a stereotype related to the physical appearance of a Wibu. On one hand, this stereotype is a part of how the society is “othering” Wibu. “Othering consists of ‘objectification of another person or group’ or ‘creating the other’…” (Dervin, 2012, p. 187). By constructing a derogatory characteristic of Wibu smelling of onion, the video is not only affirming the stereotype but also constructing boundaries between Wibu, who does not care about personal hygiene, with the society since personal hygiene is considered the “right” and normal thing to care about.

**Nolep and Ansos: Stereotypes of Wibu’s Social Relationships**

Apart from the stereotype of smelling like or of onions, research findings also show how a Wibu is constructed as an individual with low social skills which ultimately became another stereotype, which is Wibu nolep. Nolep is another popular term attached to the construction of a Wibu's self-identity. Wibu nolep has become an initial commonly used in Indonesian society. In Google Search, the keyword Wibu nolep was repeated 79,000 times, with 5300 videos using this keyword. The term nolep which has been developed on the internet and social media comes from the English phrase, namely “no life.” The use of nolep in slang refers to people who are anti-social or people who prefer to live alone. This happens because the word nolep is considered more familiar to Indonesian tongues so nolep is more appropriate than “no life” (Raya, 2022)

Based on researchers' observations, Wibu nolep is depicted in many videos on YouTube as an individual who isolates him or herself. In contrast to the narrative of Wibu smelling of onion, which often conveys its meaning and origins explicitly, the concept of Wibu nolep is mostly conveyed implicitly in the videos on YouTube. One of the YouTube videos that narrates Wibu nolep with the most viewers is a video from two YouTubers, namely Fauzzy and Alekhin Bhawiko. In a separate video, Fauzzy and Alekhin Bhawiko both discuss a character in a film. In Fauzzy's video entitled "When Wibu Falls in Love," he discusses the character Joo Oh Nam in the Korean Drama, “Mask Girl”. In the video, Fauzzy says that Joo Oh Nam is a Wibu nolep who spends most of his time at home watching hentai anime and live streaming of sexy women. Fauzzy also mentions that this is why the character found it difficult socializing and feeling very nervous meeting women. In line with Fauzzy, Alekhin Bhawiko created similar content in a video entitled "Wibu Nolep's Struggle to Have a Brother". Alekhin's video also talks about a film, a CGI animated film entitled “Padam.” Alekhin describes the main character in the film as a loner who rarely leaves the house and is considered a Wibu nolep. The two YouTubers affirmed the stereotype that a Wibu has “no life” or nolep. A wibu is constructed as someone who has minimal social interaction and finds it difficult to fall in love or find a partner.

The construction of Wibu nolep, which refers to Wibu's attitude of not being able to socialize and being alone, is often synonymous with the narrative of Wibu ansos. Ansos is an acronym for 'anti-social'. According to Millon and Davis (2004), “anti-social” is a personality disorder which is divided into six variations, consisting of (1) Jealousy, namely because of jealousy, a person always denies, feels lacking, likes to seek compensation, and does not enjoy giving but likes to receive. (2) The second one is Reputation Guard or narcissism, namely a behavior that denies being flawed or fragile,
fights to have its status questioned, insists when challenged, and refuses to be underestimated. (3) The third one is Risk Taking, namely a type of antisocial behavior that shows fearlessness, courage, adventurousness, carelessness, and impulsiveness in the face of danger or risk. (4) The fourth one is Nomadic that leads to a feeling of bad luck, unimportance, unwanted, homelessness, impulsivity, but is not dangerous, and makes sufferers feel bad luck. (5) And, the last one is Envy, which is a combative behavior with a sense of revenge, cruel, very evil, brutal, anticipating betrayal and punishment, no sense of guilt, no fear of confrontation, and others.

The term Wibu nolep, which is often equated with Wibu ansos, has been developed into an identity construction of Wibu in Indonesia that is also related to the Japanese’ hikikomori. There has been a frequent description of severe social withdrawal known as hikikomori in Japan, which results in adolescents and young adults withdrawing from society, becoming reclusive at home instead of attending school or working. Hikikomori is a lifestyle where you choose to isolate yourself or choose not to mingle with society. In Japan, this behavior indicates that someone has a low social spirit. In this regard, most Japanese people who practice hikikomori are those who are Otaku (fanatic fans) of something. Well-known hikikomori cases highlighted by the media fall into the extreme category. This could be the reason why Wibu in Indonesia is constructed as Wibu nolep because Wibu as a cultural practice and Japanese popular culture are closely related. We argue that this knowledge hikikomori also shapes the perceptions and constructions in the society and forms the stereotype of Wibu nolep.

Perverted Wibu: Stereotypes of Wibu’s Sexuality

Based on the analysis on the YouTube videos, we argue that the videos are constructing Wibu with deviant sexuality. The constructed stereotype of a perverted Wibu is based on videos the researchers found on YouTube. This stereotype refers to the issue of sexual deviation that is said to be committed by most Wibu in Indonesia. The sexuality of a Wibu in a video circulating on YouTube is narrated from a feeling of fanaticism towards imaginary characters or better known as two-dimensional anime characters. Apart from that, in more extreme conditions, researchers found the stereotype of the perverted Wibu is articulated in relation to Wibu as a pedophilia, or with homosexuality or lesbian traits towards anime characters. This is based on the discovery of a lot of Wibu content which is described as liking Loli (children’s characters in Japanese anime or manga).

In relation to the stereotype of a Wibu, we found that the sexual desires that were constructed and depicted in the videos are leading into the construction of Wibu as perverts. This construction is due to the norms in the society that consider the overtly sexualized depiction of Wibu in the videos as not “normal.” Based on our search in the Google search engine, in January 2023 there were around 14,100 videos using the keyword “Wibu mesum” or perverted Wibu. The word mesum refers to “indecent, lewd and vile behavior.” The term perverted is commonly used to describe actions or thoughts that are erotic and related to pornography.

Wibu is stereotyped as perverted due to the popularity of the ecchi and hentai anime genres in Indonesia. Ecchi, is an anime that displays many expressions or actions that lead to sexuality. Ecchi dramas do not depict actual sex acts or show intimate body parts except for bare breasts and buttocks. In contrast to the ecchi anime, the hentai genre displays and has an erotic theme with explicit sex scenes. This anime has a very simple story line and features a lot of sex scenes. The most famous hentai anime in Indonesia is Yosuga no Sora (Sukmana: 2015).

Apart from being related to the anime genre, fan service scenes in anime also build
the construction of perverted Wibu in Indonesia. Fan service is a scene used by the anime industry to provide a satisfying effect on fans. This scene does not have much of an impact on the plot of the anime, but it was deliberately made just to attract the audience's attention. Quoted from Wittenfelt (2015), “fan service is ridiculously sexual, and that is spectacle in action. Fan service is also founded on the tension of the sexual charge of the naked body, fan service is very sexual, and that is the spectacle”. Almost every anime has this scene; therefore, the majority of Wibu who like anime are constructed to be focused on things like that.

The perverted Wibu narrative on YouTube is depicted through videos showing the image of Wibu who have waifu or husbudo. Waifu is a term commonly used by fellow Wibu to call their imaginary wives, whereas husbudo is the word used to call their imaginary husbands. Waifu is derived from the English word “wife” and the Japanese word “waifu.” Husbudo or husbendo derived from the English word “husband” and the Japanese word “husbudo” or “husbendo.” Wibu's waifu and husbendo are characters or figures in anime that they like. Based on this, the narrative of perverted Wibu refers to the choice of anime characters who are used as husbands or wives.

One of the things that conveys Wibu's perverted narrative is a video entitled "Wibu's wildest imagination to waifu" which was posted by adminyami on the @cleansound account who interviewed many Wibu at an event. The appearance of the interviewed Wibu in the video are all men who appear to have sexual desires for their waifu. One of the individuals being interviewed in the video says that his waifu is Kurumi. In the anime Data A Life, Kurumi is a character who dresses provocatively and is the “hottest” female anime character according to a survey on kaskus.com. Another Wibu interviewed by admin Yami considers his waifu to be his “bitch.” In a similar video concept, in the video entitled "Wibu Interview Tutorial So You Don't Get Failed and Dramatic," there is an opening scene showing three Wibu carrying and hugging dakimakura pictures of their respective waifu. Dakimakura is a long pillow with a printed design originating from Japan, the name literally translates to “hug pillow” (Esposito, 2021). Another video related to the constructed sexual obsession of a Wibu was also posted by the @Riski Usada account which showed him enjoying food with his waifu.

Before eating, he invited his waifu to pray. However, the invitation to pray was made as an invitation or signal to have sexual intercourse.

Another video on YouTube that directs viewers to the construction of the perverted Wibu is a video uploaded by Faiz Sadad. The video does not directly say that Wibu is a pervert, but at minute 4.08, there is a scene of Wibu sitting, talking to his waifu, and groping the anime character's chest on his dakimakura. From the description of these videos, a Wibu imagines his waifu like his wife or partner. Thus, based on the findings of the data above, the construction of perverted Wibu in YouTube videos is often depicted through the Wibu's venting their sexual desires towards their waifu.

Outside the context of videos showing a Wibu with his sexual obsession, in other videos on YouTube, the term "perverted Wibu" is often used simply as Click Bait. One of the YouTube videos that uses the keyword “perverted Wibu” is a video uploaded by Fadly account. The video only shows her conversation with strangers via a video conference application. The woman does not declare herself to be a Wibu. She is depicted to be a sexy woman and wears glasses. This shows that perverted Wibu has been constructed as a common phrase to attract people's attention.

Thus, it could be concluded that the construction of the perverted Wibu is a stereotype constructed through sexual oddities and visual objects that are considered unusual or not “normal” by the majority of society. Based on the results of the analysis, the construction of Wibu as a pervert is based on the images of perverted attitudes that
are shown publicly without shame and watching anime that contains elements of *ecchi* and *hentai*. However, this construction is only highlighting male Wibu, who is openly affirmed as perverts.

**Psychopath Wibu: Stereotypes of Wibu’s Psychological Condition**

In Indonesia, the stereotype of the Psychopathic Wibu in videos on YouTube is not the main narrative but it is still quite popular. This is due to the lack of videos discussing this matter. However, in one case, this stereotype emerged by itself or was created by Wibu himself. Based on our observations on YouTube, the stereotype of the psychopathic Wibu comes from the fanfare of an anime entitled "Tokyo Ghoul". This anime has a theme of cannibalism with usual characters and a plot which makes the anime popular.

Although the stereotype of psychopathic Wibu does not have much of impact among the Wibu individuals, the society views this as an unacceptable attribute to the Wibu identity. Society in general will react strongly when it comes to the word "psychopath" because this behavior is considered manipulative and has a strong connection to violence. In Indonesia, there has not been any cases related to Wibu doing violence; however, in Japan there is quite a lot of violence related to anime fans and there are even major cases which ultimately affirms the negative stereotypes of the Japanese Otaku/Wibu. Based on these observations, we consider the stereotype of the psychopathic Wibu to be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, Wibu is proud of the Tokyo Ghoul anime, which is expressed as a hobby and a form of enthusiasm for the artist’s work. On the other hand, the ease of gaining access to themes of violence without filtration could directly or indirectly have an adverse effect on individuals and groups.

**CONCLUSION**

Research findings show how YouTube videos emphasize certain behaviors of anime lovers in Indonesia, thereby creating a distorted image of Wibu. The Wibu phenomenon that emerged in society and represented in YouTube videos led to the affirmation of Wibu stereotypes, such as smelling like onions, perverted Wibu, Wibu *nolep* (anti-social) and psychopath Wibu. These stereotypes have become a trigger for discrimination on social media. For example, the stereotype of Wibu smelling like onions is built on the condition of Wibu fans’ body odor by associating their body odor with the smell of onions. There are also stereotypes related to sexuality. Wibu is described as sexually deviated. Wibu are said to make use of anime characters to satisfy their sexual desire or lust. Apart from that, YouTube media also builds a stereotypical narrative of anime fans as Wibu *nolep* or anti-social. Wibu *nolep* is constructed as someone who prioritizes anime as a lifestyle and is therefore considered to distance themselves from any social relations in society. The final stereotype found in this research is the construction of the psychopathic Wibu. The psychopathic Wibu is characterized by the emergence of this stereotype from within the anime fandom.

The emergence of anime culture over time has become an example of foreign culture that is widely accepted by Indonesian society. Indonesia is the third country with the greatest number of anime lovers outside of Japan. This phenomenon has caused discriminative behaviors toward the anime fandom called Wibu. Although YouTube videos may contribute to the formation of stereotypes on anime lovers, this research hopefully ignites a more critical perspective for assessing digital content and avoiding overgeneralization. The anime-loving community is so diverse that it transcends or even negates stereotypical depictions. Promoting a deeper understanding of anime fans is critical to challenge and dispel stereotypes.
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