



Understanding Indonesian Students' Perceptions of Japan through One Piece as Cultural Diplomacy: The Case of Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT

As a popular culture, One Piece anime is strategically utilized in cultural diplomacy to enhance Japan's global influence and image on the international level. One Piece is popular in Indonesia, especially among university students in Yogyakarta. This study examines how the cultural diplomacy of One Piece influences perceptions of Indonesian students in Yogyakarta towards Japan's identity and cultural values. By using Alexander Wendt's social constructivism, this study emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the construction of Japanese cultural identity, norms, and values through the cultural diplomacy of One Piece in Indonesia, supported by the Cool Japan policy. This study uses primary data collection through a survey of 150 students who are One Piece fans in Yogyakarta, as well as secondary data from various relevant documents. The survey is processed using SPSS. The result shows that the popularity of One Piece in Yogyakarta encourages the acceptance of values such as hard work, solidarity (friendship), and respect (*bushido*) that are typical of Japanese culture. It also proves that cultural diplomacy of One Piece contributes significantly to strengthening Japan's positive image in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Keyword: Cultural Diplomacy, One Piece Anime, Indonesian Students

Introduction

In the current era of globalization, popular (pop) culture has become one of many countries' tools for cultural diplomacy. Japan uses pop culture to enhance its global image, especially in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. After World War II, the country started rebuilding its image as a peaceful and advanced country through cultural diplomacy, using anime as a tool of nation branding (McLelland, 2016, pp. 218–224). As a global phenomenon, anime entertains while also conveying strong cultural messages such as the spirit of perseverance, solidarity, and togetherness, which permeate Japanese culture. From 2019 to 2023, the Japanese anime industry experienced significant growth, although it declined during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 (Nippon Hoso Kyokai, 2024).

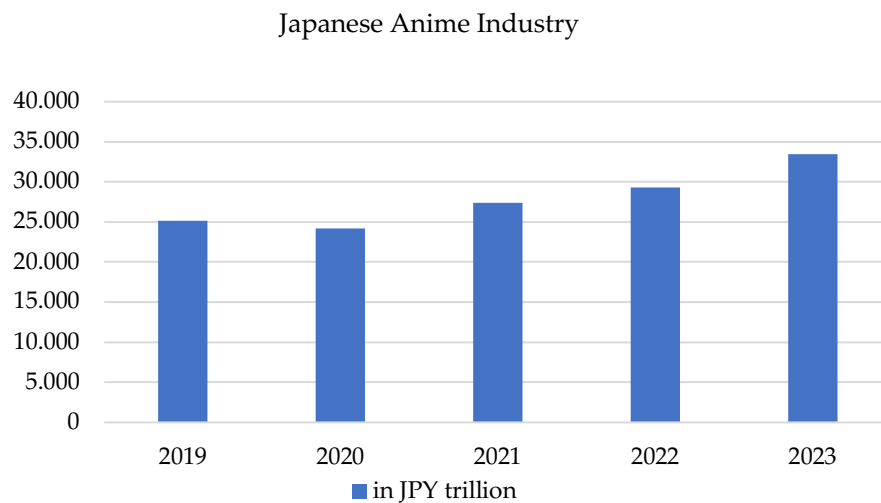


Figure 1. Japanese Anime Industry

Source: Nippon Hoso Kyokai (2024), The Association of Japanese Animations (2023)

Based on Figure 1, the anime creative industry market continued to grow, although it declined to 2.4 JPY trillion in 2020 (Masuda H et al., 2024). Over the past 10 years, the anime industry has grown by 198%, with the international market making a significant contribution to this rapid growth (Masuda H et al., 2024; Nippon Hoso Kyokai, 2024). Overseas expansion has become a key strategy for strengthening the anime industry, reaching 3.3 trillion yen in 2023 (Masuda H et al., 2024; Nippon Hoso Kyokai, 2024). This phenomenon shows that the anime industry serves as a key contributor to Japan's nation branding.

In the 1970s, anime was exported to Indonesia, and its popularity increased in the early 2000s, including *Dragon Ball*, *Naruto*, and *One Piece* (Erwindo, 2018, p. 77). Indonesia serves as one of the biggest markets for anime consumption that offers a competitive advantage for Japan's cultural diplomacy. The rising popularity of anime encourages Japan to massively introduce and shape its positive perceptions and distinctive cultures (Erwindo, 2018, pp. 70–75). *One Piece* anime is a medium that entertains and transmits Japanese cultural values of diligence, unity, and respectfulness (Lamarre, 2009, pp. 120–130). Given the policy of Cool Japan actively promoting popular culture as a means of strengthening Japan's global position, this study examines how the process of interaction through cultural diplomacy of *One Piece* influences the construction of Japan's identity and the acceptance of its norms among Indonesian students in Yogyakarta.

Anime has been an important part of popular culture for Indonesia's young generation, especially university students studying in Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta is one of the largest educational hubs in Indonesia, where thousands of students from all over the country study at Yogyakarta universities (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi di Yogyakarta, 2023). The diverse student backgrounds make Yogyakarta an ideal place for researching the influence of cultural diplomacy of One Piece on the perception of Indonesian students towards Japan's identity and cultural values. Moreover, Yogyakarta has strong fan communities of Japanese culture that have organized numerous events such as Japanese culture festivals, cosplay clubs, and screenings of anime films.

The Japanese enthusiast community in Yogyakarta is quite large. Various Japanese-themed festivals that have been held reflect the high interest of people in Japanese popular culture, along with the enthusiasm of cosplayer communities and fans of Japanese culture in Yogyakarta. Besides serving as entertainment, festivals also give fans a space to channel their creativity and express their affection for Japanese culture. Japanese-themed festivals are generally organized by various parties, such as event organizers, schools, universities, stores, and communities (Kusumadewi & Hastasari, 2020, p. 87). There are at least 16 Japanese enthusiast communities in Yogyakarta, presented in Table 1.

Table 1. List of 16 Japanese Communities in Yogyakarta

No	Community Name	Year Formed
1.	Albatros-force	2005
2.	Atsuki	2007
3.	Anata	2007
4.	Amanogawa	2007
5.	Egaku	2007
6.	Onegai	2007
7.	PKS (Paguyuban Kembang Seroja)	2008
8.	Gamabunta	2011
9.	Anoman	2012
10.	PSB (Super Fantasy Boy)	2012
11.	Guntaku	2013
12.	Kantay	2013
13.	KOY (Komunitas Otaku Yogyakarta)	2013
14.	GTS (Graha Tangga Squad)	2014
15.	JBj (Japan Band Jogja)	2015
16.	Inaichi	2016

Source: Kusumadewi and Hastari (2020)

Table 1 shows that the Japanese-loving community in Yogyakarta has been established for a long time. In 2005, the first Japanese community formed in Yogyakarta was Anata. Over time, more communities have emerged, showing a growing interest in Japanese culture. In 2007, several communities started to form, including Albatros-force, Atsuki, Amanogawa, Onegai, Enaku, and PKS (*Paguyuban Kembang Seroja*). This development continued with the emergence of communities like Gamabunta in 2011, Anoman and PSB (Super Fantasy Boy) in 2012, as well as Guntaku, Kantay, and KOY (*Komunitas Otaku Yogyakarta*) in 2013. In addition, communities such as GTS (*Graha Tangga Squad*) appeared in 2014, followed by JBj (*Japan Band Jogja*) in 2015 and Inaichi in 2016. The variety of

Japanese-loving communities reflects the wide range of interests in Japanese culture in Yogyakarta, from anime, cosplay, and music to performing arts and other activities.

Prior studies have discussed that cultural diplomacy is used by Japan to spread understanding of Japanese moral and cultural values in Indonesia. Rudiawan (2022) focused on the innovations made by the Japan Foundation in adapting the implementation of Japan Cultural Weeks into an online format during the COVID-19 pandemic (Rudiawan, 2022, p. 383). The study used a framework of three basic principles in Japanese cultural diplomacy, which include Transmission, Acceptance, and Coexistence, focusing on the use of technology to reach Indonesian audiences (Rudiawan, 2022, pp. 383–384). By conducting a survey, the study provided fairly deep insights. However, it less explored the challenges of implementing online programs and their quantitative impact on the audiences.

Patra (2022) researched Japanese cultural diplomacy in Indonesia through the Japan Foundation during the 2019–2020 period. The study highlighted the role of the Japan Foundation as a non-state actor supporting Japanese cultural diplomacy efforts through various programs focused on cultural exchange, Japanese language education, and strengthening people-to-people relationships between Japan and Indonesia. In his study, Patra used the theory of cultural diplomacy (Cull, 2009) which emphasized how a country builds a positive image through the spread of culture, as well as the notion of soft power (Nye, 2008). It also highlighted how Japan uses its cultural appeal as a diplomatic tool to strengthen relations with other countries without directly using military or economic force (Patra, 2022, pp. 32–36). Japan implemented three main pillars in its cultural diplomacy, such as transmission, reception, and cultural coexistence for Japan Foundation programs in Indonesia (Patra, 2022, pp. 34, 38). Although it contributes to understanding the role of Japan Foundation in cultural diplomacy, the study needs to apply alternative research methods to thoroughly evaluate the impact of Japan's cultural diplomacy in Indonesia.

Pratama and Puspitasari (2020) examined how the Japanese government sought to strengthen its soft power through anime-based cultural diplomacy during the 2014–2018 period, including policies such as the Cool Japan strategy, the establishment of the Cool Japan Fund, and diplomatic activities carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), such as appointing Doraemon as Japan's anime ambassador and sponsoring the World Cosplay Summit. Using the concepts of public diplomacy and soft power, the study found that Japan successfully regained international recognition and influence through anime, even though the anime industry's direct contribution to the national economy remained relatively small compared with Japan's other economic sectors (Pratama & Puspitasari, 2020). However, this study centers on Japan's policy-level diplomatic efforts and does not examine how micro-level audiences, such as Indonesian university students, actually receive and interpret the cultural messages.

Hatami (2018) explored the influence of Japanese popular culture, including anime, on the nationalism of young Indonesian citizens through a phenomenological study of thirteen high school students who were members of the *Nihon No Kurabu* (Japanese Club) association in Bandung. The findings showed that these students were highly interested in anime because of its values, characters, visuals, and storylines, and that their growing interest in Japanese popular culture came at the expense of their engagement with Indonesia's own traditional culture, raising concern that unfiltered exposure to anime could weaken young

citizens' sense of nationalism(Hatami, 2018). Nevertheless, this study remains limited to a general discussion of nationalism and does not address how anime specifically constructs audiences' perceptions of Japan's identity and cultural values through an ongoing meaning-making process.

Although prior studies have examined Japan's use of anime as a tool of soft power and cultural diplomacy, as well as its influence on the nationalism of young Indonesian citizens, this study highlights a less explored aspect of the influence of One Piece cultural diplomacy on shaping the perceptions of Indonesian students in Yogyakarta towards Japan's identity and cultural values. Unlike previous research that positions anime as an instrument of cultural diplomacy at the national and policy level or examines its broad effect on national identity and nationalism, this study focuses on the audience level, specifically Indonesian students in Yogyakarta, as social actors who actively interpret and negotiate cultural messages. Using social constructivism, this study not only assesses the effectiveness of One Piece as a tool of Japan's cultural diplomacy, but it also examines how anime functions as a medium for constructing identity and internalizing Japanese cultural norms through an ongoing meaning-making process. For this reason, this study contributes to bridging the study of cultural diplomacy with the process of forming meaning and perception at the micro level, especially through the experiences of student audiences as social actors, which has, insofar, received relatively less attention in the study of international relations based on popular culture.

This study answers a research question: how does the cultural diplomacy of One Piece influence the perceptions of Indonesian students in Yogyakarta towards Japan's identity and cultural values? Referring to this question, this study examines how the cultural diplomacy of One Piece can shape the perceptions of Indonesian students in Yogyakarta towards Japan's identity and cultural values, traditions, and the attitudes of Japanese people reflected in the anime. Additionally, this study also highlights how Japan's nation branding in Yogyakarta reduces negative stereotypes and improves the positive image of Japan as a peaceful country.

Theoretical Framework

In international relations, Alexander Wendt's social constructivism emphasizes the importance of ideas, values, and identities in the process of social interaction between international actors. In his famous book, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Wendt presents two basic constructivist approaches: 1) shared ideas are the primary determinants of social structure in international relations, and 2) state identities and interests are not "given by nature", but rather the result of these shared ideas (Wendt, 1999). In other words, how actors interact and understand each other is influenced and socially constructed by shared ideas and values.

As a key figure in social constructivism, Wendt emphasizes that social structure is not entirely material, but rather shaped by shared ideas that develop through social interaction. So does identity, which involves images of "the self and the other"(Jørgensen & Wong, 2016, p. 54). Due to its relational nature, an actor's identity (self and other) is produced and reproduced through social interactions. Identity is basically the foundation of interests (Wendt, 1992, p. 398). Hence, a country's national interests are shaped by its identity, which

develops through social interactions with other actors in the international system (Mengshu, 2020, pp. 1–2). In this context, Japan’s global image is the result of a dynamic social interaction between Japan and its target audiences. After the World War II ended, Japan attempted to change its identity (self-perception) from an imperialist country to an anime country that emphasized uniqueness, peace, and creativity.

Cultural diplomacy is a social practice used by states (including non-state actors) to brand, negotiate, and reconstruct their social identities. As part of public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy plays a strategic role in shaping perceptions, creating social reality, and enhancing a state’s global image. For Japan, cultural diplomacy is a tool of the country’s nation branding strategy. By promoting popular culture like anime, Japan crafts a positive image that enhances its popularity and strengthens its strategic position in international relations (Putri P A, 2024, p. 9). Thus, nation branding is essential in cultural diplomacy because it focuses on shaping a distinctive and symbolic national identity by involving the role of governments, private sectors, and publics. Nation branding is basically a simple form of representation that can be easily implemented, aiming to characterize and profile a country based on several variables that create market value in the form of a brand (Cesar V.R, 2022, p. 22)

Cool Japan policy is also an essential part of cultural diplomacy. The policy is implemented to promote Japan’s popular culture and creativity through anime and enhance its international influence. It involves cooperation in the creative industry, such as food, fashion, media content, tourism, as well as goods and services. Cool Japan also represents a nation branding strategy that seeks to develop the country’s good reputation by globally promoting and exporting the creative industry (Praditya & Arisanto, 2021, pp. 107–199). In this context, Japan exports not only its cultural products but also its core values, including creativity and peace. Therefore, nation branding goes beyond a commercialization strategy. It also aims to instill norms and values in international audiences, including Indonesian students in Yogyakarta.

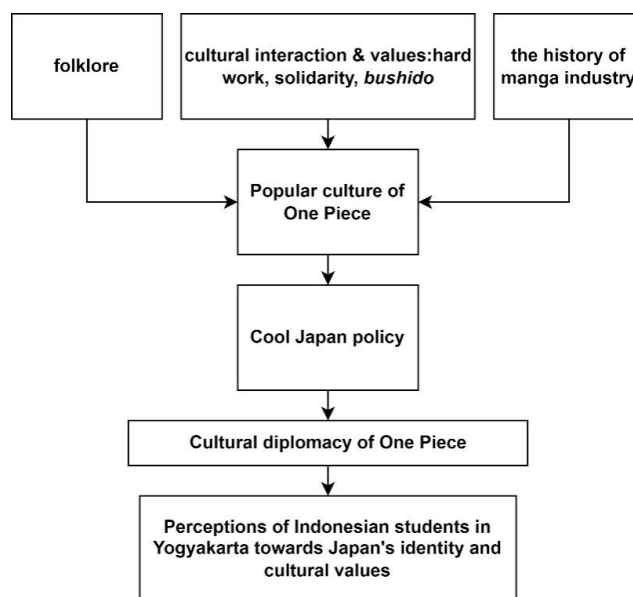


Figure 2. Analytical Framework

Source: created by Authors

This study connects social constructivism with the concept of cultural diplomacy and nation branding, illustrated in the following analytical framework. In Figure 2, the popular culture of One Piece is a central concept influenced by three main elements: folklore; cultural interactions in society that affect the spread of values such as hard work, solidarity, and respect (*bushido*); and the historical experience of the manga industry. The popularity of anime encourages the Japanese government to initiate the Cool Japan policy by prioritizing anime, notably One Piece, as a tool for cultural diplomacy. For this reason, Japan expands its influence and promotes its global positive image (*nation-branding*). As one of the most popular anime in the world, One Piece has a strong appeal in Indonesia. As one of the world's most popular anime, One Piece is famous among university students in Yogyakarta. Not only does One Piece introduce the elements of Japanese culture, but the anime also shapes students' perceptions towards Japan as a creative and innovative country with strong cultural values. Hence, the cultural diplomacy of One Piece plays a strategic role in establishing understanding and emotional closeness between Japan and the Indonesian people in particular to strengthen Japan's global identity.

Method

This study employs a mixed-method approach to comprehensively examine how cultural diplomacy influences Indonesian students' perceptions towards Japan. It combines library research to describe the origins of the One Piece anime and its connection to the government's Cool Japan policy, as well as a survey conducted by distributing questionnaires to 150 university students in Yogyakarta. The sampling was done using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was carried out based on respondents' criteria, where the questionnaire was distributed to and answered by students who had a "genuine interest" (Yusof et al., 2023, p. 496) and were fans of the anime One Piece. Although 50-100 samples are enough for a simple regression analysis (Hair et al., 2018; Memon et al., 2020), 150 samples were collected to ensure that the analysis data are representative with a sufficient level of "exposure" (Yusof et al., 2023), regarding One Piece. The survey was conducted in January-February 2025. The survey data were processed using SPSS through a simple regression model. The independent variable (X) is the cultural diplomacy of One Piece under the Cool Japan policy. Meanwhile, the dependent variable (Y) is the influence on Indonesian students, including their perceptions towards Japan's nation branding and their level of interest in Japanese culture. The hypothesis of this study is that the cultural diplomacy of One Piece (variable X) has a significant and simultaneous effect on shaping the perceptions of Indonesian students in Yogyakarta towards Japan's identity and cultural values (variable Y). This study also collects secondary data obtained from policy reports, websites, newspapers, books, and academic journals. The combination of these methods aims to offer a thorough understanding of the influence of Japan's cultural diplomacy of One Piece on shaping the perceptions of Indonesian students in Yogyakarta.

Result and Discussion

The Popular (Pop) Culture of One Piece and the Cool Japan Policy

One Piece is not solely an entertainment to watch, but it is also a representation of Japanese culture and moral values that have developed through various historical and social factors.

As a pop culture, the One Piece anime is constructed by three main aspects. First, elements of Japanese folklore, in which One Piece draws a lot of inspiration from Japanese mythology and folk tales that depict adventure, friendship, and bravery (Pakarti & Saepullah, 2023, p. 103). Second, cultural interaction and social values, where the anime reflects the *bushido* principles that uphold a spirit of perseverance, hard work, and solidarity values rooted in Japanese society (Pakarti & Saepullah, 2023, p. 103). Third, the history of the anime industry, where the development of Japan's creative industry since the post-war era has contributed to storytelling styles and visual innovations that make One Piece one of the pop culture legacies with global attraction (Auliawan & Ratna, 2024).

The international popularity of One Piece has made it a part of Japan's cultural diplomacy strategy through the Cool Japan Initiative. This policy aims to use anime as a tool to build a global positive image of Japan. The Japanese government views anime as an effective means to strengthen nation branding by introducing Japanese culture and unique values to the international community (Praditya & Arisanto, 2021, p. 108). Additionally, Cool Japan also aims to reinforce Japan's position as a cultural superpower by expanding its creative industries to various countries, including Indonesia. With the rising popularity of anime, the policy also plays a role in boosting Japan's economic competitiveness.

The Cool Japan strategy is a part of Japan's cultural diplomacy to promote the country's pop culture and creativity through the promotion of anime. As one of the most recognized anime worldwide, One Piece is an essential part of the Cool Japan strategy to create a positive image of Japan and improve cultural diplomacy between Japan and other nations, such as Indonesia (Praditya & Arisanto, 2021, p. 109). The Cool Japan program was created in 2010 to improve Japan's image and develop relationships with other countries by exporting cultural products, such as anime, manga, and cuisine. Hence, One Piece plays its role in shaping foreign public perceptions by telling stories and spreading universal values in different nations, like Indonesia. By using anime, Japan can increase its image as a center of innovation (Praditya & Arisanto, 2021, p. 8).

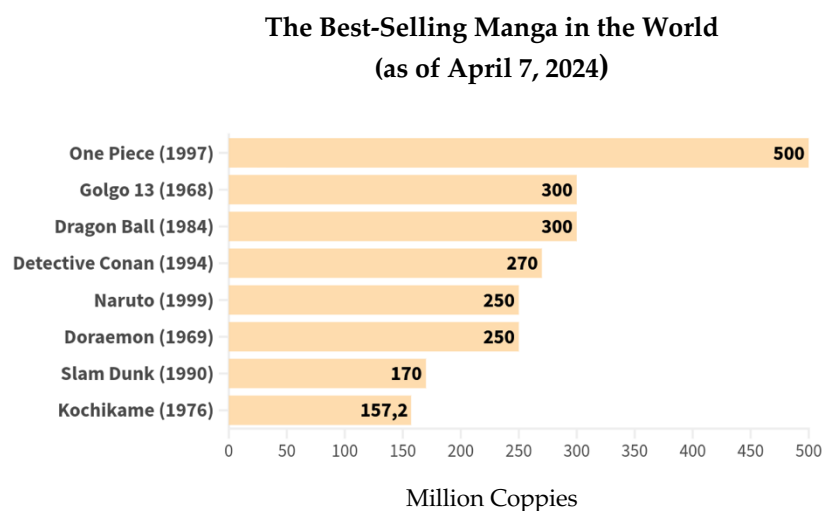


Figure 3. The Best-Selling Manga in the World
Source: GoodStats (2024)

The list of the most popular manga in the world, calculated according to the number of their sales in millions as of April 7, 2024, is presented in Figure 3. One Piece (1997), which sold 500 million copies, had the first place on the list and was the most successful manga ever. There were Golgo 13 (1968) and Dragon Ball (1984), which also sold 300 million copies, demonstrating the popularity of classical manga that had stood the test of time. The fourth place was occupied by Detective Conan (1994) with 270 million sales, while the following positions were dominated by Naruto (1999) and Doraemon (1969), which sold 250 million copies, demonstrating strong fans' love for those manga. The rest of the most popular manga included Slam Dunk (1990), with sales of 170 million, and Kochikame (1976) with 157.2 million copies sold. This data reflects the dominance of Japanese manga in the global entertainment industry, where genres such as action, adventure, comedy, and detective continue to captivate readers worldwide. The popularity of manga also demonstrates how Japanese culture, both visual and narrative, has successfully penetrated international markets and become a significant part of global popular culture (GoodStsts, 2024).

Cultural Diplomacy of One Piece in Indonesia

Japan and Indonesia established official diplomatic relations after signing the Peace Agreement and Compensation Agreement on January 20, 1958, in Jakarta. This agreement was ratified by Indonesia through Law Number 13 of 1958 (Soekarno, 1958). The signing of the agreement marked the beginning of official bilateral relations between the two countries (Soekarno, 1958). Both serve as strategic partners, sharing core values such as democracy, human rights, and a market economy. Over the past 67 years, their relationship has improved through cooperation in various sectors, including economics, politics, social affairs, and culture. Cultural diplomacy is one of the crucial aspects of this cooperation, where elements of Japanese popular culture, such as anime, are used as a means to strengthen relations between the two countries (Garmabar et al., 2024, p. 3). This process is the result of social interaction and the formation of shared norms between Japan and Indonesia. Countries with strong cultural identities tend to have greater attraction (Wendt, 1992, pp. 394–396).

The Japanese government actively leverages the popularity of anime to strengthen nation branding, including supporting cultural festivals and cosplay communities in various cities in Indonesia. In Indonesia, Japanese cultural festivals are not only organized by official institutions but also by private sectors and fan communities. These festivals include Japan Expo, Japan Wave Expo, Japan Festival, and Anime Festival Asia Indonesia, as well as cosplay competitions and gatherings (Garmabar et al., 2024, p. 8). In addition, the International Manga Award, which is directly supported by the Japanese government as a form of cultural exchange, has been won by two Indonesian artists: Muhammad Fathanatui Haq as an illustrator and Ockto Baringbing as a writer, who won the silver award for their work titled "Five Minutes Before Broadcast" (Garmabar et al., 2024, p. 24). Based on social constructivism, One Piece creates new norms and identities through cultural interaction. Indonesian students who participate in the anime community actively help shape cross-cultural relationships and strengthen Japan's positive image in Indonesia. It shows that cultural diplomacy can work effectively when the audiences are involved in the process of jointly shaping meaning and identity.

One Piece has attracted a lot of interest in Indonesia. For instance, the “The Great Era of Piracy” exhibition was held at Mall of Indonesia, from November 8, 2023, to January 7, 2024, and featured 21 themed zones as well as interactive experiences based on augmented reality (Ady Prawira Riandi and Kistyarini, 2023). The existence of such an exhibition proves the high level of excitement of the public, especially among the young generation, toward the pop culture of Japan and also confirms the significant importance of anime in the cultural exchange between the two countries. The success of the One Piece series in Indonesia has also created collaboration opportunities between local brands and the anime franchise in different business activities. In the fashion sector, several brands such as 3Second, W.Essentiels, and Kanky offer apparel items which are devoted to One Piece and feature unique designs with icons of the popular anime (HB Team, 2024; Susanti, 2024). In the footwear sector, Johnson presents his special shoe collection with unique designs for anime and streetwear fans from Indonesia (Johnson Indonesia, 2025). In the sector of illustrations and creativity, Tahilalats introduces humorous elements of Indonesian culture into One Piece-themed product designs.

The food and beverage industry is also involved in collaboration with the One Piece anime. One of the biggest coffee brands in Indonesia, Kopi Kenangan, has introduced an exclusive menu inspired by One Piece and packaged in unique collectibles to attract fans (Kopi Kenangan, 2024). Additionally, the home & living market has not been neglected. Kintakun introduces bedding products such as bed covers and bed sheets with a design based on the One Piece franchise (Kintakun, 2024). In the beauty market, Runa Beauty has also released some care products, such as lip care, gel masks, clay masks, and body creams that incorporate designs and concepts inspired by One Piece (Runa Beauty, 2023). The collaboration between Indonesian companies and One Piece anime reveals how Japanese pop culture can be used in cultural diplomacy as well as in the creative economy. This successful collaboration drives more potential for cooperation between other Japanese franchises and Indonesian companies.

Japan’s cultural diplomacy of One Piece has had a significant influence in Indonesia, including in Yogyakarta. The spread of anime as a strategic element of Japan’s cultural diplomacy has increased Indonesian people’s interest in Japanese culture. In Yogyakarta, the cultural diplomacy is carried out through various activities involving students and One Piece fan communities. For example, in 2023, Jogja Japan Week was held to commemorate the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Japan. The event was officially opened at Sleman City Hall by the Vice Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta, KGPAA Paku Alam X, accompanied by the Deputy Regent of Sleman, Danang Maharsa, and the Japanese Deputy Ambassador, Tamura Masami (Pemerintah Kabupaten Sleman, 2023). As the third edition, Jogja Japan Week featured a cultural collaboration between Indonesia and Japan through various art performances, culinary experiences, and fashion shows (Pemerintah Kabupaten Sleman, 2023). This event serves as a way to strengthen cooperation and creativity between Japan and Indonesia by introducing each other’s cultures. In addition, another discussion forum called “Going Ohara #1” was organized in Warung Kopi Sruput. Among others, the speaker M. Naufal Waliyudin, a PhD student from Yogyakarta, was invited to discuss One Piece in “Spelling Bibliocide From the Ohara Tragedy” (Aisyah, 2024). One Piece communities in Yogyakarta, such as *Nakama*

Istimewa Yogyakarta (NAIS), actively held gatherings and participated in a variety of anime events. Such communities are connected with similar communities in other cities and often hold joint activities 2026/7/27 19:58:00.

One Piece's influence also extends to the academic field. For instance, Imanuel Tegar Suryanto, a Communication Studies student at Atmajaya University Yogyakarta (UAJY), finished his bachelor's program by presenting the topic of One Piece in his thesis. In this context, One Piece not only entertains but also becomes an academic inspiration as well (Sherly, 2025). In such an activity, Japan's cultural diplomacy of One Piece has successfully created a space for interaction and discussion for Indonesian students in Yogyakarta, strengthening their understanding and appreciation of Japanese culture.

Student Perceptions in Yogyakarta towards Japan

The following diagram shows the result of a survey concerning the influence of the cultural diplomacy of One Piece in shaping the perceptions of Indonesian students in Yogyakarta towards Japan, according to responses from 150 respondents. The data reflects their opinions across five categories: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree. The survey results demonstrate that the majority of respondents tended to respond in the Agree and Neutral categories, indicating a relatively positive or moderate view of the topic.

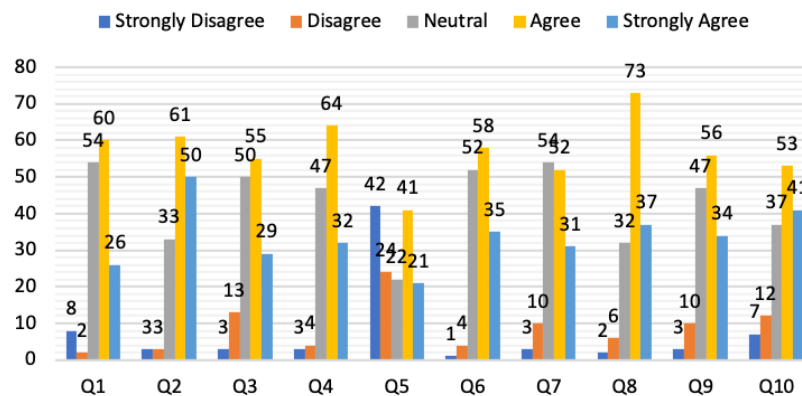


Figure 4. The Survey Results

Source: conducted by the Authors

The information in Figure 4 presents data from 150 respondents, whereby most of the answers belong to the Agree and Neutral categories. There are 10 questions (Q1-Q10) offered. In relation to Q1, most respondents selected Agree (40%) regarding their high interest in learning about Japanese culture due to the influence of One Piece. Respondents who chose Neutral were at 36%, while Disagree was at 17.3%. The majority of students believed that One Piece influenced their interest in Japanese culture. Respondents who chose Agree meant that they were interested in learning about Japanese culture, while Disagree referred to the fact that watching One Piece did not have any impact on their interest. In relation to Q2, 40.7% of respondents chose Agree that Japanese cultural values such as diligence, solidarity, and respect (*bushido*) were depicted in One Piece. Respondents who chose Neutral reached 33.3%, and Disagree reached 22%. These results show that the majority of students believe that the anime reflected Japanese culture.

In Q3, in terms of the influence of One Piece on respondents' views on Japanese nation branding, 36.7% were agree, and 33.3% were strongly agree. On the other hand, 19.3% of

the respondents chose neutral, and 8.7% of them disagreed. Based on this result, most of the students perceived that One Piece influenced their perception towards Japan. Agree meant that the anime broadened their knowledge about the nation branding of Japan, while Disagree meant that the anime did not affect the nation branding of Japan in any particular way. In Q4, 42.7% of respondents agreed that One Piece reduced negative stereotypes about Japan. Respondents who chose Neutral reached 31.3%, and Disagree reached 22.7%. Most of the students believed that the anime was an effective method to improve the image of Japan. The category of Agree meant that the anime promoted a peaceful image of Japan.

From Q5, we observed that respondents with Neutral answers dominated at 28%, regarding how One Piece served as a strategic tool in Japan's cultural diplomacy. The second highest response was Agree, which reached 27.3%. The percentages of Strongly Agree and Disagree stood at 21.3% and 14%, respectively. This result reflected some skepticism, but the majority of students acknowledged that anime could be a means of cultural diplomacy. Those who Agree believed that One Piece anime was a means of communication in Japan's cultural diplomacy, while those who Disagree implied their unwillingness to agree with that idea. In relation to Q6, we noticed that more than a third of the respondents, reaching 38.7%, agreed with the success of Japan in conveying cultural messages through the One Piece anime. The second largest response was Neutral with 34.7% of respondents, and the third one was Strongly Agree with 23.3% of respondents.

For Q7, 36% of respondents preferred Neutral in relation to whether One Piece belongs to the cultural diplomacy of Japan. However, 28% of respondents chose Agree, and 20.7% of respondents chose Strongly Agree. Those who chose Agree think that the One Piece anime belonged to Japan's diplomatic strategy, while those who chose Disagree did not agree that it belonged to Japan's diplomatic strategy. In contrast, Q8 showed that there was a big majority of 48.7% of respondents who Agreed that One Piece contributed to presenting Japanese cultural values overseas, even in Indonesia. Those who chose Strongly Agree reached 24.7%, and those who chose Neutral reached 21.3%.

For question 9, the majority of 37.3% of respondents selected Agree. It was followed by Neutral with 31.3% of respondents, and Strongly Agree with 22.7% of respondents regarding their knowledge of Japanese history. This result indicated that although One Piece anime did not explicitly discuss history, the majority of respondents perceived some historical implications. In other words, the category of Agree meant that they understood some historical implications, whereas Disagree means that the anime was not related to Japanese history. Finally, the Q10 result showed that 35.3% of respondents were Strongly Agree, 27.3% were Agree, and 24.7% were Neutral that One Piece increased students' curiosity about Japanese pop culture such as music, fashion, and drama. This result indicated that anime played a major role in introducing Japanese pop culture. The category of Agree meant that they became more interested in other aspects of Japanese pop culture, whereas Disagree meant that anime did not really have its influence.

To validate the results, this study conducted a validity test. It ensures that the research instrument is able to measure the research variables accurately and consistently. In this study, the validity test aims to assess the extent to which the questionnaire accurately measures the concept of cultural diplomacy through the anime One Piece and Indonesian students' perceptions of Japan. By conducting a validity test, it can also be ensured that each

question is strongly related to the variables being measured, so the data obtained can be trusted and used in further analysis.

Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Total X ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Total Y

b. All requested variables entered.

Figure 5. Variables in Research

Source: SPSS Data

Based on Figure 5 above, the variables processed in this study include variable (X) or the independent variable (IV), which is Japanese cultural diplomacy, and variable (Y) or the dependent variable (DV), which is the perception of Indonesian students in Yogyakarta.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.759 ^a	.577	.574	2.116

a. Predictors: (Constant), Total X

b. Dependent Variable: Total Y

Figure 6. Coefficient of Determination Test

Source: SPSS Data

Based on Figure 6 above, the Coefficient of Determination Test in this study shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable because the Pearson correlation value (r) > 0.361, which is 0.759 (r table for N = at 0.05 significance) and p -value < 0.05. Referring to this data, all items in the variable are considered valid. Variable X affects Variable Y by 57.7% of the R Square value of 0.577, and other factors outside of cultural diplomacy influence 42.3% of students' perceptions. To produce a more accurate analysis, further validity tests are necessary.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	902.415	1	902.415	201.621	.000 ^b
	Residual	662.418	148	4.476		
	Total	1564.833	149			

a. Dependent Variable: Total Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), Total X

Figure 7. F-Test

Source: SPSS Data

The F-test results in Figure 7 show that variable X has a significant influence. In other words, the Sig. value or probability of variable X reaching $0.000 < 0.05$ indicates that variable X has a simultaneous impact on variable Y.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.039	.927		1.121	.264		
	Total X	.856	.060	.759	14.199	.000	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Total Y

Figure 8. T-Test

Source: SPSS Data

According to the T-test in Figure 8, a significance level of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, demonstrates that variable X has a significant influence. These results show how variable X, which is cultural diplomacy of One Piece, becomes the foreign policy strategy that most influences Indonesian students' perceptions in Yogyakarta towards Japan's nation branding. The constant value also shows a positive result of 1.039 with a regression coefficient for variable X of 0.856 or 85.6%. This result shows that every one-unit increase in variable X will increase variable Y. Thus, the regression model is:

The model above shows that the regression coefficient for the variable X is positive at 0.856. In other words, the cultural diplomacy of One Piece has a significant positive influence on shaping Indonesian students' perceptions in Yogyakarta towards Japan's nation branding. The more increase in Japan's cultural diplomacy, the more it shapes students' positive perceptions towards Japan's nation branding, including identity and cultural values.

In the Reliability Test, this study has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.897. It means that the research variables of this study are considered reliable. Meanwhile, the Classical

$$Y = a + bX$$

$$Y = 1,039 + 0,856X$$

Assumption Test results reveal that the analyzed data have normal distributions because effective regression requires residual values that are normally distributed. Furthermore, to ensure that the regression model meets the basic assumptions of linear regression analysis, the author conducted a One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test. This test examines whether the regression model's residuals are normally distributed, a key condition for unbiased estimates and valid interpretation. The data are considered to follow a normal distribution if the significance or the probability value is greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant difference between the data distribution and a normal distribution.

According to Figure 9, the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test indicates an asymptotic two-tailed significance of 0.06, which exceeds the 0.05 threshold. This suggests that the regression model meets the normality assumption, indicating that data in this study are normally distributed.

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			
			Unstandardized Residual
N			150
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean		.0000000
	Std. Deviation		2.10849652
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute		.089
	Positive		.053
	Negative		-.089
Test Statistic			.089
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c			.005
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) ^d	Sig.		.006
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	.004
		Upper Bound	.008

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.
d. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 2000000.

Figure 9. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test
Source: SPSS Data

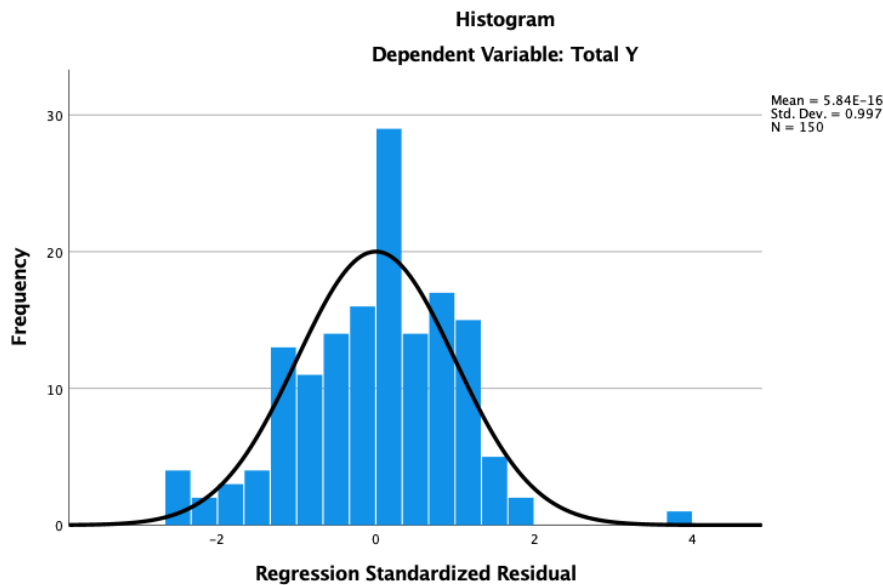


Figure 10. Histogram
Source: SPSS Data

A residual histogram is used to evaluate the distribution of standardized residuals in regression analysis. If the residuals form a bell-shaped curve with a Mean close to zero and a standard deviation of around one, the residual distribution can be recognized as normal. In this analysis, the average residual of 5.84×10^{-16} based on Figure 10 shows that there is no significant bias in the regression model. A normal residual distribution shows that the regression model aligns with the data and there is a significant relationship between Japan's cultural diplomacy of One Piece and the perceptions of Indonesian students in Yogyakarta. Therefore, it reveals that the cultural diplomacy of One Piece has significantly increased students' positive perceptions towards Japan. Consequently, it impacts the strengthening of Japanese cultural values and identity, which are promoted through the cultural diplomacy of the One Piece anime.

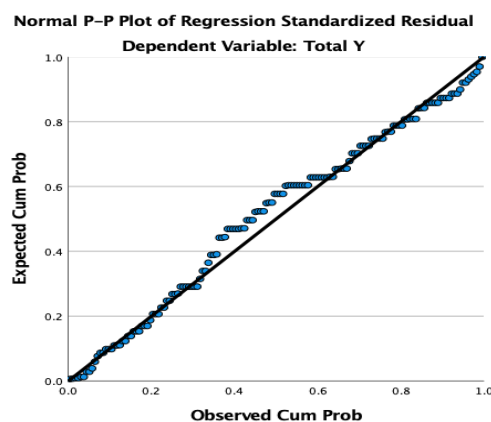


Figure 11. Normal P-P Plot
Source: SPSS Data

Based on Figure 11, normal P-P Plot is used to evaluate whether the residuals from a regression model are normally distributed. This plot consists of the X-axis (Expected

Cumulative Probability) that shows the expected cumulative probability if the residuals are normally distributed, and a Y-axis (Observed Cumulative Probability) that shows the observed cumulative probability of the residuals. When dots in the Normal P-P Plot follow the diagonal line, it reveals that the residuals are normally distributed. It indicates that the regression model provides reliable results. Furthermore, variable X demonstrates that it has a significant influence on variable Y. As a result, cultural diplomacy of One Piece is the main factor influencing variable Y in this study.

Based on the regression analysis results, Japan's cultural diplomacy of One Piece has a significant influence on shaping the perceptions of Indonesian students in Yogyakarta toward Japan's identity and cultural values. The Coefficient of Determination Test results show that variable X (Japan's cultural diplomacy) contributes 57.7% to variable Y (Indonesian students' perceptions), while the remaining 42.3% is influenced by other factors. The F-Test and T-Test also confirm that the relationship between these two variables is significant, as indicated by a Sig. value < 0.05. The regression model demonstrates that the more increase in Japan's cultural diplomacy, the more it shapes students' positive perceptions towards Japan's nation branding, including identity and cultural values. Additionally, the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test results confirm that this study's data follow a normal distribution, so the regression model is valid and interpretable accurately.

The high level of agreement among respondents regarding the statement that One Piece influences their perceptions towards Japan highlights the effectiveness of Japan's cultural diplomacy, as well as reflects the process of meaning-making that occurs by consuming popular culture. Thus, the cultural diplomacy of One Piece not only serves as a strategy for Japan's foreign policy. It also shapes positive perceptions of Indonesian students towards Japan. In terms of social constructivism, the perceptions of the students are not passive in nature, but rather actively constructed through constant interaction with the narratives, characters, and values that are presented in the anime. Such values as hard work, cooperation, creativity, and loyalty are seen as cultural values of the Japanese society that help shape the image of the peaceful and harmonious state. Moreover, the neutral attitudes towards certain issues indicate that the acceptance of cultural messages is not homogeneous either. These attitudes may be considered as the process of meaning negotiation in which the students do not fully agree with the cultural images that have been presented.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the cultural diplomacy of One Piece has an essential influence on shaping Indonesian students' perceptions in Yogyakarta towards Japan's nation branding. According to a survey of 150 university students, almost all of the respondents were positively oriented towards Japan. Hence, it proves that the One Piece anime is an effective tool of Japan's cultural diplomacy to build its positive image among Indonesian students in Yogyakarta. Friendship, hard work, adventure, *bushido*, and other aspects of Japanese culture represented in One Piece help to form an image of a creative, innovative, and culturally rich country. On the other hand, One Piece is an essential part of implementing Japan's strategy of nation branding through the Cool Japan Initiative. The

phenomenon of One Piece demonstrates how anime represents the identity of Japan as a creative and innovative country that has a unique cultural heritage. The results of the regression analysis confirm the presence of a positive correlation between the degree of exposure to the One Piece anime and the positive perceptions of students towards Japan. These results prove that anime represents an important element of Japan's cultural diplomacy and promotes the development of cultural ties between Japan and Indonesia.

This study contributes to the study of cultural diplomacy by understanding how micro-level audiences actively participate in the process of meaning-making through symbolic interactions and interpretations of cultural values, including the folklore elements presented in the anime One Piece. It also demonstrates that cultural diplomacy encompasses not only official state activities but it also represents a form of public cultural communication in everyday life. Practically, this study serves as the basis for assessing and improving Japan's cultural diplomacy through the Cool Japan Initiative. Furthermore, it can also be used to develop cultural and educational cooperation between Japan and Indonesia, as well as enhancing the potential of popular culture as a means of non-traditional diplomacy. Further research should conduct the study of other Japanese popular cultural products, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods and broader respondents to obtain a more comprehensive analysis.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors have no conflict interest.

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