

Wibu Depictions in Indonesian Online News Portal: A Corpus-Assisted Discourse Study

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ABSTRACT

The wide popularity of Japanese pop culture in Indonesia has given to the term Wibu, a label for local enthusiasts that often carries negative connotations, including social exclusion. Given the power of mass media to shape public opinion and reinforce stereotypes, this research investigates how Indonesian news portals, especially Kompas.com, Jawapos.com, and Detik.com from the years 2022 to 2025 represent the term Wibu, a label that is frequently referred to describe Japanese pop-culture enthusiasts. However, the label Wibu often carries negative connotations in society. Utilising a Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) approach and Social Actor Network schemes by van Leeuwen (2008), this research examines how news and media linguistically portray and shape the perception surrounding Wibu and the identity of Wibu. The data analyzed in this research consist of 516 news articles analyzed using AntConc with collocate, concordance tools, and Social Actor Network schemes such as functionalization, appraisal, identification, and instrumentalization. The results show that Wibu is represented negatively across the corpus. Indonesian online news portals are framing Wibu as deviant, abnormal, and excluded in society, prolonging pre-existing stereotypes surrounding Wibu and the community. Generally, the research demonstrates that Indonesian online news portals have the advantage of shaping public perceptions and strengthening stereotypes of the term Wibu.

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1. Introduction

In Indonesia, the term Wibu has become a cultural nickname that simultaneously embraced by Japanese pop culture enthusiast and ridiculed by broader society as a mark of social exclusion. The rise in popularity of Japanese crafts such as anime (animation), J-Pop (Japanese Pop), manga (Japanese comic), and dorama (Japanese drama) subsequently created a massive and passionate group in the country (Ahmad et al., 2024; D. Hidayat & Hidayat, 2020), that are referred to as Wibu. The term Wibu used by Indonesian is a loanword from an English word “Weeaboo” which directly refers to the stereotypes about hardcore fans of Japanese culture to the extent of imagining themselves to be born as Japanese, ‘Want to be Japanese’ (Junianto et al., 2024). However, the semantic scope of Wibu has undergone a significant broadening by Indonesian. Nowadays, the term is frequently applied not only to the people that are considered as the member of the group, but also the individuals who are a casual enjoyer without necessarily embody the stereotypes traditionally associated with the label. Chaer (2014) stated that the development of socio-culture is one of the factors that push semantic or meaning shifts in a word. This semantic expansion can be caused by the increased accessibility to Japanese cultural products through streaming platforms, social media, localized merchandising, and normalized engagement with Japanese media across demographic groups (Ahmad et al., 2024; D. Hidayat & Hidayat, 2020).

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The shifted usage of the word Wibu may be caused by the way the internet, especially Indonesian online news portal, publishes information on Japanese culture, or Wibu community in general. In the process of producing and publishing news, media portals have Agenda Settings to be applied. Robertson and Williams explain about Mass Media – Agenda Setting Theory and further inform that media portals firmly use the foundational concepts of media agenda, public agenda, and framing (Williams et al., 2024). The issues and subjects that the news portal decided to highlight and publish are referred to as media agenda (Williams et al., 2024). News portal has the power to leverage public discourses by choosing which stories to prioritize and present (Williams et al., 2024). Whereas public agenda is all about topics and themes that are considered relevant by the whole population, the agenda-setting impact explains how public perception of particular issues could be influenced by how the news portal publishes them (Williams et al., 2024). To complement the concept of agenda settings, framing is also used by news portals to depict how the public discussed certain topics. Framing news with particular ‘light’ may form public perception toward that specific issue (Williams et al., 2024). In this case, when there is certain discourse that the news portal consistently publishes such as Japanese culture and their close ties to the Wibu community, society may start to see Japanese culture and Wibu community having the quality of gaining public attention. Not only that, it also broadens the possibility of how the public perceives Japanese culture and the Wibu community in general.

Studies on the depiction of subcultural communities in media can be broadly categorized into three thematic strands: stigmatization of fandoms in digital media, representation of marginalized groups in news portals, and corpus-assisted analysis of media discourse. Each strand offers valuable insights but also presents limitations that the present study seeks to address.

Previous comprehensive studies examined how digital media platforms, particularly YouTube, construct and reinforce stereotypes toward specific communities. Junianto et al. (2024) investigated how stereotypes towards the label Wibu are shaped through YouTube content, identifying recurring tropes such as body odor stigmatization (Wibu smelling of onions), antisocial behavior (Wibu *nolep*), abnormal sexuality (perverted Wibu), and self-proclaimed psychopathy. The strength of this research lies in its focus on user-generated content, which reflects certain group stigmatization rather than public thoughts. However, the study's limitation is its exclusive reliance on YouTube, a platform where content creators deliberately amplify stereotypes for entertainment and algorithmic engagement, potentially exaggerating negative representations that may not reflect broader public discourse. Moreover, the study does not examine how more established and institutionalized media, such as online news portals, contribute to the formation of these stereotypes. Despite the influence of engagement metrics, online news portals function within professional journalistic framework and have higher discursive authority, making their representations more significant in influencing public opinion.

Similar patterns of stigmatization have been examined beyond YouTube platform, focusing more on marginalized groups. Previous studies focused on stigmatization of marginalized groups in institutional media, particularly online news portals. Smith (2007) established a foundational framework for understanding stigma communication, defining it as messages widely spread with the intention of making others acknowledge the disgraced and act accordingly. Building on this, studies have examined how Indonesian news portals portray various social groups. Al Fajri & Isti'annah (2025) found that Indonesian online news portals frame people with mental disabilities through medical and criminalizing narratives, while Santyarini & Fajri (2024) revealed derogatory portrayals of diabetes through collocations such as *pasien* (patient), *penderita* (sufferer), and *penyakit* (disease). Similarly, Silfia & Kurniawan (2022) demonstrated that CNN Indonesia stigmatises K-Pop female fans through negative language styles, including negative connotations and negative diction. Comparative studies in other contexts have yielded similar findings: Yangxia & Mengdan (2025) found that Chinese media reinforce victimization and dependency narratives of disabled women, while Meng et al. (2025) revealed contrasting representations of the elderly between China Daily (active contributors) and South China Morning Post (urban challenges). The advantage of these studies is their focus on institutionalized media, which carry greater authority and reach than user-generated content, thus playing a more significant role in shaping public perception. There is lack of studies specifically examining the depiction of the Wibu community in Indonesian news portals, leaving a gap in understanding how this particular subculture is institutionally represented.

Another area of studies adopted a Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) approach to examine media representation of social groups. As Baker and McEnery (2015) argued, a corpus-driven approach is able to uncover bias or manipulation between languages by revealing recurrent linguistic patterns that may not be visible through manual analysis. Studies employing CADS have demonstrated its effectiveness in identifying dominant narratives and semantic relations between particular words and social groups (Gillings et al., 2023; Zih & Biadi, 2023). The primary advantage of CADS is its mixed-method nature, combining quantitative method and collocation statistics with qualitative concordance analysis, reducing researcher bias and increasing the reliability of the findings. However, a significant limitation of purely corpus-based studies is that they identify linguistic patterns but do not offer explanations on how social actors are positioned within the discourse. In other words, the collocation analysis reveals what words co-occur with a particular term but does not fully explain why certain representations emerge or how they function socially. This limitation is particularly relevant for studying stigmatization, where understanding the social positioning of actors is as important as identifying the linguistic patterns themselves.

To address the gap identified in previous studies, the present research integrates two complementary frameworks: Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) and Van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor Network. CADS addresses the methodological limitations of previous studies by providing a systematic, replicable, and less biased approach to identifying linguistic patterns in large datasets. As Zih & Biadi (2023) explain, CADS allows researchers to calculate frequencies, investigate collocational patterns, identify discourses, and describe salient semantic features. However, as stated, CADS alone cannot explain the social positioning of actors. This is where Social Actor Network theory becomes essential. Van Leeuwen (2008) argues that social actions and actors are represented using language and depicted as needed in accordance with the readers. Rather than focusing on grammar rules, Social Actor Network theory considers social factors of how actors are portrayed, analyzing them from social aspects before addressing the linguistic factors. Van Leeuwen identifies several key schemes relevant to this research: *functionalization and identification* (when actors are regarded by activity, job, or what they do), *appraisement* (when social actors are defined as good or bad, liked or hated, respected or despised), and *instrumentalization* (when actors objectify the tool they used to perform). These schemes enable a systematic analysis of how Wibu is positioned, stigmatized, or legitimized in news discourse.

The combination of CADS and Social Actor Network addresses the limitations of previous studies in three ways. First, unlike studies that rely exclusively on YouTube or manual discourse analysis (Junianto et al., 2024; Silfia & Kurniawan, 2022), the present study draws on a corpus of multiple Indonesian online news portals, providing a more representative image of institutional media discourse. Second, this study applies Social Actor Network to systematically interpret how the Wibu community is constructed and stigmatized. Third, this research fills the empirical gap left by previous studies, which has not specifically examined the depiction of the Wibu community in Indonesian online news portals. By integrating CADS and Social Actor Network, this research offers both methodological rigor and interpretive depth in examining how the term Wibu is portrayed in Indonesian institutional media.

With the diversity of communities, advancement of media, technology, and approaches through corpus study, it is necessary to conduct further research in how Indonesian online news portals portray certain topics, in this case, the term Wibu and the community referred to by that term. There is a lack of previous research that covers investigation in depiction of the term Wibu focusing in the linguistics area using news from several Indonesian online media portals as their main data with the CADS approach and explored further with Discourse Analysis. This research aims to understand how Wibu is depicted in Indonesian online news portals by identifying and classifying key collocates of the term Wibu, analyzing common patterns where Wibu is used in the narratives, and determining the portrayal of the term based on linguistic evidence from the corpus. Thus, the result of this research is expected to add empirical knowledge by systematically investigating the collocational and discursive patterns associated with Wibu in Indonesian news portals, theoretical insight by implementing CADS and Social Actor Network frameworks to the analysis of stigmatization in institutional media, and societal awareness by examining how news platforms' linguistics choices may reinforce stereotypes surrounding the term Wibu and its community. This research addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the key collocates of the term Wibu in Indonesian online news portals?
2. How is the term Wibu and the community portrayed in Indonesian online news portals based on linguistic evidence?

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative analyses to address the research aims (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The quantitative analysis involves corpus-based collocation calculations, while the qualitative analysis comprises concordance interpretation and discourse analysis using Van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor Network framework. This research combines both Discourse Analysis (DA) and Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) frameworks to investigate the objective of the study.

2.2. Data

The data for this research consist of news articles collected from three Indonesian online news portals: *Kompas.com*, *Jawapos.com*, and *Detik.com*. These portals were selected based on three criteria: (1) their popularity and substantial readership, (2) their wide range of news coverage, and (3) their representation of diverse editorial perspectives. The articles were published between 2022 and 2025, a period chosen to capture the growing narratives following the mainstreaming of Japanese pop culture in Indonesia, particularly supported by streaming platforms and social media, which has intensified public discourse around Wibu and its community. This period was chosen to capture contemporary narratives and evolving discourses surrounding the term Wibu and the community in Indonesian media, continuing the academic discussion of Budiono et al. (2026) in exploring the evolution of Indonesian cultural discourse.

The data collection process began with retrieving URLs of articles containing the keyword Wibu from the three news portals. The URLs were compiled and organized in a Microsoft Excel file. Following this, the article content was extracted from the URLs and converted into plain text (.txt) format using a Python script. The extraction process involved cleaning the text by removing non-relevant elements such as author names, publication timestamps, image captions, advertisements, and links to other articles. This cleaning ensured that only the headline and main text were retained for corpus compilation.

After filtering, the corpus comprised 516 articles with a total of 102,725 tokens. The corpus was then uploaded to AntConc (Anthony, 2026) for further linguistic analysis.

2.3. Analytical Procedures

The data analysis was conducted in two stages: quantitative and qualitative, following the CADS framework. The quantitative stage involved collocation analysis to identify the key collocates of the word Wibu. The qualitative stage involved concordance analysis and interpretation using Van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor Network framework.

2.3.1 Collocation Analysis

The first analytical stage involved identifying the key collocates of the word Wibu using AntConc's collocation function. Collocation techniques are utilised to understand the pattern of certain words or phrases that appear frequently next to the word Wibu. A window span of ± 5 words (5L–5R) was applied, following the LogDice settings in AntConc. The LogDice coefficient was used as the primary statistical measure to understand the strong association between Wibu and its collocates. Gablasova et al. (2017) express that LogDice offers a stable result in terms of collocational strength as the feature relies heavily to frequency of co-occurrence. This aligns with the research's aim to identify words with strong and consistent semantic association with the term Wibu. The LogDice score is not affected by the size of the corpus, it remains stable despite how many texts is processed, which make it as a more reliable measurement for identifying collocations (Rychlý, 2008). Stated by Budiono et al. (2026) an increased LogDice value shows that a certain word and its collocates have a stronger co-occurrence association.

However, LogDice is known to inflate association scores for low frequency collocates. Given that the word Wibu is leaning into a mid to low frequency term in the corpus, a minimum co-occurrence frequency of 5 was applied to filter false associations. To validate the collocates identified, the LogDice results were cross-checked against the Effect measure. Only collocates with an Effect value exceeding 5.000 were considered. This restriction was established to ensure that only words with meaningful and statistically reliable associations were included.

The identified collocates were then manually categorized into thematic groups based on their contextual usage and semantic preference, following the approach adopted by Al Fajri & Isti'annah (2025) and Santyarini & Fajri (2024). Two thematic categories were established:

1. Stigmatization: Collocates that carry negative stigma, stereotypical portrayals, or socially derogatory representations of the Wibu community, such as *nolep* (no life), *psikopat* (psychopath), *biasanya* (usually), and *ciri* (traits/characteristics) *lari* (run away) *bau* (smelly) *bawang* (onion). This category includes collocates related to antisocial behavior, physical appearance, and abnormal sexuality.
2. Subculture References and "In-Group" Jargon: Collocates associated with community-specific terminology, subcultural practices, and fandom-related expressions, such as *otaku*, *waifu* (wife), *Jepang* (Japan), *dunia* (world), *nuklir* (nuclear). This category includes collocates that reflect shared identity, cultural knowledge, and group membership among the Wibu community.

2.3.2 Concordance Analysis and Social Actor Interpretation

The second analytical stage involved concordance analysis of the identified collocates. Concordance analysis enables a more comprehensive examination of a word by revealing its broader contextual patterns (Hunston, 2022). Each concordance line containing the word Wibu and has more than 5.000 effects were manually examined to determine its contextual usage and discursive function.

To interpret the social positioning of Wibu in the discourse, the concordance lines were analyzed using Van Leeuwen's (2008) Social Actor Network framework. This framework provides a systematic lens for understanding how social actors are represented in discourse through several key schemes:

- Functionalization and Identification
Examining whether actors are identified by their activities, roles, or what they do (functionalization), or by what they are considered to be inherently (identification), such as, "*selain menyukai anime, biasanya para Wibu juga senang membaca komik Jepang, atau yang biasa disebut dengan manga.*" (other than liking anime, Wibu usually also likes to read Japanese comic, or called manga) and "*para wibu biasanya kesulitan jika harus berinteraksi dengan orang lain di luar komunitasnya, karena mereka memiliki kebiasaan-kebiasaan yang tak lazim dan sering dianggap aneh.*" (Wibu often have a hard time interacting with people outside their community because they have unusual habits that are often considered strange).
- Appraisal
Examining whether actors are evaluated as good or bad, liked or hated, respected or despised through linguistic choices. For example, "*biasanya, para Wibu ini adalah orang-orang yang bukan berkewarganegaraan Jepang alias orang-orang di seluruh dunia, kecuali Jepang, yang sangat terobsesi pada budaya Jepang.*" (Typically, Wibu are people who are not Japanese citizens, that is, people from all over the world, except Japan, who are deeply obsessed with Japanese culture).
- Instrumentalization
Examining whether actors are objectified through the tools or means they use to perform actions. For example, "*Faktanya, remaja tersebut diketahui sebagai seorang Wibu yang gemar memakai cosplay hingga menggambar anime yang membuat netizen menyebutnya sebagai Wibu psikopat sesungguhnya.*" (In fact, the teenager is known as a Wibu who loves cosplay and drawing anime, leading netizens to call him a true psychopathic Wibu).

The findings were then interpreted in relation to the research questions and discussed with reference to previous studies on media representation and stigmatization.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Collocation of the Term Wibu

The researchers used the AntConc program to process the data collected. Through AntConc, the researchers found that the term Wibu has total hits of 430 from the Indonesian online news portal corpus that consists of news from *Kompas.com*, *Jawapos.com*, and *Detik.com* from the year 2022 – 2025. In accordance with the analysis done using collocation technique, the term Wibu has a total of 50 collocates which were then filtered with the total effect should be more than 5.000 and falls under the thematic category.

The collocates in both the *Stigmatization* and *Subculture References & “In-Group” Jargon* categories, as presented in Table 1, were analyzed using Social Actor Network by Van Leeuwen (2008).

Table 1. Collocation of Wibu

Thematic Category	Collocations	Effect
Stigmatization	<i>Nolep</i> (no life)	7.129
	<i>Psikopat</i> (psychopath)	6.308
	<i>Biasanya</i> (usually)	7.065
	<i>Ciri</i> (trait/characteristic)	7.605
	<i>Lari</i> (run away)	6.780
	<i>Bau</i> (smelly)	6.432
	<i>Bawang</i> (onion)	6.776
Subculture References & “In-Group” Jargon	<i>Otaku</i>	7.940
	<i>Waifu</i> (wife)	6.419
	<i>Jepang</i> (Japan)	7.223
	<i>Dunia</i> (world)	7.076
	<i>Nuklir</i> (nuclear)	6.564

3.2. Stigmatization Category

The results of collocation in the first category, as appear in Table 1, are *nolep* (no life), *psikopat* (psychopath), *biasanya* (usually), *ciri* (trait/characteristic), *lari* (run away), *bau* (smelly), and *bawang* (onion). There are seven total collocates in this category that have connections in how Wibu is represented in online news portals.

The first collocate that belonged to the stigmatization category, *nolep* (no life), indicates functionalization from van Leeuwen. This collocate represents how an actor is referred to with an activity they are doing, or seems to be doing (Van Leeuwen, 2008). In this case, the term *nolep* (no life) is a collocation of Wibu that is used to characterize the Wibu community for the appearance of the lack of social life, living in isolation, and avoiding society in general. This finding is consistent with Junianto et al. (2024) who identified that YouTube proclaims the identification of Wibu through stereotypes such as “Wibu *nolep* (antisocial, unsociable)” about their personal skill in socializing. A concordance line such as, “*biasanya, orang-orang dengan sebutan nolep ini kerap menghabiskan waktu mereka di dalam kamar dan dengan rela mengorbankan waktu bersosialisasi dengan kegiatan yang mereka anggap lebih menyenangkan.*” (Typically, people known *nolep* often spend their time in their rooms and willingly sacrifice time spent socializing in favor of activities they find more enjoyable), further exemplifies how the term defines Wibu through their perceived activity of social withdrawal.

Psikopat (psychopath) is the second collocate in the category with the lowest effect. *Psikopat* (psychopath) from this collocate, put Wibu, the actor, in a disadvantageous position. After the researchers looked deeper into the concordance of the term, *psikopat* (psychopath) is used with hyperbolic tone and purposely used in an appalling manner as it is directed without actual proof and full of judgment. The concordance of *psikopat* (psychopath) shows that the term is used in the context of derogatory, labelling Wibu as a psychopath because people outside of the community are seeing them as members of a community that is obsessive over Japanese culture, for example, “Wibu *psikopat* bisa diartikan sebagai seorang individu yang mempunyai obsesi terhadap berbagai hal yang berhubungan dengan kebudayaan Jepang, khususnya budaya populer, namun mereka juga memiliki kelainan kejiwaan yang ditandai dengan perilaku yang abnormal, manipulatif, keras, dan kasar” (A

psychopathic Wibu can be defined as an individual who is obsessed with various aspects of Japanese culture, particularly popular culture, but who also has a mental disorder characterized by abnormal, manipulative, harsh, and abusive behavior). This collocates shows that it fits van Leeuwen's appraisal. Van Leeuwen expresses about the term appraisal, meaning that social actors are valued, or appraised, with how they are referred to (Van Leeuwen, 2008), in this case, is considered a negative appraisal as the term *psikopat* (psychopath) makes the members of Wibu community as the subject of judgement, intentionally making a whole new branding for the community as a violent group. Through the stigma, though it does not have a huge impact among the individuals, there are unfavorable perceptions that Wibu are to be called psychopaths (Junianto et al., 2024).

Both *nolep* (no life) and *psikopat* (psychopath) have similar positions from the results of respective concordances. *Nolep* (no life) and *psikopat* (psychopath) are actively used by the media to label members of the Wibu community, rather than merely reporting pre-existing public perceptions. Through repeated usage in journalistic discourse, these labels are legitimized and disseminated, resulting strong stigmatization and negative public's perception. Both are further explaining negative characteristics of Wibu such as having no social skills and having excessive obsession with Japanese culture. Novienta et al. (2026) suggested that through social media called 'X', Wibu is also getting cyberbully and having the image of an anti-social person.

The next collocates from the stigmatization category are *biasanya* (usually), *ciri* (trait/characteristic), and *lari* (run away). These collocates are used to generalise Wibu by the media and how the media construct stereotypes surrounding the Wibu community. Both *biasanya* (usually) and *ciri* (trait/characteristic) collocates build identity markers around Wibu and members of the Wibu community. It establishes a general notion, making the personal identity of each member of the community set aside. Looking further into the concordances of *biasanya* (usually) and *ciri* (trait/characteristic), it is apparent that both are used to give stereotyped information about Wibu for general readers, for instance, "*namun, biasanya para Wibu memiliki komunitas yang juga berperilaku sama*" (However, Wibu usually belong to communities where members behave in the same way) and "*banyak sekali ciri atau perilaku yang mengindikasikan seseorang bisa disebut sebagai seorang Wibu*" (There are many traits or behaviors that indicate someone can be called a Wibu). These interpretations are reinforced by a previous study by (G. S. Hidayat et al., 2025), demonstrating that Wibu self-present themselves according to the public's "normal" condition when they are not among the community members.

Lari (run away), from the perspective of the data collected and processed, is used to explain how people from outside of the community reacted to Wibu and the members of Wibu community. Examining the concordance further, it is shown that Indonesian online news portals used the term *lari* (run away) with the intent of explaining the stereotypical information regarding Wibu and the Wibu community. The term *lari* is used widely in the context of a stigmatized joke, "*Lari, ada Wibu!*", which means "*Run away, there is a weeaboo!*", for example, "*daripada harus beradu argumen dengan para Wibu maka lebih baik lari.*" (Instead of getting into an argument with a Wibu, it's better to just run away). The Wibu community is a stigmatized group. "*Lari, ada Wibu!*" is the evidence in social exclusion, how the public reacts when interacting with Wibu or the community members (Novienta et al., 2026). This aligns with Smith's (2007) argument that stigma communication is when there are messages, news, or words that are being widely spread through the society with the intention of making other people to acknowledge the disgraced, and for them to act accordingly.

Bau (smelly) and *bawang* (onion) are two collocates that have hand in hand concordance results. Both terms *bau* (smelly) and *bawang* (onion) are used to capture the stigmatization about Wibu as a person and community. According to the contexts further, Wibu is captured by the news as a person who is having poor personal hygiene, supported by the concordance found, "*... seperti wibu bau bawang yang biasanya disematkan kepada para Wibu yang senang berdiam diri di dalam rumah untuk maraton menonton serial anime hingga seharian penuh.*" (... like the "onion-smelling Wibu" label that's usually applied to Wibu who love to stay indoors and binge-watch anime series all day long.) They are seen as someone who neglects their hygiene due to excessive time in prioritizing their hobby and dedication to anime and Japanese subcultural interests. Not only from the news portal, Junianto et al. (2024) exposed that first-hand commentary from YouTube videos made by users showed stigmatization for Wibu's hygiene practices, claiming that Wibu's obsession with anime is making them neglect their hygiene and odors, making them smell like onions.

Seven collocates shown in this category are clearly used by Indonesian online news portals to highlight the stereotypes and stigma made for the Wibu and Wibu community by society.

3.3. Subculture References & “In-Group” Jargon Category

The results of collocation for the second category, as appear in Table 1, are *otaku*, *waifu* (wife), *Jepang* (Japan), *dunia* (world), and *nuklir* (nuclear). In this Subculture References & “In-Group” Jargon category, there are also five collocations that will be analyzed in groups. *Otaku* and *waifu* (wife) are analyzed each; *Jepang* (Japan), *dunia* (world), and *nuklir* (nuclear) are analyzed in one group.

The collocate *otaku* in this category shows other nicknames or terms used by the media to the Wibu and Wibu community. *Otaku* itself refers to people who are overly interested in certain cultural content (Jang, 2026). When researchers investigated further, the concordance of *otaku* clearly shows that it is used in comparison to Wibu, “*Otaku adalah istilah dari Jepang untuk masyarakat yang sangat senang menekuni hobi*” (*Otaku* is a Japanese term for people who are deeply passionate about their hobbies). If not used in comparison, it holds in the same category as Wibu, because *otaku*, in this case, is having the meaning shifted. At first, from the result in AntConc, *otaku* is a term used to describe people that have a passion towards their hobby. Now, however, it has shifted and is specifically used to describe people that have strong interest in Japanese *manga* (comic), *anime* (animation), and games (Junianto et al., 2024). The result of *otaku* as one of the collocates sparks identification from van Leeuwen, specifically rational identification. Van Leeuwen expressed that rational identification is the process of characterising individuals according to how they relate to other people (Van Leeuwen, 2008). In this case, the actor, Wibu, is defined, compared, and has their identity labelled with nicknames such as *otaku*, *waifu* (wife), or *husbu* (husband). Wibu and Wibu community are being judged as a person with limitations subjecting their superficial preferences in anime (Raifatiyana & Hadiyansyah, 2025).

Waifu (wife), has the lowest effect in the category with a total 6.654. Looking further into the concordance, it is apparent that not only the term *waifu*, the term *husbu* (husband) also appeared alongside the collocate. For instance, “*Waifu adalah plesetan dari kata wife atau istri, dan husbu adalah plesetan dari kata husband atau suami*”. Both *waifu* and *husbu* are loanwords from the English words wife and husband. It is also clear that the context in the corpus presents *waifu* (wife) as a tool used by the actor, Wibu, in making a fictional character from Japanese media as their partner. Both *waifu* (wife) and *husbu* (husband) are used by the media to portray Wibu as the actor that used both characters to meet their psychological and emotional needs instead of presenting themselves as other actors. Van Leeuwen categorized it through Social Actor Network theory as instrumentalization. As explained by van Leeuwen, instrumentalization is a scheme of objectification where actors are depicted by referring to the tools or instruments to act (Van Leeuwen, 2008). Wibu is portrayed as someone that needed another character to fulfil their needs by Indonesian online media. All three terms, *otaku*, *waifu* (wife), and *husbu* (husband) that appear in the concordance of *waifu* (wife) are jargons used by Wibu and their community. Hermawan & Marciu (2024) notes that Wibu who claimed they have *waifu* or *husbu* is seen by others as inadequate and embarrassing; however, some are accepting as long as the said Wibu and the community do not cause any disturbance.

The next collocates from this category are grouped, consisting of *Jepang* (Japan), *dunia* (world), and *nuklir* (nuclear). Three of the collocates are used and understood mostly by the members of the Wibu community. When the researchers investigated further, *Jepang* (Japan), *dunia* (world), and *nuklir* (nuclear) are terms used to describe settings and events surrounding the actor Wibu and Wibu community. It is shown from the concordances *Jepang* (Japan) and *dunia* (world) that Wibu is included by the media when they are reviewing and writing about Japan and Japanese culture. For *nuklir* (nuclear), however, researchers found it is more narrowed and more appropriate to categorise it as a jargon. From the concordance and the context of the collocate, it is shown that *nuklir* (nuclear) is a known code within the Wibu community that is used as a password to access Japanese *manga* (comic) and anime (animation) or content.

The data collected, processed, and analyzed are based on the collocational and concordance evidence. Researchers divide the result of collocation according to the constructions that were led by the data collected. Thus, in Indonesian online news portals, Wibu alternates between stigmatization, subculture references, and consisting of in-group jargon. From the dataset, Wibu appears to be getting several labels, nicknames, and as many as stereotypes. According to Social Actor Network schemes by

van Leeuwen (2008), it is shown that Indonesian online news articles frequently used language that emphasises exaggeration and abnormality to describe Wibu and members of the its community.

Linguistically, the stigmatization of the term Wibu is constructed through discursive strategies. First, functionalization and identification, are achieved through collocates such as *nolep* (no life), which defines Wibu though negative social activities, *lari* (run away), which frames them as people to be avoided. Second, negative appraisalment is known through collocates such as *psikopat* (psychopath), which framed Wibu of having psychological issue, and *bau* (smelly) & *bawang* (onion), which invoke sensory stigmatization by linguistically associating Wibu with poor hygiene. Lastly, instrumentalization is evident in collocates such as *cosplay* and *komunitas* (community), which reduce Wibu identity to external cultural tools rather than recognizing them as autonomous individuals. Collectively, these linguistics patterns demonstrate that Indonesian online news portals do not merely report existing stereotypes but actively construct and legitimize a portrayal of Wibu as deviant, abnormal, and socially excluded.

Through the functionalization scheme, Wibu is portrayed as an actor that is engaging in strange and obsessive actions. This finding aligns with Junianto et al. (2024) who identified similar stereotypes on YouTube, where Wibu is depicted as engaging in anti-social behavior (*nolep*) and having abnormal sexuality (perverted Wibu). Meanwhile, through the appraisalment scheme, Wibu is seen as an actor that is judged in a negative light, consistent with the negative labels such as *psikopat* (psychopath) found in the corpus. This is consistent with Smith's (2007) argument that stigma communication involves messages widely spread with the intention of making others acknowledge the disgraced, and for them to act accordingly. The identification scheme shows how *otaku*, another term that holds in the same position as Wibu, are being compared to each other, reflecting the shifting meaning of the term, which further connected Wibu to other characters *waifu* (wife) and *husbu* (husband), and functioning them as tools to support Wibu to perform as also observed by Hermawan & Marciu (2024). Wibu and *otaku* are said to have a higher regard for their idols, which inspires them to consider worshipping them.

The outcome of how Indonesian online news portals linguistically construct a discourse surrounding a particular subject or community generates a representation that directly affects the said subject and or community. In this case, the results of how Indonesian online news portals depict the Wibu and Wibu community are the perceptions surrounding them. The news consistently frames Wibu as deviant, most of the time by highlighting behaviors that are seen by society as deviant, extreme, and abnormal. The image formed around the community is established through negative labels, exaggeration, and the use of ridicule and mocking tone in the reporting news. This finding supports Al Fajri & Isti'annah (2025) who found that Indonesian media portals support stigmas and perpetuate misinterpretation for marginalised groups, prioritizing commercial interest and impressions that sell newsworthiness. Similarly, Silfia & Kurniawan (2022) discovered that CNN Indonesia news portal indicated gender discrimination through stigmatization against K-Pop female fans, showing that stigmatization of fandoms is a recurring pattern in Indonesian media.

Indonesian online news media positions Wibu and Wibu community in a different category from mainstream culture and community. Wibu and the community are seen as fundamentally abnormal and unconventional. From the news, Wibu is also represented as outsiders, not included in social interactions. The identity that is shaped for Wibu and the community is a minority, different from the society, that brought heavily negative connotations, bound to be ridiculed. This is similar to Novienta et al. (2026) who found that Wibu are subjected to cyberbullying and have the image of anti-social persons, and G. S. Hidayat et al. (2025) who demonstrated that Wibu self-present themselves according to the public's 'normal' condition when they are not among the community members.

Thus, the application of Social Actor Network schemes by van Leeuwen (2008) to the data collected and processed using AntConc shows a consistent and clear portrayal of Wibu and the Wibu community across Indonesian online news portals. Through functionalization, appraisalment, identification, and instrumentalization schemes, it reveals that Indonesian online news portals construct the discourse surrounding Wibu as deviant, abnormal, and a minority in society. Beyond influencing how Wibu and the community perceived in news and media, these overlapping portrayals also affect public opinion and perception, supporting the existing stereotypes and adding more validation towards wide social stigma associated with the term Wibu.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of this research demonstrates that Indonesian online news portals form the term Wibu through Social Actor Network by van Leeuwen (2008), establishing the term Wibu which has negative connotations and social identity. From what has appeared in the data collected and processed, Wibu is not represented as a neutral community as they have negative labels, making them a stigmatized group. Using functionalization, appraisal, identification, and instrumentalization schemes, researchers are able to find linguistic patterns which show how the Indonesian online news highlights judgmental behavior around Wibu and the community, making the stereotypes accepted widely. As a result, Wibu, in Indonesian online news portals and media is portrayed as deviant, extreme, abnormal, and a minority in society. This representation of Wibu shows how Indonesian online news portals have the power in shaping public perception and ideas towards some issue or discourse.

This research emphasizes how digital media shaped stereotypes towards the term “Wibu” using YouTube by Junianto et al. (2024). However, this research has limitation. The research is limited to three Indonesian online news portals and concentrates on specific themes from the collection of collocates. Future research could add and expand by adding several news portals and analyze the data further, if possible, making a comparison between communities, to understand further how Indonesian online news portals represent communities.

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