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Master's Thesis
Academic Year 2015

JKT48 as a New Pop-Culture Phenomenon in Indonesia:
The Emergence and Influence of Idol Culture
In Jakarta Area

Graduate School of Media Design
Keio University

Ryan Adi Putra

A Master's Thesis
submitted to Graduate School of Media Design, Keio University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER of Media Design

Ryan Adi Putra

Thesis Committee:

Professor Ichiya Nakamura (Supervisor)
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Abstract of Master's Thesis of Academic Year 2015

JKT48 as a New Pop-Culture Phenomenon in Indonesia:
The Emerging and Influence of Idol Culture in Jakarta Area

Category: Social Science / Humanities

Summary

JKT48 is the first idol group in Indonesia that has successfully achieved enduring popularity in the Indonesia entertainment industry, while other local boy and girl bands that are heavily influenced by K-Pop had abruptly disappeared in a very short period after their breakthrough. There is a strong relationship between AKB48 and JKT48 model in which gives some advantages to both countries, especially in some aspects such as cultural and tourism exchanges. The concept of “idols you can meet everyday” provides various consumption and promotion that finally led to the emergence of a new pop-culture phenomenon in the country, where the genre of ‘idol group’ had never before existed. Today, JKT48 Theater has already become one of the new excitements among Indonesians, particularly for the people who live in Jakarta area. JKT48 Theater has developed into a new place for relieving their stress while at the same time gathering with friends who share the same interest. In-depth interviews were conducted, and a questionnaire was distributed to the fans to find out the “real story” about, and explore their perspectives on being, JKT48 fans. Finally, we found that JKT48 was not only impressing their fans personally but also giving some impacts to them.

Keywords:

JKT48, Theater, Pop-Culture Phenomenon, Idol, Culture, Indonesia, Jakarta

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Ryan Adi Putra

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“Do not go about in the land exultingly, for you cannot cut the through the earth nor reach the mountains in height.” - Holly Quran, Chapter 17 Verse 37 –

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgement	iii
Table of Contents	vi
List of Figures	viii
List of Tables	x
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Research Background	1
1.2 Aim and Objectives	3
1.3 Brief Description of Methodology	4
1.4 Thesis Outline	4
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1 Indonesia as a New Emerging Market for Entertainment Business	6
2.2 Brief description of Idol History in Japan	9
2.3 Brief description of Idol History in Indonesia	13
2.4 Acceptance of Boy Bands, Girl Bands, and Idol in Indonesia	15
2.5 JKT48	20
2.5.1 Origins	20
2.5.2 JKT48 Theater	26
2.5.3 Song and CD Release	28
2.5.4 General Election	30
2.5.5 Handshake Event	31
2.6 Concept of AKB48 and JKT48 Model	32
2.7 Controversies and Sexism in Female Idol	35

3.	COMPARISON BETWEEN JKT48 AND AKB48	40
3.1	Cultural Difference	40
3.2	Environmental Difference	43
4	THE ACCEPTANCE OF JKT48 IN INDONESIA	46
4.1	JKT48 as a New Pop-Culture Phenomenon	46
4.2	Acceptance of JKT48	48
4.3	JKT48 Theater as a New Excitement for People in Jakarta Area ..	56
5	FINDING AND DISCUSSION	59
5.1	In-depth Interview Finding	59
5.2	Questionnaire Findings	64
5.3	Positive Impacts of JKT48	72
5.4	Negative Impacts of JKT48	76
6	CONCLUSION	79
5.1	Limitation	79
5.2	Conclusion	80
5.3	Further Research	81
	References	82

List of Figures

1.1 JKT48 won AMI Award, The Most Prestigious Award in Indonesia	2
1.2 JKT48 and AKB48 Concert on February 2015 in Jakarta	3
2.1 <i>Onyanko Club</i> Debut Single “ <i>Seira Fuku woNugasanaide.</i> ”	12
2.2 Finalist of Indonesian Idol 2012	14
2.3 The Most Famous Indonesian Local Boys Band SM*SH	16
2.4 The Most Famous Indonesian Local Girls Band 7icons	17
2.5 JKT48 First Appearance on Pocari Sweat Commercial	18
2.6 Total Number YouTube Viewers on JKT48 Account	19
2.7 Audition and Press Conference on 2 November 2011	20
2.8 Press Conference of AKB48 & JKT48 Live Concert in Jakarta	22
2.9 JKT48 Second and Third Generation of JKT48	23
2.10 JKT48 All Members	24
2.11 Haruka Nakagawa in “Ini Talk Show” with Local Comedian	25
2.12 Chikano Rina Wearing Indonesian Traditional Costume	26
2.13 JKT48 Theater	27
2.14 JKT48’s Album and Single Release	28
2.15 Graphic of CD Sales in 3 Years	29
2.16 Melody and Veranda Stand as a Center in 1 st and 2 nd General Election	30
2.17 Number of Handshake Event Visitor	32
2.18 AKB48 Business System	35
2.19 Kissing Scene in Heavy Rotation Music Video	37
2.20 Minegishi Minami Shaves Head as Punishment for Scandal	38
3.1 AKB48 Members with Bikini in Mannatsu Sounds Good MV	41
3.2 JKT48 Members with Swimsuit in Mannatsu Sounds Good MV	41
3.3 JKT48 Handshake Event Bustling with Thousand Fans	45
4.1 Number of JKT48 Official Homepage Visitor	48
4.2 Number of Most Searched Words on Google	51
4.3 Number of Facebook Likes	52
4.4 JKT48 Pictures on Pocky Package	53

4.5	JKT48 Appointed as Honda Brand Ambassador	54
4.6	JKT48 in Tolak Angin Commercial	55
4.7	Press Conference Enjoy Jakarta in Tokyo	56
5.1	Gender Distributions	64
5.2	Percentages of the Media in Spreading JKT48	65
5.3	Age Distributions	66
5.4	Status Distributions	67
5.5	Distributions of Occupation	68
5.6	Percentages of Alternative Consumptions before Becoming JKT48 Fans	69
5.7	Percentages of Alternative Stress Reliever	70
5.8	Income Distributions	70
5.9	PAO48 Members with JKT48 Graduated Member Andela	73
5.10	Happy Kingdom Festival Poster	74
5.11	JKT48 Performing Nebuta Dance in Aoyama	75
5.12	Jeje's Pictures with Her Boyfriend Leaked Online	77

List of Tables

3.1	Cultural Differences between JKT48 and AKB48	43
3.2	Environmental Differences between JKT48 and AKB48	44

1.

Introduction

1.1 Research Background

JKT48 is a rewarding activity in the Jakarta area. JKT48 was born in 2011, adopting the whole business system from their sister group AKB48, both of which have a similar concept, music, performance, theater, and even costume design. AKB48 and JKT48 were built on the concept of “idols you can meet everyday”, which is entirely different from other idols that had existed in the past in both countries. Certain localizations are applied to JKT48 since Indonesia is the world’s most populous Muslim nation, which means that some aspects of AKB48 that might be appropriate in Japanese pop culture may not be acceptable within Indonesian society.

The concept of “idols you can meet everyday” provides various consumption and promotion methods which are rarely provided in the Indonesia entertainment industry, such as theater, handshake, direct selling, and general elections. Now, they are signing partnership contracts with some Japanese, local and foreign companies, including Honda, Glico, Otsuka Seiyaku (*Pocari Sweat*), Lawson, Unicharm, Advan, Unilever, Bandai, Cimory, and Rohto. At the same time, they had also signed contracts with several Japanese companies such as Yamaha, Rakuten, Sharp, Kao, and Tokyuu Land Corporation in the past (Dentsu, 2015). Moreover, since 2014, JKT48 has been appointed by the Government of Jakarta as “Enjoy Jakarta Ambassadors” to promote Jakarta tourism and culture to the Japanese people. JKT48 has been awarded 14 awards including the AMI Award, which is the most prestigious award in Indonesia’s recording industry, for two years in a row.



(Source: Dentsu, 2015)

Figure 1.1 JKT48 won AMI Award, The Most Prestigious Award in Indonesia

Regarding of the success of JKT48, in this case, local fans also play a significant role in advancing the popularity of JKT48 among Indonesians. Currently, JKT48 has successfully gained a large number of fans, which came from both Japanese lovers and ordinary people. Some of them were Japanese idol group fans before they came to be JKT48 fans, and many of them are naturally becoming their fans through JKT48's regular appearances on TV, in commercials, and from the crowd in front of the JKT48 Theater. There are at least 300 spectators who visit JKT48 Theater every day to see their regular performance, and today JKT48 Theater has already become one of the new attractions among Indonesians particularly for people who live in the Jakarta area. JKT48 Theater has developed into a new place for some people who live in the Jakarta area, to relieve their stress while at the same time gathering with friends who share the same interest. Theater, handshake events, official fan club events, and charity events, which allow fans to communicate directly with their Idol, have successfully achieved enduring popularity in the Indonesia entertainment industry; while other local boy and girl bands that are heavily influenced by K-Pop had abruptly disappeared in a very short period after their breakthrough.



(Source: Dentsu, 2015)

Figure 1.2 JKT48 and AKB48 Concert on February 2015 in Jakarta

This research finally wants to investigate a new pop-culture phenomenon of JKT48 within Indonesian society, a country where the genre of ‘idol group’ had never before existed. This research also wants to review the acceptance of JKT48, and the influence of JKT48 towards their fans.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

The research objective is (i) to examine if JKT48 is already accepted by the Indonesian society; (ii) to verify that JKT48 Theater has been successfully enchanting a large number of fans and become a new excitement for some people in Jakarta area; (iii) to find out the potential positive and negative influences of idol culture among the Indonesian youngsters.

1.3 Brief Description of Methodology

Through the collaboration with JKT48 Operation Team (JOT)¹ in terms of collecting the literature review of JKT48 Project within 4 years, this research has been made to examine the success factor of JKT48, and aims to find out the potential positive and negative impact of Idol Culture originally brought from Japan that could be finally accepted by some parts of Indonesian society, through in-depth interviews. These interviews were conducted with 20 informants during field research in Jakarta, to find out the “real story” about, and explore their perspectives on being, JKT48 fans. In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of informants to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation (Creswell, 2007). These questions are also open-ended questions to find out various information and perceptions towards the issues. Oliver (2004) argues that the data will be analyzed to try to identify some concept or themes, which are relevant to the main research question. Furthermore, to investigate the acceptance of JKT48 and to have a better understanding of the customer’s need in the future, a questionnaire with random sampling was also distributed among 334 JKT48 fans across Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi (Jabodetabek) through Twitter and WhatsApp. Random sampling is the purest form of probability sampling. Each member of the population has an equal and known chance of being selected (Fink, 2002). The questionnaire was meant to check the demography of fans such as gender, age, status and income distributions, also the occupation and place of living. It is also aimed to understand the potential positive and negative impacts of idol cultures.

1.4 Thesis Outline

The remainder of this work is organized as follows:

¹“[魅力の大国インドネシア～日本初のアイドルビジネス・スキム](#)”. Buaiso.net. Accessed on 23 November 2015.

²“[Indonesian Population 2015](#)”. World Population Review. Accessed on 11 November 2015

Chapter 2 presents a literature review concerning of the history of idol group changes in Japan and Indonesia, the concept of JKT48, and the related concept of AKB48 and JKT48 strategy. Chapter 3 explains about the comparison between JKT48 and AKB48. Chapter 4 discusses the acceptance of JKT48. The results of the data analysis are presented and discussed in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 includes the conclusions of this thesis, which are followed by some suggestion for further research.

2.

Literature Review

2.1 Indonesia as a New Emerging Market for Entertainment Business

Indonesia is the biggest country in Southeast Asia and the fourth most populous country on the earth, with more than 250 million people as of 2015.² The economy is growing, and political stability has made Indonesia home to one of the fastest-growing middle classes in Asia. The middle class is growing very rapidly: it increased from about 25% in 1999 to 57% in 2010, which means the population of the middle class itself has been increased by 32% in just one decade.³ Also, Indonesia's demographics are attractive. More than 60% of its residents are currently aged 20 to 65; and, in fact, its working-age population is almost twice that of Vietnam, and nearly three times the size of South Korea's entire population. Another 27% of Indonesia's population is under age 15, giving the country a large incoming workforce and a low dependency ratio.⁴ Also, private consumption is a significant contribution to GDP in Indonesia: 59% of total GDP is private consumption, making it a primary driver of Indonesia's growth.⁵ Moreover, consumers in Indonesia remain the second most confident globally, with an index score of 123 in Q1 2015⁶.

As another point, Indonesia is also a huge market for various products both domestic and international. For example, regarding information and technology consumption, the number of Internet users in Indonesia reached 73 million, equal to some 29% of the population.⁷ Furthermore, using the Internet led to the interest of

²“[Indonesian Population 2015](#)”. World Population Review. Accessed on 11 November 2015

³Afif, Syaiful. “[The Raising of Middle Class in Indonesia: Opportunity and Challenge](#)”. Accessed on 12 November 2015.

⁴“[Indonesia's Rising Middle-Class and Affluent Consumers](#)”. The Boston Consulting Group. Accessed on 12 November 2015.

⁵“[Understanding the Indonesian Consumer](#)”. McKinsey&Company. Accessed on 12 November 2015.

⁶“Indonesia Remains the 2ND Most Optimistic Country Globally”. Nielsen. Accessed on 12 November 2015.

⁷“[Internet Users in Indonesia Reach 73 million](#)”. The Jakarta Post. Accessed on 13 November 2015.

Indonesian consumers in browsing both local and foreign contents, including Japanese Pop Culture contents, to obtain information as part of cultural exchanges. During this period, the Cool Japan Policy has been intentionally created to promote Japanese brand and creative industries abroad. To market “Japan, a country providing creative solutions to the world’s challenges”, they compiled ideas to realize this mission in the Cool Japan Proposal.⁸ Indonesia is seen as a high-potential target market for Japan that is also expected to be actively involved in the expansion of Cool Japan in Southeast Asia.

Hiroshi Aoyagi (2009) studied the Prospects on the Impact of Cool Japan in Southeast Asia and identified the claim of pop culture as a kind of “soft diplomacy.” This is due to the capacity of this distinctive genre of culture to influence public consciousness and potentially alter consumer lifestyles through fantastic means. Cool Japan Strategy – as a key part of Japan’s overall brand strategy – is an effort that aims to disseminate Japan’s attractiveness and allure to the world. As a result, globalization of cool Japan has a big role regarding the expansion of Japanese Pop Culture contents in Indonesia through Television, Internet, and SNS. Cool Japan is presented as something ordinary for Japanese, such as characteristics based on Japan’s original culture, tradition, and lifestyles, and creative content that grows in free thinking minds, but sensed by non-Japanese people. A report by the Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Council described that the expectations for Cool Japan are not limited to economic expansion contribution through the communication of Cool Japan information and the expansion of goods and services overseas; a multiplier effect is expected that will increase the consumption in Japan through the growth of Japan enthusiasts overseas.⁹ Moreover, according to the Indonesian Investment Coordinating Board, in the past five years, Japan invested a combined total of USD \$12.1 billion in Indonesia that made Japan became one of the top investors in Indonesia¹⁰.

⁸ Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Council. (2015). “Cool Japan Strategy Public-Private Collaboration Initiative.”

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ [“Japanese Investment in Indonesia Slowed in 2014 but Rebound Detected”](#). Indonesia Investments. Accessed on 23 November 2015.

The signs of “Japanese boom” can be seen in the capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta. The Japan Foundation claims that 874,444 Indonesian people have learned Japanese, and the number has increased significantly – by around 21.8% - since 2009.¹¹ According to Indonesia’s Ministry of Education and Culture, more than 10% of Senior High School students in Indonesia are learning Japanese as an elective foreign language in their schools¹². Some of them want to learn more about Japanese people and culture since it will be easier to communicate with people and understand the culture by learning their language first. Meanwhile, many of them are learning Japanese because they liked Japanese culture since they were children, and started to learn the Japanese language because they wanted to watch anime and read original Japanese manga without translations. Badruddin (2006) studied the actions of manga and anime fans in Indonesia and noted that most fans in the past had not been comfortable with publicly showing their interest in anime and manga.¹³

However, in the past five years, there were lots of Japanese events held around the country, which made J-Pop lovers begin to be more open in expressing their interest to those with similar interests because they would join and gather within the manga, anime, and other J-Pop related festivals. During “Jak-Japan Matsuri 2015” event, crowds of Indonesians gathered within the venue located in central Jakarta; cultural events named “Japan Week” were also held on the main stage, which was placed inside the prestigious shopping mall. Fun activities and performances from traditional to modern cultures, including workshops, music sessions, costume-play (Cosplay), and many others successfully drew significant attention from the Indonesian people. The closing ceremony at Parkir Timur GBK Senayan featured several performances, including Japanese traditional dance and Japanese drum art – as well as pop music performances from Japanese singer

¹¹[“Indonesia has largest number of Japanese language learners”](#). Antara News. Accessed on 23 November 2015.

¹²[“Indonesia ranks 2nd in learning Japanese language”](#). The Jakarta Post. Accessed on 23 November 2015.

¹³Badruddin, Yena. (2006). “Pengguna Media dalam Konstruksi Identitas di Era Globalisasi: Studi Kasus pada Penggemar Animasi dan Komik Jepang di Jakarta.”

Mayumi Itsuwa, whose song titled “Kokoro no Tomo” was famous in Indonesia during the 1980’s.¹⁴ The event closed with a special performance by the first Indonesian idol group JKT48, which became a sort of pop-culture phenomenon among Indonesian youngsters.

2.2 Brief description of Idol History in Japan

‘Idol’ is derived from Greek *eidolon* and Late Latin *idolum*, which means image. In religion, idol represents a deity who is being worshiped as God, and it could be a person or the object that is genuinely admired, loved and adored. Idols, referred to in Japan as *aidoru* (from the English “idols”), is a derivation of a term that originally referred to an image of a person or thing used as an object of worship, or something visible but without substance. Aoyagi (2005) considers Idol performances as a secular religion by highlighting analogies between Idol performances and religious rituals using concept such as “charisma.” He also states that doing so unfolds the mechanism of idolatry: that is, the way in which social relationships, networks, and institutions are built around the object of popular worship.

Masayoshi (2014) defined that it has been known for decades that Japan is one of the countries in which mass media such as movie and television had developed fastest in the world, and the presence of Idols has been one of the most important element of media. Idols in Japan emerge for the first time around the 1970’s with some stereotypes, which are: someone who is a singer that makes a debut before turning 18 years old, often appears in the media (magazine, movie, drama, variety show, and many others), yet generally is not well off in either wonderful voice or acting ability. That last stereotype was obviously considered one of the special characteristics of idols during that period. Brasor and Masako (1997) believe that Japanese idols are not expected to be talented in order to become famous

¹⁴[“Jak-Japan Festival 2015”](#). Embassy of Japan in Indonesia. Accessed on 24 November 2015.

and even worshiped by its fans. Craig (2000) argues that being talented is not sold enough in the mainstream Japanese music industry. The Idols have to be groomed by the management first since they will be taught how to laugh, smile, pose, and behave in front of audiences. Masayoshi (2014) states that the first idol in Japan was Saori Minami, born in Okinawa, and started her debut in June 1971 with her hit song *Seventeen Years Old*. One year after, in 1972, she suddenly jumped to stardom since she was helping to promote the Okinawa's boom after Okinawa was returned to the mainland, which resulted that she was recognized as one of the three popular idols singers at that time together with Mari Amachi and Rumiko Koyanagi.

Since then, Japanese people become increasingly aware of the presence of Idols, in particularly due to the success of *Star Tanjou*, a television show of singing competition where many idols were born and successfully turned out to be national idols. During this time, the concept of idols was those who turned their immaturity into a charming point, and it strongly influenced the model of the future idols in Japan. Masayoshi (2014) established the Prototype of Idol consisting of some elements, which are: they who made their debut as a singer through auditions held by either talent productions or TV programs; at the same time they would gain their popularity by performing on top 10 music programs on TV; and becoming famous idol by appearing in movies, dramas, commercial, variety shows, and other related activity in media. It would be ideal if they could declare their retirement during their last concert that should be held on the big stage before their popularity falls. Hence, since the prototype was completed, it became possible to produce idols in the same way as industrial products.

In the 1970s, idols had left much of their lifestyles secret, since their public and private lives were distinguished perfectly. Aoyagi (2005) states that Idols are designed to contribute to the industry's establishment in the market by their abilities to attract people and perform as lifestyle role models. Whether they are loved or disliked, widely admired or ridiculed, idols inform their viewers about appearances and personal qualities that are considered socially appropriate and trendy. Masayoshi

(2014) described that they always appeared perfect in every single situation and seemed to enjoy a sumptuous lifestyle of which most Japanese could only dream. This statement was also emphasized by Weber (1958) and Shils (1965): that they can become the object of public adoration, and idols are charismatic personalities. However, in the 1980s, idols finally became much closer to the average Japanese people. This is because the average lifestyle of Japanese improved in general. During this period, idols were finally allowed to show more of their real personalities as human being.

In 1985, two big projects called *Yuuyake Nyan Nyan* and *Onyanko Club* were started, and they went down in the history of Idols in Japan. *Yuuyake Nyan Nyan* was a TV program that was made up and targeted for senior high school students when they already finished their school and have leisure time to watch TV. *Yuuyake Nyan Nyan* was produced by Akimoto Yasushi, who became the producer of AKB48 later, and was broadcasted on Fuji TV from 5 pm to 6 pm. There was a corner “*aidoruwosagase*” (*Where’s Idols?*) where female senior high school students who can pass the audition would have a chance for debut as one of the *Onyanko Club*’s member. *Onyanko Club* was created by Yasushi Akimoto. The characteristic of *Onyanko Club*, after all, was the number of members. They consist of more than 20 members inside, which made them become the first Idol group; at the same time they had a huge impact on the history of future idols in Japan. More than 20 girls were singing in unison without creating different harmonies, and they successfully debuted in 1985 with the big hit “*Seira Fuku wo Nugasanai de*” that represented the biggest hit of the year. Every single member of *Onyanko Club* was an amateur entertainer as they entered this group through passing the audition, and every new member had to be ready to appear on *Yuuyake Nyan Nyana* week after selected. Since they all were chosen through the audition, they needed to get used to talking in front of the camera, so their gradual process to be the real idol became one of consumption target for the fans. *Onyanko Club* practically created some systems that have been naturally adopted by current idol groups such as the graduation system, which had never existed in the history of Idol in Japan until it was created and

became a system. The biggest subject of concern for the fans was also the combination of member's part when they perform each song (Masayoshi, 2014).



(Source: Laughy¹⁵, 2015)

Figure 2.1 Onyanko Club Debut Single “*Seira Fuku wo Nugasanaide.*”

Onyanko Club had grown into a new social phenomenon and became prominent in Japanese entertainment industry back then. They started to perform on various TV programs on different TV stations and were accepted by the major

¹⁵ “【会員番号1～26】おニャン子クラブメンバーを順番に並べてみた！国生さゆり、河合その子他… “<http://laughy.jp/1430108944676149749> accessed on November 2015.

production companies while many of talent agencies sent their new talents to *Onyanko Club* for marketing purpose. Unfortunately, the success of *Onyanko Club* came to the end too soon. The final episode for Yuuyake Nyan Nyan was on 31 August 1987, followed by the farewell concert of *Onyanko Club* on 20 September 1987, which indicated that their activity as an idol group came to an end. These could happen at the same time because *Onyanko Club* could do not survive without the existence of *Yuuyake Nyan Nyan* as both of them worked under the integrated system. Masayoshi (2014) points out there could be the expiration of their attraction as an amateur group, which means people lose interest in them, resulting in the dissolution of the group. However, twenty years after the dissolution of *Onyanko Club*, their Producer Akimoto Yasushi created a new idol group named AKB48, which has a similar business model with his former group that developed and modified into modern and unique ways. The business model of AKB48 will be explained in the same chapter in section 2.5.

2.3 Brief description of Idol History in Indonesia

In Indonesia, Pop Idol (Figure 2.2) is a contested term. As the globalization of culture occurs, the term of an idol in Indonesia has been affected by three different concepts: (i) Western Idol, (ii) Korean Idol, and (iii) the one that is happening currently, Japanese Idol in Indonesia that has been strongly influenced by Western countries. Before the term idol group is emerged in Indonesia, we already have *Indonesian Idol*, a television show of singing competition that is adopted from the British show, *Pop Idol*.

Amegashie (2009) argues that in Idol series, contestants with high ability to sing, even though they have less popularity on the show, would likely to be chosen as idols rather than vice versa since it will be easier for media to boost the popularity of such idols than to boost the popularity of idols with mediocre talent that will eventually wane. Coutas (2008) observes the consumer culture on Indonesian Idol and argues that “*Idola*” is a new form of celebrity in which talent is especially

needed to be successful in the entertainment industry. Being “*Idola*” is achieved through the competition on reality television show. In this case, the winner will be decided based on the number of votes sent by the audiences through premium SMS (Short Message Service). However, it is not always easy for the winner to maintain their popularity within Indonesian music industry since they must still compete with other singers who have the same or even higher quality of voice. In other word, idols in Indonesia were born through the competition and most of them gradually disappeared as soon as the competition ended.



(Source: Indonesian Idol¹⁶, 2015)

Figure 2.2 Finalist of Indonesian Idol 2012

After the trend of Indonesian idols in which dominating music industry in Indonesia came to the end, Korean idols started to influence young Indonesians by penetrating their culture through K-Pops and Dramas. Shin-Hyun (2011) argues that

¹⁶ “*Indonesian Idol*” <https://indonesianidols.wordpress.com/> accessed on November 2015.

Korean Idols as another form of idol emphasize several aspects of the idols: singing, dancing, acting and physical appearance. People have to 'undergo years of rigorous training' before they begin their debut. On the other hand, Brasor and Masako (1997) state that Japanese idols are not expected to be talented to become famous and even worshiped by its fans. This contradicts with what people would assume. Here, the term of the idol is being contested. Craig (2000) believes that being talented is not sold enough in the mainstream Japanese music industry. The idols have to be groomed by the management first. They will learn how to laugh, smile, pose, and behave in front of audiences. Aoyagi (2005) even emphasizes that to some extent, the cultures Japanese or Japanese-style pop idols bring 'has no apparent equivalent in the American pop star scene.' Japanese popular culture popularity in Indonesia mainstream media had been in decline for the past ten years while the New Korean Wave had successfully reached its peak in 2011. However, in the middle of the New Korean Wave and the emergence of many girl bands and boy bands in 2011, JKT48, which is based on the Japanese music genre that produced by the *Onyako Club* and AKB48 producer Yasushi Akimoto, was born.

2.4 Acceptance of Boy bands, Girl bands, and Idol in Indonesia

Indonesians were bombarded with girl and boy bands that are totally adopting the concept of Korean girl and boy bands since 2010. A number of Korean films had started to dominate TV airtime and received good responses from Indonesian public during 2010 to 2013, especially teenagers. Having good-looking and fashionable actors is considered the main reason why many Korean films caught Indonesians interest. After the booming of Idol competition such as Indonesian Idol in local media, the influence of K-Pop began to spread among youngsters. During that period, the number of Boy bands and Girl groups had been steadily rising. It started with the SM*SH boy band (now they already broke up) that successfully hit Indonesia's music industry. After the success of this boy band, other boy bands trying to emulate their success started to appear. They were all imitating Korean Boy Bands fashion style. They frequently performed on music TV channel, or live events.



(Source: 4HD Wallpaper¹⁷, 2016)

Figure 2.3 The Most Famous Indonesian Local Boys Band SM*SH

The same also applies to girl groups. It started with 7icons (now they already broke up too), consisting of 7 beautiful girls, whose popularity suddenly skyrocketed. Similar with their boy bands counterpart, plenty of girl groups began appearing and trying to imitate K-Pop concepts in order to repeat the success of 7icons afterward. It really worked for a time; the author still can not remember the total number of local boy bands and girl bands that suddenly emerged due to the popularity of K-Pop in Indonesia. They performed in many occasions; and were invited to be guest speakers in several TV programs. The author could say that Indonesia was experiencing the K-Pop fever for a while. K-Pop fever could also be seen from the enthusiasm of many Indonesians toward Super Junior concert, a boy band originating from South Korea. Super Junior, more commonly known as Suju, successfully managed to make teenagers and Indonesian devoted fans spin out of control. Many fans were willing to do anything, for instance, selling their smart phones, staying overnight by the ticket booth and many of those devoted fans lining up to buy tickets even passed out.

¹⁷"Smash Cool Boy Band" <http://4hdwallpapers.com/smash-cool-boy-band.html> accessed on February 2016.



(Source: On The Spot Trans⁷¹⁸, 2016)

Figure 2.4 The Most Famous Indonesian Local Girls Band 7icons

However amidst the strike of those local Korean boys and girls band concepts, JKT48 was born as the first overseas sister group of AKB48. It was composed of 28 teenagers in the beginning (now they have 72 members) making JKT48 a very interesting group in Indonesian music industry. JKT48 first appeared in Pocari Sweat Commercials on TV. Their attractive, energetic, and young appearance made their first entry a Trending Topic in Twitter. Since Pocari Sweat is a well-known Japanese product in Indonesia since a long time ago, it is easier for JKT48 to get Indonesian people to recognize their emergence on TV. Then, JKT48 was appointed as the ambassador of Pocari Sweat, which let them appear on many Pocari Sweat Commercials that help them to gain the popularity among Indonesians. Furthermore, 2011 was the year when internet access had been established well, and the popularity of SNS has rapidly increased in Indonesian society. Dissimilar to general girl and

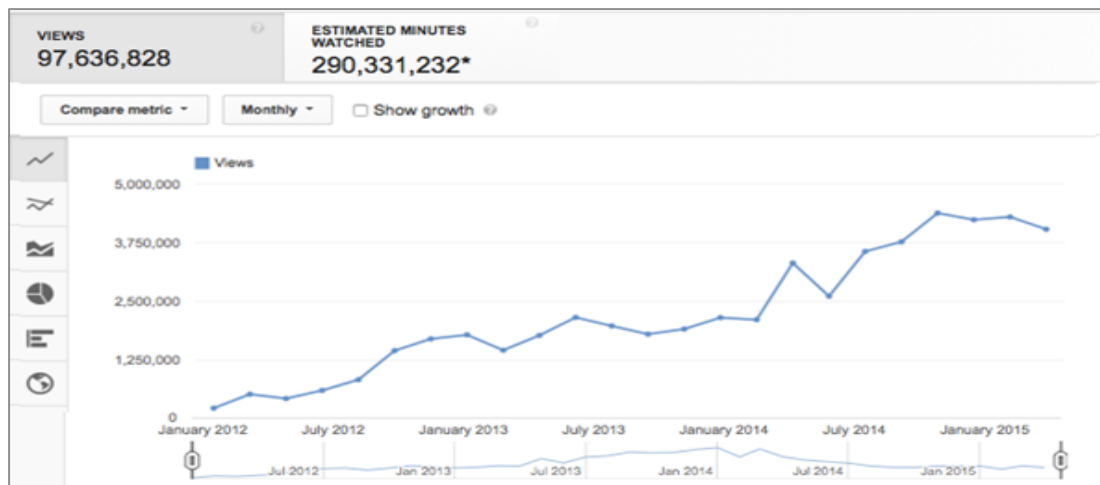
¹⁸ "7 Fakta Unik 7icons" <http://cumantujuh.blogspot.jp/2013/07/7-fakta-unik-7-icons.html> accessed on February 2016.

boy bands that actually need it, JKT48 did not regularly perform from stage to stage in TV music programs, as if holding out slowly to spread curiosity to the music lovers in Indonesia. So, people at the first time knew the existence of JKT48 from Pocari Sweat Commercial, JKT48 TV programs and then they would find some information through the internet, for instance following JKT48 operation team and member's Twitter and Facebook, watching their video performance on Youtube, and finally visit their Theater in FX Plaza Sudirman.



(Source: Dentsu 2015)

Figure 2.5 JKT48 First Appearance on Pocari Sweat Commercial



(Source: Dentsu 2015)

Figure 2.6 Total Number YouTube Viewers on JKT48 account

The concept together with fans intended by JKT48's conceptor is a fan community that is invited to follow actively the growth of their idols in pursuing their dream and definitely create a close relationship between fans and members. JKT48 members really put their fans as an important part of achieving success. With the interesting music concept, suitable voice, and loyal fans supports, JKT48 win the competition with differentiation, and they successfully managed to grab the attention of music lovers and gain sympathy and get accepted by many Indonesian youngsters, boys and girls. Unfortunately, many major Indonesian local boy bands and girl bands could not manage to keep their existence by creating loyal fans, innovation and curiosity like the JKT48 operational team did all of them had suddenly disappeared 3 years after their debuts. On the other hand, JKT48 with their unique concept and marketing strategy is still able to maintain their popularity in Indonesia. Everything about JKT48 will be explained in the next section of chapter 2.

2.5 JKT48

2.5.1 Origins

The JKT48 project was established in Jakarta, as the first official sister group of AKB48 outside Japan in 2nd November 2011. The first batch of JKT48 were elected out of the applicants who reside in Indonesia through auditions, as the result of the final audition held in Jakarta, 31 members were elected as the first generation of JKT48 by the general producer of AKB48 Yasushi Akimoto. JKT48 is expected to be the Indonesian Original Idol Group that will grow up with their fans the same as their sister group AKB48 that already reached the top of the success as National Idol Group in Japan in several years. Akimoto said that it was not decided since the beginning, he received a proposal from several countries, and the present management partners invited him with particular enthusiasm. Thus, something that struck his interest was Indonesia's power; the 70% of a population of 250 million being under 40 years old made him felt that Indonesia would eventually become the center of Asia.



(Source: Dentsu, 2015)

Figure 2.7 Audition and Press Conference on 2 November 2011

This statement was also argued by the CEO of Dentsu Media Group Indonesia, Harris Tayeb, that at the beginning Akimoto was looking for an opportunity in another country such as Singapore and other Asian countries. CEO of Dentsu Indonesia also gave him a proposal to collaborate in creating JKT48 in Indonesia as the first overseas sister group of AKB48¹⁹. Akimoto, as a result, agreed to create JKT48 that adopting the concept of “idols you can meet” because of the uniqueness of Indonesia and because Indonesia’s growing economy was considered a potential market by many Japanese companies²⁰. He also mentioned the most important factor is that something never seen before, something that interests, and something with power bringing Idol culture where it does not exist yet in Indonesia²¹. Furthermore, some people in Indonesia were interested in AKB48. Therefore, he decided to try it in Jakarta. Indonesian kids watched AKB48 on the Internet and they want to do the same, but they do not know whether they have the talent, at the same time it is hard to go to Japan to join on audition²².

Hence, Akimoto came to Indonesia to make their dream come true through some auditions including document screening, together with an interview that was primarily held in several big cities in Indonesia, and the elected finalists were invited to join the final audition in Jakarta that was also judged by Akimoto himself broadcasted on Indonesian local TV partner MNC TV. Akimoto and Dentsu team finally selected 28 final contestants among 1200 participants as the first generation members of JKT48, which was followed by their first debut at local TV channel one month later and their first performance at 62nd “*Kohaku Uta Gassen*” which was held in Tokyo with other sisters group of 48 family singing “*Aitakatta*” in Bahasa.

¹⁹ Mata Najwa JKT48 SihirSeleraImpor uploaded on Youtube 27 May 2015

<https://youtu.be/xbq1YeaMnvE>

²⁰ 「インドネシアにワクワク」 JKT48 総合プロデューサー秋元康氏に聞く海外初挑戦、特色ある個性伸ばす (4 November 2011) <https://www.jakartashimbun.com/free/detail/1394.html>

²¹ Dentsu Ho: Yasushi Akimoto Interview on JKT48 (26 March 2015)

<http://www.jkt48stuff.com/2015/03/dentsu-ho-yasushi-akimoto-interview-on-jkt48/>

²² Talk Asia – Interview with Yasushi Akimoto on CNN uploaded on Youtube at 21 January 2012.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbhFViGPJHo>



(Source: Dentsu, 2011)

Figure 2.8 Press Conference of AKB48 & JKT48 Live Concert in Jakarta

As the sister group of AKB48, all the JKT48 members are doing the same amount of heavy exercise for dancing as well as vocal training every single day since the first day they committed themselves to be the members of JKT48. Three months after JKT48 formed, AKB48 traveled to Jakarta for the first live performance with JKT48 on 25th February 2012.

The audition of the second generation was announced a year after the formation of JKT48, and the final round was held in Tokyo on 3rd November 2012 which resulted in 31 new members of the second generation. Audition of the third generation was also announced a year after 2nd generation was formed, as the result of which 32 finalists were selected among 10.900 of total applicants as the new members of the third generation in March 2014. This year, the audition of 4th generation member has been conducted, and 12 members were selected from 4.500 applicants even though their activity in JKT48 is still limited compared to other members from 1st, 2nd, and 3rd generations.

There are 71 members in JKT48 divided into three performing teams. Team J consists of 20 members; Team KIII consists of 18 members; Team T consists of 18 members; Trainee consists of 15 members. After all, the character of each team has been revealed naturally, for instance, Team J was known as a celebrity since most of them are frequently appearing on TV and commercial break.



(Source: Dentsu, 2015)

Figure 2.9 Second and Third Generation of JKT48

On the other hand, while Team K was known for their solidarity as a team, they are still struggling to equalize the strong influence of team J that is still considered as a face of JKT48. Meanwhile, Team T was known as the group of cute little girls who just entered the school. Referring to the dialogue with Akimoto during Final Audition of JKT48 1st generation, JKT48 was also considered as an entrance gate at the same time as an elementary school for the girls who are chasing their dream to be someone they admire in the future. However, their successes are not determined by only dreams, but they are measured by what they do, carry out or execute to accomplish and achieve greatness.



(Source: Dentsu, 2015)

Figure 2.10 JKT48 All Members

Therefore, JKT48 as the first Idol group which adopted the Japanese system would be expected to blow a new wind towards Indonesian music industry. JKT48 was not only created to be the first idol group in Indonesia but they were also formed to bring the mission to a cultural bridge between Indonesia and Japan. JKT48 operational team and total producer Yasushi Akimoto claimed that JKT48 will reflect the Indonesian cultures to fit into a new and unique type of idol group, and they will become a bridge between Indonesia and Japan. The previous statements claimed by the JKT48 operational team and its total producer imply that JKT48 is acknowledged to encourage cultural exchange between Japan and Indonesia.

As a result, since November 2012 member of AKB48 Haruka Nakagawa was transferred to JKT48 and now her existence in Indonesian music industry is

garnering attention around the country. Her presence in every TV commercial starring JKT48, and her regular appearance as a co-host speaking Bahasa fluently in local TV program ‘Ini Talk Show’ broadcasted in Net TV proved that Haruka has successfully ingratiated herself with Indonesian people by entertaining them with local jokes and her cute Japanese accent whenever she speaks in Indonesian language. Many of Indonesian knew about Haruka as a member of JKT48 because of her amazing talent to amuse people from all level of society. Haruka also showed her intention to live in Indonesia in several interviews, and she often says jokes that she wants to marry an Indonesian man in the future.



(Source: Dentsu, 2015)

Figure 2.11 Haruka Nakagawa in “Ini Talk Show” with Local Comedian

Besides Haruka, there is another AKB48 member also intentionally transferred to JKT48 in 2014. Chikano Rina became the fifth generation of an AKB48 member after being elected in 2007, since that she started her activity yet her career was not so bright in AKB48 then. Finally, she decided to move to JKT48 seeking for brighter opportunities.



(Source: Dentsu 2015)

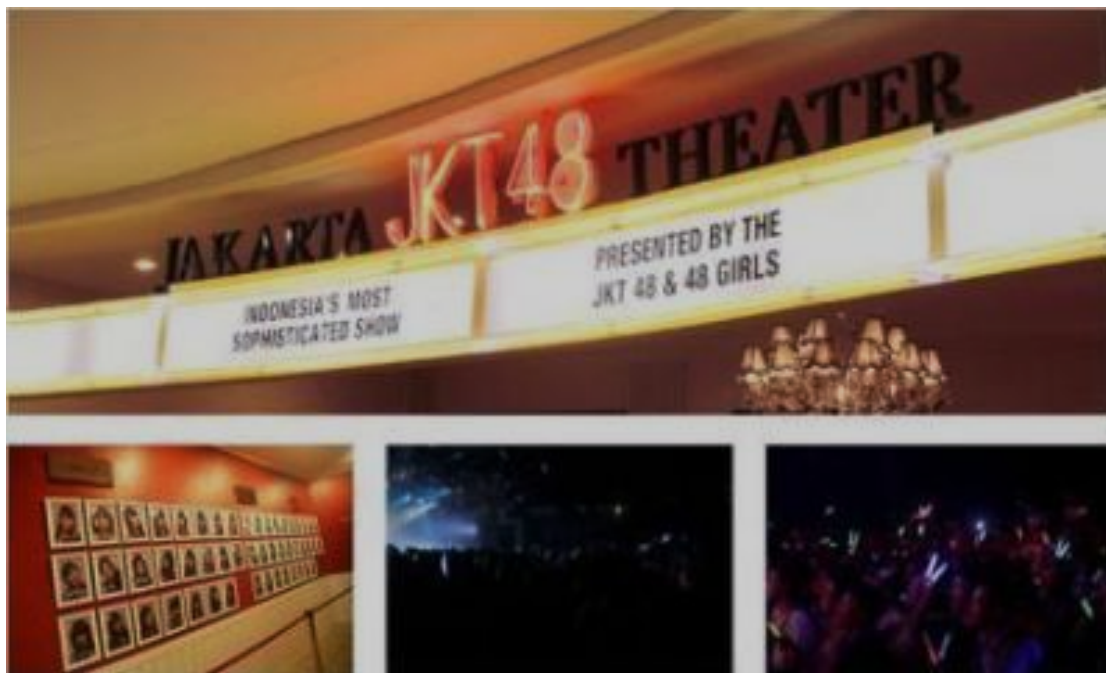
Figure 2.12 Chikano Rina Wearing Indonesian Traditional Costume

Now, Chikano Rina has been appointed to promote '*Dangdut*', a genre of Indonesian popular music among ordinary people; this is also the strategy by localizing the song to attract the intention of common people to be the fan of JKT48. She also named herself, Siti Rinayanti that is very local and familiar to every Indonesian. This strategy is fascinating since Chikano Rina who is originally Japanese yet endeavoring to sing the Indonesian Dangdut with its distinctive wobble that certainly not everyone can do could attract the ordinary people. In this musical genre, the wobble is something that cannot be released. Therefore, Chikano Rina fought tooth and nail to sing with Dangdut style perfectly.

2.5.2 JKT48 Theater

JKT48 has been getting dedicated fan base which always supports them whenever they have performance both in the live event and TV show. JKT48 also has a permanent theater that opened to public since 2012 where they can hold stage shows and interact with fans almost daily exclusively. JKT48 Theater was built on the 4th floor of Shopping Mall 'FX Plaza Sudirman' which is located in the heart of Jakarta downtown. The capacity of theater can accommodate maximum 330 audiences for both sitting and standing audience. Every audience should apply for

the show ticket through e-mail according to the show they want to watch. According to Dentsu, the price of the ticket certainly adjusted to the standard local price, which costs Rp.100.000 (1.000¥) for male, and Rp.50.000 (500¥) for female and elementary-senior high school student. Special price for female and student aimed to increase the diversity of fans since many of them were male when this theater was opened in the beginning.

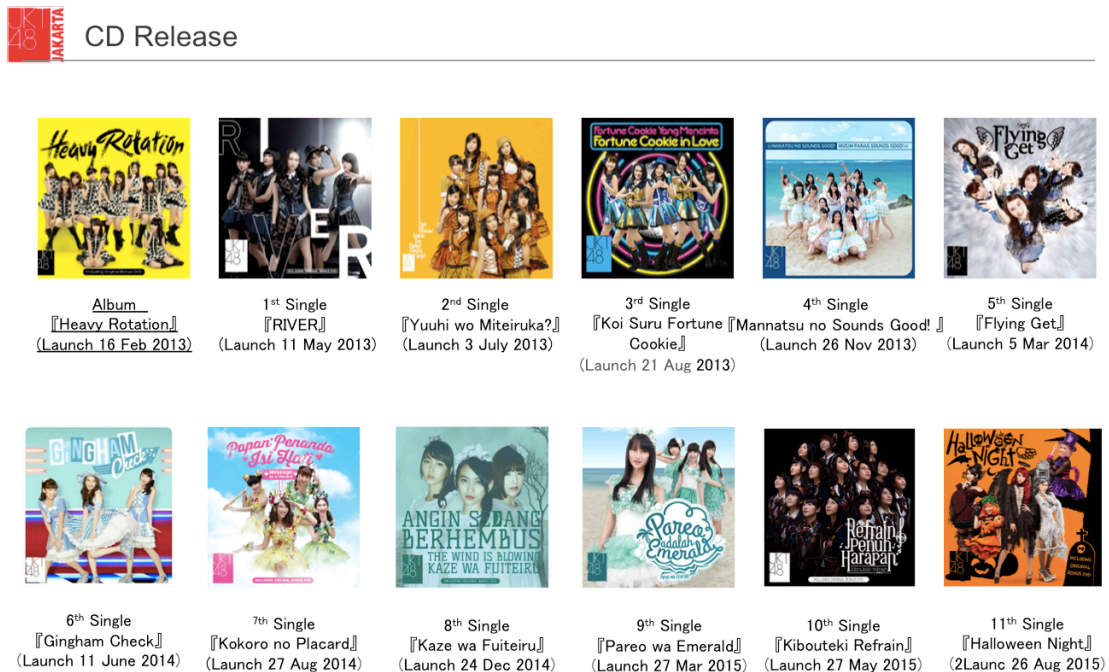


(Source: Dentsu, 2015)

Figure 2.13 JKT48 Theater

JKT48 already has 8 different shows in Theater until now, which are ‘Pajama Drive’, ‘Renai Kinshi Jourei (Love Ban Ordinance)’, ‘Boku no Taiyou (My Sun)’, ‘Dareka no Tame ni’ (For Someone)’, ‘Seishun Girls (Youth Girls)’, ‘Te wo Tsunaginagara (While Holding Hands)’, ‘Theater no Megami (The Goddess of Theater)’, and ‘Saishuu Bell ga Naru (The Last Bell Ringing)’. JKT48 Theater also held most of JKT48’s events such as JKT48 Valentine Event, JKT48 Ramadan Event, and JKT48 New Year Event. JKT48 Theater always crowded by the audiences for the daily show, particularly on the weekend since they have two shows and sometimes-special show on the weekend.

2.5.3 Song and CD Release

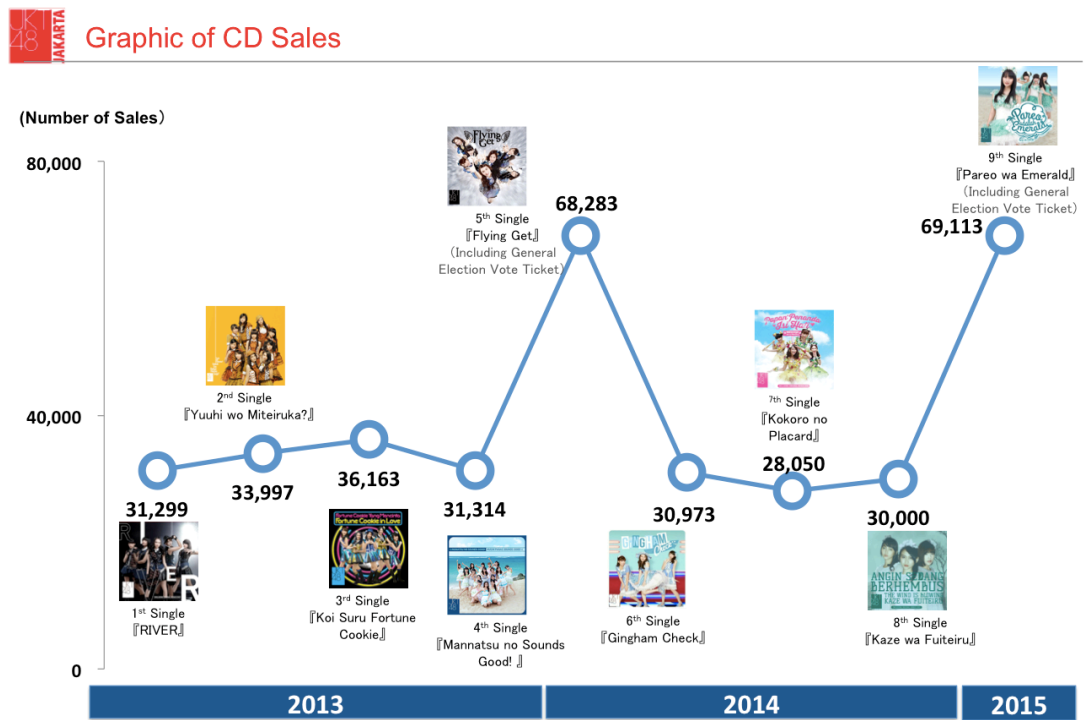


(Source: Dentsu, 2015)

Figure 2.14 JKT48's Album and Single Release

JKT48 songs are originally translated version of AKB48 and other sister group's songs. For ordinary people, some lyrics use a powerful metaphor, which are hard to be interpreted just by simply listening to the song and often sounds unnatural if it is translated to Bahasa. In this case, the listener needs to consider the meaning of metaphor expressed in the lyric and has to interpret the message of it. This is what makes JKT48 song is totally different with most original Indonesian song that usually expresses their message straightforwardly. On the other hand, since the lyric consists of numerous unique themes with colorful music, JKT48 could blow new wind towards Indonesian music fans that are already bored with the local music industry that has no significant changes. According to the data recorded by Dentsu and JKT Operational Team, until now JKT48 has released one album and 11 singles with mostly more than 30.000 CDs sold whenever it is released. According to the

investigation report towards Indonesian music Industry conducted by JETRO, CD sales have been significantly declining from 12.9 Million CD in 2012 to 9.300.000 CD in 2013²³.



(Source: Dentsu, 2015)

Figure 2.15 Graphic of CD sales in 3 years

However, the number of sales shown in Figure 9 clearly indicate that JKT48 has an already loyal fan base who keep buying their CDs despite the CD sales in Indonesia declining in these recent years. Putting handshake coupons and general election voting tickets might be regarded as the main part that make them still hold steady sales; at the same time single sales are up 100% due to the general election voting system that requires fans to buy a CD, which costs Rp.40.000 (400¥) for one vote. The more they buy CDs, the more they could have right to give votes, and the explanation about JKT48 general election will be described briefly in the next section.

²³ JETRO. (2015). "インドネシアにおける音楽市場調査報告書"

2.5.4 General Election

The general election of JKT48 has become an important event on the calendar every year among the fans. This year was the second year of the election since the first election for their new special single was started in 2014. The voting period was approximately one month so that they can vote for voting ticket placed on the CD, Mobile SMS, Official fans club, and audience of a theater. A total number of votes cast in the first general election was 207.022, as the result Melody became the center getting the most votes and won the inaugural general election with 14.541 votes, followed by Jessica Veranda with 13.285 votes at the second place and Haruka Nakagawa with 13.276 votes at the third place. Nevertheless, Melody could not hold the center position and she had to be willingly replaced by Jessica Veranda in the second general election.



(Source: Dentsu, 2015)

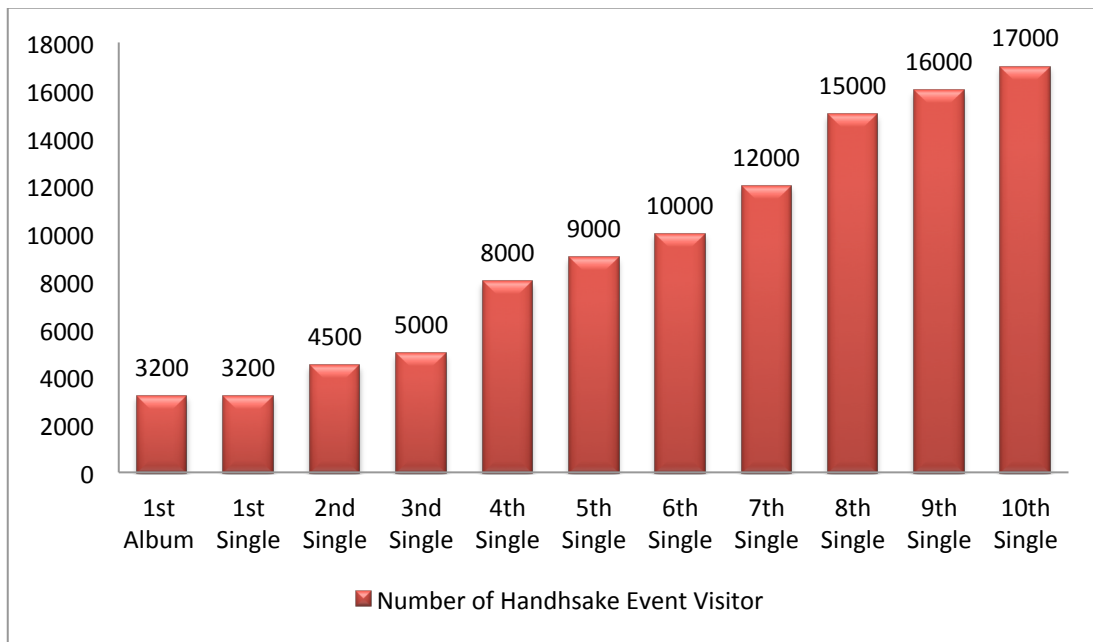
Figure 2.16 Melody and Veranda Stand as a Center in 1st and 2nd General Election

Veranda had successfully won the first place with 22.404 votes followed with Haruka and Melody in the second and third position, and the total votes had

incredibly increased to 366.301 votes. These votes came from the overall fan base in Indonesia, and some of them managed to get together as one for voting. The author view is that what makes the marketing strategy of JKT48 absolutely groundbreaking is how it incorporates such proactive efforts among fans to decide who is going to be the next center.

2.5.5 Handshake Event

Handshake event is also one of the most exciting and awaited events among fans since they would have a chance to interact personally with the member they like in the limited time. Unlike AKB48 handshake events, JKT48 Handshake events are usually held on the Mall because Indonesian people tend to spend their free time in a shopping mall instead of going to outdoor activities. During the Handshake event, they can talk and interact with members in the personal booth as much as they want depending on how much they willing to spend their money on it. If they buy one CD, they will get a chance to talk with the member for 10 seconds. For instance, if they want to interact with one member for 1 minute, they have to buy 6 CDs. Despite there is a must to spend money on Handshake Event, the number of visitors has been gradually increasing from time to time, which clearly acknowledges that JKT48 has constantly gained popularity among some Indonesians. It finally reached 17.000 visitors in their 10th single handshake event, and apparently many visitors are coming from outside of Jakarta area that mostly have smaller chance to visit theater compared to Jakarta-residing fans.



(Source: Dentsu, 2015)

Figure 2.17 Number of Handshake Event Visitor

2.6 Concept of AKB48 and JKT48 Model

Xie (2015) explains that in recent years, idols have become much more accessible to average Japanese people because some fans are growing tired of idols with extravagant auras and started looking for the girl-next-door type. This is actually what the general producer of AKB48 and JKT48 finally came to realize when he launched the now hugely popular group in Japan and Indonesia. He intentionally picked up the ordinary-looking and ‘pure personality’ young girls without previous dance and musical training, to provide fans a unique opportunity to witness their idol’s growth. Herd (1984) studied that prototypical idols are “just enough to provide their fans with the sense that they too could be stars if they work hard enough”. Both AKB48 and JKT48 have a concept: ‘Idol you can meet’ and ‘grow together with fans’. Masami (2013) studied that the system of AKB48 was born as a system in which constructed a structure to create the emergence. Akimoto

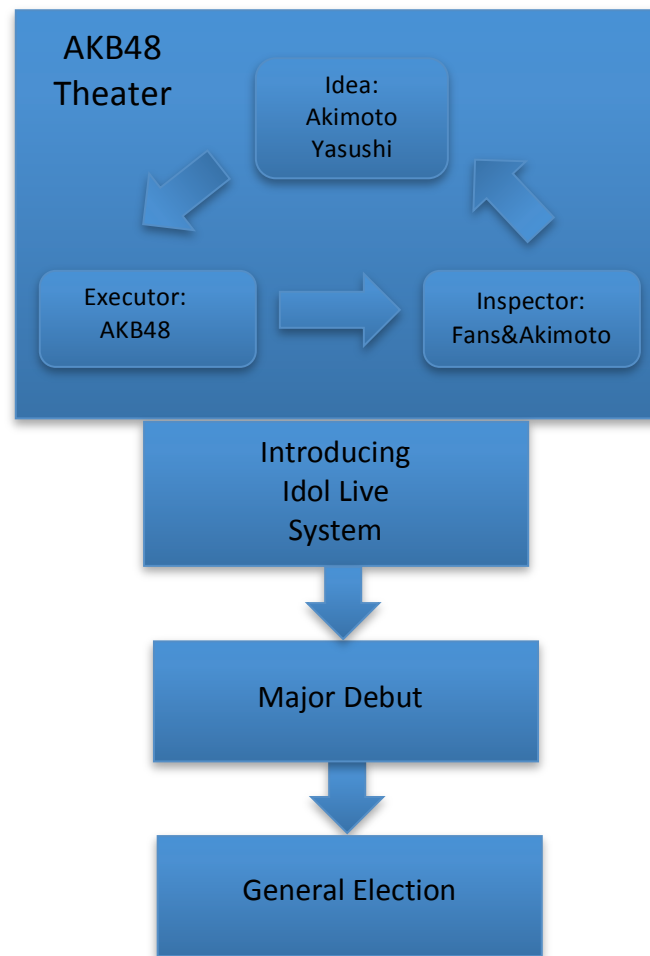
answered the interview from Harada (2013) and admitted that AKB48 was intentionally established on the assumption that they will continue evolving.

Many parts of AKB48 at present were obviously created by their fans, in the other word Akimoto only created a system to make the girls develop, get better, and fit the needs of lots of fans. Akimoto believes that people have immensely different tastes in girls just like wine connoisseurs' preferences in wine can be much varied. Therefore, both AKB48 and JKT48 are allowed to show facets of their true personalities rather than constantly exhibiting perfectly crafted. This concept is supported by the statement from Aoyagi (2005), in which says that in Idol performances, idols are typically presented to the public as "pure" personalities, and this reflects the relation of Idol performances to the Shintoism idea of purity. The "pure" image of an idol encompasses "innocent", "childlike", and "cute" appearances and personalities. Since an idol is a symbol of purity, they must be distant from scandalous romance and acts considered immoral. In this case, both AKB48 and JKT48 are not allowed to date, and must be well-behaved, since both of them are applying Love-Ban-Law as one of their Golden Rule. If they get into a relationship with a guy, the fans sentiment to support members will fade. Although, Akimoto once said in the interview that he never intended to ban relationship, he just meant they might have no leisure to enjoy love relationship if they are truly serious²⁴.

Masami (2013) in her paper studied that AKB48 is like a Linux system, in which working under Linus Torvalds, where its OS base is an open source that is possible for the public to get involved in the modification and improvement of the system. The audition is conducted by Akimoto. However, fans can actively participate in the amendment as Linux did in the past. Harada (2013) explains that Akimoto said that the main concept of AKB48, idol you can meet, at the same time has a meaning 'the initiative to meet AKB48 is on the fans since they can respond to their idols whenever they want.' Hence, fans have full access to live performance and

²⁴ AKB48 Wrap Up: Akimoto Yasushi says "Love Ban Law is just a fun thing to Make 48 group more captivating. <http://www.akb48wrapup.com/2013/02/akimoto-yasushi-says-love-ban-law-is-a-gag/> accessed on 9 December 2015

be able to meet the members they support as often as they desire. Unlike other common Japanese idol groups that are mostly seen on the TV screen and concert stage, AKB48 has its theater in Tokyo, while JKT48 has its own theater too in the Jakarta area where they usually perform on daily basis. Furthermore, AKB48 and JKT48 regularly conduct 'handshake events', where fans get a chance to shake hands with and briefly talk to the members they support. At a usual handshake event, members would first perform their songs on stage, and then fans would wait in line for their turn to meet and shake hands with individual members in booths. Another AKB48 and JKT48 hallmark event are their annual 'General Elections', which usually take place once a year. Fans can vote as many times they like, and there would also be fanatic competition among fans to increase the ranking for their favorite members by purchasing huge volume of CDs for voting tickets. The AKB48 business system will be described in the figure 2.14, which is exactly same as JKT business system.



(Source: Masami Minowa, 2013)

Figure 2.18 AKB48 Business System

Gaining their fans through live performance and activity in theater, when they already have loyal fans those are willing to support them, they would have a major debut. In the end, when they finally reached their popularity on the top of the entertainment industry, the hallmark event ‘General Elections’ are held to give a chance to fans to create their dream idol team.

2.7 Controversies and Sexism in Female Idol

Aoyagi (2005) studied that a focus on female idols offer insight into the difficulties encountered by young Japanese women as they grow up in a society

where male and female gender roles are traditionally strongly differentiated and where women's key role has been biological and social reproduction. The study of idol engineering from the perspective of gender analysis would not be complete without mentioning how the "cute style" is constructed, embodied, and popularized. Cute idols advance a traditional adolescent femininity that idealizes the image of the good future wife, a wise mother of young girls. When female idols act cute and coy, they resign themselves to sexual subordination, just as those who conform to the good wife, wise mother ideology to social subordination along with domestic protection. Aoyagi (2005) indicated that becoming a female idol is to be wrapped in a package of toy like femininity designed by idol-manufacturing agencies to attract consumers and enlarge profits. As a result, in the domain of popular culture and the mass media, gender bias has influenced the ways in which women were selected and portrayed. Funabashi (1995); Clammer (1995); Allison (1996) discussed that the Japanese preoccupation with the characterization of young girls as sexual objects is a trend found in magazines, comics, and movies that are increasingly aimed at young audiences. Since the dawn of Japan's modernization, this profoundly influenced the ways women were treated and portrayed in social economic and popular-cultural sectors.

The author found several controversies related to AKB48 that will be discussed in this section. AKB48 has been criticized for the perceived sexually-suggestive lyrics found in their song "Seifuku ga Jama o Suru" (My School Uniform's Getting In The Way). Here is the a part of its lyrics.

Take off my uniform
I want to play around more naughtily
You can do whatever you like
I want to experience adult pleasure

It addressed the issue of "Compensated Dating" from a first person view, and was considered by some Western reporters unsuitable for its young members. However,

answering this issue, the overall producer Yasushi Akimoto stated that his lyrics “depicted reality” and were meant to prompt the consideration of difficult problems²⁵. Moreover, “Heavy Rotation” Music Video has also been considered controversial and was criticized by the same Western reporters for showing AKB48 members in lingerie, hugging, kissing and sharing a bath²⁶.



(Source: Nihongogo.com²⁷, 2016)

Figure 2.19 Kissing Scene in Heavy Rotation Music Video

Aoyagi (2005) also studied that Female idols in Japan, in this senses, are treated as motifs with which viewers identify themselves: either as types of adolescent females that young boy wishes to possess or as types that young girls want to emulate, therefore; Love Ban Law is necessary in the Idol Industry. There was an incident that caught huge public attention and made headlines around the world, when Minami Mengishi, a member of AKB48, cropped her hair and delivered

²⁵ “Interview with Japanese Music Producer Yasushi Akimoto.” CNN.com Quoted from Wikipedia on February 4th February 2016.

²⁶ “Japan all-girl group ad ‘encourages homosexuality’ “. Agence France-Presse. April 20, 2012. Quoted from Wikipedia on 3rd February 2016.

²⁷ “100 Million Thank You Notes: Yuko Oshima’s Heavy Rotation Passes 100 Million View Barrier” <http://nihongogo.com/2014/02/100-million-thank-you-notes-yuko-oshimas-heavy-rotation-passes-100-million-view-barrier/> accessed on February 2016.

a tearful apologetic video on YouTube. The video of the once-peppy, long-haired young woman with a buzz cut, contorted face and red eyes apologizing directly into the camera were viewed millions of times²⁸. It was disturbing reminder of how troubling gender issues can be in Japan. All members of AKB48 do sign a pledge agreeing to a code of conduct that demands no dating. Such a contract is legally questionable. No other job in Japan, and perhaps in the world, demands that sexuality is forgone in private life²⁹.



(Source: Jpopasia.com)

Figure 2.20 Minegishi Minami Shaves Head as Punsihment for Scandal

This incident does nothing to improve women's position in Japanese society; nor does it present a positive view of woman as autonomous human beings with their desires and need for privacy³⁰. Such "scandals" are common in Japan; despite the flagrant marketing of J-pop idols as sex symbols, any hint of them engaging in an

²⁸ "[AKB48 and Sexual Politics](#)." Japan Times. Accessed on 3rd February 2016

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ *ibid*

actual relationship is harshly frowned upon³¹. The author will examine and discuss whether this type of sexism is also found in JKT48 in next chapters.

³¹ [“Dating AKB48: The J-Pop Cult Banned From Falling in Love.”](#) The Verge. Accessed on 4th February 2016

3.

Comparison between JKT48 and AKB48

3.1 Cultural Difference

The primary difference between JKT48 and AKB48 is obviously known from their culture. Since Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population, JKT48 is not allowed to wear Bikini, and there are some significant modifications in the songs which containing suggestive sexual lyrics. For example, in Mannatsu Sounds Good PV AKB48 version, the girls wear an atypical bra-type bikini and mostly dance on the beach. Nevertheless, in JKT48 version, the girls wear a kind of long swimsuit, which is not showing their body. In Indonesia, girls generally don't want to wear such kind of Bikini even if they are on the beach, JKT48 members personally are not willing to wear bra-type bikini and fans also don't agree since most of them believe that JKT48 must still keep their eastern culture in which avoiding to showing off their sexiness to public. One hundred thirty-seven women set to compete in this year's Miss World beauty pageant in Indonesia reportedly won't wear bikinis because organizers don't want to offend locals in the Muslim-majority country³². This statement is strongly supported by the result of the questionnaire, which revealed that nearly 80% of respondents think that JKT48 costumes are not sexy while the rest 20% of respondents might think the costume they wear is too sexy. The gravure culture brought by AKB48 is inappropriate to be applied in Indonesia, the largest Muslim population country in the world since it is most likely being seen as child and female sexual exploitation in Indonesia. A gravure idol is a Japanese female model who primarily models in magazines, especially men's magazines, photo books or DVDs. Gravure idols, in most cases, emphasize their sexual attractiveness and often model in swimsuits or lingerie³³.

³² "[Miss World pageants calls off bikini contest to respect Indonesian Muslims](#)" Daily News accessed on 21st January 2016.

³³ "[Gravure Idol](#)" World Public Library accessed on 2nd February 2016



(Source: [NaverMatome](#)³⁴ 2014)

Figure 3.1 AKB48 Members with Bikini in Mannatsu Sounds Good MV



(Source: Dentsu, 2015)

Figure 3.2 JKT48 Members with Swimsuit in Mannatsu Sounds Good MV

³⁴ “AKB, 史上初のシングル TOP3 独占”

<http://matome.naver.jp/odai/2140305883707820601/2140306153010854103> accessed on February 2015

Second, the translation of the lyrics must be adjusted in some parts, particularly if it contains sexual words. Since there are some lyrics in AKB48 songs which containing sexual words that considered unacceptable in Indonesian culture, when it is translated into Bahasa Indonesia, the lyrics are not literally translated but they rather soften the meaning in order to avoid the negative image which might be caused by those offensive lyrics.

Furthermore, the JKT48 member uses only right hand when they have a handshake or high touch with fans. An American Anthropologist Helder (1991), in his book titled *Indonesian Cinema: National Culture on Screen* stated that in Indonesia, as generally throughout Asia, the left hand is specifically marked as impure. This is not merely a part of the abstract symbol system. Since the left hand is used with water to clean oneself after defecation, it is physically impure as well. To use left hand in giving or receiving objects, in touching another, or in putting food to the mouth can give great offense, therefore having a handshake or high contact with left hand is absolutely prohibited. Meanwhile using either hand to have both handshake and high touch for the AKB48 member is fine since there is no taboo in Japan for using the left hand to give or receive things.

Education and culture are intimately related to each other. Talking about the difference between JKT48 and AKB48 members in the educational side, all the JKT48 members get the proper education even while some of them are studying at university to pursue their dream. Being an idol in Indonesia is not always about the appearance but also the brain, which means to be a great idol these talents cannot be separated from the growth of the idol itself. Moreover, according to the result of an interview with members, they said that education has been their top priority instead of idol activity because for them education is an essential element to achieve their dream. On the other hand most of the AKB48 members quit their school and focus on their career to be an idol, so when they graduate from the group they probably will not find a proper job, even some of graduated members work as female porn star

since they do not possess enough educational background to work in a higher sector or even in a company.

Last but not least, the unique point of view, which is obviously related to Indonesian culture, is the strong bonds between the members and parents. The author found that when the 1st generation final's audition was held, most of the members emphasized the reason why they joined the audition to be an idol is to make their parents happy and be proud of them. Those statements got the producer Yasushi Akimoto amazed since he never heard that word came out from AKB48 members. Even some members support their parents for the living expenses off their month salary. This is becoming one of the important factors to keeping up their good work as well as their motivation to learn and grow to be the idol that could inspire other people especially the fans.

Table 3.1 Cultural Differences between JKT48 and AKB48

Cultural Difference	JKT48	AKB48
Wearing Bikini	Prohibited	Allowed
Gravure Idol	No	Yes
Handshake & High Touch	Right Hand	Both Hands
Education	Important	Less Important
Motivation	Parents & Fans	Fans

3.2 Environmental Difference

Besides the cultural differences that differentiate JKT48 with other sister groups in Japan, there is also the environmental difference that also gives huge influences in terms of the marketing strategy. First is the traffic Jam problem. Jakarta has now received the status of the city with the worst traffic in the world, this time by the British lubricant producer Castrol. Castrol's Stop-Start Index examined traffic conditions in 78 cities and regions around the globe, and according to the survey,

Jakarta ranked as the city with the highest number of stops and starts, with an average of 33,240 per driver per year³⁵. Jakarta's traffic congestion might well be among the worst in the world since it doesn't have a decent rail-based mass transportation system and the city currently only has one rail-based form of public transportation, a commuter train; therefore, Jakarta will always be congested especially during the rush hour. This is become one of the main considerations for the JKT48 operational team to hold big concerts, handshake events, and other special events only on weekends, since many of fans will sink in an endless traffic jam during the weekend and it will definitely affect the ticket sales too. Meanwhile AKB48 could hold big concerts and special events both on weekdays and weekends since Japan has advanced transportation; therefore, it is easy for people to move from one place to another and come on time to the place where the concert or handshake event is conducted. Moreover, Indonesian people mostly spend their leisure time in the shopping mall. As a result, JKT48 Theater was built inside the shopping mall rather than outdoor.

Table 3.2 Environmental Differences between JKT48 and AKB48

Environmental Differences	JKT48	AKB48
Handshake & Concert Day	Always Weekends	Weekdays or Weekends
Handshake & Concert Place	Indoor	Indoor & Outdoor

Another consideration related to the marketing strategy of JKT48 regarding the environmental aspect is the climate. Split by the equator, the archipelago is almost entirely tropical in climate, with the coastal plains averaging 28-C, and the area's relative humidity ranges between 70 and 90 percent. Because of its proximity to the equator, generally the weather is hot and humid. Indonesian climate is divided into two distinct dry seasons: dry and rainy seasons. During the rainy season, rain starts around noon and lasts into the afternoon; even some areas can have sudden showers for more than two hours. Also, in a dry season there is rainfall in the

³⁵ ["Jakarta has 'worst traffic in the world'"](#) The Jakarta Post accessed on 22 January 2016.

afternoon³⁶. As a result, the shopping mall becomes one of the most comfortable places for people to spend their time, since it has an air conditioner to keep the people cool and they can take shelter when the rain comes. For that reason, the JKT48 operational team will definitely hold the big concert, handshake event or special event in shopping mall, hall, or other indoor places to prevent the fans feeling uncomfortable when they come actually to enjoy the time with JKT48 members.



(Source: Merdeka.com³⁷ 2013)

Figure 3.3 JKT48 Handshake Event Bustling with Thousand Fans

After all, JKT48 has been successfully conducting some localization considering several aspects, which is related to the cultural and environmental differences that resulted in the acceptance from some people within society. The JKT48 operational team, in this case, has developed the excellent marketing strategy to recruit Idol fans selectively into its system of production and turn these loyal fans into connoisseurs.

³⁶ “[Weather and Climate in Indonesia](#).” Indonesia Travel Guide accessed on 23 January 2016.

³⁷ “[Ribuan Fans JKT48 Padati Event Handshake](#)” <http://www.merdeka.com/foto/artis/ribuan-fans-jkt48-padati-event-handshake.html> accessed on January 2016.

4.

The Acceptance of JKT48 in Indonesia

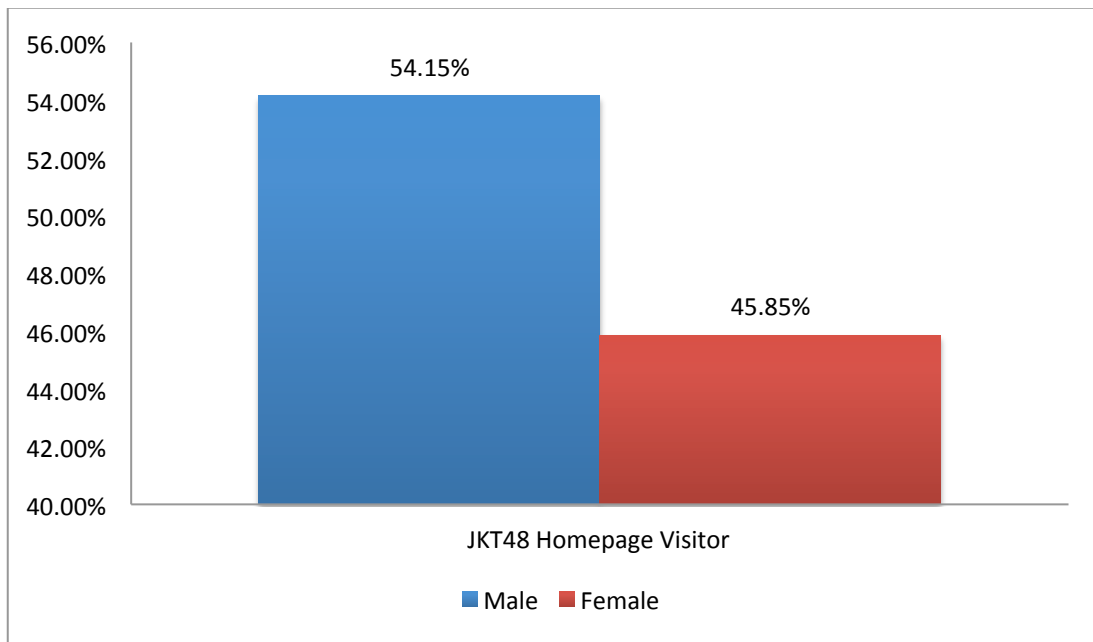
4.1 JKT48 as a New Pop-Culture Phenomenon

Storey (2012) pointed out that popular culture is simply a culture that is widely favored or well liked by many people. And, undoubtedly, such a quantitative index would meet the approval of many people. Aoyagi (2005) studied that in many Asian countries including Indonesia, forms of Japanese popular culture such as popular music, manga, animation, television drama, and fashion have become as well known as Japanese cars and electronic products, which at least changed the lives of people in some Asian countries. Representing a modern, urban lifestyle, these items had become points of cultural dissemination for students, young working people, and tourists in Asia's upward-moving economic areas including Jakarta and several big cities in Indonesia.

The popularity of Japanese-style idols, in this term JKT48, is one of the interesting recent examples of Japan's cultural dissemination in Indonesia. JKT48 was born during the popularity of K-POP, and Korean Wave reached its peak and became a new pop-culture phenomenon there; some people called it a "virus", others an "addiction", which was a huge challenge for the JKT48 operational team and Dentsu as a matchmaker to heighten the image of JKT48 within the Indonesian market. In particular, they had to overcome the cultural barrier between Japan and Indonesia since JKT48 is currently adopting the AKB48 marketing system that is totally different from existing entertainers in Indonesia. In September 2011, when the author had just come back from Japan, the author accidentally watched the commercial for the JKT48 audition on TV and never thought that JKT48 would successfully be accepted by some Indonesians, especially the youngsters who are targeted to be their loyal fans. In an interview with Mata Najwa (leading talk show on Indonesian local TV, Metro TV), President Director Dentsu Media Group Indonesia, Harris Tayeb explained that AKB48 was planning to enter Singapore at

that time. However, he still believed that this group would be popular in Indonesia. He mentioned that since there are a lot of AKB48 fans in Indonesia, so it would not be so difficult to gain the die-hard fans of JKT48 in the future. Finally, it happened, JKT48 has successfully grown their die-hard fans, and even many fans who initially knew and liked AKB48 turned into JKT48 fans later. He also added that there is some adaptation in the JKT48 system, yet the concept is pretty much similar to AKB48, like 'idol you can meet' where idols can interact with their fans. There are a handshake, meet and greets, and some others, and this concept has proven good results.

Aoyagi (2005) argues that long-term planning and long-term relationships in the idol industry require a promotion system that in principle enables successful candidates to grow and benefit the industry over an extended period. The author strongly agrees with his argument since Indonesia considered as a big market with an enormous number of consumers, it is necessary for the management team to make some innovations in promotion system to grow the popularity and benefit its industry itself. Furthermore long-term planning is essential to keep their existence in Indonesian music industry as well. Murayama (2011) studied that five elements are giving influences to the success of AKB48: 'product planning', 'diffusion strategy', 'marketing strategy', 'promotion strategy', and 'business planning'. These five elements have been currently adopted also by the JKT48 operational team and resulted in significant achievement. This discussion in this chapter has tried to show some proofs that idol culture is applicable not only within the domain culture society, which is Japan but also across difference culture society. The author will show data regarding the number of demographic data of JKT48 fans based on the number official homepage visitor bellow. The figure 4.1 shows that there is no significant difference between male and female visitors, which means JKT48 has also won the hearts of female fans, since in the beginning 90% of fans and most of the theater visitors dominated by males. However, now as you can see from figure 4.1, the percentage of JKT48 Official HP female visitors has reached 45.85%.



(Source: Dentsu 2015)

Figure 4.1 Number of JKT48 Official Homepage Visitor

4.2 Acceptance of JKT48

Talking about the acceptance of JKT48, there is an obvious relationship to its sister group AKB48 and the one prominent figure that created them, the General Producer Yasushi Akimoto. In our discussion in chapter 2, the author described the history of *Onyanko Club*, the first Idol group in Japan, which influenced its producer to create AKB48 and all sister groups in future. If we looked back to the past, AKB48 was not the first trial, but the author revealed that Akimoto made some strategies based on them. Different with AKB48 that was born independently through audition, Onyanko Club was born through an audition on the popular TV program named *Yuuyake Nyan Nyan*. Onyanko Club created an entirely different image of an idol of that period, which turned to be an ordinary girl who chases her dream and grows up with fans. Onyanko Club has a concept where fans can enjoy their performance on TV after school; fans were conditioned as if they are joining Bukatsu Activity (club activity) after school. There was no ‘idols you can meet everyday’ concept on Onyanko Club, yet Onyanko at once became widely popular

due to the power of its TV Program, which already known by the people across the nation. On the other hand, AKB48 started their activity in a small theater in Tokyo, steadily gathering their fans until they became national idol group.

However, since Onyanko Club was born from Yuuyake Nyan Nyan, they had to break up when that program was stopped being broadcasted. Learning from that experience, 20 years after Onyanko Club broke up, Yasushi Akimoto created AKB48 as a new version of Onyanko Club with a different concept where these girls are born from independent audition and have to struggle to boost their popularity and gain their fans by their ability from zero. AKB48 was created with the concept 'idols that grow with fans', that allows fans to watch their idol growing and actively participating in modifying the journey of their idols. It is almost similar to an RPG adventure game where the player is allowed to choose the character they like and make them become a stronger character with extraordinary appearance. This direct experience of user enjoying the product that sold became a system in AKB48 including JKT48 and other sister groups. Also, there are many innovations in AKB48 such as handshake events and general elections that are used by the management team to keep the popularity of AKB48 for an extended period. AKB48 has just celebrated their 10th year with another surprise that graduated member Atsuka Maeda, Yuuko Oshima, Tomomi Itano, Shinoda Mariko, and graduating member Minami Takahashi will join a 10th-year-anniversary single in next Spring.

Yasushi Akimoto as the general producer of 48 family decided to create the first overseas sister group of AKB48 in Jakarta 4 years ago. One year after the formation of JKT48, they won many awards in Indonesian music industry. They won The Best New Comers, The Best Single Act, The Best Costume and The Best Single Award in Hai Magazine Award 2013. They also won The Best Group and The Most Die Hard Fan Award in Yahoo! OMG! Awards 2013. They also got many awards from different categories like New Wave Marketing Recognition Awards from MarkPlus Award 2013, and they could finally prove to the Indonesian people that they deserved to win AMI Awards 2014 & 2015, which is the most prestigious

award in the Indonesian music industry. This achievement has successfully brought JKT48 to the top of popularity in Indonesia. Now everyone knows JKT48 as the idol group with die-hard fans, and he or she turned to be the most popular female “Idol” group in Indonesia, at the same time Haruka Nakagawa (the former AKB48 transferred to JKT48) also became the most popular Japanese artist in Indonesia.

This is the first time in AKB48 history to send their member Haruka Nakagawa to Jakarta in 2012. Now that Haruka is shining, many Indonesians even say that they only know Melody and Haruka as members of JKT48 since they have too many members, so nobody remembers all their names. In an interview with Sponichi Annex on April 16th, 2013, Haruka talked about her decision to transfer to JKT48 and her experiences.

“My dream is to become an actress. I think Jakarta is a great place to start. Many people told me, “Why do you have to go to Jakarta to become an actress? You cannot get jobs in Japan if you go there!” It is true that if I stayed, I would probably get 2 or 3 jobs every year. However, becoming fluent in Indonesian, appearing in dramas over there, I think it helps with exposure because more people will know about me. Indonesia’s population is not small, and getting much support there will probably be big news in Japan too (laughs). I also want to learn English and make it to Hollywood.”

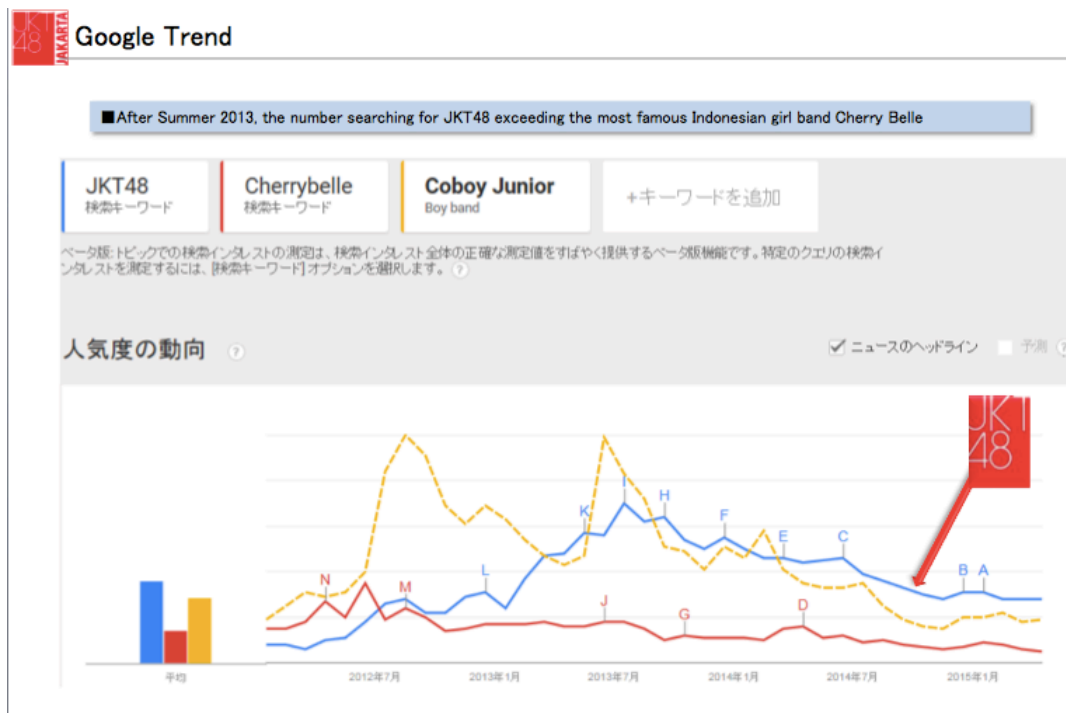
“I am living it to the fullest (laughs). Everyone around me says I am vivacious; Akimoto Sensei said it looks like I’m enjoying myself. I think the change of environment was a good one.”

Furthermore, in an interview with Another Sky two years, later on, December 12th, 2014, Nakagawa talked about her life and experiences living in Jakarta after two years.

“If I have to go back to AKB48, I had better graduate because I want to be here until JKT48 is done. So I think I will not definitely go back to AKB48.”

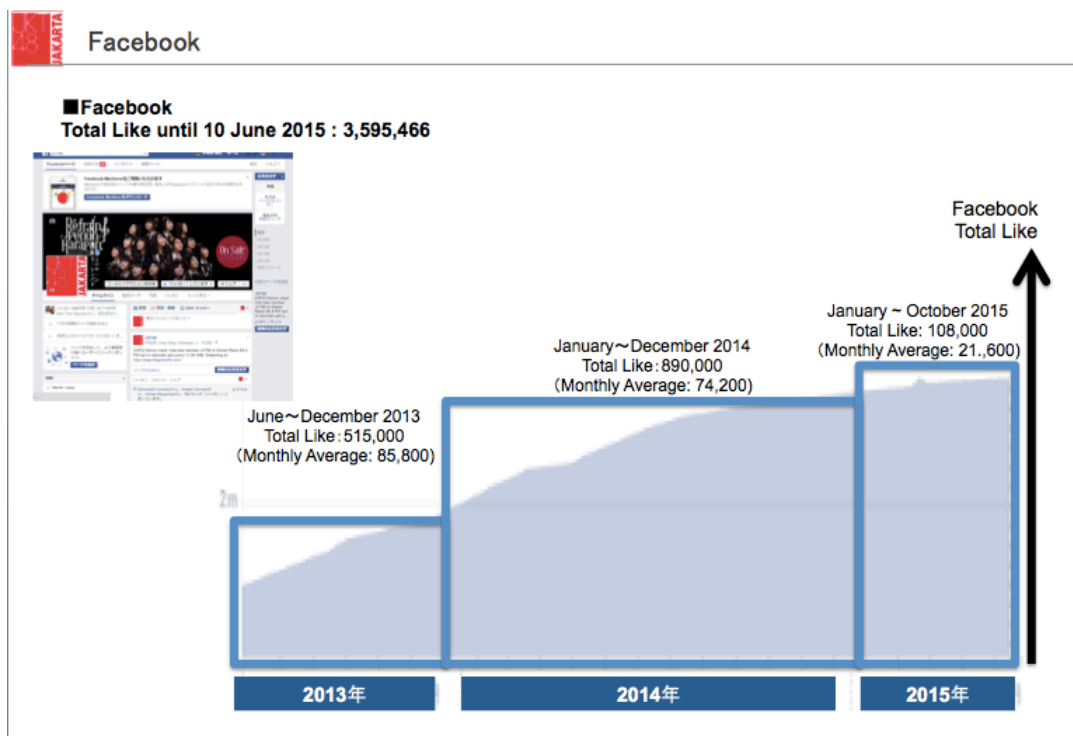
“For me, Jakarta is the place where I could be myself, at the same time the place where I could express myself.”

Nakagawa Haruka has managed to prove that she could do better in JKT48 in two years instead of being an AKB48 member. She learned many things about the cultural difference between Indonesia and Japan and trying to adapt to Indonesian cultures. The author was born and grew up in Indonesia, and the author realized that there were no foreign artists who decided to live in Indonesia and became very famous like Haruka Nakagawa did. This is such the greatest achievement for Haruka herself, especially when she won the 2nd position in JKT48 general election 2015, which proved that she already got so many local fans there. Compared to another idol group like girls band in Indonesia, the author found that JKT48 already got a special place in the heart of their fans as mentioned on the graphic bellow.



(Source: Dentsu 2015)

Figure 4.2 Number of Most Searched Words on Google



(Source: Dentsu 2015)

Figure 4.3 Number of Facebook Likes

Founded in 2011, the cute, young first idol group in Indonesia JKT48 has quite a significant fanbase in Jakarta area and elsewhere, and its obvious sign that JKT48 is accepted by Indonesian society. As the author already mentioned several times in the previous chapter that JKT48 originally brought the AKB48 concept 'idol you can meet everyday,' JKT48 has completely similar concept with their sister group AKB48, yet there are some modifications and localizations applied to win the hearts of Indonesian fans. Unlike other Pop Idols in Indonesia, JKT48 regularly performs in its theater. Murayama (2011) in his book "5 secrets of AKB48's success" studied that since the launch of AKB48 was the project that supports those girls dreams to be achieved, it was important to let the AKB48 members recognize that fans are the most important thing. He also added that AKB48 is formed by the story of the members, which means they are not fixed stories but rather the story that always leads to another story. So their fans will be excited to see another new chapter of their story time to time.

Members are promoted by Dentsu Media Group Indonesia, and now they are appointed to be the brand ambassador of some Japanese products in Indonesia like Honda, Glico, and Pocari Sweat (Dentsu, 2015). Since their target markets are Indonesian youngsters, appointing JKT48 is the most appropriate strategy in gaining the profit and strengthening their brand image. Aoyagi (2005) explained that Dentsu is a leading advertising agency in Japan and serves as a matchmaker between promotion agencies (which offer talents) and Marketing Corporations (which hire talent selectively for advertisements to heighten the image of advertised products). Furthermore, the benefit is not only coming to the company that hires JKT48 to be their ambassador, but also to boost up the popularity among the ordinary people. In fact, nearly 41% or 126 questionnaire respondents revealed that they know JKT48 for the first time from TV commercial.



(Source: Dentsu, 2015)

Figure 4. 4 JKT48 on Pocky Package and Advertisements



(Source: Dentsu 2015)

Figure 4.5 JKT48 Appointed as Honda Brand Ambassador

It is not always about Japanese company in Indonesia that chose JKT48 as their brand ambassador; Indonesian herbal company Sido Muncul has also appointed JKT48 as Tolak Angin (Indonesian herbal product to cure a cold) brand ambassador in order to strengthen their brand image. The Product Manager of Sido Muncul Group stated that Tolak Angin is known as a very mature product; therefore they want to expand their market among the teenager segment. She realizes that the teenager market has been a huge market since there are more than 10 millions teenagers aged 10 to 15 in Indonesia. These days, teenagers have an important role to introduce how great the Indonesian medical herbal is to the next generations, so they must aware of it³⁸. The JKT48 members' appointment as "Tolak Angin Ambassador" became a strong indication of the JKT48 acceptance in Indonesia in general.

³⁸ ["JKT48 Didaulat Jadi Duta Produk herbal"](#) Pikiran Rakyat Online Accessed in 2 February 2016



(Source: Dentsu 2015)

Figure 4.6 JKT48 in Tolak Angin Commercial

Inspired by the JKT48 great success, the Jakarta government has appointed idol group JKT48 to be the city's tourism ambassador. JKT48 take up the remarkable job of helping the city government to increase tourist arrivals, which stood at 2.13 million last year. Jakarta Culture and Tourism Agency head Arie Budiman stated that JKT48 was deliberately selected as Jakarta would target Japanese tourists, whose number has continuously declined over the last few years. According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), foreign tourist arrivals reached 8.8 million in 2013, with over 492.000 from Japan³⁹. Arie revealed that JKT48 was pointed to become a brand ambassador for the Jakarta city because the group is not popular only in Indonesia, but also in Japan. He expected that by bringing the girls of JKT48 he is optimistic that JKT48 will boost the positive image to the city and improve its tourism promotional activities both in Indonesia and in Japan. Harris Thayeb, CEO of Dentsu Aegis Network Indonesia, stated that the collaboration between the government of Jakarta and JKT48 would bring the relationship between Indonesia and Japan closer.

³⁹["Editorial: Pop Culture for Tourism."](#) Jakarta Post. Accessed in 14 December 2015

Japanese visitors to Indonesia would then not only visit Bali but also travel to Jakarta.



(Source: Dentsu, 2015)

Figure 4.7 Press Conference Enjoy Jakarta in Tokyo

4.3 JKT48 Theater as a New Excitement for People in Jakarta Area

The researcher did field research during summer break to experience the ambiance in JKT48 Theater and to investigate the reasons that JKT48 could keep their loyal fans coming, willing to spend time and money on them, through in-depth interview and random surveys, the results of which will be discussed and analyzed in Chapter 5. Upon visiting the theater, the researcher discovered that a lot of those fans are gathering as groups while enjoying their conversation about JKT48. Before entering the theater, the researcher had to queue through “Bingo” (a term used for the queue entry): basically, the queue is divided into two groups by colors and numbers, and every audience member holds a number that will be drawn, so that they must wait for the bingo order allocation that takes place 45 minutes before the show begins. There will also be a security check that everyone must pass without an

exception. Ticket holders have specific seats and areas already assigned to them, so they are not allowed to sit on a seat that has a different color from the ticket they hold.

The show started immediately after members appeared on the stage. The light sticks were lit, and “Wota” (a term for obsessive fans of an Idol group) were ready. While they were singing, “Wota” also had the same rhythm in swinging their light sticks and completed with the chant as if they were watching their favorite soccer team. They were shouting the name of the member who was singing at that time and kept swinging their light sticks during the show. There was an MC session after singing four songs in every session, which became an interaction time between members and fans, but one-directional from the members to the audience. In these sessions, members will talk about certain topics prepared in advance, and it will be a different topic in every show so that fans never get bored with this session. They sang approximately 17 songs, yet the interesting thing was that before the last song, there was a session when fans shouted “Ankoru” (encore or repeat in the Japanese language) for two minutes non-stop. Member continued to sing the last four songs and the show ended with all members bowing with a smile and thanking the audience. When the show was over, there was a session where the audience could high-five directly with members along the gate before they left the theater.

Finally, after experiencing the JKT48 Theater from a fan standpoint, the researcher felt that JKT48 has successfully created an exclusive performance where fans can directly interact with their idol and be satisfied with their service. The capacity of the theater is noticeably smaller than the normal venue for live performance, which is designed to lessen the distance between idol and fan. Furthermore, the researcher could see if there was an active interaction between members and fans: some of the members even remembered the names of fans and called some of them during the high-five session. The energy that was bursting out from surrounding Wota since the beginning of the show, and the crowd at every show, proved that JKT48 Theater is just not the ordinary venue where an artist gives

a performance – it is rather a place where people can get amused and feel satisfied with the whole performance of JKT48 members because of the active communication between members and fans. As seen through the author's observation, Idol culture, which was originally born in Japan, was adopted by Indonesia and is gradually being accepted by some communities. Therefore, today JKT48 may be considered as a new hobby for some people where they are willing to spend time and money. As long as they get excited and feel satisfied, they would not care how much money they spent on it.

As the focus of this thesis is JKT48 as a Pop-Culture Phenomenon, the author will analyze the acceptance of JKT48, the function of JKT48 Theater as a new excitement and the potential positive and negative influence of Idol Culture among Indonesian teenagers through in-depth interviews and questionnaire results that proposed as the proper methodologies to give the answer correctly. Since this study draws on multiple proximities frameworks, the author filtered the data that are related to the goal of this thesis.

5.

Finding and Discussion

5.1 In-depth Interview Findings

The open-ended interview was conducted in Jakarta during 7th September until 18th September 2015. The interviewees consisted of 4 females and 16 males. From the total of 20 interviewees, the author found that there are several reasons why they often visit the theater and willingly spend much money on them. The author tried to summarize them as bellow:

1. JKT48 performance could relieve their stress and fatigue after works or school, especially when they got attention from a favorite member. In fact, it encourages them to do the rest of their office tasks or school homework after watching the performance because JKT48 live performance could release their stress.
2. They willingly spend time and money on JKT48 as a hobby like someone addicted to sports, automotive, and traveling.
3. All of the interviewees are entertained by watching the JKT48 performance in Theatre. Many of them used to spend their money on movie or karaoke until they found new excitement inside the theater.
4. They could meet a lot of new friends with the same interest and built community to share curiosity of JKT48 episode from day to day. Mostly they are talking about members' performances, general election, and many things during the show.
5. Handshake Events become the most interesting part since they are allowed to talk directly with the member as long as they want.

6. Many interviewees answered that JKT48 Theater is an additional choice of entertainment rather than go to the cinema or hanging out in coffee shop or bar.

The result of an in-depth interview about the function of JKT48 performance from a fan's perspective revealed that idol fans are so lively in front of their idols and friends because they are amused and have their stress relieved. The result can be linked with the theory about Idol performance stated by Aoyagi (2005) that say idol concerts offer a ritualized space for fans to isolate themselves from the rest of their society, which is perceived to be an arena full of stress, and regain their sense of self through the power of idols to heal their broken hearts and anxious feelings. This theory was proved by the answer of all interviewees explaining that their main reasons to visit and watch members' performances is to get away from the reality, which gives them kind of pressure for a while, and are ready to deal with it again after releasing their stress by visiting the theater.

The author found that members have considerable power to get the fans attracted to visit theater frequently because members somehow could make the fan feels happy and forgets all their life problems during the show. As the result, they still want to visit theater again and become addicted to it. They are willing to spend their money on their hobby without enforcement as long as it meets their budgets every month. Aoyagi (2005) studied that in the competitive world of consumer capitalism, the survival of idols is independent of how many idols can continue to attract people and sell their images. To survive, JKT48 member should be able to continue to attract their fans, keep influencing them, and sell their images through theater in particular, and other events.

President Director Dentsu Media Group Indonesia Harris Tayeb, in the interview with Mata Najwa elucidated that he is not just thinking of the business side, he also discovered that most of the fans are willing to be the fans just not because JKT48 is popular and there is no distance between the idols and fans, but

also fans themselves could develop better personality. Aoyagi (2005) argues that seeing an average child grow into a big star is what makes Idol performances all the more exciting. If successful, an idol will become an undisputed leader who can stand on the mountaintop of popularity. Climbing this mountain is not easy, however. On the way, idols must face various obstacles. Only those who overcome these obstacles with their patience and charm can win the hearts of many people. Since idol and fan are human beings, so they will sometimes meet some barriers and need to overcome them. In this case, fans are highly motivated and inspired by the idols. The value exchange was so great that both fans and idol are mutually inspiring and inspired each other. The author's statement is supported by the answer of fans mentioned below:

“The most interesting part of being an idol fan, is we can grow together with the idol, and we can meet our idol whenever we want” (Hanif, 28 years old, Male, Lecturer)

“Idol is different with existing girls band, they all started from zero, from someone who can not do anything, and became someone with a certain skill. Members are willing to receive feedback from fans, and they keep growing gradually” (Dea, 21 years old, Female, College Student)

“They (JKT48) are very open and close to fans. JKT48 motivated me. I am motivated to work harder since they are also working hard to grow.” (Aji, 19 years old, Male, College Student)

“Since I began to be one of JKT48 fan from the very beginning, I became a more positive person” (Erwin, 25 years old, Male, Private Employee)

“Stella (one of aJKT48 member that already graduated) motivated me, and then I successfully finished my thesis. Idol directly influenced me in taking important decision that is finding a job in Jakarta even though it took a year until I finally found job that suits me” (Ekan, 23 years old, Male, Private Employee)

“I like the concept “growing together with fans” since you have chance to see your idol growing, at the same time you are also growing in a positive way” (Naz, 25 years old, Male, Private Employee)

Aoyagi (2005) elaborated that in contemporary Japanese popular culture and mass society, the successful idol is considered charismatic because they demonstrate

the transformation from an ordinary young person to an extraordinary figure that influences the public. He also added that in Japan, charisma encompasses a person's abilities to face challenges, overcome struggles, and accomplish dreams against all odds. In a similar vein, Simpson (1993) examined the popularity of Brazil's pop star Xuxa and the cultural strategy of mega-marketing that promoted her public impact. Simpson demonstrated how Xuxa's child-friendly image on television told her viewers, especially young audiences, about the meaning of beauty, power, success, and happiness.

Thereby, the author believes that JKT48 influences their fans' confidence to overcome struggles and achieve success no matter how hard the life is. One thing that should be understood: fans are not passive. Jenkins (1992) stated that fans are not mindless consumers who are passive and take everything for granted, yet people are no longer striving for use value but rather the exchange value. Another factor that is appealing from JKT48 is the process of growth and thus imperfection they sell. Same as McDonald's that emphasize on its quantity instead of quality (Ritzer 1998), JKT48 itself emphasizes its quantity. Fans are enjoying the process of their growth, every single story of their journey, which become their selling point.

The author was very curious about the reason they will spend their money on the theater. According to the answers of the interviewees, their reason for visiting JKT48 Theater varies, such as a stress reliever, a hobby, entertainment, a place to meet friends and share talks.

"I come here almost every weekend to relieve my stress" (Reza 23 years old, Male, Private Employee)

"When we are watching them laughing, we also laugh, and it is so releasing my stress" (Putu 24 years old, Male, Master Student)

"Since the first time I came to watch them in theater, they made me feel enjoy. Especially when I am in a bad mood, somehow I will suddenly become happy. Watching their performance makes me feel relaxed. (Erwin 25 years old, Male, Private Employee)

“I spent much money on JKT48 as if enjoying my hobby. It is like when your hobby is watching a movie and you willingly spend your money on it.” (Rere, 25 years old, Male, Private Employee)

“I always miss the theater itself, the whole things in the theater. I feel like every time I see their performance, I will find new things” (Hanif, 28 years old, Male, Lecturer)

“I want to be entertained by them” (Afifah, 20 years old, Female, Univ Student)

“I often talk with new friends in theater even to strangers because of the same curiosity” (Rangga, 28 years old, Male, Private Employee)

“I am happy because I got lots of friends, even some of them are coming from outside Jakarta area” (Alvi, 17 years old, Male, Senior High School Student)

The author found that different with male fans; the female fans tend to admire the member and motivated to be better especially in appearance. This is an interesting fact because both fans and member are girls, and they share similar emotion and thought in some cases.

“At the beginning, I watched Nabilah (Member of team J) on a local TV program. Since that, I became curious and tried to find her video on Youtube and started to follow her Twitter.” (Afifah, 20 years old, Female, College Student)

“I am motivated by Melody (General Captain) to be a beautiful girl. Melody once told me to wear a skirt to look more feminine” (Cici, 19 years old, Female, College student)

Weber (1968) and Shils (1965) argued that idols could become the objects of public adoration because they are charismatic personality. So, JKT48 members considered having a charismatic personality, so they became public admiration, and fans are influenced by their words and actions. Furthermore, Aoyagi (2005) argues that enthusiastic Idol fans treat idol goods as a symbolic object and use them to create their versions of a shrine for the worship of their idols. JKT48 fans once were

allowed to send their idols with gifts, which were regarded as offerings, and the effective way to draw the idol's attention.

5.2 Questionnaire Findings

5.2.1 Basic Demographic Characteristics

The author had distributed an online questionnaire and received 334 respondents. The questionnaire was posted on 3rd November until 6th November 2015 through JKT48 fans communities across Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi through *Twitter* and *WhatsApp*. The questionnaire was meant to check the demography of fans such as gender, age, status, and income distributions, also the occupations. It is also aimed to understand the potential positive and negative impact of JKT48 and its theater for the fans.

- **Gender Distributions**

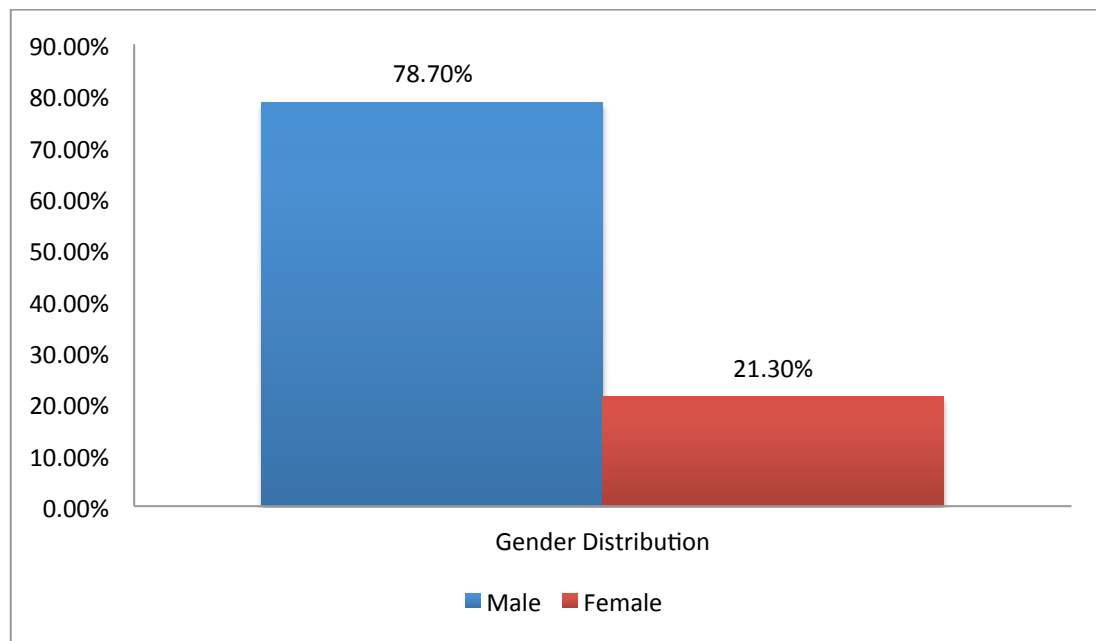


Figure 5.1 Gender Distributions

The result shows that JKT48 fans is still dominated by male fans, yet according to the JKT48 operational team, the number of young female visitors in theater has been increasing compared to the previous years. Since the author has been working with JKT48 and team for more four years, the author can say that there is an enhancement of female fans that devoted themselves to be loyal fans and frequently visit their theater in FX Plaza Sudirman.

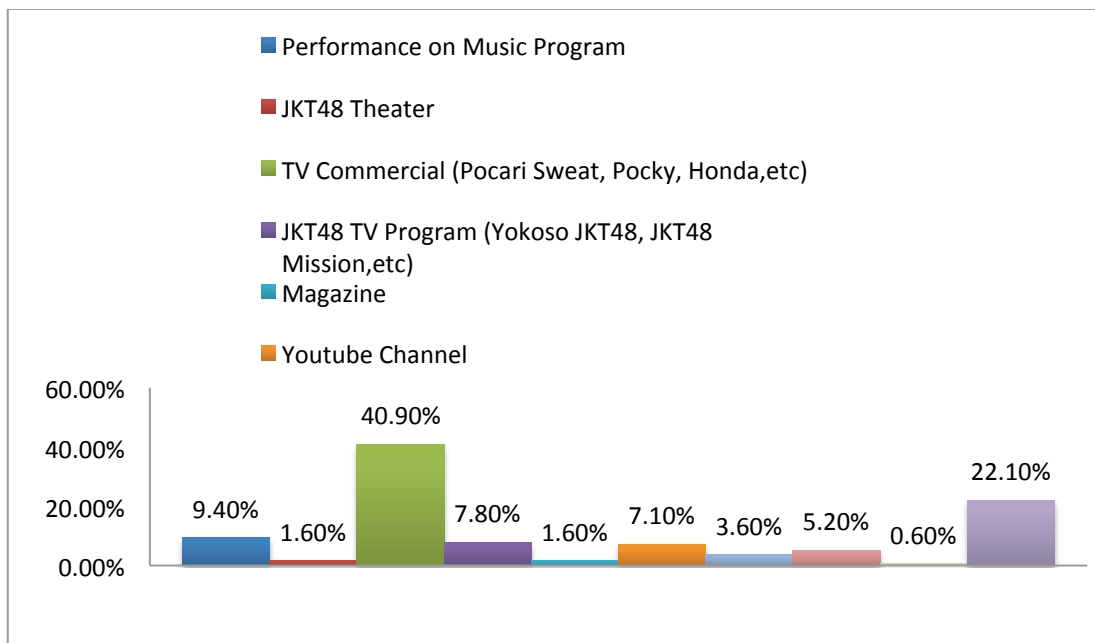


Figure 5.2 Percentage of the Media in spreading JKT48

From figure 5.2 The author found that media especially TV commercial has given strong influence in gaining the popularity and acceptance of JKT48, in particularly those who do not know about J-Pop.

- **Age Distributions**

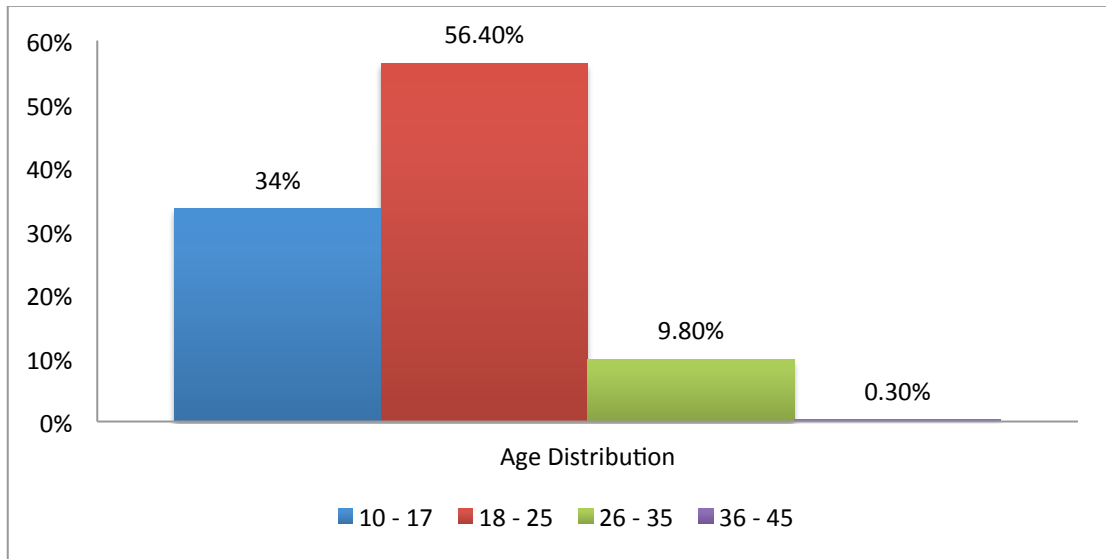


Figure 5.3 Age Distributions

The total sample consisted of 334 respondents, of whom 56.4% are aged 18-25. This result shows us that majority of fans are youngsters who already graduated from senior high school, and then either continued to university or started to work. However, some fans below 18 years old reached 33.5%, which means JKT48 is also popular among the younger generation indeed. Since JKT48 was born in 2011, there might be some fans that were in senior high school when they discovered JKT48 for the first time, but now some of them already graduated and work or go to college. Speaking about being a loyal fan, there are lots of fans that know JKT48 since this idol group just started to be known by the public, yet they only began to visit the theater two years after because they did not have friends to go with, and some of them did not know how to purchase the tickets.

- **Status Distributions**

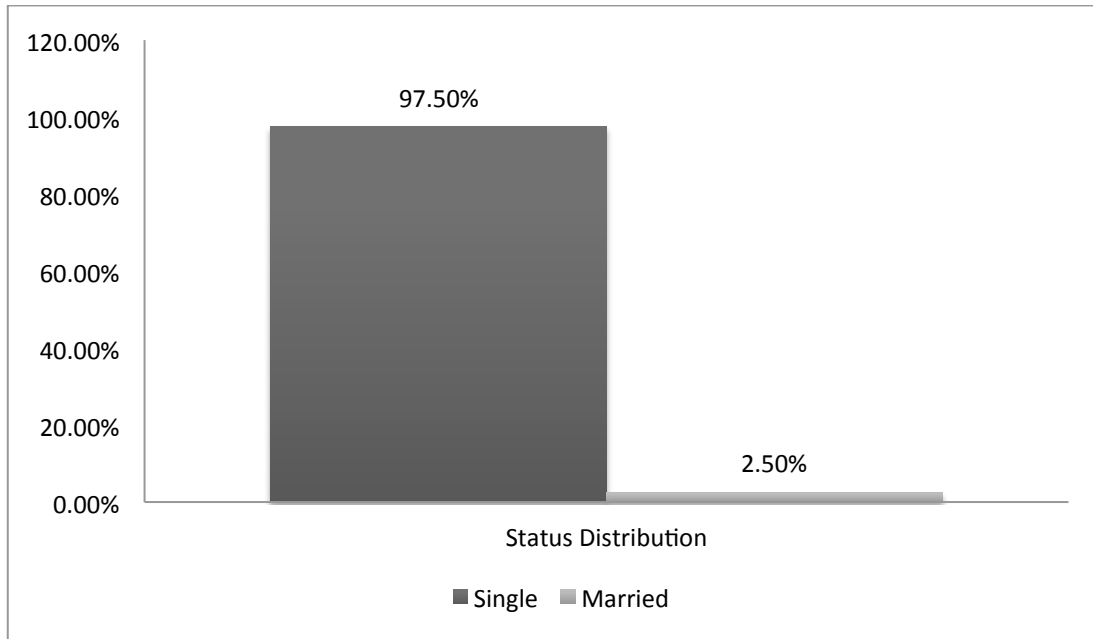


Figure 5.4 Status Distributions

The author discovered the interesting fact that 97.5% of the respondents are single. From 16 male interviewees, only one who has a girlfriend, while some of them broke up after they became idol fans, even the reason was seemingly not because they started to be JKT48 fans.

“I had a girlfriend. She did not prohibit me, as long as I let her know and still am able to spend time with her” (Christofer, 27 years old, Male, Businessman)

“Once I had a girlfriend. However, since she prohibited from coming to the theater when we were in relationship, I had to respect her” (Erwin, 25 years old, Male, Private Employee)

Unlike AKB48 fans, most of the JKT48 fans are unmarried and still at young ages. Meanwhile, most of the AKB48 fans are older men who already married and have a family. In Indonesia, if someone gets married and has a family, they will be embarrassed to read manga or even play games in public spaces, which is considered a childish action. Indonesian men have a high pride in terms of this issue, therefore,

even if there might be lots of married men who admire JKT48, they mostly will keep it as a secret and refrain from visiting the theater because people have a stereotype that married man who go to watch young girls performances especially idol groups will be judged as pervert men. The author believes that people are having this kind of stereotype because of cultural differences.

- **Distribution of Occupation**

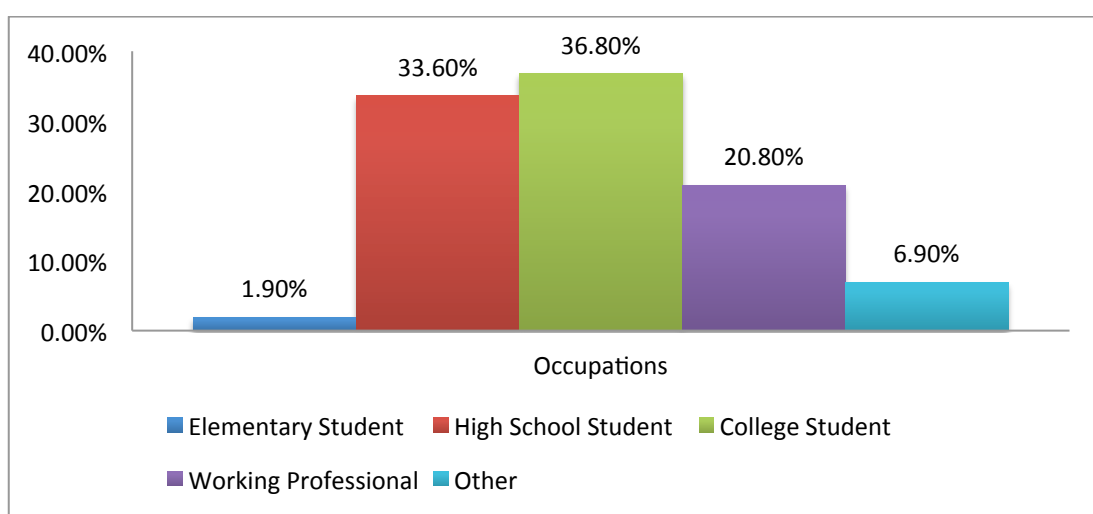


Figure 5.5 Distributions of Occupation

According to the result of this data, we could understand that nearly 70% of respondents are students. Even though more than 20% are workers, still the majority of fans are in school or college age, which revealed that many of them are saving their pocket money to purchase the ticket for the theater. In Indonesia, it is unusual for students to work a part-time job and earn money from it. So there is a condition when they have to refrain from buying other things they used to consume or going to the place they used to go. In this kind of situation, student fans must take the decision to fulfill their needs. The author found some facts revealed that before they became JKT48 fans, they used to spend their money mostly on food and cinema.

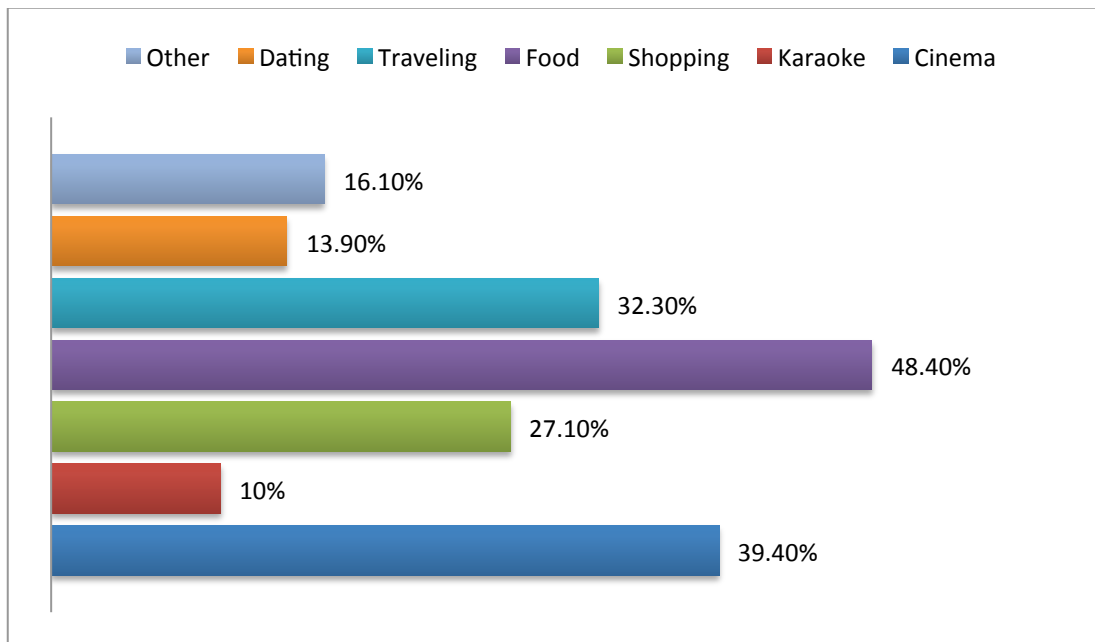


Figure 5.6 Percentages of Alternative Consumptions before Becoming JKT48 Fans

From Figure 5.6 the author found that there is a tendency of JKT48 fans to spend money when they finally find new excitement in the theater and join some events like handshake events and general elections, and they tend to devote more money to it. Since now JKT48 including Theater has become a new hobby for them, no matter how much they spend, as long as they feel pleasure, money would not be a big object.

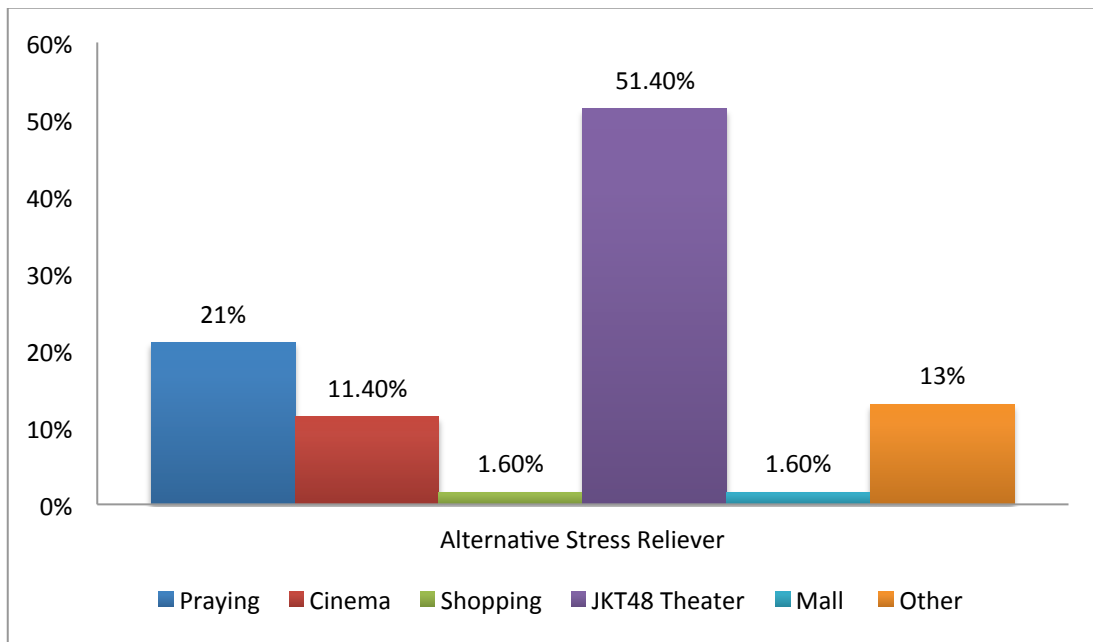


Figure 5.7 Percentages of Alternative Stress Reliever

The percentage in alternative stress reliever among JKT48 fans shown in figure 5.7 above revealed that the fans pay their money to acquire the privilege offered by JKT48 to enjoy honestly what they see and feel, so fans can heal the distress that comes from their social interactions. From this fact, the author thinks that JKT48 Theater can be considered as a stress reliever for fans since most of them tend to go to visit the theater rather than go for praying or watching a movie.

- **Income Distributions**

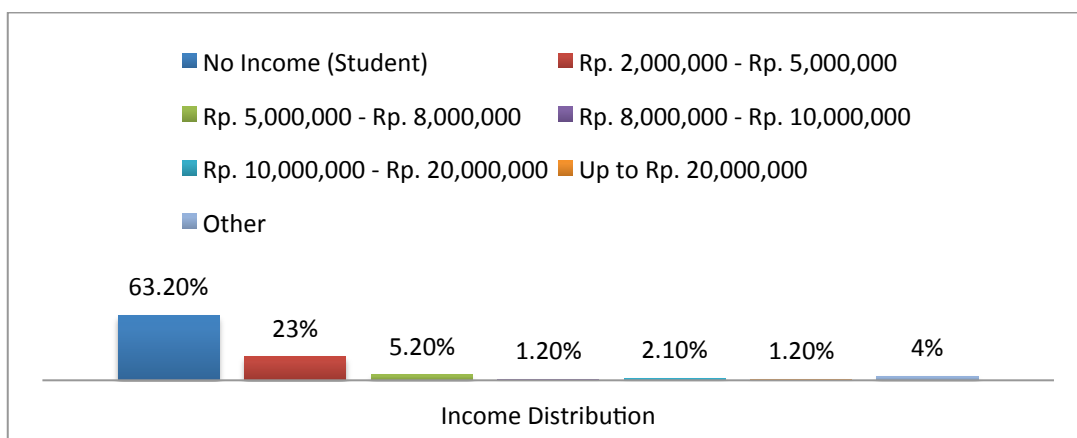


Figure 5.8 Income Distributions

One of the most interesting thing in the JKT48 model is their fans are mostly people in a young age that means they are mostly students with zero income. This is contrast with AKB48 fans where many of older men willingly spend their money on theater, goods and CD to vote for their idol particularly in general election. JKT48 fans are not only people who live in the Jakarta area, but also fans who live hundred or even thousands of kilometers away, called 'far fans', that are only able to support them through social media and to purchase their CD online since most of them are students and don't have much money to visit the theater. The total sample consisted of 334 respondents, of whom 55.7% are spending less than 300.000 Indonesian Rupiah (equal to 3.000 Japanese Yen), which indicates that most of the fans are visiting the theater at least 1 to 4 times in a month.

"I always visit theater 2 to 3 times in a month" (Alvin, 17 years old, Male, Student)

"I will watch the theater every two weeks" (Rheza, 24 years old, Male, Private Employee)

"I come to the theater at least once in a month to meet my idol Nabilah" (Afifah, 20 years old, Female, Student)

"I watch their performance in theater 2 to 3 times in a month" (Erwin, 25 years old, Male, Private employee)

There are even some fans that are addicted in JKT48 Theater that makes them come to the theater more than three times in a week, as long as they do not ask their parents for money.

"I come to theater 3 to 5 times in a week. I willingly spent my money because I have my own business, so I never ask my parents for that" (Aji, 19 years old, Male, Student)

Hamano (2012) stated that AKB48 is a system that requires you to try at least once to understand the merit. It is obviously like a game where you have to attempt to play or else you won't get the fun part. He emphasized that whatever it is, for

instance, theater, handshake events or general elections, once you try to join it, then you will understand. In this case, JKT48 Theater and other idol-fan events are becoming a place to have fun and mutually gain benefit from it.

5.3 Positive Impacts of JKT48

In this part, the author will explain potential positive and negative influences brought by JKT48 to the fans in particular and the Indonesian society in general based on the result of both in-depth interview and questionnaire. From the 334 questionnaire respondents, 63.9% of them do not like Indonesian original girl band. Most of respondents answered that they like JKT48 because JKT48 has their theater, unique concept, and good fan service, which was not adopted by any single girls band.

“Because the notion of the girl band is still the same as another musician in Indonesia, they created a single, an album and appeared on TV but they never actually touch their fans, the fans never felt been close to them, and there are no guarantee for their fans to meet them, different with JKT48 who held Theater almost everyday.” (Anonymous Respondent)

“They sold fantasies. They got into a lot of young men's heads and made them think that the members have some special feelings for them. Moreover, with the handshake event, they took the fantasies to the next level and made some of the fans a die-hard defender of JKT48.” (Anonymous Respondent)

“They have strategy that can be imitated by other girls band like regular show in theater, and we would get a gimmick if we bought their single” (Anonymous Respondent)

From those answers above, the author found that JKT48 could create new experiences and sell the fantasies to their fans. The regular show in the theater is regarded as the best strategy to keep their fans on the concept of ‘Idol you can meet’ which obviously worked within the Indonesian community. As the author already explained in the previous section, JKT48 indirectly gives their fans positive influence. Many fan communities are born because of the same hobby and share stories about members. The author met one of the communities named PAO48. They consisted of

12 male members with the different range of ages and living place and often gather in FX Plaza at least once in a week. This community has been doing many creative activities such as creating songs, video parody, performing in the fans events, doing a photo shoot, playing golf and futsal together. These activities are regarded as positive activities that develop their talent and fulfill their interest and hobby with other group members.



(Source: PAO48, 2015)

Figure 5.9 PAO48 Members with JKT48 Graduated Member Andela

Most of the interviewees argued that instead of going to the night club, drinking alcohol, using drugs which are considered as bad habits from the Indonesian point of view, it is way better for them to visit theater and do some positive activities with their theater's friends. For instance, there were some groups who did negative things such as fightings and even some of them were alcohol addicts. But, since they knowing JKT48 they admitted that they would never do that again since they have

spent so much time on their new hobby that is Idoling. They could interact with fellow fans, exchanging information and get a lot of friends, and this change surely considered as the positive impact of idoling

Moreover, there are also some fans that are doing such business as their side job while enjoying their hobby as idol fans. The author found that there was a talent management business ‘The Happy Kingdom’ that formed and managed by some fans.



(Source: [Kejepangyuk.com](http://kejepangyuk.com)⁴⁰, 2015)

Figure 5.10 Happy Kingdom Festival Poster

⁴⁰ "Happy Kingdom Festival, Acara Musik Bertemakan Idol di Indonesia"
<http://kejepangyuk.com/happy-kingdom-festival-acara-musik-bertemakan-idol-di-indonesia/>
accessed on November 2015.

The Happy Kingdom, Inc. itself is a talent management with a vision to facilitate cooperation between talented people from different fields to work together to do something bigger. HKI Inc is now working with a wide variety of talented people in various fields such as songwriter, comic illustrator, singer, filmmaker, photographer and many more. Recently Happy Kingdom held an event where local Idols performed on the stage and enjoyed a talk show with their fans.

Since JKT48 is expected to be a bridge between Indonesia and Japan, particularly in cultural activity, through the Cool Japan project supported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, JKT48 last year created the first made-in-Japan TV content: namely, 'YOKOSO JKT48.' This project allowed JKT48 members to visit various places in Japan and to promote its hidden attraction to Indonesian audiences to boost the number of Japan lovers in the country.



(Source: Dentsu, 2014)

Figure 5.11 JKT48 Performing Nebuta Dance in Aoyama

“I always watched YOKOSO JKT48 with my little sisters, and they are more interested in Japan after watching this program” (Putu, 24 years old, Male, Master Student)

“Last time I went to Japan in April and visited some places promoted on YOKOSO JKT48. Whenever I watched them eating delicious Japanese foods, I always wondering to try the foods. I still remember when they had horse meat, it seems horrific, and I cannot just imagine if I have it by myself” (Christofer, 27 years old, Male, Businessman)

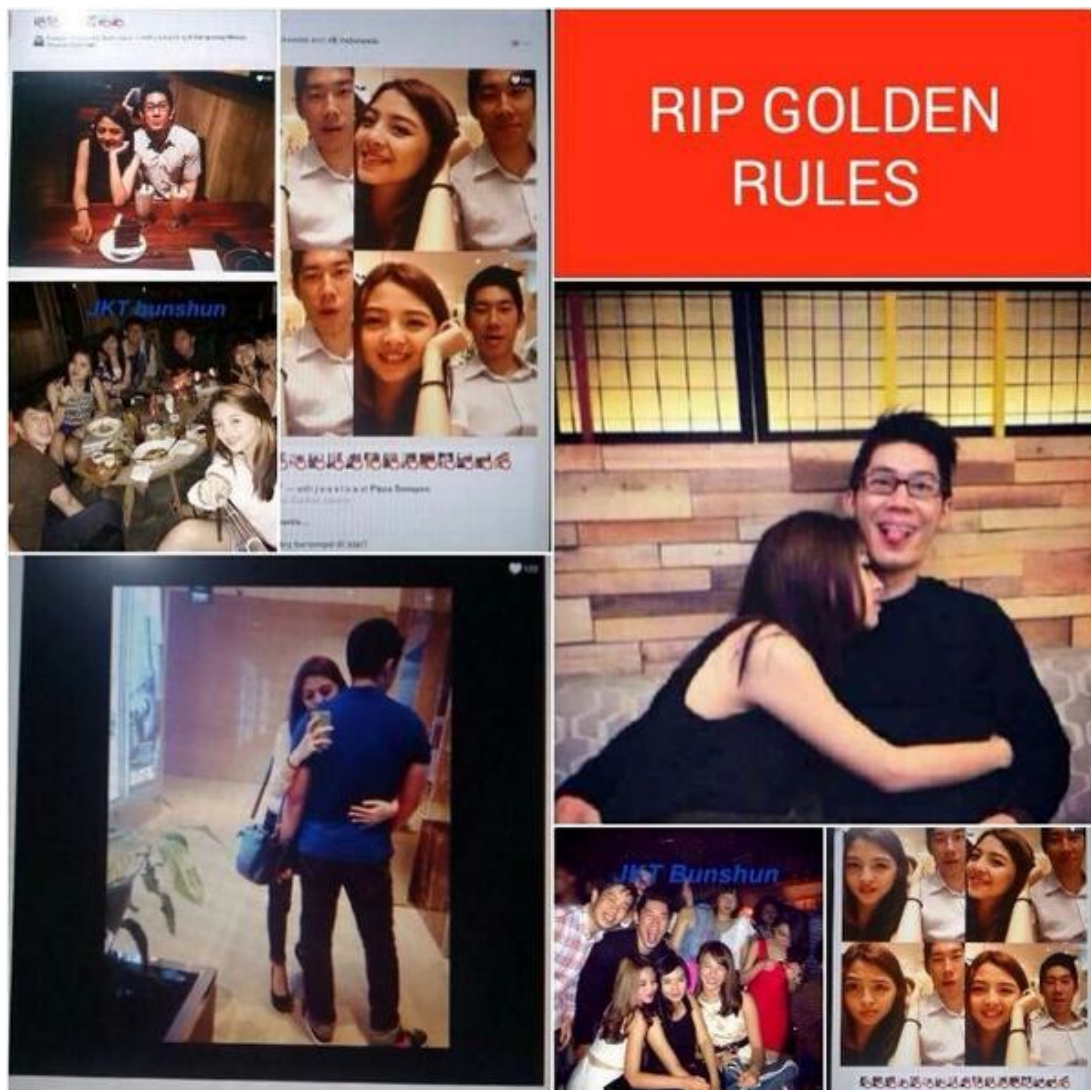
The author also took part in this project as an interpreter and actively joined the meeting and gave them many ideas regarding the contents. YOKOSO JKT48 became the first Indonesian local TV program made by Japan, where the production staffs for shooting are all Japanese that resulted in Japan-quality content. Finally, YOKOSO JKT48 was expected to show the beauty and culture of Japan to Indonesian audiences, so when they have a chance to visit Japan, they will have many alternative places to visit across the country instead of visiting the most famous destination in Japan, Tokyo, and Kyoto.

5.4 Negative Impacts of JKT48

Besides, there are also some potential negative impacts of idol cultures that have been brought by JKT48 and its theater. From in-depth interviews, the author found that many of interviewees spent too much money on JKT48. Even though they try so hard to save their money, but in the end they would spend all their savings to buy swags such as photo packs, CD, T-shirts, etc. There was even a fan who spent millions rupiahs to buy the member's thing in the charity event that is considered as prodigality. Second, many of them often waste a lot of time on watching member's activity on *twitter*; they use their time for googling member's activities and watching JKT48 new videos on YouTube. These kinds of activity often make them forget the time; even some of them miss their lunch or dinner, and waste their time for googling until late night. Third, most of male fans do not have girlfriends because they are too busy on idolizing activity as if JKT48 member is their girlfriend. In fact, many of them broke up with their girlfriends because of idolizing activity forced them to spend much time on it instead of spending time with girlfriends.

Furthermore, some fans sometimes stalk the members especially when they are outside theater, the author found that even some of them stalked the members until their home or even school. This stalking behavior might be related to harassment and may include following the member in person or monitoring them since some of fanatic fans think that member belongs to them. Based on the result

of the questionnaire, the author found that 67% respondents agree with “Love Ban Rule” which force the member will not have any relationship with any guy. This is because idol is a symbol of purity; they must be distant from scandalous romance and acts that consider immoral. One of JKT48 members Jeje was caught having a relationship with guy. Her pictures were leaked online that led the offensive comments from fanatic fan, so Jeje finally apologized in tears in front of her fans in theater.



(Source: Beranda.co.id⁴¹, 2016)

Figure 5.12 Jeje’s Pictures with Her Boyfriend Leaked Online

⁴¹ “Jeje JKT48 Keluar atau memundurkan diri?” <http://www.beranda.co.id/jeje-jkt48-keluar-atau-memundurkan-diri/200/> accessed on February 2016.

That was Jeje's own decision to do apologize in front of public since she felt guilty about the rumors spread online. She did not clearly mention that she has a boyfriend, yet she apologized because she made her fans worried and troubled. However, all the female interviewees do not care if JKT48 member has a relationship with guy as long as they can keep it secretly from their male fans. This might be understood since Indonesian female fans are more flexible and JKT48 operation team is not as strict as AKB48 management since JKT48 Operational Team did not give any comments regarding JKT48 member scandal, even the Indonesian local media and infotainment never care about it.

The other potential negative impacts that could be considered is since JKT48 was created to be a bridge between Indonesia and Japan, they will be a potential media for Indonesian teenagers to know the existence of AKB48, which means many of teenagers unwittingly will find the information about Gravure Idol which is totally in contradiction with Indonesian culture. In Japan, gravure idol has been commodity to sale and many producers get much profit from them.

6.

Conclusion

6.1 Limitations

We have several limitations to our study:

1. Due to the limitation of the time, we were only able to conduct in-depth interviews with fans that live in the Jabodetabek area. We need to interview fans that live in another region in Indonesia to explore more about their thoughts towards the subject of research.
2. Findings of this study are limited because of the exploratory source of the study and sampling. The main source of JKT48 project research was only from the activity report given by Dentsu. Furthermore, the object of in-depth interviews and questionnaire were only fanatic fans. We would be better to add ordinary people to the list of an informant to explore other perspectives.
3. Since in-depth interviews and questionnaire were conducted in the Indonesian language, there were some limitations in interpreting the proper expression for each quotation mentioned in the discussion part. The transcription of an in-depth interview and some open-ended answers on the questionnaire are not translated into English due to the limitation of time.
4. The scope of this study is a bit narrow since we mainly only discussed about the acceptance of JKT48 and the idol influence towards fans. If we could broaden the subject of this research, we could study more about the management team, JKT48 personnel, marketing strategy or even the other sister group in Shanghai.
5. It was difficult to find the negative impacts of JKT48 since they are still new and developing, and the Idol culture has just been born in Indonesia.

Furthermore, the differences of culture and local value may create different perspective in seeing sexism as discrimination based on gender.

6.2 Conclusion

As discussed in this research, we confirm that the concept of JKT48 which exactly adopts the concept of its sister group AKB48 has been accepted by some communities in Indonesia due to some modifications and localizations. We also found that as the first idol group in Indonesia, JKT48 has successfully gained their popularity and is recognized by the Indonesian music industry since they were awarded some prestigious awards. We also discovered that the media especially TV commercial play a significant role in promoting JKT48 to the people who live outside Jakarta area. JKT48 is also trusted to be a bridge between Indonesia and Japan especially in cultural and tourism exchanges by both governments that became a proof that they are accepted by Indonesian society.

Additionally, we found that JKT48 Theater already became a new alternative excitement for youngsters in Jakarta area who are looking for either stress reliever or an amusement, where they can find a fantasy for a moment. Furthermore, through the in-depth interview and questionnaire analysis, we found that JKT48 not only impresses their fans personally but also gives some positive and negative impacts to them. Male fans are motivated to work harder to accomplish their goal. A lot of fan communities were born, and some of them even created some businesses to make money from this idolizing activity. While the female fans are also motivated to be a multi-talented girl since JKT48 members are able to keep balance between school and work. However there are also some potential negative impacts for fan itself, for instance, many of them could not save their money due to the idol addiction, they also could not manage their time because of too focus on idol activity which escalated to the stalking behavior.

6.3 Further Research

Suggestion for future research will be focusing on:

1. We could explore more perspective about JKT48 as a pop-culture phenomenon in Indonesia by conducting in-depth interviews towards people who live outside Java Island, and adding more respondents from ordinary people to enrich the data also to find out another point of view to our research.
2. We could analyze more about JKT48 from various aspects by broadening the subject of research. With more complex data analysis, we hope to conduct a deeper research about the quality of management service that is required. It would also provide on advantage in making a better contribution to the development of idol culture in Indonesia.

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