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Thai enthusiast community among indonesian youth

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Abstract. This study examines the emergence of Thai popular culture among Indonesian youth through the Thai Enthusiast (Thai Enthu) community, a digital fan-based group centered on T-pop, Thai series, and social media platforms such as TikTok and YouTube. Using Henry Jenkins' Participatory Culture Theory, this qualitative study explores how community members act as active participants who share, discuss, and interpret Thai cultural content rather than as passive consumers. The study addresses two research questions: how the Thai Enthusiast community spreads Thai culture in Indonesia, and what factors make Thai culture popular among Indonesian youth. Data were collected through observation of Thai-related content on TikTok and YouTube, as well as interactions within Thai Enthusiast community groups. The findings show that the community spreads Thai culture through content sharing, participation in viral trends, cultural translation and adaptation, member interaction, and the network effect of social media algorithms. The popularity of Thai culture among Indonesian youth is driven by strong social media exposure, an attractive entertainment industry, relatable storytelling, and the active role of fan communities. This study concludes that the Thai Enthusiast community functions as a vital agent of cultural exchange, introducing Thai language, food, fashion, and lifestyle to Indonesian audiences while reinforcing participatory fan culture in the digital era.

Keywords: Thai Enthusiast, Cultural Exchange, Indonesian Youth, Popular Culture.

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, people can easily learn about other cultures through social media and entertainment. Platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Netflix, and Spotify allow people to access content from different countries. One culture that has become popular in Indonesia is Thai culture, especially Thai series, T-pop music, and Thai artists. Many Indonesian youths enjoy Thai entertainment and follow the latest trends from Thailand.

Because of this popularity, many fans have created the Thai Enthusiast (Thai Enthu) community. This community is a place where fans share information, discuss Thai series

and music, and connect with other people who have the same interest. Through this community, Indonesian fans not only enjoy Thai entertainment but also learn about Thai language, food, fashion, and lifestyle. This shows a form of cultural exchange between Thailand and Indonesia.

According to Jenkins (1992), fans are active participants who share and discuss the content they enjoy. Smutradontri and Gadavanij (2020) also explain that online fan communities help people communicate and interact through digital media. Therefore, the Thai Enthusiast community is an example of how Thai culture spreads and becomes popular among Indonesian youth through digital platforms.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. How does the Thai Enthusiast community spread Thai culture in Indonesia?
2. What factors make Thai culture popular among Indonesian youth?

OBJECTIVES:

1. To find out how the Thai Enthusiast community introduces Thai culture to Indonesian youth.
2. To identify the factors that make Thai culture popular among Indonesian youth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Thai popular culture has become popular among Indonesian youth through Thai series, T-pop music, and social media. Many young people enjoy watching Thai series, listening to Thai music, and following Thai artists on platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and X. Because of this growing interest, the Thai Enthusiast (Thai Enthu) community has developed in Indonesia. This community allows fans to share information, discuss Thai entertainment, and connect with other people who have the same interest in Thai culture.

According to Smutradontri and Gadavanij (2020), online fan communities help people communicate, interact, and build relationships through digital media. These communities also help spread information and introduce foreign cultures to a wider audience. In the case of the Thai Enthusiast community, members not only enjoy Thai entertainment but also learn about Thai language, food, fashion, and lifestyle. However, there are still only a few studies that focus on the Thai Enthusiast community in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to understand how Thai culture is introduced to Indonesian youth through this community and why it has become popular among them.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method to understand how Thai culture spreads in Indonesia through social media and the Thai Enthusiast community. The data are taken from Thai cultural content on TikTok and YouTube, such as videos about Thai series, T-pop music, Thai artists, and other Thai-related topics. The study also looks at activities in Thai Enthusiast communities in Indonesia, where members share information and discuss Thai culture.

The data are collected by observing interactions and activities in community groups and on social media. The researcher observes what content is shared, how members communicate, and how they respond to Thai culture. The data are then analyzed to understand how the Thai Enthusiast community helps introduce and spread Thai culture among Indonesian youth.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 How Does the Thai Enthusiast Community Spread Thai Culture in Indonesia?

3.1.1 Content Sharing as the Main Channel

3.1.2 The Thai Enthusiast community shares Thai culture mainly through social media platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and X. Members often post and share content about Thai series, T-pop music, Thai artists, fashion, food, language, travel, and daily life in Thailand. Because many Indonesian young people use social media every day, this content is easy to find and can reach many people quickly.

Community members also make Thai content easier to understand by creating translations, subtitles, reviews, and recommendations. They also discuss Thai culture with other fans, which helps more people learn about Thailand in a fun and simple way.

As people see more Thai-related content, they become more interested in Thai culture. Some start watching Thai series, listening to T-pop, learning the Thai language, trying Thai food, or planning to visit Thailand. Therefore, social media is the main channel that helps the Thai Enthusiast community introduce and spread Thai culture to Indonesian audiences.

3.1.3 Trend Participation and Viral Culture

The Thai Enthusiast community also helps spread Thai culture by joining popular trends on social media. Members often make TikTok dance covers, fan edits, memes, and videos using popular Thai songs or sounds. They also take part in online challenges that are related to Thai series, T-pop, or Thai celebrities.

When these videos become viral, more people see the content and become interested in Thailand. Many users who were not familiar with Thai culture start watching Thai series,

listening to T-pop, or learning more about Thai artists and traditions. In this way, viral trends help introduce Thai culture to a larger audience and encourage more people to become interested in it.

3.1.4 Cultural Interpretation and Adaptation

The Thai Enthusiast community does not only share Thai culture in its original form but also makes it easier for Indonesian people to understand. Community members often translate Thai content into Indonesian, add subtitles, and explain Thai words, traditions, or cultural meanings. This helps people who do not know the Thai language or culture enjoy the content more easily.

Sometimes, they also combine Thai culture with Indonesian trends or popular topics on social media. This makes the content feel more familiar and interesting for Indonesian audiences, especially young people. Because of this, Thai culture becomes easier to understand, more relatable, and more accepted by people in Indonesia.

3.1.5 Community Interaction and Engagement

Interaction among community members is an important part of spreading Thai culture. Members often talk about Thai series, T-pop music, Thai celebrities, and Thai culture through social media, group chats, and online communities. They share their opinions, recommend new content, and answer questions from other members.

The community also organizes activities such as watch parties, fan projects, online events, and offline gatherings. These activities help members get to know each other and build stronger friendships. They also create a fun environment where people can learn more about Thai culture together.

Because members feel connected and supported by the community, they are more motivated to keep sharing Thai-related content. This strong interaction helps introduce Thai culture to more people and keeps the community active and growing.

3.1.6 Network Effect on Social Media

Social media has an important role in spreading Thai culture to more people. When users like, comment on, share, or repost content about Thailand, the content becomes more popular and reaches a larger audience. Social media platforms also recommend popular content to other users, even if they have never searched for Thai culture before.

Because of this, more Indonesian people can discover Thai series, T-pop music, Thai celebrities, food, and other parts of Thai culture. As more people interact with the content, it continues to spread even further. This network effect helps Thai culture become more popular in Indonesia, especially among young people who use social media every day.

3.2 What Factors Make Thai Culture Popular Among Indonesian Youth?

3.2.1 Strong Social Media Exposure

Social media is one of the main reasons why Thai culture has become popular among Indonesian youth. Platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and X make it easy for people to access Thai content anytime and anywhere. Users can easily find Thai series, T-pop music, Thai celebrities, food, fashion, and other cultural content with just a few clicks.

Social media also recommends popular and viral content to users, making it easier for people to discover Thai culture even if they were not looking for it. As young people see Thai-related content more often, they become more interested in learning about Thailand. This easy access through social media helps Thai culture reach more Indonesian audiences and continue to grow in popularity.

3.2.2 Attractive Entertainment Industry

Thailand has a strong entertainment industry that attracts many young people. Thai series, T-pop music, actors, actresses, and idols have become popular not only in Thailand but also in other countries, including Indonesia. Many Indonesian youths enjoy Thai entertainment because it has interesting stories, good production quality, talented performers, and different types of content.

After watching Thai series or listening to T-pop music, many people become interested in learning more about Thailand. They start following Thai celebrities, learning the Thai language, trying Thai food, or finding out more about Thai traditions. Because of this, Thai entertainment plays an important role in introducing and promoting Thai culture to Indonesian audiences.

3.2.3 Relatable Themes

Another reason why Thai culture is popular is because Thai entertainment tells stories that many young people can relate to. Many Thai series and films focus on topics such as friendship, family, school life, personal growth, and romance. These are common experiences for Indonesian youth, so the stories feel familiar and easy to understand.

Because viewers can connect with the characters and their experiences, they enjoy the stories even more. This makes them interested not only in Thai series and films but also in Thai culture, language, food, and daily life. As a result, relatable themes help attract more Indonesian audiences to Thai culture.

3.2.4 Active Fan Communities

Active fan communities also help make Thai culture more popular in Indonesia. Communities such as Thai Enthusiast regularly share updates about Thai series, T-pop music, Thai celebrities, and other cultural topics. They also create fan content, translate information into Indonesian, and explain Thai culture to make it easier for others to understand.

In addition, these communities organize online discussions, fan projects, watch parties, and community events. These activities help members connect with each other and encourage more people to join the community. Through their active participation, fan communities continue to introduce Thai culture to new audiences and help increase its popularity among Indonesian youth.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that Thai culture has become popular among Indonesian youth through social media and the Thai Enthusiast community. Many young people enjoy Thai series, T-pop music, and other Thai cultural content because it is easy to find on platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and X. The popularity of Thai culture is supported by social media, interesting entertainment, relatable stories, and active fan communities.

The findings also show that the Thai Enthusiast community helps spread Thai culture in Indonesia by sharing information, discussing Thai content, and interacting with other fans online. Through these activities, more people become interested in Thai culture. As a result, Thai culture is not only enjoyed by Indonesian youth but is also shared and introduced to others, creating cultural exchange between Thailand and Indonesia.

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