

## **The Role of Students in the Popularization of School Basketball As Component of Popular Culture in Indonesia**

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to reveal the role of students in the popularization of school basketball as popular culture component, and to know their reason for consuming products that exist at the advertisement of basketball competition. A qualitative method was applied which includes interviews, analysis of visual texts and observation as the data collection. The study consist of 25 informants. The results show that: (1) Students play a pivotal role in the popularization of school basketball as popular culture component because of three factors: First, the involvement of leading companies as sponsors. Second, the broadcasting of basketball games through the mass media (television, radios, newspapers and magazines) that makes millions of basketball fans enjoy the competition. Third, the players' individual skills fascinate fans. (2) Students are interested in the basketball sports for several reasons. First, they need entertainment. Second, they want to gain identity, and the third, they want to obtain the social status. (3) They consume the products being advertised while watching a basketball game because they are provoked by consumer products, especially foods and beverages. They wear goods or attributes such as sneakers, jerseys, jackets and hats because they want to show their supports and social identity.*

**Keywords:** *Students, popularization, School, basketball, popular culture*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Popular culture is media for the distribution, reproduction, and negotiation of meanings through language (Reynolds, 2014). Funnell & Kiuchi (2016) describe that popular culture as ideas and images produced, distributed, and consumed by many people. It has many components such as animation, cinema, film, television, literature, music, sports, advertising and social media. The social media is an important tool for students and schools to communicate. Social networks are useful for forming communities and becoming self-promotion tools to be known by the community (Rosyidah et al., 2020). Popular culture can be defined as entertainments, customs, beliefs, and values shared by groups of people. It covers entertainments such as movies, television, music, books, magazines, sports, games online, food and beverage (Torr, 2003). It includes mass media, commercial, folk and working-class culture (Storey, 2013).

Popular culture is useful media for helping people understand the real life in different ways and can be used by teachers to describe students' role in the popular culture at schools (Jubas et al., 2015). Sport, especially basketball is an integral part of the culture of a nation. Basketball is one of the most popular sports because it has many fans that support its popularity and help it become the centre of attention (Meletakos et al., 2016). Basketball is a popular sport since it is played by more than 450 million people in many countries (Williams et al., 2016), and its popularity is incredible (Kachanathu et al., 2013). Basketball can be regarded as popular sports among students because it attracts the students' attention. Not only do common people play basketball sports, but also students do so (Heller et al., 2016). Students find basketball courts at many places such as at sports ground as public utility, at school and at their houses. For this reason, basketball is very popular among students in schools (LI & LIU, 2015).

In line with the popularity of basketball as the school sports, Syrbe & Rose (2016) found that sports were included as a unit of English textbooks which described cultural information about teenage life and school. Sports existed in the textbooks were used as English language teaching materials that enable teacher to achieve instructional or curriculum goals. In other words, sports, especially basketballs are inseparable from the students live upon which they enhance their learning achievement. Through sports, teachers are able to provide students with new knowledge from which they increase their level of English language skills (Christopher et al., 2012).

Basketball, which is considered as a means of entertainment, has turned into a global phenomenon that is spreading throughout the world and cannot be avoided by anyone (Markovits & Rensmann, 2010). Some presidents of America had a sense of concern for the basketball, and they invited a special player to celebrate his victory at the White House (LaFeber, 2003). It means that not only does basketball offer entertainment to fans, but it also influences the social life and the spread of culture, such as the construction of national identity as well

as immediate formation of a global community. This is because basketball has become a global sport and has undergone a dramatic increase in the recruitment of international players. Basketball also has turned into a popular sport around the world (Hudson, 2005).

The basketball sport has a major function in spreading the values of discipline and hard work (May, 2008). In Indonesia, both values of discipline and hard work are in accordance with the schools' curriculum goals which help students gain opportunity to achieve success that is to be champions so the basketball interests many students. This makes basketball spectacle give a sense of fun that is watched by its fans either directly at the sports hall or indirectly on television. The way to watch a basketball game in two ways, either directly or on television resulted in an increase in spectators and fans that change basketball into popular sport that reflects the spread of popular culture. Moreover, basketball as a mirror of popular culture can be seen from the ubiquitous commercialization of the basketball in which the sponsors of companies tried to pay an Olympic athlete to become an advertising star of their products. Amateur championship game as a symbol of pride and social status for the athletes has become a large commercial enterprises that help companies to advertise their products.

Research on the students' role in the popularization of school basketball as popular culture components is important because the topic is interesting and useful for developing extra-curriculum activities of senior high schools and for improving students' achievement of sports. In the curriculum of schools, sports play a necessary role in the process of building students' character such as social competence, discipline, competition and collaboration. Moreover, the research of the topic has received little attention. The purposes of the study are to describe the role of students in the popularization of basketball as the popular culture component and to know their reason for consuming products that exist at the advertisement of basketball competition.

There is a close relationship between the values of sport and their spectators' behaviour (Gau, 2007). Gymnastics plays an important role in the producing a strong body for working class, and it helps the middle class to keep the body healthy. Therefore, most team sports such as basketball and football became popular among professional workers, technicians, and employees. However, other sports such as golf, horse racing, and skiing belonged to middle class. A sport is a cultural aspect that helps people meet their needs of obtaining entertainment. It is also considered as an activity that requires energies and skills which enable players become winners (Inge & Hall, 2002). As an aspect of culture, sports have some elements such as the rules of the game, the competition and the objects including balls, hoops, whistle and many other objects needed at the match.

Sports can be used as a means of a struggle for achieving success through participation in high schools basketball game. In this case, students have to struggle to achieve their goals that are to be champion in the basketball (Shakib & Dunbar, 2002). Players and their fans played pivotal role in the popularization of the basketball. Through the players' motivation and the support of the fans, basketball became popular sport not only in schools but also in the community. In other words, there was relationship between players' motivation and fans' support in the popularization of basketball.

The globalization existed in sports organizations such as FIFA, the IOC (International Olympic Committee) and the NBA (National Basketball Association). International Olympic Committee (IOC) in which basketball is incorporated has a membership of 203 countries. In terms of players, basketball has led to the migration of players from other countries (Thibault, 2009). Thus, basketball had led to the transfer of players from one country to another. The players who moved to other country intend to obtain experience, to improve their quality of skills and to increase standard of living by earning well-paid in other countries. Nowadays, basketball becomes people's daily activity. It can be said that basketball has become a popular sport because it is played by 203 countries and is an integral part of everyday activities.

Basketball has changed into popular sport since both amateur and professional players have been popular figures since the 1970s. It was one of sports played by millions of fans, and it spread widely in many countries because of the spread of sports culture, along with the values and symbols, beauty and style, economy and politics (Lane, 2007). For this reason, basketball is a sport that has undergone major developments. The development pertains not only to the system and the rules of the game, but also relates to the growth of the number of teams that are incorporated in the basketball organizations. In addition to the number of team grew bigger, the quality of the game and the spirit of basketball players also progressed. Consequently, the competition of basketball has become global spectacle and has myriad fans. The strength of the basketball that has become the world spectacle is inseparable from the players' hard work, discipline and enthusiasm (Markovits & Rensmann, 2010).

Basketball games were usually played by teenagers. They know and play the basketball, especially in North America, China as well as in Europe. The basketball has been watched by so many people that it becomes popular sport. The popularity of basketball can be considered as a main factor to make basketball games become popular culture. It has changed into ubiquitous entertainment and popular culture since 1990 (Torr, 2003). As popular entertainment, basketball was broadcasted on television as prime time entertainment which reflected fans' characteristics.

Nowadays, in Indonesia basketball has become a popular sport, especially for students. The basketball popularity can be seen from the championship organized by Development Basketball League (DBL) with a sponsorship from a leading company. For example, basketball competition was held from July 17 to August 6, 2010 in Surabaya city. Participants who competed at the competition were 300 teams from many senior high schools and were watched by around 6000 spectators (*JawaPos*, 2010). The competitions were broadcasted on television which attracted many teenagers attention. For this reason, televised basketball competition plays a decisive role in the basketball popularization so that many teenagers or fans enjoy the sport show. The extent of basketball enthusiasts or fans is inseparable from the role of: (1) managers of basketball who always endeavor to make the teams better, (2) players who always show their self-discipline and hard work to struggle for being basketball superstars, and (3) the role of the public, especially basketball fans who always graced every basketball competition that was held in the sport stadium.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

This study used a qualitative method which involved interviews, observation, and visual texts analysis. The study was conducted at four private and a state senior high schools in Yogyakarta city, Indonesia where basketball team were popular among students as an integral part of the school curriculum.

This study was conducted on the basis of the research questions:

- 1) How is the role of students in the popularization of school basketball as popular culture component?
- 2) Why do students consume products that exist at the advertisement of basketball competition?

The study aims to reveal the role of students in the popularization of school basketball and to portray the students' reason for consuming products advertised by industries as sponsor of basketball competition. The study was expected that it would contribute to the theory and practice. Theoretically, the findings of the study could be applied as a reference regarding to the schools extra-curricular as a means of students character building. Practically, this study would provide benefits to improve the senior high school students' achievement through extracurricular activities of basketball sports as a component of popular culture.

### *Informants and Data Collection*

The study interviewed 25 informants. They were 15 schools' basketball players, five basketball coaches, four sports teachers and a district head of Indonesian Basketball Association (PERBASI). The students were interviewed about their reasons for playing basketball. Interview was also used to reveal the students reasons for watching and playing basketball at schools and to know their reasons for consuming products advertised at the places where basketball competition took place. Basketball coaches were interviewed about their goals of coaching basketball as extra-curricular activities at senior high school and their strategy to develop students' skills to be champions. Sports teachers were interviewed about their approach and teaching materials to improve the students' achievement of sports. A district head of Indonesian Basketball Association was interviewed about his vision and mission to promote the school basketball as media of building students character.

The study also observed students activities at schools where they practised basketball. Apart from schools, the observation was done at the basketball court where the school players joined basketball competition. It was done to elicit data about basketball and popular culture materials used or consumed by the students as spectators of basketball. It was important to observe popular culture materials because at the basketball competition in the sports hall there were many traders selling merchandise such as T-shirts, hats, shoes, souvenirs, food and soft drinks and other merchandise. These items attracted the attention of the audience and many of them bought.

Furthermore, the study analyzed products produced by the advertisement as the basketball competition sponsors. Printed materials such as books, brochures, and basketball posters were intended to examine all documents regarding to the role of students in the popularization of basketball as popular culture.

### *Analyzing of Data*

Data obtained were analyzed and interpreted according to popular culture theory. Popular culture materials such as books, brochures, basketball posters and documents were classified according to the category of popular culture. The data obtained from interviews, observation and products or visual texts analysis was triangulated to examine the validity of instruments.

## **III. FINDINGS**

### **The Role of Students in the Popularization of school basketball**

In Indonesia, basketball sports are popular that many students are interested in watching and playing because many schools provide students with a basketball team. Students who love to play and watch basketball are classified into adolescence ranging from the ages of 12 to 21 years. The extent of the teenagers who play or

enjoy basketball has indicated that the basketball sport is supported by myriad fans. There are several factors that teenagers are interested in the basketball games.

#### 1) Factors of Lexical Items

Audience or fans are interested in watching basketball because they like players' styles of playing which is fascinating. The players' action such as jumping and running to catch a ball amazes the audience. The amazing styles result in lexical items regarding the greatness of basketball games: slam dunk, blocked shots, rebounds, great jumping, hang time, hardworking player, and talented player.

Those terms refer to the basketball players' expertise in matches. On the basis of observation, many schools basketball players imitate American professional basketball players' style of playing because American basketball sport is popular. This can be seen from the reward of championship achieved by the players. The popularity of basketball can be seen through the emergence of basketball professional players.

Athletes' playing styles are supported by the production of sports equipment to increase the speed of players' movement, for example, basketball sneakers that are made lighter. Shoes Company has produced sports shoes that bolster the athletes' performance by using lighter materials so they can move quickly. In addition to the sports equipment products like sneakers, playing styles are also reinforced by the spirit of the basketball athletes' hard work through competitions as a means of improving their ability to be a winner.

#### 2) Factor of Easily Accessible Facility

Many teenagers love basketball with some reasons, first, the basketball court is easily accessible because of the size, relatively not too large (28.65 m X 15.24 m) that can be placed inside or outside the building. Basketball sport courts are often found in formal education environments ranging from junior high school to college. Moreover, there are some communities that offer basketball training equipped with gymnasium facilities. The basketball training owners are concerned with the teenagers who love basketball. They are generally entrepreneurs who sell services such as restaurant, fitness centre (gym), aerobics, and many other services. Second, the number of players is five people each team so it is easy to recruit players.

#### 3) Factor of the Frequency of Basketball Competition

A large number of students are interested in basketball because they always view televised basketball competition widely, so it makes basketball popular. In Indonesia, television stations broadcast basketball games every morning and evening as main information. Therefore, basketball is now rapidly growing on the world because it is an interesting sport to watch, especially on the television. Televised basketball competition throughout the world has encouraged many students to participate the basketball games.

The accessibility of playing basketball and the frequency of televised basketball competition are teenagers' reasons for promoting their performance in the basketball. Their reasons motivate them to improve their performance both academic and sport. Considering basketball is played by many students in Indonesia, it makes basketball popular and provides players, coaches, club officials and fans with many benefits. Therefore, Indonesian basketball competition is always broadcasted on television so that many fans could enjoy it as prime time entertainment that can be watched in their house.

#### **Students' Reasons for being interested in Basketball**

Basketball sport is inseparable from players' or fans' efforts to obtain social identity. Sports can be considered as a means of achieving identity. It is as a concept that comes from people's imagination that represent their self conception and the way they regard other people. In terms of concept, identity can be defined as element of similarity creation among people so that they know each other and have mutual understanding.

Basketball clubs help teenagers gain social identity. Teenagers who take part in basketball clubs have access to communicate each other because they have identity as members of club. Their communication will intensify their identity. They will obtain meaningful identity if they become the best players or winner proved by winning a championship medal. Becoming a basketball player helps teenagers achieve important identity and enables them to be famous people among their friends. Identity is a collective action, which is created through the interaction of a group or among people.

#### **Students' Reasons for Consuming Products Advertised**

Basketball competition interests many school students because of several reasons; **first**, they want to fulfill their need of entertainment. Amazing entertainment is one of the students' needs that improve their creativity. Basketball competition is full of entertainment aspects that amaze many students because of its interesting players' individual skills. **Second**, they engage in basketball as a way to obtain social identity. Students who take part in basketball fans need to gain identity as sports fans community. They show their



identity through wearing similar attributes such as sneakers, caps, jackets, shorts and t-shirts. They wear those attributes not because they need it, but because they are persuaded by advertisement and basketball fans.

**The last**, students use basketball as a means of increasing their social status. They consider that to watch basketball competition is one of ways to learn how to promote their knowledge of basketball skills. Students who are active in school basketball club as players endeavor to do their best for being the winner. The aspirations of achieving success in the basketball are normal for students because when they succeed in being the winner, their social status rises.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Basketball is an integral part of the activity of adolescents, especially the extra-curriculum activities in the school. In Indonesia, most secondary schools have basketball courts that are located in the main courtyard of the school that inspires students to practice. The schools equip the students with basketball facilities. In other words, basketball is part of the teenagers' activities and is integrated into educational extra-curricular in high schools. This proves that the basketball is not only a popular activity among teenagers but also has become the agenda of the government through providing students with the school basketball facilities.

Basketball competition entertains many fans. They feel happy to watch basketball championship. Televised basketball competition attracts family to watch television together in a house. Many families consider basketball as special entertainment so that they need to watch it. It becomes more interesting when it comes to the final session. Many basketball fans stop doing their activities in order to watch the amazing basketball competition. In other words, basketball competition has important meanings so that it encourages its fans to watch the competition because basketball is inseparable from teenagers' lives.

In terms of identity, not only is basketball as a sport, but it is also as a means of making an identity. Basketball fans who are members of a club could obtain identity either as players or as fans. Their identity will be meaningful if they successfully win the competition. Apart from helping teenagers establish the identity, basketball can be used as a means of socialization. Sports are activities that support physical and mental development and contribute to emotional development and facilitate the process of socialization. Therefore, basketball contributes to the formation of identity for those engage in it.

Based on the interview, many basketball fans share information about professional basketball players' lives who they admire. They know their idols' background and social life such as education, interest and their income. Some basketball fans wear t-shirts like the players' jersey. Some of them also wear caps and sneakers whose trade marks are the same as their idols' things. The wearing of sport attributes such as cap, t-shirts and sneakers can be considered as consumption activities to show their identity as the supporters of the basketball players. The activity to wear sport attributes helps fans to show that they become the supporters of basketball team and its players. As a result, social identity at the basketball is marked by wearing attributes usually worn by basketball players such as sneakers, t-shirts, cap, jackets and many other sport attributes. It is also obtained by consuming food and beverage existed at advertisement such as fast food restaurants and soft drinks.

In relation to the basketball power to help students enhance their identity as basketball fans, sports enable fans to know other people through their identity. Through sports, people think that they are inseparable from their teams or country where they come from. It means that basketball players have the same identity as their club. Moreover, fans who love basketball try to identify themselves as supporters through wearing and consuming things worn and consumed by the basketball players. Their consuming the consumption products such as food, t-shirts, caps and sneakers indicates that they support the famous basketball players. Meanwhile, basketball provides fans with important meanings such as hardwork, winner spirit, honesty, solidarity and enthusiasm. It is useful to enhance teenagers' self-confidence because it helps them gain social identity. Basketball competition spectacle aids fans in obtaining happiness because it allows them to share experience and feeling.

Basketball is popular because it is easy to access everywhere. Students who watch basketball tend to play sports to strengthen their muscles and to keep their body healthy. For this reason, when students watch basketball and consume food, beverage and wear sport equipment advertised on television, they enjoy popular culture because basketball sport has been created as one of the elements of popular entertainments. In other words, when students learn and play basketball, they are in the process of consuming popular culture products. Furthermore, when they become member of basketball teams or fans, they belong to global community and have global identity because basketball is a global spectacle watched by many people around the world.

#### V. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings, it can be concluded that students of senior high school play an important role in the popularization of basketball as a component of popular culture in Indonesia because some factors support it: **first**, there are several leading companies as sponsors such as Shoes Company, fast food restaurant, Soft Drinks Company and many other sponsor industries. They play a decisive role in the every event of

basketball competition either national or school level. They underpin the popularity of basketball because they sponsor the championships. Their reasons for being sponsors of the basketball competition are to increase the sales of products and to build an image that they are concerned with the sports as a means of national character building.

**Second**, basketball competition is broadcasted by mass media such as television, newspaper and magazines so that many people view and read it. Television plays a significant role in the popularization of basketball and helps its players become superstars and global icons because of their many fans who support them. It means that basketball exists not only on television, but it is also reported on other popular mass media like newspaper or magazines.

**Third**, individual skills of basketball players amaze many school students. When a good player from favorite basketball club struggles for winning a match at the final session, thousands of spectators crowd the basketball stadium. The fans ranging from teenagers to young people indicate that basketball games are very famous in Indonesia.

The existence of television, newspaper, magazines, fans, sponsors and favorite players shows that basketball can be regarded as the popular culture component enjoyed by thousands of people. Basketball fans come from many cities. Their interest in basketball games unites them as fans. In other words, basketball exists in the various aspects of teenagers' lives. Therefore, it is recommended that researchers may develop the study to examine the extent of popularity of the basketballs as popular culture components.

This study has a limitation on the number of interviewed informants. There are 25 informants, and they are classified into four categories such as 15 senior high school basketball players, five basketball coaches, 4 sports teachers, and a chairman of the Indonesian Basketball Association (PERBASI). Furthermore, the research has been conducted in one city in Indonesia, Yogyakarta. Although Yogyakarta city is a student city where many students from many cities in Indonesia study there, this research is considered restricted. Therefore, it needs elaboration to make it significant.

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