



Diplomatic efforts of the Japanese government through anime doraemon in the cool Japan strategy

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Abstract

Diplomacy is an activity that has been carried out by countries in the world since hundreds of years ago. The practice of diplomacy implemented by countries today has begun to shift from hard power to soft power. Diplomatic activities using hard power are considered irrelevant because they seem more coercive and can trigger conflict and can create a bad impression when diplomacy using soft power is more widely applied. Cultural diplomacy is also an option in the application of the concept of soft power. Of the many countries in the world, Japan is one of the countries that implement these efforts. Japan is trying to make a good impression on countries in the world by utilizing cultural diplomacy. With the influence of globalization, the spread of modern culture can occur easily in various regions. This strategy can attract public interest in Japan without coercion.

This study discusses the cultural diplomacy of the Japanese government through the use of Doraemon anime in the Cool Japan strategy. The purpose of this study is to explore how the impact of Doraemon anime can improve the image of Japan and increase the good impression on Japan. By using a qualitative method, it was found that the presence of anime, especially Doraemon, can be a diplomatic tool that Japan can use to achieve its national interests and make Japan being well-accepted in the international region.

Keywords: diplomacy; cultural diplomacy; Japan cool strategy; soft power

Introduction

Japan is a country on the continent of Asia and included in the East Asia region. Japan has many cultures that have existed since ancient times. Various cultures can be seen in Japan and still exist until today such as the tradition of drinking tea, the art of Japanese origami and calligraphy, and many other cultures. Apart from that, Japan also has other popular culture such as anime and manga. The culture from one country will be varied and different from another country.

Japanese popular culture has spread to various international regions, including Asia. The spread of Japanese popular culture has been going on for a long time and has developed outside Japan since the late 1970s. One popular culture, namely anime, has become a routine consumption that has become a small part of existence by young people consisting of various age ranges. It shows that anime can be enjoyed and suitable for any people because it contains light conversation and usually related to our daily activities.

In carrying out diplomatic activities to achieve its country's national interests, Japan has made efforts to spread cultural diplomacy through the film industry such as anime and manga which are included in soft power. Currently, countries in the international area have implemented soft power diplomacy rather than using hard power. In practice, the Cool Japan strategy is used to carry out diplomacy by Japan. Japan is trying to carry out the Cool Japan strategy in order to form a cool brand image and maximize the economic benefits gained by promoting Japanese modern culture which is widely known by the international community. This research will focus on the Doraemon anime which was carried out by Japan as a diplomatic effort

using the Cool Japan strategy. This research is interesting because based on the author's findings, most previous research only discussed Cool Japan's strategy in general. One of the studies was conducted by Natasya Ichi Tania regarding the diplomatic efforts of the Japanese government through the use of Hello Kitty in the Cool Japan strategy. Other research also only discusses Japanese strategy in the development of the popular culture industry through the AKB48 group conducted by Rattandi Ibnu Tsaqif. Therefore, this study will discuss how Japan makes popular culture, namely the Doraemon anime, as a tool of diplomacy.

Method of Research and Theory

This study uses qualitative method. The qualitative method is a stage that uses descriptive data, both in form of written and spoken words from people and objects that can be perceived and used in explaining problems and research focus. This research will explain how the presence of anime, especially Doraemon, can be used as a tool for Japanese diplomacy through cultural diplomacy. In this study there are data sources that use secondary data by collecting data through literature studies, books, journals, and electronic publications such as websites and others. These data will be used by author as a tool to carry out data collection activities that related with the topic which will be discussed.

Findings and Discussion

Japanese Popular Culture

Anime is an abbreviation of the word animation which has a large selection of stories available for all ages. Anime was first created in 1917 but still in the form of short animated

films with duration of two to five minutes and mostly still tells about the folklore of that time. The creation of anime was initiated from Disney animation originating from the United States. Oten Shimokawa, Jun'ichi Kouchi, and Seitaro Kitayama as the first anime creators wanted to make anime and manga that were greater than those of the United States's. Initially, anime was not used by the Japanese government in promoting the lives of Japanese people, but only used to develop Japanese animation. Anime then continues to develop according to the times.

The 1980s marked the first time that anime was recognized by the world. In the late 80's and during the 90's, anime had considerable popularity around the world and could attract thousands of fans spread across various countries. For nearly two decades, more than 60% of the animation shown in the world was produced by Japan and this made anime become the number one animation (Condry, 2009) ^[2].

Cool Japan Strategy

Cool Japan is a strategy that is controlled by the Japanese government program as a Japanese diplomacy strategy by utilizing popular culture and creative industries including anime, manga, culinary, music, fashion, film, and others with the intervention of the government and the private sector. Initially, Cool Japan was implemented in 2007 by MOFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan) and then in 2011 it was taken over by METI (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan). The word "Cool" in Cool Japan has a special meaning because the Japanese government wants a slogan that has a political character and used as a characteristic because it is considered attractive when used as the name of policy (Muhammad, 2015) ^[13].

In the early 2000s, Japan faced a state of crisis and economic and political paralysis which is also known as Japan's Lost Decades (Kobayashi, 2015) ^[9]. Such circumstances reduced Japan's influence and power in the international world. At that time, all of Japan's strength, both in terms of economy, culture, and influence on popular culture in the eyes of the international community, had greatly diminished. Then in 2012 Shinzo Abe returned to serve as Prime Minister of Japan and marked the beginning of Japan's rise from a stagnant economy and unstable politics during the 'lost decades'.

During the Shinzo Abe administration, Japan's desire to play a major role in global leadership flared up again. In 2013 Abe focused on developing popular culture which will continue in the following years and have an impact on the development of Japanese popular culture. In an effort to strengthen soft power and gain the trust of other countries, including competing with popular culture brought by other countries, popular anime culture, which has been Japanese popular culture for a long time, was then utilized by Japan (Japan House: Tokyo's New Public Diplomacy Push, 2017) ^[8].

In previous years, starting in 2002, Japan used anime as a soft power stemming from the Intellectual Property Act established by Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro. Furthermore, in 2004 a law called the 'content industry' was issued in order to introduce Japanese creative industry which leads several types of Japanese creative industries including anime, manga, film, television broadcasts, video games, and even popular music.

Coinciding with the presence of this law, a policy draft made by the Japanese government which is also known as

the "Intellectual Property Strategic Program" or IPSP aims to trigger and actualize intellectual works and protect and maximize the energy of individual works. The Strategic Council on Intellectual Property then formed in order to increase competition for Japan's creative industries and economic re-actualization by establishing a national strategy for intellectual property that supports policies related to Japan's creative industries. This program was refined again in 2004 under the name 'Intellectual Property Strategic Program 2004,' and in subsequent years it supports Japan's image strategy and expands intellectual property in domestic industries including software, food, arts, as well as traditional crafts or modern ones. Japan also has national project carried out by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) in 2010 as an effort to attract people's interest in Japan through food, music, anime, manga, and others. This project resulted in a strategy called the Cool Japan Strategy which has the goal of spreading Japan's allure to the international sphere and integrating global growth which can also affect domestic economic growth (METI, 2014) ^[12].

One of the strategies produced by the Cool Japan Strategy for Japanese popular culture is the creation of the Japan Boom. Japan Boom is a word used to create trends in an area related to Japanese popular culture. Japan Boom utilizes the media as a means to spread Japanese popular culture. Japan will utilize creative content from music, anime, manga, drama, newspapers, and several other sources so it can become a trend that a country will be affected by Japan Boom.

Cool Japan Strategy is a way used to increase the level of creativity of the people at the international level. Increasing the level of creativity generated by citizens or the private sector can generate new breakthroughs that can give benefit to Japanese citizens or the whole country. Cool Japan become the result of government and private collaboration to get Japan's status as a 'cultural superpower'. This can happen because a country uses an image strategy in producing a profitable bond between the economy and culture (Sukumolchan, 2013) ^[20].

The Japanese government wants its culture to be utilized as best as possible and not only as an instrument of diplomacy, but also for higher cultural mobilization so Japanese economy will increase. Products belonging to the creative industry are increasingly expanding so Cool Japan can run smoothly (Lies, 2013) ^[10].

In 2013, the Cool Japan Fund, a public-private backed fund that has financial support from the government and the private sector of 60 billion yen, was founded by Japanese businessmen and bureaucrats (Cool Japan Fund Launches to Aid Global Promotion of Japanese Culture, 2014). The Cool Japan Fund has the goal of supporting overseas investments made by companies, especially on the cultural side, as well as supporting the development and management of projects that sell Japanese cultural works. The Cool Japan Fund is also a medium for making profits in all areas of Cool Japan and increasing foreign demand in a number of activities ranging from culinary to media (What is Cool Japan Fund, n.d.).

In 2015, the Cabinet Office of Japan actively participated in shaping the next policy on the Japanese creative industry by producing the Cool Japan proposal on the Japanese creative industry. Japan's Cabinet Office wants to improve the relationship between government agencies and private

companies that previously existed so Japan's content industry sector will become stronger, including anime. They then formed a program officially called Cool Japan Public-Private Partnership Platform (Headquarters, 2014)^[6].

The Cool Japan Hub Development Review Committee in 2017 has a technique that considered quite effective in collaborating with Cool Japan activity centers across Japan by using a website that used to obtain and disseminate information by working with foreign bloggers or influencers by using anime as a tool to boost the tourism sector. In addition, the Japanese government also created a website as a form of support for government policies aimed at supporting activities related to the dissemination of the Japanese content industry abroad which received positive responses from the international community. In order to form a tool for promotion of Japanese popular culture, the Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters agency in 2018 developed an information center through the official website of the Japanese government relating to media art such as anime and manga, namely Digital Archives Japan (Headquarters (. P., 2018)^[5].

The Use of Doraemon Anime as a Diplomacy Tool

Doraemon as one of the anime which also a TV series from Japan is one of the favorite shows broadcast in Indonesia. Anime Doraemon is a product that collaborates with several products such as household products, as well as other products such as collaboration with PT. Sinda Budi Sentosa on canned beverage packaging. Not only in Indonesia, other country such as China also have high interest in this anime. Meitu, one of the smartphone companies in China, is releasing limited products with the theme of Doraemon (Tsaqif, 2019)^[21].

Doraemon is a fictional character created in 1969 by Fujiko F. Fujio. Doraemon is a cat-shaped robot that present from the twentieth century to the twenty-second century in order to help Nobita solve everyday problems with the help of tools that have advanced technology. From its inception until 2012, Doraemon comics have sold 170 billion copies spread all over the world and the anime has also been broadcast in eighteen countries in Europe, Asia and South America (Iwamoto, 2012)^[7].

Doraemon not only managed to attract the interest of people around the world, but also managed to get various awards. In 1973 the Japan Cartoonist Association Award awarded Doraemon. In 1982 Doraemon also won the First Shogakukan Manga Award. Then in 1997 won the First Osamu Tezuka Culture Award. Doraemon also won another award in 2002 as Asian Hero which was conducted by Time Asia magazine through a special survey and also named Doraemon as The Cuddliest Hero in Asia.

In 2006, the big screen Doraemon film was released entitled "Doraemon The Movie: Nobita's Dinosaur" and has been translated into five languages, namely French, Russian, Chinese, English and Spanish. Not only that, this film also been shown in fifty countries around the world and in 2008 an estimated 28,700 people have watched this film. This number does not include shows that were screened illegally or the number of viewers for the Doraemon film until 2022 (Affairs, 2014)^[11].

Anime began to become the Japanese Ambassador since 2006 conveyed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Taro Aso. Not only that, many residents outside Japan are interested in Japanese culture, such as when the Japan Expo

was held in Paris in 2009, where around 160,000 visitors came from countries around the world. The Japan External Trade Organization in 2005 also said that if the animations broadcasted around the world, 60% of the total animations were made by Japan (Nakamura, 2013)^[14].

In 2008, in a serious effort by the Japanese government to use anime as soft power, Doraemon was honored and selected as the first Japanese Animation Culture Ambassador and appointed directly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan named Komura Masahiko in 2008 in March.

Dorayaki, which is Doraemon's favorite food, served on a very large plate during the inauguration along with the official inauguration certificate by the Japanese government. Doraemon's diplomatic duties as the Ambassador of Japanese Animation Culture are to introduce Japan through manga and anime so international community can know and understand Japan more broadly. This can cause the international community to fall in love with Doraemon and begin to have interest in Japan, then expected to like Japan and establish good relations with that country.

Through manga and anime, Doraemon can show the international community about culture in Japan, show the thoughts of Japanese people, the lives that Japanese people go through everyday, and the future that Japanese people hope for. Not only that, there are several messages conveyed in Doraemon shows such as freedom of expression, stories of friendship, and the environment.

After Doraemon's inauguration as the Ambassador of Japanese Animation Culture, Doraemon's visits to several countries and film screenings were also carried out. These activities took place in major countries such as China, France, Spain, and several other countries including Indonesia. During their visit to Indonesia, this coincided with the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Japan in 2008. Doraemon's visit to Indonesia was welcomed by the Japanese Ambassador to Indonesia, namely Shiojiri Kojiro and also attended by Kaji Yukari who was the Cultural Attache of the Japanese Embassy.

Apart from holding a meeting at the Japanese Embassy, the Doraemon Dreamland event featuring 17 types of games and areas selling food such as dorayaki, also organized by the Japanese Embassy and the Indonesian-Japan Friendship Association. The event was held from June 20 to 29 in 2008. Doraemon also introduced himself again as the first Japanese Animation Cultural Ambassador along with the specific diplomatic mission he carried out at the commemoration of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Japan which took place on November 9, 2008. Doraemon also explained his wishes regarding the relationship between Indonesia and Japan. Visitors who attended the event also gave a lively welcome, from children to adults who seemed to like Doraemon's presence. In 2016, the success of anime made the Japanese government give full support to Japanese tourism sector. More and more tourist destinations in Japan link places with certain anime, as well as travel agents that provide tour packages with anime themes. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MILT) which oversees the Japan Tourism Agency, with Akihiko Tamura as its commissioner, said that the government agencies related to Japanese tourism will support and assist as much as possible for tourism agents who want to market Japanese

tourist sites by utilizing anime popularity. He also believes that rural areas can utilize resources more optimally if Japanese tourist destinations are added with anime themes and used to promote tourist sites (Times, 2013)^[22].

Japan has several goals in its efforts to utilize Doraemon as a soft power diplomacy tool. First, Japan wants to improve its image where previously Japan was famous for its cruelty during the World War so Japan wanted to show to the world that they were more focused on peace. Its position as a country with strong economic influence also makes it want a positive image to accompany it. With the existence of popular culture such as manga and anime that they have, they can show positive cultural values so other countries can accept the new Japanese image and it will be easier for Japan to establish relations with other countries through this image that can bring benefit to them. (Ogura, 2009).

Furthermore, the spread of anime and manga has enabled Japan to use popular culture as a diplomatic tool through a soft power approach. Japan realizes if they use soft power, it will be easier for the international community to accept because it does not use violence or coercion in any form. Through anime, Japan can show good nuances because Doraemon's daily stories along with the positive moral values shown in the film can make efforts to safeguard Japan's national interests and relations with other countries smoother. Japanese foreign policy can also be implemented more easily and have a positive image because it uses anime as a tool of diplomacy.

The impact as a result from the spread of Doraemon occurred in several countries. In South Korea, for example, according to a survey conducted by the BBC World Service Poll from 2008 to 2009, 37% of respondents considered Japan's influence characterized positive and 55% considered it negative and the rest viewed it as neutral.

Then in 2010 the survey was conducted again and 64% of respondents considered Japan's image to be positive, 30% still felt negative influence from Japan, while the rest chose neutral. This shows that the influence of Japanese public diplomacy in South Korea is quite good (Poll, 2010)^[17].

In Indonesia, manga and anime have a pretty good influence on Japan. In a survey conducted by Caraka Wahyu Erwindo (2018)^[4] on several respondents consisting of an age range of 19 to 23 years, a large number of respondents thought that Japanese society is a hard worker, prioritizing polite values, and upholding cultural values. This is seen by respondents from anime and manga which describe the characteristics of Japanese society. The perspective of the Indonesian people underwent a change and did not use too many perspectives during the Second World War era because anime and manga had an influence on the reconstruction of this identity. As we all know, in the era of the Second World War, Japan was considered quite cruel because it had colonized the Indonesian nation and the use of bombs and other destructive devices sent by Japan to other countries. Therefore, with the presence of the friendly Doraemon anime, it is hoped that the international community will slowly forget about this bad incident.

Conclusion

With the presence of Doraemon as a cultural diplomacy tool used by Japan, this can be a good strategy because Doraemon is an animated figure quite loved by the international community of various ages, especially for children and adults. Many people from other country also

want to visit Japan to see their culture and feel curious about that because Japan's culture might be very different from the culture in their country.

In Doraemon animation, the audience can also see how the daily lives of Japanese people and the traditions that exist in Japan. The Cool Japan strategy used by Japan is a strategy that can attract the interest of the international community to find out more about Japanese culture. People around the world will have desire to visit Japan which can make Japan's foreign exchange increased and it will bring benefit to local community in Japan. This research is expected to provide benefits for both researchers and readers and the writer realizes that this research is still far from perfect, so it is hoped that for future researchers, this research can be further developed.

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