

American Fashion Influence in Japanese Imagination: A Study of Semiotic on Furudate's *Haikyuu!!*

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ABSTRACT

This research discusses the influence of American culture in Japan on Haruichi Furudate's *Haikyuu!!* manga. The manga was published in 2012 and ended in 2020 with 45 volumes. In the context of American influence, more precisely in the field of sports, one of them is adopted as the theme of the *Haikyuu!!* manga, which is volleyball. This manga tells the journey and struggle of the main character, Hinata Shoyo, to become a professional volleyball athlete. But as it turns out, apart from the volleyball sport introduced by America, there are other aspects that are also American influences. By using Transnational American Studies, this research found the influence of American culture by the characters in the *Haikyuu!!* manga. The influence of American culture in this research is specific to the cultural aspect, fashion, which is then examined using the semiotics of Roland Barthes. From the analysis, it was found that there is some American fashion used by some characters in *Haikyuu!!* manga, leather jacket and denim.

Keywords: *american Influence; american studies; fashion; haikyuu!! manga; transnational*

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INTRODUCTION

Japan, a country with traditional and modern cultures can walk side by side. The traditional culture has developed since the Edo era or more than 400 years ago (livejapan.com), which made Japanese traditional culture even more embedded in their lives. Still, the Meiji Restoration made Japan slowly open to the influx of modern Western cultures (Kitaoka 2), and this continued until their defeat in the Second World War (Tanaka 1). However, Japan can follow the development of modern culture without leaving the traditional culture that is very attached to them. From these two cultures that can walk side by side, Japan created new popular cultures that spread around the world, such as *manga*, anime, and cosplay.

The Japanese popular culture began when anime such as Astro Boy, Doraemon, Sailor Moon, and several other titles became a spectacle around the world, especially when Hayao Miyazaki's Spirited Away won an Oscar award in 2003 as the Best Animated Feature according to The Time (2021), which made anime popular. Moreover, the rise of people doing cosplay or imitating a character at events like the Anime Expo in America has made Japanese culture even

more popular (anime-expo.org). However, before anime became popular until now, there is another Japanese culture called *manga*, which was first recognized by the world. Most anime is adapted from *manga*, for example, Astro Boy by Osamu Tezuka, the pioneer of modern Japanese *manga*, which originally is a *manga* before it was adapted into an anime and became famous worldwide.

One of the oldest among anime and cosplay is *manga*, which has existed since the 12nd to 13th century. This makes *manga* the first to be recognized among fans since it became popular in the 19th century, which was between 1920-1930s, the modernization of *manga* took place. *Manga* itself is an illustrated comic from Japan developed in the late 19th century (Gravett 8), that covers various themes. Apart from the many themes that exist, *manga* even dares to take risks in its production, for example, Attack on Titan by Hajime Isayama was banned in several countries due to graphic violence and controversial themes according to The Japan Times (2015), but this made Attack on Titan more popular. Another thing that makes readers enjoy *manga* is the continuity of reading *manga* is vivid, and the *manga* author will remain the same from the

beginning to the end of the story without any changes.

In fact, America has played a big role in Japan's growth, such as in the field of technology that facilitates distribution. This began after the Second World War and the American occupation, when Japan was undergoing a massive transformation in various fields, especially the industrial sector. In addition, Japanese society also began to adopt American culture and lifestyle, but Japanese society was still able to synchronize foreign culture with their original culture, giving new forms without abandoning their culture. Which, despite westernization in various aspects of life, Japanese society still has pride in their values such as hard work and discipline, which have become pillars in post-war Japanese society.

Further, besides influencing the industrial sector, America also influenced Japanese popular culture, *manga*. This influence emerged since the Meiji Restoration and after the Second World War. This began after the end of Japan's isolationist policy during the Meiji Restoration, the West had a profound impact on the country. This marked the start of Japan's modernization that was heavily inspired by Western

(Japan-avenue.com). Wirgman and Ferdinand Bigot, European cartoonists, were responsible for introducing comic strips to Japan after the Meiji Restoration. During the 1920s, newspapers used comics to supplement news stories and convey satire (Schodt 37). The mentorship of Wirgman and Bigot proved instrumental, as they imparted invaluable guidance to budding artists. Their unique blend of musical and artistic talent facilitated the introduction of European style in perspective, anatomy, and shading to Japan (Schodt 40). As *manga* gained popularity in the mass media at the time, artists such as Rakuten Kitazawa traveled to America (the epicenter of comics and cartoons at that time) and discovered that serialized comic strips had become the basis of American newspapers. As a result of realizing that *manga* for children may boost newspaper sales, Kitazawa began publishing Japanese versions of comic strips (Ito 32). Although initially influenced by the West, *manga's* drawings slowly took on a style of their own.

However, American influences can still be found in modern *manga* today. Although it has been a long time since Osamu Tezuka was influenced by American cartoon drawings, there are some other aspects

that are portrayed in modern *manga*. These can be found in the *Haikyuu!! manga*, which tells the journey and struggle of the main character, Hinata Shoyo, to become a professional volleyball athlete. Apart from the theme of the *manga* itself, which is volleyball, there are also some other American influences such as the fashion that used by the characters of *Haikyuu!! manga*.

Therefore, to determine the influence of America, this study aims to analyze American Culture in Japanese *manga*, as portrayed in Haruichi Furudate's *Haikyuu!! manga* by using a transnational in American Studies because as a new school in American Studies, transnational could study an issue outside America related to other countries or vice versa. In conducting an in-depth analysis, this research uses Roland Barthes semiotics to answer how those American cultural aspect, in this case fashion, portrayed in *manga*.

The emergence of transnational itself began when the phenomenon of American dominance in globalization, society, and culture in the world by academics, which explained by Rowe in Transnationalism and American Studies, Rowe explains that transnationalism itself was triggered by international

scholars outside America who saw the impact of America on various countries and cultures (Rowe 1). That statement also strengthened in Transnationalism and Education in the United States by G. Sue Kasun (2022), it stated;

Transnationalism describes the ways in which ties between two or more nations are maintained; these ties abound in social practices that are, at times, situated within rigid governing structures.

Transnationalism implies not only physical movement across borders, commonly referred to as "immigration," but also emotional ties across borders. It also includes distinct ways of knowing that are informed by social media, loved ones, and cultural practices that span borders. (Kasun)

It can be seen that transnationalism shows no boundaries in the exchange of information and it arises because humans are increasingly connected, and the borders between countries are increasingly blurred. This was reinforced by Stanley Fishkin, who, in Fishkin's perspective, highlighted how global influences, such as media, communication, and social interaction, can actually have

an impact on America's political and cultural landscape, thus blurring the boundaries between domestic and international issues.

Whereas, semiotics itself is used to study the signs contained in an object to find out the meaning of the object, or it can be said that semiotics is a study about signs. According to Zoest, everything that can be observed can be called a sign, and signs are not limited to objects (Zoest 18). The first person who coined this concept was Ferdinand De Saussure. In Saussure's view, language is a sign system, and each sign consists of two parts, the signifier and the signified. Signifier is a sound image that arises in our minds, while signified is an understanding or impression of meaning in our minds (Chaer 348), which can be concluded that Saussure's semiotics only focus to examines signs in life because words are signs. Later, this was developed by Roland Barthes, where Barthes semiotics not only examines signs but also the hidden messages, where Barthes' greatest contribution to semiotics is his second-order signification semiotic analysis map.

There are two levels of processes in Barthes' analysis

of map than in Saussure's map or it can be said that Barthes developed his semiotic analysis even deeper. The first is the denotation, or it can be called the primary signification, and the connotation or the second signification, which both consist of the signifier, signified, and signs (Storey 118). Denotation is the level of descriptive and literal meaning understood by almost all members of a culture, and connotation is the meaning created by connecting the signified with broader aspects of life (Abror 93). However, to differentiate from his predecessor, Saussure, Barthes distinguishes mention in secondary signification, the word signifier changed into form, the signified changed into concept, and the sign changed into myth.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative method to analyze. Creswell (2013), stated that qualitative research less focuses on testing hypotheses and the relationship between variables but on the description, analysis, and interpretation of a given phenomenon. The purpose of qualitative research is to explain a phenomenon as deeply as possible by collecting the data and showing the importance of the depth and detail of the

data being studied. This research does not use numbering or calculations to get research results, as stated;

Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln 3).

DISCUSSION

American Influence through Fashion

During the Meiji Restoration, or by the mid-19th century, such styles were adopted in Japan and were initially known as Western Style or *Yofuku*. With the beginning of the Meiji Restoration, the spread of Western-style clothing among the general public became a sign of modernity in Japan's clothes, as Japanese people had previously worn simply traditional clothing. The influence of western clothing is caused by their nation's relationship with the West, especially with America. According to Kawamura (n.d), Western clothing was first adopted for men's military

uniforms for the army and navy, influenced by French and British styles. Later, in the 1870s, government employees were required to wear Western styles. Even at the Emperor's court, the mandate to wear Western clothing was issued to men in 1872 and to women in 1886. However, only high-ranking noblewomen and ambassadors' spouses used the Western style.

After the Meiji Restoration, Japan's modernization continued until the Taisho period (1912-1926), when the opening up of Japanese politics and society resulted in a new wave of modernity. That led made a rise in wealth and also developed a working class with financial freedom who might choose to stay in cities and be exposed to Western influences (thosethatknow.co.uk). This gave rise to the subcultures of *Mobo* (modern boy) and *Moga* (modern girl). *Moga* used Western culture as a fashion statement in this example, wearing silk gowns with short bobbed hair, while *Mobo* brushed their long hair back and wore wide-legged "trumpet pants" (Mark 16). Clothing that was so casual in America was seen as revolutionary in Japan, with police even trying to crack down on *Mobo* and *Moga*, who were seen as rebellious groups in Ginza. This culture was

criticized for being artificial and un-Japanese, as well as a sign of Westernization (thosethatknow.co.uk). Those modern girls, in particular, are often accused of not being properly Japanese, as quoted from The Japan Times article, the "idealized, kimono-wearing, subservient housewife who stood for all that was proper in family life."

Japan's modernization came to a standstill during the Second World War, but Western Style grew and began to be worn by people in general following the war. According to Kawamura, the tremendous influence of America created a significant change in Japanese fashion, and people began to follow more Western trends. Japanese women who wore kimonos in their daily lives gradually began changing into Western-style clothes. Workers such as bus drivers, nurses, and typists were among the first to wear Western clothing in public. This is still present today, with Japanese people wearing casual clothes such as dresses, jeans, t-shirts, business suits, and so on, according to Moore (2017).

Leather Jacket

American casual clothes have become an integral part of Japanese fashion culture, and it might seem that Japanese

fashion has been "Americanized" since America accepted responsibility for rebuilding Japanese society after the Second World War. Following World War II, Japanese people began to wear button-down shirts, denim, and leather jackets (Marx x). It started around the end of the American occupation of Japan, with a lot of leftover clothing and equipment left behind by the American troops. However, shortly afterward, the younger generation of Japanese began to wear these abandoned clothes, meaning that the style became commonplace for the first time in Japan. One of the most iconic fashion styles adopted from America is the leather jacket.

Nowadays, leather jackets have become a globalized fashion style that is used by all members of society. Today, leather jackets have become a global fashion style used by all members of society. Before it became a fashion trend, leather jackets were an integral aspect of military outfits. The leather jacket debuted in the early 1900s and is reinforced by Makhluof's (2019) statement, which says that leather jackets were first used in military outfits. During the First World War, German officers and aviators wore black leather jackets

(DeLong 2). Leather jackets were worn by Americans also, where The US Army Aviation Clothing Board developed the "flight jacket" for the First World War pilots in 1917. Aviators and military personnel wore brown leather flying jackets. The major function of the sheepskin-lined jacket is to keep pilots warm in very cold conditions at altitude. Then, the Second World War became a significant point in the history of leather jackets. During this war, leather jackets became the standard uniform for military aviators, especially those involved in aerial combat. Leather jackets such as bomber jackets and shearling jackets became icons of the war. At the time, leather jackets were reintroduced and became the signature outfit of Nazi Germany and symbolized power and dominance. American general, Patton, also wore a black shearling jacket, reflecting his admiration of wartime heroes (DeLong 2).

Before it was reintroduced in the Second World War, leather jackets were first appearing in the fashion industry. In 1928, Irvin Scott designed and introduced The Perfecto jacket for Harley Davidson. The leather jacket as a fashion style then continued to grow through the post-Second

World War Era due to pop icons such as James Dean in "Rebel Without A Cause" and Marlon Brando in "The Wild One", according to Reddy (2019) and Qureshi (2019). They wear leather jackets in their roles, turning them into symbols of toughness and rebellion (DeLong 2). Furthermore, according to Andrew Martin, leather jackets became mainstream fashion because of these movies, even making leather jackets identical with youth rebellion. The leather jacket, created for practical and functional purposes such as protecting aviators from cold air, gradually permeated American society over time and evolved into a symbol of bold and masculine style. Even in the year that those films were released, 1953, the leather jacket became the distinguishing style of motorcyclists due to its resilience to abrasion and capacity to lessen damage sustained by riders in the case of a fall (Kalei 5).

Along with contributing to its use by aviators and later adoption by motorcyclists, the leather jacket became a part of the look of the emerging cultural hero or antihero teenage archetype in the 1950s and 1960s, emerging as a visual expression of rebellion against the prevailing norms of the

time (DeLong 2). During the period, urban youths were recognized for their clothing, which included jeans, T-shirts, and leather jackets. Keywords in films like "rebel" and "wild" indicated that young people were no longer restricted to wearing suits, shirts, and ties like mainstream society (Constantino 183). In the same year, leather jackets were famous in music subcultures, especially in the American rock and roll and punk movements. Leather jackets were commonly worn by musicians and music fans as part of their identity. This revival contributed to the rising popularity of leather jackets.

Then, in the 1970s and 1980s, according to Qureshi (2019), leather jackets, which were previously only used by men, became popular as women's fashion. Famous female performers such as Blondie and Joan Jett were among the first to wear leather jackets, making the classic item popular for women. According to Setyanti (2014), the popularity of leather jackets among women can make them seem strong with a more diverse range of silhouettes and styles. Leather jackets have progressively become a component of casual fashion in America throughout time. They are no longer

limited to aviation or specific subcultures but have become a fashionable option for many Americans and even all over the world. As Collen Hill says, "The appeal of leather jackets lies in their practicality for creating a fashionable style."

American leather jackets have a long and influential history across the world, and their evolution has played a role in significant developments in Japanese fashion culture. This began with their effect during the American occupation of Japan after the Second World War when flight jackets found their way into the country. It continued with the influence of Hollywood films such as "Rebel Without a Cause" and "The Wild One," which introduced Japanese youths to American clothing style. In addition, the rise of rock and roll music into the Japanese music market. As American cultural influences began to invade Japan, leather jackets became one of the country's most eye-catching apparel parts. This can be seen in the manga "*Haikyuu!!*" in examples of leather jacket use below.

Image 1. Tanaka Saeko use leather Jacket



Source: MangaPlus, *Haikyuu!!*
Ch 116

The impact of leather jackets from America spread to Japan throughout several chapters of *Haikyuu!!*. As can be observed, a character named "Tanaka Saeko" frequently wears leather jackets in several chapters. As previously said, the usage of leather jackets may generate a bold image, where leather jackets become a mark of boldness and masculinity in style. It is reasonable to say that the use of leather jackets in this work is a representation of American cultural influence, as leather jackets are a fashion icon that is closely associated with America, particularly in the popular culture in America. Characters in *Haikyuu!!* wear leather jackets, showing how American culture has invaded Japanese culture. Eventually, leather jackets became a popular fashion item in Japan.

Long before leather jackets became a popular type of

apparel in Japan, they were seen as a sign of rebellion among young people. After the Second World War, American cultural influences began to invade Japan, and leather jackets became one of the eye-catching apparel aspects. Leather jackets, which were originally designed for specific purposes such as aviation, have entered the international fashion industry. During this period, Japan experienced significant changes in many aspects of life, including clothes. Even though these clothes were not immediately embraced, they were gradually accepted.

When the leather jacket debuted in Japan, it soon became a popular item among the locals. It all started when Masayuki Yamazaki desired luxury by studying Japan's top celebrities in celebrity magazines and discovering that the best looks were neighbourhood gangsters. Since then, Yamazaki realized that "all cool fashion is delinquent fashion." Then, in 1969, he launched a pub where the personnel wore leather jackets as uniforms. The location afterward became popular among Japanese delinquents (Marx 132).

Although it has become popular among young Japanese society, traditional Japanese

society, at first, considered it to be an impact that could threaten the authenticity of Japanese culture. Moreover, traditional norms and values are deeply rooted in Japanese society. However, this did not subvert the self-expression of Japanese youth, they fought back to reflect the shifting values in the younger generation of Japan. Nonetheless, the two contradictory values are able to blend together and bring about change in Japanese society.

The introduction of the leather jacket itself began in the early 1970s, Yamazaki thought, he and his bartenders were the only adults in Tokyo dressed like Americans. His fashion sense continued to expand, leading him to set up Carol, a rock and roll band. The members of that band wore black leather jackets and stunning leather pants as they posed astride heavy motorcycles. As a result, the Weekly Playboy magazine called their appearance "Yankee style," seeing it as an imitation of American gangsters from the past. Their appearance, according to the National Broadcaster NHK, seemed like motorcycle riders with a rough education. Even, they were rejected in several locations due to concerns about

fears of clashes, riots, and property destruction (Marx 132-133). Therefore, leather jackets immediately became a symbol of toughness and bravery. They were even sought after by rock and roll music fans and members of the rebellious youth culture. This concept is reinforced by the writer Kenro Hayamizu, who commented on the group's appeal:

Eikichi Yazawa, one of the band members, with his sunglasses, leather jacket, defiant feeling, and motorcycle, looked like a hero in an era where youth battled with school administrators. Yazawa spread American rocker style into juvenile delinquent culture (Marx 133).

It can be seen that the leather jacket has become an important cultural icon on its voyage from America to Japan. It represents values such as courage, toughness, and a bold lifestyle. Within this work, the use of leather jackets acts as a symbol of American cultural influence. The leather jacket is one of the fashion representations most strongly linked with America, particularly with the country's popular rock and roll and rebellious culture. The use of leather jackets by characters in *Haikyuu!!* shows how American

culture has infiltrated Japanese culture and confirmed that American influence had truly infiltrated Japanese society. It shows how cultural aspects, such as fashion, can be incorporated into art forms like *manga*. Consequently, the use of leather jackets by characters in "*Haikyuu!!*" can be seen as a sign of American influence in shaping Japanese fashion.

Denim

With the rise of American influence around the world after the victory of America and the allies, one of the symbols of America, denim, began to become a fashion trend. And one of the countries that has been influenced by this American fashion trend is Japan. Denim became a popular fashion trend in Japan that emerged after the Second World War and remains popular nowadays. The popularity of denim is also closely tied to a Japanese youth who were captivated by American popular culture. But, denim, which eventually became a fashion trend in Japan, did not immediately lead Japan to continue importing these iconic American garments. Japan gradually started creating and producing its denim. The birthplace of Japanese denim, Kojima, as stated by Mannheimer (2018), initially emulated

American jeans until they could pave their path and sell their first entirely Japanese-produced denim. However, the journey to the point where Japan could produce its denim was not disconnected from the post-Second World War American influences, during the American occupation in Japan.

During the occupation, American soldiers often went to brothels and hired Pan Pan Girls or teenage prostitutes. Instead of spending money to pay them, the soldiers would pay them with used clothes. This led Ken'ichi Hiyami, the owner of Maruseru Store, to seeing many women coming in with faded indigo blue pants, which according to rumors were thought to be the bottoms of American prison uniforms. Eventually, Hayama called the pants "G.I. Pants" (re: *jiipan* or G-Pan). In addition to the women using the G-Pan pants, some pedestrians who also owned G-Pans also sold them directly to his shop. (Marx 72).

What may seem strange at first, G-Pan makes up half of Maruseru's sales. According to an interview with *Shukan Asahi Magazine*, Maruseru's profits can reach 2,600-2,900 yen from a pair of pants, which they buy for only 300-500 yen. Even at this price, the G-Pan sells out immediately even though they have not put a price tag on it.

In addition, G-Pan stands out in the sea of citizen clothing with its blue colour. In addition, cotton as a material was more suitable for the Japanese climate (Marx 73). One prominent brand during that time was Levi's. As a result, Japanese stores, like Maruseru, gradually began to import Levi's jeans. It did not stop there, this trend continued, and by 1955, pop icon in Hollywood movie screenings in Japan caused a shift in the dressing style.

Pop icons such as James Dean in "Rebel Without a Cause" (1955) and Marlon Brando in "The Wild One" (1953), who used denim as their fashion in their roles, according to Reddy (2019) and Qureshi (2019). Both films not only popularized Hollywood movies but also contributed even more to the world of fashion, notably denim trend in Japanese culture when they were released in Japan a year after their premiere in America. According to Kemp (2021), the arrival of American popular culture happened when Japan was still recovering from the Allied troops' massive destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, causing the Land of the Rising Sun to become immersed in it.

This expansion of knowledge about denim led to it becoming a cultural obsession. According

to Trotman, magazines like Lightning, Free & Easy, and Made in USA published detailed information about various types of vintage denim. In addition to these magazines that provided in-depth information about vintage denim, Yukari Negishi, the director of the concept store Ron Herman, mentioned in the documentary film "The 501 Jean: Stories of an Original" that Japanese men's magazines sometimes featured 10-page spreads about a particular type of denim. This gradual exposure to denim details contributed to denim becoming a fashion trend in Japan. This can also be seen in *manga*, which is a culture that is closely associated with Japan. Clothes such as denim, which have become everyday wear in Japan, are in fact an influence from America.

Figure 2. Tanaka Saeko use denim



Source:
MangaPlus,
Haikyuu!!
Ch 78

Figure 3. Oikawa Tooru and Iwaizumi Hajime use denim jacket



Source:
MangaPlus, *Haikyuu!!*
Ch 185

Before it became a fashion trend, denim was originally a fabric used exclusively for manual laborers in America because it was durable, sturdy, affordable, and could withstand any condition despite frequent use, making it suitable for them. Denim was even dyed indigo, which helped hide dirt and stains, which these workers would inevitably encounter. One denim brand, Filson, explains the reason behind the use of denim pants by workers. At the time, denim was a popular cheap garment that came in a variety of sizes for workers in the fields, coal mines, forestry, and factories. During the California Gold Rush from 1848 to 1855, miners were commonly seen wearing denim, field jackets, and hip boots.

Its use by workers started in 1848 when a man named Levi Strauss emigrated from Bavaria to America. Arriving in America, he and his brothers sold wholesale dry goods in New York, but the California Gold Rush made him decide to go to San Francisco in the centre. It was then that he sold sturdy work pants to thousands of miners, who needed pants that could withstand weeks and even months of daily wear without falling apart. Because of this, denim began to be recognized by manual laborers and eventually by all of society.

The prosperity of his business after two decades led Strauss to choose to work with Jacob Davis to obtain a patent for his denim pants, with its distinctive pocket stitching, as described by another denim brand, Ellicott. However, it was not until 1873 that the design patent was granted and the modern American denim was born. Not immediately recognized by the masses as it was previously only worn by blue-collar workers, denim began to make a comeback after the Hollywood revival of the 1950s saw celebrities such as James Dean, Marlon, Brando, and Marilyn Monroe wearing denim pants on the silver screen. Because of this, most teenagers at the time started wearing denim because it was considered cool.

One of the effects of the introduction of denim in the silver lining was that American denim spread to Japan. This can also be seen in several chapters of *Haikyuu!!*. As can be observed, the characters above frequently wears denim in several chapters. It is reasonable to say that the denim in this *manga* is an American cultural influence, as it is an American fashion icon. Characters in *Haikyuu!!* use denim, showing how American culture has invaded Japanese

culture and eventually become a fashion trend.

Although denim is currently a fashion trend and become everyday wear in Japan, the acceptance of denim in Japan was not immediate. According to the older generation in Japan during the Occupation, denim was considered provocative and controversial. They even considered denim as a symbol of villainy. According to Ma (2018), who was confirmed by Masayoshi Kobayashi, founder of The Flat Head, in the movie "Weaving Shibusa", stated that denim is the only clothing that can cause controversy. In fact, students are not even allowed to wear denim to campus because, according to professors, denim looks too provocative. Kobayashi says that, "The only clothing that can cause controversy (is) jeans. They became a symbol of criminals. Students wear jeans on campus, and the professors do not allow it because it is too 'sexy'."

However, this did not deter young Japanese generations from wearing denim. Reflecting the atmosphere of optimism that engulfed the post-war Japanese youth, according to Ma (2018), denim symbolized the carefree and exuberant ethos of Hollywood protagonist heroes and rebellious bikers, offering an attitude of anti-

establishment. Therefore, denim can represent youthfulness and youth culture. Denim effectively dismantled the fashion system, where clothing that communicated social status quickly fell out of favor, as denim became a symbol of the informal revolution. Even Levi's, one of the popular brands in Japan, was honoured as a symbol of their youth. Indeed, because of their passion for denim, Japan ended up producing their own denim as well. Which, according to Cardiner (2023), Japanese denim has a reputation among fans and is called the best denim in the world.

Even though denim was controversial, it evolved into a highly beloved fashion trend among the Japanese, encompassing denim jackets and jeans. According to Meyer (2023), denim jackets are among the 29 most popular Japanese fashion trends in 2023. Therefore, denim has become an important cultural icon on its voyage from America to Japan. Within this *manga*, the use of denim acts as a symbol of American cultural influence and emphasized that the American influence has truly entered the Japanese society, until Japan made their own denim and even became the best denim in the world. It shows how cultural aspects, such as fashion, can

be incorporated into popular culture like *manga*. Therefore, the use of denim by characters in "*Haikyuu!!*" *manga* can be seen as a representation of American influence in Japanese fashion.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in Haruichi Furudate's *Haikyuu!!*, Japan was influenced by American culture in terms of fashion. Especially after the Meiji Restoration and the Second World War, when Japan began to open up to the outside world, especially America. This also shows how much America influenced Japan, in this research, the American influence is in the aspect of culture, fashion. It can be seen that American fashion such as leather jackets and denim are still used by some characters in the *Haikyuu!!* *manga*. Moreover, both are very popular among the Japanese society itself even though there was a lot of disagreement in the beginning from the traditional Japanese society that holds traditional values. However, that did not stop the popularity of American fashion, like denim for example, which was eventually adopted by the Japanese so they could make their own denim and develop into the best denim in the world. Which then shows that the American influence cannot be separated, even the

influence has also become a fashion trend in the lives of Japanese people. Therefore, even though *manga* is well known as Japanese popular culture, there are still some American influences in it, which represents that American influences have been embedded into the lives of Japanese society.

COMPETING INTEREST STATEMENT

Herewith the author declares that this article is totally free from any conflict of interest regarding the assessment, review and revision, and publication process in general.

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