

## ผลบวกและผลลบของวัฒนธรรมแฟน ๆ

Positive and Negative Lights of Fan Culture



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### บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อให้ความรู้โดยรวมเกี่ยวกับวัฒนธรรมแฟน ๆ ของสื่อสาธารณะ และชี้ให้เห็นถึงผลลัพธ์ของการเข้าร่วมสังคมของแฟน ๆ และการทำกิจกรรมในหมู่แฟน ๆ ผลกระทบทั้งทางบวกและทางลบนั้นนับตั้งแต่ผลกระทบในจิตลักษณะของแฟน ๆ ความเพลิดเพลิน พฤติกรรม แรงจูงใจ ตลอดจนการพัฒนาทักษะการรู้เท่าทันสื่อ และทักษะของนักเรียน ประเด็นที่อภิปรายร่วมคือ ผลกระทบจากสื่อ สื่อสร้างสรรค์ และสื่อเพื่อการศึกษา จากการวิเคราะห์งานวิจัยจำนวนมาก ทำให้ผู้เขียนพบว่าการแนะนำให้ครูและอาจารย์นำการเขียนแฟนฟิกชันมาใช้ในชั้นเรียน โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในวิชาการเขียนเชิงสร้างสรรค์ การเขียนแฟนฟิกชัน คือการเขียนนิยายต่อเติมเนื้อเรื่องจากสื่อบันเทิง ซึ่งสามารถก่อให้เกิดประโยชน์ในด้านการศึกษา อาทิ สร้างแรงจูงใจในการเรียนรู้ และส่งเสริมทักษะแห่งศตวรรษที่ 21 ทั้งนี้งานวิจัยในอนาคตควรศึกษาผลของการใช้กิจกรรมอื่นๆ ของแฟนในชั้นเรียน เหมือนกับที่เคยศึกษาการใช้แฟนฟิกชันในชั้นเรียน

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## Positive and Negative Lights of Fan Culture

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### Abstract

This article primarily aims to give an overview regarding fan culture, and point out the outcomes of both joining fan community and doing fan activities. These outcomes were ranked from fans' psychological trait, enjoyment, behaviors, motivation, to the improvement of media literacy skills and other academic skills. Other related issues such as media effect, prosocial media, and educational media are also identified. As reviewing various studies in the field of fandom, fan scholars suggest the teachers to incorporate fan fiction writing activities as a part of creative writing assignment. Fan fiction is the story written by fan authors who reproduce the original media in different narrative. Using fan fiction in classroom can heighten students' learning motivation and enhance the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Future study should test the effect of using other kinds of fan activities in classroom setting as well as previously done with fan fiction.

**Keywords:** fandom, fan culture, fan fiction, media effect, fan activities

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## 1. Introduction to Fan Culture

Fandom is a subculture, where fans have a positive feeling toward the object of fandom, such as celebrity, TV show, comics, sport team, and music band. Fans' activities can be either active, semi-active, or passive. Before internet has become a part of our life, fan activities are generally passive. They could not easily interact with their interesting objects. In other words, these fans perceived their own strong relationship to their favorite celebrities or TV show, but they had never received any feedback from them. This is how some scholars called fans as, “losers” (Stanfill, 2013). Keller (2011) considered “album amicorum” in 1800s as an active fan activity, in which album amicorum artists did not only have a positive feeling and attitude regarding their object of interest, but they also recreated and collected it as a collection of artwork. This practice is similar to current active fan activities. Writing fan fiction is one of active fan activities that has been explored by various fan scholars. This activity has been done before the computer-mediated communication (CMC) era, and early fan fictions were published in fanzine (fan magazine). Later, in the age of Web 1.0, fans published their work in the website with editors. Nowadays, fans have more freedom to publish their work without editor reviews on blog and other Web 2.0 spaces (Rogozinska, 2007).

### 1.1 Creating Fan Work

Active fans do not only reproduce the text in the format of fan fiction. Original work, whether books, movies, music, and comics inspire fan to recreate many forms of expression (Zimmerman, 2014). They could be invented in the format of fan art, fan video, fan poetry, and other creative work (Zimmerman, 2014). These creative works could be called, “fan work” or “fan creation.” The purposes of creating fan work are to express the emotion of love, appreciation, and respect (Romanenkova, 2014). Sometimes, fans are inspired by the work of other fans instead of the original media (Brennan, Monroy-Hernandez, & Resnick, 2010). For instance, a fan could draw the crossover romantic pairing, Elsa and Jack Frost, after viewing the work of other fans. This pairing is an example of fanon, which refers to the acceptance among fans.

Fans may write fan fiction or draw fan art to protest against the original plot that they do not like (Leavenworth, 2015). Just as artists create their artwork based on how they want the world to be (Prigent, 2001), so too fans create fan work based on how they want the original media to be. Fan video or fan vid is another form of fan creation which was rarely mentioned in fan studies. Nowadays, technology allows fans to edit the video files of their favorite TV series. They could borrow a song from popular musicians and remake its music video by using clips from TV series. In fan videos, fans often tell the relationship among fictional characters that they want it to happen in the original media (Busse, 2009). Lately, it could be noticed that Youtube do not entirely delete fan video, but Youtube system automatically cites the original work and the name of copyright owner underneath the fan video. As a former fan video maker, the author would like to add another type of fan video, which is created by using the original work of the fan video maker, not the video from entertainment media. When the author was in high school and in undergraduate school, she often created Flash animation to fit into the song she liked. Animation production required much more effort and time, but the author found that she has more freedom in composing the narrative than just editing the existing video.

Some text has a similar producing process as fan fiction, but it is not considered as a fan work. Some literary work, for instance, was written by borrowing the plot from original work. Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, was reproduced in the movie format with the recreated narration including Zombies. However, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* has also been rewritten in fanfiction.net and it is still called, “fan work” (Leavenworth, 2015).

The author would like to question the standards to classify the original-like work and fan work, if it is reproduced based on popular media or public domain work. In Thailand, many stories were written by using the plot of public domain work. Ramayana, for instance, was rewritten from the original Indian epic by adapting it to fit into Thai tradition and moral beliefs. Moreover, Siam history regarding wars with the Burmese was often rewritten as novels. With the same static historical narration, Thai authors have reproduced it in various versions, e.g. in movie format shown in both television and cinema.

Although many scholars have tried to understand various aspects regarding fan recreated work and fan fiction writing activities, the majority of fans are not fan fiction authors. Internet allows fans to build a secondary discourse based on the original text, so that they could discuss their favorite TV series, comic, and music bands with other fans who share the same interest. With a common interest, fans share their identity, value, emotion, idea, feeling, and canon knowledge (Kuznetsova, 2015). Shared identity as fans provides numerous spaces for people with different races, cultures, classes, and ages to interact to one another. Moreover, fans do not only communicate to other fans who have similar opinion, but they also produce secondary discourse to protect their object of interest (Van den Bulck & Van Gorp, 2011). This kind of discourse is often seen in fan activist activities.

### **1.2 Rhetoric Discourse of Fan Activities**

Fan activists create another form of rhetoric discourse with full of symbolic cues. They include motto, phases, quotes, and familiar words shown in their favorite TV series, animation, or songs (Whiteman, 2009; Corciolani, 2014). Symbolic convergence theory could help explain the using of these words (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011, p. 206). By being informed with these words, fans understand the shared meaningful knowledge and background of these words. In fan fiction community, everyone shares similar knowledge about the fan object, which is called, "canon" (Kuznetsova, 2015). They know the plot, setting, and character development of their favorite object of fandom. Some fan scholars believe that people outside the community would never understand fan fictions as much as fans do (Berkowitz, 2012). Interactivities inside general fan community show the similar process of shared meaning as in fan fiction community, that fans could share inside jokes where only insiders can realize what they are (Berkowitz, 2012). Hand gestures in music fan community (sign of the horns or obscene gesture) are another form of meaning sharing. Rock and heavy metal fans may understand the particular hand gestures as positive encouragement for their favorite musicians, but such the hand gesture is viewed as impolite posture by the outsiders.

Fan discourse is a type of secondary discourse and also an internet phenomenon. Fan scholars together have constructed the knowledge about the structure, format, and characteristic of the discourse. Then, fan phenomenon can be viewed as a theory to evaluate other types of secondary discourse, citizen journalist communication (Coombs, 2016). The dimensions that make fan discourse different from other secondary discourses are how fans respect the original text and how fans perceive the hierarchy or power differentia that happens between fans and their object of interest, and sometimes, among fans themselves. General secondary discourses may have other types of relationship between practitioners and their target object. For example, when people from a developed country discuss the news about people in an underdeveloped country, they might perceive that their power is higher than the targets.

Because fan activities are various and the relationships among practitioners are complex, it is worth to identify the outcome of being a part of fandom whether it can generate a prosocial outcome on both fans and society. In that case, fan scholars would need to suggest the way to use such the phenomenon to benefit the society and young generation. On the other hand, if the results are negative, fan scholars should establish the strategies to protect



fans from negative effects. The next section will review the impact of being in the fan subculture on other related social sectors.

## 2. The objectives of this article

The objectives of this articles are (1) to understand the characteristic of fan work or fan creation and the structure in fan community, (2) to identify the positive and negative effect of joining fan community, engaging in fan activities, and being a part of fan culture, (3) to use the studies in the area of impact of media to help describe the role of media in fan culture, and (4) to suggest the teaching strategies for the teachers or lecturers regarding how to use fan activities as academic practices.

## 3. Negative Light

Media consumers can be affected by media content. In a similar manner, fans are also media consumers with a higher rate of media consumption, and cult fans are those who consume the media at the longer and greater amount compared to general fans (Greco, 2015). Hence, fans were viewed as unreasonable people who extremely loved their object of interest without critique (Jenkins, 1992; Stanfill, 2013). This stereotype does not allow fans to classify the prosocial or antisocial contents in media. In other words, both prosocial and antisocial contents are easily able to result in fans.

### 3.1 Violent Content

Problematic media with a large number of fans and consumers have been examined by media scholars. The relationship between media violence and trait aggressiveness has been confirmed by meta-analysis of Anderson and his colleague (Anderson & Warburton, 2012). Video game content is not only the factor that causes players' aggressiveness, but competitiveness is also another important factor (Anderson & Morrow, 1995). Similarly, content in other media, such as television (Josephson, 1987), movies (Bushman, Jamieson, Weitz, & Romer, 2013), and comics (Bauer & Dettore, 1997), could produce an aggressive and anti-social thought in the viewers. As a result, the rating system has been used to control the violent content in movies. Nevertheless, the level of violence in PG-13 is extremely higher in later movie than in early movie (Nalkur, Jamieson, & Romer, 2010). This means adolescent in later generation would watch the violent scene, because of the less stringency in rating system.

Violence content in media is not the only thing that the scholars have concerned. Myth, stereotype, and false belief are another important issue to worry about. Social Learning Theory (Aker, 1973) is used to describe the way young adolescents learn things from media. These people are lack of prior experience in the real-world situation, so they might select some media contents to use as their first time experience, or to use as the script to process their life and make a decision in a particular circumstance (Huesmann & Malamuth, 1986). The worst case shown in a research study is how murderers imitated the killing methods in films to kill actual people (Helfgott, 2015).

### 3.2 Gender Role and Stereotype

Feminist researchers had questioned whether Disney films benefit or harm young girls. The exposure to Disney fairy tales animated films could mislead the young girls about their gender role (Arunrangsiwed & Pasomsat, 2016). With lack of experience regarding gender role, the young girls would absorb media content and use it to develop their gender identity (Butler, 2013; Popa & Gavrilu, 2015). The finding of previous studies shows that early Disney films are more harmful than later Disney films. Cinderella and The Little

Mermaid, for instance, taught young girls that (1) women have to wait for men to help, (2) women cannot be happy without men, and (3) powerful women are wicked (Morrison, 2014; Garofalo, 2013). Later Disney films, give a better personality and gender role to female characters, which is relating to the concept of second-wave feminism (Rochester, 2014; Wilde, 2014; Hovdestad, Hubka & Tonmyr, 2009).

Likewise, some comic provides an inappropriate gender role for female characters, as seen in early superhero work of Marvel Comics (Dunne, 2006). These Marvel female superheroes were often fragile and passive. Recently, Marvel Comics has solved such problems, by releasing the book of female superhero, X-Men (2013). For comic books in general, they reinforce the rape myth in such a way that the rape is not harmful if men are raped by women, and also women without supernatural power would always be the rape victims (Garland, Branch, & Grimes, 2016). Crime comics is also another type of graphic novels with violence against women (Lavin, 1998), and fortunately that they are rarely found today. Comics and movies often portray fighting women to impress male audiences (Kittredge, 2014) regardless of gender norms of women. This teaches the false belief to young boys, and makes them misunderstand what the actual women are.

As mentioned earlier, the negative stereotype of fans is an unreasonable manner. Perfect Blue is an animated film that portrays such the stereotype (Norris, 2012). Honestly, fans of Perfect Blue gave positive reviews about the film, but failed to critique its negative stereotype of fans. Without media literacy skills, fans cannot recognize that they are blamed by the media they like.

### **3.3 Violent Expression in Fan Practices**

Negative outcomes of being a part of fandom are also shown in fan studies. Higher level of identity salience as sport fan can cause a higher aggressiveness against the rival sport team and its fans (Rahmati, Kabiri & ShadManfaat, 2014). Some serious fans use trash talk or impolite words to blame the celebrities they do not like, and also blame their fans, too (Han, Kim, Kim, Jun, & Kim, 2014). Both examples illustrate that physical and verbal aggressiveness were used by fans to attack the out-group members. In the same fan community, fans have built the hierarchy as well as they do with outsiders (Reysen, Lloyd, Katzarska-Miller, Lemker, & Foss, 2010; Whiteman, 2009). Fans of a famous video game, Silent Hill, reject the new community members who joined their online forum (Whiteman, 2009). It was even worse when there is no equality between genders in some fan communities, as female fans obtain a lower status than male fans (Kohnen, 2014). Moreover, as fans are aggressive in interpersonal communication, aggressiveness and violence are also used in intrapersonal communication. This violence appeared in the group of male Slash fan artists (Brennan, 2013). Slash is a type of fan art depicting the homosexual relationship between male fictional characters from original media (Arunrangsiwed, 2016; Salmon & Symons, 2004). Male fans who produce Slash fan art express their violent thought through their artwork. It is a type of hegemonic masculinity violence that men need to have the power over other men (Brennan, 2013; Dennis, 2010).

### **3.4 Problem Music**

Music fandom is frequently reviewed and studied by scholars in the area of media violence. Listening to loud music can physically harm the ears of audiences, and cause headache and inability to concentrate (Gupta, Sharma, Singh, Goyal, & Sao, 2014). On the other hand, some scholars found a positive and neutral effect of music use in adolescents. Herrmann (2008), for example, found that female fans of pop bands want to be famous and want to have abilities as well as their favorite musicians. This could imply that fans want to imitate their favorite idols in some way. As such, music is considered as a part of adolescent identity development process, and they construct their self-concept related to music (North & Hargreaves, 1999). It was known that a stable self-concept can bring about self-esteem

(Szabo & Ward, 2015), which is supported by a fan study of North and Hargreaves (2006) that indicates some association between music use and self-esteem. These causal relationships can offer a hypothesis regarding fan identity development and self-esteem.

In some genre of music, the lyrics contain anti-social content, and the music video shows violent behaviors. For example, lyrics of rap music involve rhetoric of committing a crime (Hollman, 2013). Similarly, lyrics of some rock and heavy metal bands can reinforce their audiences to belief in Satan and Antichrist cult (Eastman & Iapalucci, 2014). The images of blood, murder, and self-harm are also displayed in rock and heavy metal music videos. Most musicians of this music genre are white male, and that might create some racial and gender inequality (Donze, 2011). In this case, Lozon and Bensimon (2014) classified rock, heavy metal, alternative rock, punk rock, and rap as problem music, and the fans of which sometimes have deviant behaviors, such as alcohol use, drug use, violent behavior, antisocial behavior, antisocial thought, and suicidal thought (Bensimon, 2014; Lacourse, Claes, & Villeneuve, 2001). However, Bensimon (2014) believed that the negative message might not come from the music itself, but from the fan culture and related environment of the particular music. The study of North and Hargreaves (2006) has supported this idea. They found a weak link between problem music use and self-harm, but they found a strong link between low self-esteem and self-harm. This refers that to the fact that the problem is not caused by the music, but by other factors.

### **3.5 Emo Subculture**

Emo is a part of negative light of fandom. Young internet users are influenced by music and the surrounding culture. Since the author had been a lurker in emo online group, she would give some introduction about this culture. These young people could turn to be emo kids by adapting their personal characteristics to fit into the subculture group. The adaptation includes personal traits, taste of music, dressing, and makeup style. To join into this fan culture, a practitioner does not have to change one's whole personality. On the contrary, one should have most of these characteristics as prior manner, and might change only some minor things to fit into the group. Emo kids may choose to be fans of some bands based on two reasons. First, they appreciate the kind of music preferred by most emo kids. Second, they would become fans of the musicians with emo visual appearance. This means emo kids could listen to more than one music genre, ranking from pop punk, alternative rock, punk rock to heavy metal. That is, emo kids do not only have to be fan of music band, but they are also a fan of some online celebrities who dress and makeup like emo kids.

Outsiders do not blame this subculture because of their taste, but primarily their self-harm and suicidal behaviors. Anti-emo people often make joke on emo behaviors, such as the meme saying that "I wish my lawn was emo, so it would cut itself." Furthermore, parody of emo kids was also made on Youtube videos, focusing on the visual appearance and feminine characteristic of emo boys (Johansson & Sternudd, 2014). Not only anti-emo media that emphasize their visual appearance, the researchers also did the same thing. A questionnaire developed to measure emo behaviors also consists more of the appearance-related items than those about belief and behaviors (Ashaaan, Alsukah & Algadheeb, 2013). Zdanow and Wright (2012) conducted a qualitative interviewing and found that emo kids cut themselves to release their painful feelings. These scholars suggest that public should not separate this subculture group by blaming or making a joke of them, since the separation would make these young adolescents perceive that they are unfit for usual culture (Zdanow & Wright, 2012). While rock and heavy music are also favorite music genres of some emo kids, it might increase their suicide thought. This is because rock and heavy metal fans are not afraid of the death (Kneer & Rieger, 2015).



## 4. Positive Light

Berkowitz (2012) studies the content in the New York Times and found that the public does not have a negative attitude on fandom, but some fan scholars just focus too much on a single negative issue. The negative aspect regarding fandom might be constructed by outsiders who have no experiences as fans. Herrman (2012), who is both an insider in punk culture and a scholar, is unsatisfied that early researchers misunderstood about punk culture.

### 4.1 Prosocial Fan Activities

Some fan studies showed the prosocial activities that fans join together and help the society. FandomAid is a campaign that fan fiction authors and other fan creators sell their fan work to raise fund for charity (Romanenkova, 2014). Some fan activists do not run the campaign just for their need, but they expand their goal to meet the society need. Football fan activists in Australia, for example, protest against football players' sexual assault crime (Dimitrov, 2008). Another group of fan activists discussed in a research study is on the website Racebending.com. Their web administrators have sent a prosocial message to the media organization to consider removing whitewashing in films (Lopez, 2011). This group of fans started their campaign when Asian characters in an animated film were replaced by white actors when it was made into the movie format (Lopez, 2011). Although this issue was ended in 2010, Racebending.com has never stopped their campaign. Today, they still run their website to improve the portrayal of multi-racial characters in media.

### 4.2 Prosocial Media Consumption

Across several studies, the use of prosocial media to improve manner and positive characteristics in young adolescents has been introduced. Prosocial media do not have to be the media which were primarily created as a part of a particular classroom, but they can be movie, website, game, and other types of media, which bring about positive effects on media consumers. Disney animation could be considered as prosocial media, since Asawarachan (2015) found that Disney animated films could teach morality to young audiences. However, prosocial media are rarely explored by media scholars, unlike media violence which is often found as research topics. Gentile, Coyne, and Walsh (2011) had conducted a longitudinal study and found that consumption of violent media can affect the adolescents in the two-year-later period through negative effects which are both verbal and physical aggressiveness.

Just as media violence could result in the long-term negative effect, so prosocial media should also result in a long-term positive outcome. The scholars could raise a similar question, if young adolescents could learn and imitate prosocial behaviors from media as well as they did with anti-social behaviors (Hogan, 2012). The study of Ostrov, Gentile, and Crick (2006) shows that media exposure can cause both prosocial and aggressive behaviors in pre-school children. For using prosocial media alone, prosocial media could help reduce aggressiveness in young children (Greitemeyer, 2011). For example, Prosocial video game can be used to increase prosocial thoughts (Greitemeyer & Osswald, 2011), and help reduce physical aggressiveness (Saleem, Anderson, & Gentile, 2012a). The same scholars, Saleem, Anderson, and Gentile (2012b) had tested the effect of using prosocial video games in another study which shows that playing prosocial video game can increase helpful behaviors and decrease hurtful behaviors (Saleem, Anderson, & Gentile, 2012b). Conversely from problem music, when prosocial content is included in song lyrics, it would result in prosocial thought, feeling, and behavior in its audiences (Greitemeyer, 2009). Since prosocial media have an effect on audiences' feeling, they can improve the level of empathy in media audiences (Prot et al., 2014), which is one of the positive traits that lead people to understand others' feeling.

#### 4.3 Social Change

Since popular media can guide people's behaviors, media producers should ethically present the content to generate prosocial belief in media audiences (Brown & Singhal, 1990). To add prosocial message in media also helps solve social problems (Brown & Singhal, 1997). Popular media producers could set their agenda to lead to a social change, such as raising the problematic issues about the poor and inequality in the society (Brown & Singhal, 1993). Some media have been intentionally developed to teach people, such as to promote sexual responsibility (Keller & Brown, 2002). Moreover, an animated film created by Thai producers, Khun Tong Dang the Inspirations (2015), was created to teach young children about bravery and gratefulness (Mongkolprasit & Arunrangsiwed, 2016). This kind of media meets the suggestion of scholars in the area of media study and media literacy, where the company should consider more about the wellbeing of society than thinking solely about their own profit (Somsert, 2013; Sliburyte, 2009). Private company is not only the organization that should be aware of this issue, but scholars suggest that school, policymaker, and government should increasingly concern the impact of media, too (Strasburger & Hogan, 2013). That is, media should be used to educate people in both behavior improvement and knowledge enhancement.

#### 4.4 Academic Use of Fan Fiction

Several fan scholars identify the benefits of using fan fiction writing activities in academic setting as a part of creative writing assignment and assignment of other ESL classes, and this is a new strategy of incorporating media in classroom. Earlier media used in classroom are web-based learning, educational application, animation-based learning, and other types of prosocial media. Researchers in the area of education have tested the capability of using educational media in classroom, before fan fiction writing was suggested to be a part of writing course.

Education media offer much benefit to the students, including to generate a better class performance, a higher intention, and increasing intrinsic motivation. Animation-based learning helps improve the knowledge for students with low-prior knowledge, better than those with high-prior knowledge (Zhu & Grabowski, 2006). Visualization, similarly, could make the students understand the process of universe better than traditional lecturing (Badre, Beranek, Morris & Stasko, 1991), because using picture and words together may increase the level of understanding in audiences better than using words alone (Mayor, 2002; Mayer & Moreno, 2002; Rieber, 1990). Nonetheless, creating education media might take a long time and require the skills as website or game developers (Arunrangsiwed, 2014). Consequently, some scholars suggest the teachers use the existing media to engage students' attention in classroom. For example, teachers might include cartoon characters in Mathematic book (Turan, 2014). In this case, teachers of young children had formerly used comic in classroom to encourage the students to read and expand their vocabulary (Wright, 1979). In addition, non-fiction comic use in classroom can create enjoyment, inspiration, and excitement in students (Decker & Castro, 2012).

All previous examples are how teachers use the media as a knowledge-insert method for their students. In fact, this kind of visualization and narrative can be used to support the expression of the students, too. A study by Rättyä (2013) indicates that speaking and drawing together can evaluate students' skills in language grammar better than using speaking alone. Tasker and Dalton (2008) assigned their students to watch the animation and draw a storyboard (picture sequence) to show their knowledge about the molecular switch. This implies that students can express their knowledge and skill received earlier by using available media, such as drawing tools or computer programs. Similarly, to involve fan fiction in classroom practice can help students express their idea and their language skills. As mentioned in previous studies, moreover, drawing picture is also an effective way for the

students to express their idea and knowledge (Cronin-Jones, 2005). The author of the current article encourages the teachers and university lecturers to incorporate fan art in classroom as well as they have done with fan fiction.

#### 4.5 Academic-Related Skill Improvement

Fan art, fan fiction, fan video, fan poetry, and cosplay activities are the products of fans' enjoyment, that helps fan to keep producing such artwork. They do it without force from others, similar to a proverb, "A volunteer is worth twenty pressed men." Fan authors write fan fiction because of their own motivation, and this motivation could drive fans to make a better fan work. Likewise, teachers would not want to force their students to work harder in the assignment, but they would need their students to work harder with their own motivation. Doujinshi artists have proved the high level of motivation in fan artists, since Doujinshi is a comic book, which requires effort in both drawing and plot development. After writing a fan fiction, fan authors would seek the way to improve their writing skills to generate a better work (Jenkins, 2006; Bolt, 2004). Plot development is another skill that fans gain from writing fan fiction (Land, 2010). Similarly, creating fan art provides an opportunity for fan artists to have a better drawing skill (Chen, 2007; Manifold, 2009). Making costume for a cosplay event is considered as another kind of craft making, and fans who created costumes by themselves have earned a skill of making mixed media work (Chen, 2007; Manifold, 2009).

Kate, an informant in Roozen's study (2009), has tried using various kinds of tools to make a better fan art. She began with drawing on paper, then drawing in tablet, and finally coloring in Adobe Photoshop. Hence, the ability to use multiple tools does not only benefit students in academic life, but also provide them an opportunity to work in their interesting area (Mannifold, 2009), such as some fan artists or Doujinshi creators have grown up and become professional artists. Lam (2010) showed an example of a former Doujin gamer who later owns a game production company. This implied that fan motivation in making fan work can drive fans to their life achievement.

Some fan scholars do not believe that joining a fan fiction community could help fans improve their writing ability. Magnifico, Curwood, and Lammers (2015) conducted a content analysis in two websites that fans generally publish their fan fiction, fanfiction.net and figment.com. They found that most comments are to inform the author positively, but not to point out the mistake or suggest the way to improve writing skills. Moreover, some fan fiction authors are discouraged by the community, when their fan fictions are banned or blamed. This case happens when fans violate the agreement of community, such as giving the fictional characters an uncommon habit, called, "OOC" (Out of Characters) (Kuznetsova, 2015).

While the study of Magnifico, Curwood, and Lammers (2015) shows that most comments for fan fictions do not direct fan authors how to write a better work, the author of current article argues that without critique comment, fans are still able to improve their writing and drawing skill. To post fan fiction or fan art online is like to join a contest. Fans will not need their fan art to be the worst in the gallery. Like an artist who need one's artwork to standout from others' (Arunrangsiwed, 2015a), fan artists should also need their fan art to be seen and famous in the community. Previous fan studies suggest that the motivation to improve fans' writing skill is not based on the critique in comments, but fans improve their writing ability because of their motivation received from the positive comments (Schott & Burn, 2004) of "mentors" or people who give the comments for fan fictions, which commonly provide a cheer comment. Some users who gave negative comments are often blamed by other mentors and users (Campbell, Aragon, Davis, Evans, Evans, & Randall, 2016). The motivation to continue doing fan work with a higher quality can be described by two drivers, which are encouragement and inspiration (Campbell, Aragon, Davis, Evans,

Evans, & Randall, 2016). As shifting away from the ordinary mentoring process that fan authors post their fan fictions before receiving the comments from the mentors, Lammer (2016) showed another process which was done by an active fan who was an active learner. The participant in the study of Lammer (2016) did not wait for mentors to comment her work. Conversely, she sought for people to proofread her fan fiction, and sought for fan artists to create illustrator for her fiction.

All of these make fan practices different from classroom practices. Fan scholars who are writing teachers suggest that fan fiction should be a part of writing assignment (Black, 2006; Black, 2009; Land, 2010; Manifold, 2009). Reading fan fiction should help increase the amount of reading in students who do not like to read a book (Berkowitz, 2012). This is similar to the suggestion of early study in comic use in classroom, which could engage young children to read and expand their vocabulary (Wright, 1979). Fan fiction, as well as comic books, should be able to help students who have reading problems (Berkowitz, 2012). Therefore, school administrators and librarians may provide their students a section in the library with tangible books of fan fictions (Land, 2010).

More recently, the studies in this area point out that the benefit of fan fiction use in classroom is greater than to increase the amount of reading, learning motivation, and to engage students in writing class. Fan fiction use in classroom can improve learning activities to meet the requirement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (Bahoric & Swaggerty, 2015). With fan fiction assignments, the students will use digital media to explore others' work and publish their work online. This process motivates them to learn by themselves both inside and outside classroom, and also enhance their creativity in plot construction (Bahoric & Swaggerty, 2015). Since the original media contain a strong story setting and character development, fans could borrow them to rewrite in fan fictions. On the contrary, when the teachers assign their students to write their original story, the students might worry about the setting and character development. This concern will not occur when they have to write a fan fiction, because plot and characters are existing in the original media (Jessop, 2010). These evidences offer an assumption that fan fiction use in classroom should help minimize students' uncertainty.

Without guiding by the teacher, some students brought fan practices into the classroom by themselves. Fans may merge their knowledge from classroom with their beloved story from entertainment media and develop both of them to be fan art or fan fiction. This way will help fans to remember a difficult lesson easier (Roozen, 2009), because people can remember things in a narrative format, which contains a causal relationship between each part of knowledge, better than in a fragmented format.

While most fan scholars identify the benefit of fan activities in classroom, some of them also provide the detailed strategies of how to run the classroom with fan activities. Teachers who teach history or classic literature, for instance, could assign their students to draw fan art of classic literatures (Zimmerman, 2014). This would help them visualize the scene in the literary work. Moreover, the teachers will be able to indicate how students understand the literary work (Zimmerman, 2014). Bahoric and Swaggerty (2015) identified various ways of using fan fiction in classroom based on the grade level of the students. That is, fan fiction can directly help increase media literacy skills in older students, as their teachers may assign them to rewrite the original media by avoiding stereotypes, gender inequality, and violence.

Although Bahoric and Swaggerty (2015) suggest teachers use fan fiction activities as a tool to teach their students to avoid stereotype belief and myth in media, Vasilyeva (2015) found that some fan fictions repeat the stereotype shown in media. The example raised in the study of Vasilyeva (2015) is the fan fiction of a manga-style animated series, *Hetalia: Axis Powers*. This series contains a lot of racial stereotypes, in which each cartoon character represents a whole country, and all stereotypes of the particular country are added into the

character. Fans of this series wrote about a female character, Belarus, whose characteristics are borrowed from news and other popular media. Such these racial and gender stereotypes are opposite to how Belarusians view themselves (Vasilyeva, 2015). When teenagers are engaged in online community alone, they might not know that media are teaching them an inappropriate thing. However, with fan fiction writing in classroom, teachers are able to guide the students to be active media consumers.

#### **4.6 Copyrights Issue: Point to Concern**

While fan fiction community and fan fiction writing activities in classroom bring about a lot of benefit for fans and students, there is an unsolved problem related to law and policy. Fans use the plot and characters from the original media without permission from the copyright owners. Although many authors and copyright owners do not have problem with fan fiction activities, Ann Rice, an author of original media, are unsatisfied that fans rewrite her story (Jessop, 2010). However, since copyright laws aim particularly to protect the benefit of copyright owner, writing fan fiction does not take any benefit from the copyright owner, but instead supports the copyright work and make it more famous (Kalinowski, 2014). Fan fiction function is similar to word-of-mouth marketing; hence it will be a bad marketing strategy if the company tries to take down fan fiction online community (Romanenkova, 2014). On the contrary, the company should find the way to support fan fiction related to their own media (Berkowitz, 2012). Romanenkova (2014) suggested a method to solve the issue of copyright in fan fiction, that the company should create the space in their own website and let their fans upload fan fiction into the space. Thus, fans have to sign an agreement to transfer the license of their work to the company. This method could be allowed in the current copyright law, and the company will be able to control the quality of fan fiction, such as screening out the pornographic content (Romanenkova, 2014).

## **5. Implication**

### **5.1 For Education**

1) Fan fiction should be used as a tool to develop students' media literacy skills. The teachers could assign their students to write fan fiction based on problematic media (Bahoric & Swaggerty, 2015). For example, the students need to remove the fairy-tale stereotypes from the movie, *The Huntsman: Winter's War* (2016), in which powerful women are wicked and unreasonable.

2) Fan activities, either writing fan fiction or drawing fan art, could help increase students' intrinsic motivation. If the teachers involve such the activities in classroom, their students should pay more attention to the class and have more motivation in doing homework assignment.

3) Fan art could be used in exams or homework assignment, since students can confirm their idea and knowledge by illustrating as the pictures (Hale, 1995; Pun, 2011).

4) Teachers might inform their students that they are also a fan of some media object, because students' perceive similarity and "connoisseurship" can strengthen the relationship between students and their teachers (Simon, 2012). Moreover, when the students have something to identify with their teachers, they will imitate their teachers, as well as the audiences imitate the media characters when they identify with them (Hearold, 1986; Arunrangsiwed, 2015b; Anderson & Warburton, 2012). To imitate teachers would benefit the students, because of the assumption that most teachers are positive role model for people to follow.



### 5.2 For Parents

Parents, as well as teachers, can try or pretend to be fans of media objects preferred by their children. This does not only the way to strengthen the relationship in the family, but it is also a way to monitor their children politely, since the parents should not leave their children alone with the media.

### 5.3 For Marketing

The media organization should not fight against their fans who create fan art and fan fiction, but they should support their fans by providing the space on the website for their fans to post fan work.

## 8. Conclusion

Joining fan community as active fans can benefit young adolescents in various aspects. Fan creators are motivated to develop their writing, drawing, and craft making skills. Some fan activists have run the campaign for the society. Creative writing teachers have brought fan activities into their classroom, which help increase learning motivation and media literacy skills in their students. However, some fan activities may be harmful, such as listening to problem music, learning from stereotype-reinforced media, and using physical aggressiveness while attending the soccer match. Future study should examine if the positive and negative outcomes mentioned in the current paper are really caused by engaging in fan activities. Moreover, instead of writing fan fiction, the strategies of using other fan activities in classroom should be identified.

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