

Ametora and Cultural Hybridity in Japanese fashion

¹Rama Ray Rigil Kent, ²Diah Soelistyowati

¹Universitas Dian Nuswantoro, Semarang, Indonesia

²Universitas Dian Nuswantoro, Semarang, Indonesia
(3122022101009@mhs.dinus.ac.id)

Abstract. This study examines *Ametora* style in Japan. *Ametora* or *American Traditional* is one of the popular fashion street styles in Japan. The purpose of this study is to examine the process of cultural hybridization between western and Japanese cultures. The data sources in this study were obtained from books and visual documentation such as catalogs, lookbooks, and advertisements from Japanese brands such as *Beams+* which feature the *Ametora* style. The research method that will be used is a qualitative descriptive method. The theory used is the *Cultural Hybridity* theory. This theory explains how local and global cultures not only collide but also blend and form new identities. This hybridization process will later form a new resistance and negotiation for a group of people in social relations between Western culture and Japanese culture. *Ametora's* style of dress, which was originally an adoption of the traditional American style, then underwent a process of reinterpretation by Japanese society through a blend of local aesthetic values, social needs, and unique cultural sensitivities. This research will show that Japanese society creatively adapts foreign fashion elements to become part of local identity through visualizations strengthened by brands such as *Beams+*.

Keywords: *Ametora* style; fashion; culture

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

According to Lypovettsky in Suhendar et al. (2021) Fashion is a form of change characterized by rapid time, so that fashion is the power of individuality by allowing someone to express themselves in clothing. Other scientists also say that Polhemus and Procter say that fashion is used as a synonym or equation for the terms makeup, clothing and style in society.

The existence of fashion culture that then spread to all corners of the world made many changes in every country, one of which is Japan. One of the street styles that emerged in Japan is the *Ametora* style. Japanese styles imported from the United States now occupy their own genre, called *Ametora*, a slang abbreviation in Japanese for "American traditional".

But how was *Ametora* formed? Did people suddenly discover *Ametora* fashion? There has been no research that carries the theme of *Ametora*, therefore the researcher chose this title because the researcher is interested and wants to share information related to *Ametora*.

This study aims to examine the occurrence of *Ametora* fashion which is the result of *cultural hybridity* between Western and Japanese cultures, when Western fashion culture entered Japan a hybridization process occurred. This process will be studied further in this study. This study uses books, catalogs, and websites from brands as data to examine the *Ametora* phenomenon.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Based on research conducted by (Firdaus, 2023) entitled "Pengaruh Globalisasi terhadap Hibriditas Budaya Korea pada Masyarakat Lokal Thailand". Korean popular culture began to gain popularity in Thailand. The Korean government's goal was to focus on promoting Korean popular culture in

Thailand because it wanted to generate more income for the country after the Asian financial crisis. This promotion was successful because of the globalization process that made the entry of Korean popular culture into the global community, especially Thailand, easier. Through television series and dramas and music, Korean culture can be known and become a trend in Thailand.

Based on research conducted by (Anggraini, 2018) entitled “Memakai Harajuku Style: Brand-Brand Lokal dan Street Style di Jepang”. Harajuku style is often judged only by its appearance, as we generally judge style. However, we rarely pay attention to the elements that form the appearance, even though these elements play an important role in realizing a style. In the context of education, Harajuku style can be understood as the result of a creative process and learning in dressing through purchasing clothes from local, international brands, or a combination of both, as well as through do it yourself practices where individuals design or reconstruct their own clothes. This process reflects cultural literacy, creativity, and the individual's ability to shape identity through clothing.

Ametora, which is a mixed fashion between western and Japanese culture, is very suitable when combined with the theory of cultural hybridity because this theory will give birth to a cultural construction that is similar but not the same as its origin. Hybridity itself does not only focus on the construction of a combined culture (cultural mix) but also focuses on the process that describes how this cultural combination is placed in Japanese society. This study investigates how the process of mixing *Ivy style* elements with militarywear, sportswear, and workwear gave birth to a new fashion in Japan called *Ametora*.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. This method was chosen because the data used in this study is in the form of visual images. The objects in this study are images of the *Ametora* fashion catalog from the beams+ brand. Qualitative descriptive research is an alternative in enriching understanding, and also aims to understand the phenomena of what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions and others (Safarudin 2023). The theory used in this study is the theory of cultural hybridity according to Bhabha, namely

Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. (1994 ; 112)

Cultural hybridity is a metaphor to describe two types of types (forms) that bring out certain characteristics of each form, while at the same time eliminating the characteristics of both. This theory is used to analyze how the cultural mixture between Western fashion and local Japanese culture occurs in forming the *Ametora* style. This theory emphasizes that in the process of cultural encounters, not only copying or imitation occurs, but also the formation of new identities through negotiation, adaptation, and reinterpretation of foreign cultures into local contexts. The data source used is catalog photos of beams+ brand products. This approach is used to deeply understand the process of cultural hybridity that occurs in the construction of *Ametora* fashion as a result of the interaction between Western culture and local Japanese culture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. RISE OF IVY

After World War II, Western fashion culture was born. To the extent that Western fashion in Japan has been combined with Japanese culture and tradition, this style enjoys a certain degree of freedom from European and American history. Thus, it is able to be innovative and has the potential to become a symbol of "post-modern" culture. Before the entry of Ametora, Western fashion was called *Ivy Style*. The history of Western-style clothing in Japan is relatively short. The habit of wearing Western-style clothing began to develop rapidly after World War II. Along with the increasing interest in clothing that follows trends, *Ivy Style* entered Japan in the 1960s. At that time they still called it "*fashion business*", and there was no term in Japanese that was considered appropriate for the term "*fashion business*." After a long discussion about the possibility of an equivalent word in Japanese, it was finally decided to use the English term directly, which was then pronounced in Japanese as "*fatshon biznesu*." (Yoko, 2007).



Figure 1 *Ivy Style*

Ivy Style is a fashion style that developed from *Ivy League* campuses in the United States in the mid-20th century and reflects casual elegance, a relaxed style but still neat and classy. Figure (1) is an example of *Ivy style* clothing. They usually wear shirts, jackets, chinos, loafers, and sweaters. The arrival of *Ivy* to Japan brought a new impression to the fashion world in Japan, even the name changed to "*Japanese Ivy*".

While *Ivy Style* was beginning to die out in the United States, the Japanese version of *Ivy Style* or *Japanese Ivy* began to appear in Tokyo in the summer of 1964. The clothes were worn in a very authentic American style, but with a much slimmer cut as in Figure (2).



Figure 2 *Japanese Ivy*

Japanese Ivy is often worn by young people who like to hang out, more precisely in Ginza, Tokyo. They wear shirts made of thick, wrinkled fabric with buttons that are attached to the collar, jackets with an unnecessary third button on the upper chest, striking tartan (checkered) motifs, chinos or shorts that are shrunken with strange laces at the back, black knee-high socks, and leather shoes with intricate carving details. The emergence of *Japanese Ivy* is evidence of the entry of foreign culture into Japan.

2. IVY STYLE REJECTION IN JAPAN

Ivy Style received rejection from Japanese society but *Japanese Ivy* actually received a lot of criticism from Japanese society. Starting from many young people who often relax in Ginza, Tokyo, then these young people were nicknamed *Miyuki-zoku* or *Miyuki-tribe*. Many complaints from the public because every time they come to the Ginza area, these young people do not buy anything and only block the display of shop windows. The many complaints given by the people eventually led the government to deploy the police to arrest these young people.



Figure 3 Miyuki-zoku youth arrest process

Figure (3) shows the arrest of *Miyuki-zoku* youths in Ginza, where after the youths were arrested the police could do nothing but give them a lecture and take them to their parents. This incident illustrates how the tension between the expression of youth identity and national interests are at odds and cannot yet be accepted.

3. THE ACCEPTENCE OF IVY STYLE IN JAPAN

Since the 1960s, teenagers have begun to rebel against parental authority and formal institutions and to create their own unique culture, freeing themselves from their narrow identity as mere students. In Japan, the first and most important step in this process was to replace the standard school uniform with a stylish clothing choice of their own choosing. Interest in *Ivy Style* initially emerged among teenagers from elite families, but then spread to the wider community as Japan's economic growth accelerated and the mass media began to feature *Ivy style*.

The sale of *Ivy Style* clothing to individuals under the age of thirty is a major economic activity and is spread throughout Tokyo's Harajuku, Shibuya, Aoyama, and Daikanyama districts. For many years, the Japanese were the most enthusiastic consumers of global fashion. However, in the last three decades, the balance of trade in this area has shifted. Japanese designers and fashion brands are now receiving significant attention from international audiences, and have even exported their clothing products worldwide.

After 1868, the government finally began implementing a series of policies to encourage men to wear Western-style clothing as part of its modernization agenda. In 1870, the Emperor cut his hair into a short Western-style style and wore a European-inspired military uniform. Meanwhile, the military began to adopt Western uniforms, with the Navy imitating British styles and the Army following French ones. In the following decades, government officials such as bureaucrats, police, postal workers, and train conductors followed the military's lead in wearing Western-style clothing. Figure

(4) is an example of a Japanese military uniform inspired by Western culture.

Figure 4 Japanese military model with western elements

4. THE NEW IVY : AMETORA (*American Traditional*)

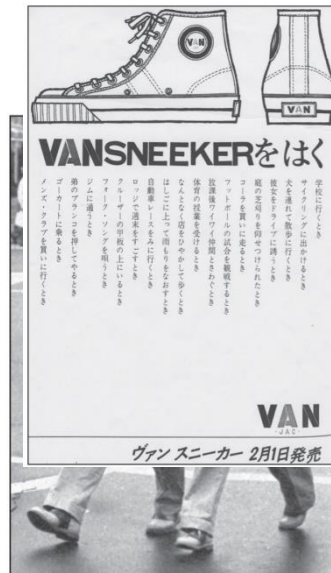


Figure 5 VAN JACKET brand advertisement example

In the 1970s, the brand that *Miyuki-zoku* often wore, VAN JACKET, as in the example of Figur (5), began to go bankrupt and the name *Miyuki-zoku* became a youth culture and was used as a cover for fashion media in that year, but not only wearing clothes with *Ivy Style* elements, these young people also added other elements such as jeans and sportswear. The popularity of the news that was spread created rumors of a new fashion style called *Ametora* and claimed to be Japanese fashion. The Japanese initially shortened the words "American traditional" to *Ametora*, but now the entire series of *Ametora* practices have stood as a separate tradition.

"Ivy is a lot like tonkatsu (breaded pork cutlet). It was originally German but now it's just part of Japanese cuisine. You serve it with rice and miso soup and eat it with chopsticks. I think Ivy is becoming like tonkatsu. It may have originally come from America 60 years ago, but after 60 years of being in Japan, it's been arranged to better fit us" (Marx, 2015;243).

Similarly, *Ametora* is not originally from Japanese culture but from American culture, but due to changes in Japan, it will be adapted to follow Japanese culture. Both Japanese and foreign observers often see that this Style has clear characteristics of following the rules, being studied seriously, conforming to common gender roles, and being made with high quality.

Mix and match in *Ametora* style is formed through the creative process of the Japanese fashion community that combines typical elements of Americana style, such as Ivy style, with other elements such as workwear, militarywear, and sportswear. This mixing process is not done randomly, but through aesthetic curation that maintains the silhouette, quality of materials, and philosophy of Western clothing, but is adjusted to the cultural sensitivity and tastes of the Japanese people. This adaptation process is what creates the new *Ametora* culture taken from Western culture.

American fashion that entered Japan through the hands of individuals who did not follow the norms and customs of a society hungry for change and business success. The style then blended with local customs and practices. This cultural ecosystem is always changing, moving, and adapting in the future, and the same thing is expected to continue to happen. The *Ametora* tradition will not stop at one point,

but will continue to be shaped and colored by the passage of time.

The hybridization process that occurred in Ivy Style which turned into *Ametora* in Japan is proof that two cultures originating from different places can become one and give birth to a new culture without leaving behind elements of the old culture. The result of this hybridization is what makes *Ametora* fashion popular in Japan.

5. THE LOOKS OF AMETORA IN NOWDAYS



Figure 6 *Ametora* model from the *Beams+* brand

Many brands have emerged in Japan that carry the *Ametora* theme. *Beams+* is one example of a brand that can be taken as the form of *Ametora* in the current era. As shown in Figure (6), it shows that the combination or mix and match in the *Ametora* style is not done carelessly, but through strong aesthetic and symbolic considerations. This can be seen in the use of military-style outerwear combined with *Ivy* elements such as loafers and material pants. This combination reflects a visual curation process that represents a blend of Americana functional values, order, and elegance which are then adjusted to the tastes and clothing identities of the Japanese people. Meanwhile, according to *Beams+*, there are several elements that need to be considered in using *Ametora*:

- a) *Trad* or Traditional is one of the elements used in *Ametora*. Trad reflects values and principles that have been formed for a long time and are an inseparable part of quality educational institutions. One example is the *Ivy League*, a university sports league consisting of eight prestigious campuses on the east coast of the United States. From this academic environment was born what is known as *Ivy Style*, a typical student dress style that is not only about appearance, but also reflects the depth of tradition, discipline, and intellectual prestige. Figure (7) shows the

application of several items listed in the Trad category.



Figure 7 example of *Ametora* model that highlights the *Trad* side

- b) Outdoor clothing was originally created as functional clothing designed to help the wearer achieve a specific goal. Over the years, various items have been developed to help a person enjoy nature better. Although many new brands and products have emerged over time, the basic elements shown in figure (8) such as down jackets, fishing vests, and *anoraks* remain the mainstays that have not changed much. These garments also have a distinctive design that is tough and safe, designed to support activities such as mountain climbing, rock climbing, and fishing.



Figure 8 *Ametora* clothing examples with outdoor elements

- c) *Workwear* is like a textbook that teaches the history of Western fashion from a different perspective than *Trad* style. As the name suggests, *workwear* is created for work purposes. The specialty of *workwear* lies in the attention to technical details, such as triple needle stitching that is designed to not come off easily. Figure (9) shows one use of workwear items and shows several lists of items that can be categorized as *workwear*.



Figure 9 *Workwear* element in *Ametora*

- d) The Sport element in the form of numbered T-shirts and university logos printed on sweatshirts initially appeared along with the development of the world of sports, such as football, baseball, or basketball as shown in Figure (10). Every detail on the clothing is designed to meet the specific needs of each sport. In the world of competitive sports, team colors indicate group identity, while numbers serve to identify individuals within the team.

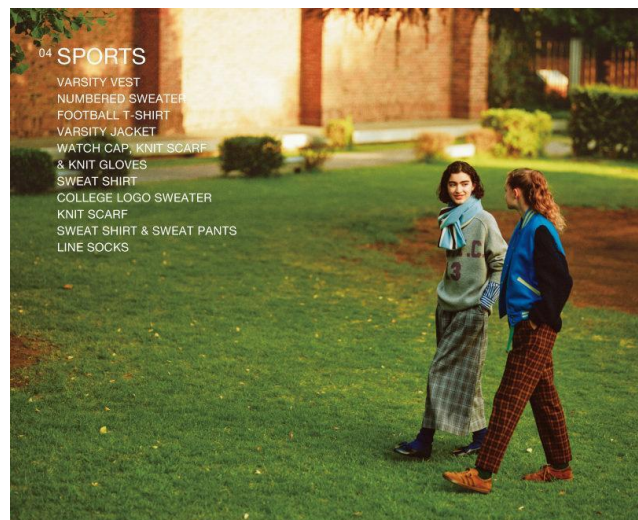


Figure 10 Sport element in *Ametora*

- e) Military elements are designed with a clear and functional purpose, becoming the basis of many types of modern men's clothing. The details in military clothing have had a major influence on modern clothing design. The best technology and materials are used without compromise when the clothing is designed as in figure (11).



Figure 11 example of Ametora clothing with military elements

According to Soelistyowati (2024) every stage of activity requires creativity. While innovation dominates the stages of theme selection and designing activities and the final project completion stages. *Ametora* is the result of one's own creativity when in the stage of adjusting to western fashion culture.

Ametora, which has become popular until now, has become a daily clothing style for Japanese people and many shops selling fashion have sprung up. Now, *Ametora* is no longer seen as a foreign culture, but has undergone a hybridization process so that it has become one with and become part of Japanese cultural identity. Japanese brands have shown their expertise in producing and perfecting American fashion styles, but the next decade will be the real test. After seventy years of borrowing style ideas from the United States, Japanese society has absorbed all possible inspirations from American history. The form of *Ametora* originated in the United States, but has now become one with Japan. In the future, the world will most likely imitate the healthy example of Japan rather than the original version from America which has now lost its vitality. The brands that have emerged are concrete representations of the results of hybridity. This process creates a unique new identity, where elements such as Americana design, Japanese production quality, and local clothing philosophy blend harmoniously. In the context of cultural education, *Ametora* is a relevant example of how globalization does not always result in homogenization or the fading of local cultural differences, but can encourage the birth of new forms of culture resulting from local creative adaptations.

CONCLUSION

The development of the *Ametora* style in Japan is a concrete example of the process of cultural hybridity, namely the mixing of Western culture and local Japanese culture that produces a unique new form. Japan does not only imitate the Ivy League style from America, but studies it in depth, adapts it to local social norms and aesthetics, and combines it with other elements such as workwear, militarywear, and sportswear.

This hybridization process did not immediately receive acceptance from the surrounding community,

such as the example where the Myuki tribe previously received many complaints from the Japanese community and had received resistance from the police in the form of arrests, but the persistence of teenagers in Japan made resistance to the rules made grow positive results. Getting good views from the media and government and then becoming a trend setter in their own country. The acceptance of these teenagers gave birth to many new brands with the characteristics of Ametora or American traditional.

Just as Beams Plus combines Americana values with Japanese sensibilities, the world of education is also required to not only imitate foreign systems, but to process them through the curation of local values, aesthetics, and socio-cultural needs. The acceptance of Ametora in Japan signifies the blending of western culture adopted by Japanese society and made into their own culture. Thus, Ametora is a reflection that education based on cultural openness and creative adaptation can produce something that is not only functional, but also meaningful and reflects identity.

REFERENCES

- Anggraini, C. (2018). Memakai Harajuku Style: Brand-Brand Lokal Dan Street Style Di Jepang. *Lensa Budaya: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-Ilmu Budaya*, 13(2). <http://journal-old.unhas.ac.id/index.php/jlb/article/view/5296>
- Beams+. (2020). 2020 Spring/Summer Catalog.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge .
- Chensvold, C. (2010). Damned Dapper: The Origins of the Go-To-Hell Look. *Ivy style*.
- Diah Soelistyowati, I. W. (2024). Membangun Kreatifitas Dan Inovasi Melalui Project Work Yang Memuat Pendidikan Bahasa Jepang, Kepariwisata Dan Kewirausahaan. <https://eproceeding.undiksha.ac.id/index.php/semnastribasapa/article/view/254>
- Firdaus, R. M., Pottu, O. Y., Panduwal, C. M., Panjaitan, V. F., & Paskalina, O. (2023). Pengaruh Globalisasi Terhadap Hibriditas Budaya Korea Pada Masyarakat Lokal Thailand. *Jurnal Ekonomi, Sosial & Humaniora*, 4(05), 47-57. <https://www.jurnalintelektiva.com/index.php/jurnal/article/view/926>
- Fujishima, Y., & Sakura, O. (2018). The rise of historical and cultural perspectives in fashion studies in Japan. *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, 5(1), 197-209. https://intellectdiscover.com/content/journals/10.1386/inf.5.1.197_1
- Hasan, R. V. Perkembangan Trend Harajuku Dalam Fotografi Fesyen (Fashion Photography). <https://repository.unej.ac.id/handle/123456789/58516>
- Indun, R., Dila, R., & Kun M, P. (2014, March). Perkembangan Street Fashion Di Kalangan Anak Muda Jepang Sebagai Bagian Budaya Populer. In *Prosiding Seminar Hasil Penelitian Semester Ganjil 2013/2014* (No. 1, Pp. 129-139). Unsada. <http://repository.unsada.ac.id/379/>
- Kondo, D. (2010). Through Western Eyes: Japanese Fashion In The 1980s. *Dress Study*, 57.
- Onohara, N. (2011). Japan as fashion: Contemporary reflections on being fashionable. *Acta Orientalia Vilnensia*, 12(1), 29-41. <https://www.zurnalai.vu.lt/acta-orientalia-vilnensia/article/view/1095>
- Safarudin, R., Zulfamanna, Z., Kustati, M., & Sepriyanti, N. (2023). Penelitian kualitatif. *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 3(2), 9680-9694. <https://j-innovative.org/index.php/Innovative/article/view/1536>
- Shimizu, K. (2013). Reshaping The Social Memory Of The Miyuki-Zoku: The Agents And Reconstruction Process Focusing On The Interaction And Roles Of Van, Heibon Punch, Other Media And Audience. *Communication & Society*, 215-35.
- Sugiyanto, B. A. W. (2021). Hibriditas Budaya Jawa dan Budaya Barat di Museum Keraton Yogyakarta. *Jurnal Ilmiah Multimedia Dan Komunikasi*, 6(1). <https://ojs.mmtc.ac.id/index.php/jimk/article/view/107>
- Suhendar, A., Takwim, A., Farkah, A. M., Gumilar, P., & Dalih, V. M. (2021). Rancang Bangun Sistem Informasi Penjualan di Shop Berbasis Web. *Naratif: Jurnal Nasional Riset, Aplikasi Dan Teknik Informatika*, 3(2), 41-47. <https://naratif.utb-univ.ac.id/index.php/naratif/article/view/134>
- Wansan, K. (2021). Role of Japanese street fashion. *Asian Journal of Arts and Culture*, 21(2), 39-45.
- Yoko, O. (2007). Japanese Fashion Business: Tradition & Innovation. *Japan Spotlight*, 12-15

