

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

Sport is a form of activity that involves the body and is usually competitive in nature which aims to improve one's physical skills and abilities while providing entertainment for the spectators or the doer of the sport itself (Australasian Sport Information Network, 2021). Not only preparing physically, sports must involve mentally and in the game there are procedures or rules. Sports can be done individually or in teams, in a sports competition there are winners and losers. In social life, sport can be a human self-expression. Some sports that involve physical ability as a big controller in game results, namely football, basketball, MMA, and others.

Around 3000 years ago there was the documented history of the sport. In ancient Greece, there was a sports championship called the Olympics in 776 BC, athletes competed in various sports such as boxing, wrestling, running, horse racing, chariot racing and others. Apart from that, in the era of the Roman Empire there were also chariot racing sports competitions, but what was famous there was the fight between gladiators. Gladiator means a man fights using a short sword "gladius" and fights five other gladiators with the aim of killing each other for victory (Tim Lambert, 2021).

Several sports that emphasize physicality and attacks above are very popular with many people, especially back in the days of Ancient Greece, in 648 BC they created a martial sport called Pankration ("all powers") at the Olympics where two fighters combined wrestling, boxing, and street fighting. They are prohibited from striking and biting, a match is declared over if one fighter loses by K.O or points from the judges. At that time pankration became

famous in the Ancient Olympics, but in 393 BC the Roman official, Theodosius I, banned the holding of the Olympic Championships because of this pankration (Stenius, M., 2014).

Even though pankration was no longer popular, a fighting sport emerged in Brazil called vale tudo (“anything goes”) in 1925. Vale Tudo was introduced by Carlos and Helio Gracie, who started to set up brazilian jujitsu martial arts courses in Rio de Janeiro. They made information in a newspaper with the title “Gracie Challenge” where they accepted anyone who wanted to fight, and this idea worked so well that they rented a football stadium to accommodate the large number of enthusiastic spectators for the event (Stenius, M., 2014).

In the 20th century, MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) is growing rapidly, especially in the Northern United States. An organization called UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) from Las Vegas changes this fight program not only in terms of tournaments by the various skills of the fighters, but also shows it in terms of business, brand and content in various media around the world. Royce Gracie (son of Helio Gracie) became the first fighter to win all 3 matches in the first UFC event held in Denver, Colorado, which could be called “UFC 1” (Stenius, M.,2014).

In this study, the researcher tried to explain the sport of MMA as a part of popular culture and analyzing the portrayal of the MMA fighters’ American dream as the object of the study because UFC as a world popular promotor is a fighting show accompanied by entertainment. The fight show held by UFC is a paid show that has made a big stage for fighters (Stan S.V, 2017). In several main matches in the UFC, there are bound to be statements and nonsense between the two fighters in the press conference, octagon, or outside the match area to make the opponent feel insecure, afraid, and so on. Moments like this attract the audience because a match without drama feels like something is missing.

There are many challenges they have to deal, one common problem is struggling to build a statement to attracting the fans about journey of the match or made good/bad personality of the fighters. Hence the researcher wants to get in a deep review how is the sport of MMA being a part of popular culture in America and what is actually for the fighters' dreams with the values of American dream in this study.

## **B. Problem Formulation**

This research has several questions formulated into the following questions:

1. How is the sport of MMA being a part of popular culture in America as seen in the documentaries videos of American MMA sports.
2. How is the portrayal of the fighters' American Dream values as reflected in America MMA sport documentaries videos of American MMA sports ?

## **C. Objectives of The Study**

Based on the problem of the statement above, the objectives of the research include:

1. To explain the sport of MMA as a part of popular culture as seen in the documentaries videos of American MMA sports.
2. To analyze the portrayal of the fighters' American Dream values in documentaries video of American MMA sports.

#### **D. Review of the Related Studies**

This study has some correlations or related to theses, papers, academic journals, etc. in libraries and websites. The researcher may be similar to those, but there is always a difference between them.

First, the thesis conducted by Sofiyan Hadi in 2020 entitled “*Impoliteness Strategies In UFC Press Conference*”. The objective of this research is to describe the types of impoliteness strategies that were uttered by Conor McGregor at the UFC press conference. The similarity of that thesis and this research is both discussed about the analysing statement of MMA fighter. While that thesis discussed about the impoliteness of Conor Mcgregor itself, this research focused to symbol of the several MMA fighters. That matter make the researcher understand about the meaning of the MMA fighters statement about their dream in their job.

Second, the researcher found a journal entitled “*Louis Zamperini’s American Dreams as Reflected in the Film Unbroken*” by Masruriati Khairiah (2017). She tries to describe about Louis Zamperini’s dream in the film Unbroken by Angelina Jolie with american dream and popular culture theory. Her theories as same as the researcher have to support the information and data. The American Dream theory in his research is related to the research here because it concerns the values of Life, Liberty, and Pursuit of Happiness. In this research about Louis Zamperini who adopted the value of an American citizen's dream to achieve a better life goal.

Third, a thesis entitled “*The Portrayal of the Main Character’s Struggles in Achieving American Dream as seen in the Film*” by Yogi Rohim Hidayat (2023). In this research, he demonstrate how the main character, Jonathan Larson, in the Tick, Tick..Boom! film by Lin Manuel that applied the value of American Dream. What is related to this research is that it has similarities in the values of the American Dream from James T. Adams regarding individual freedom, equality of opportunity, and material wealth and hard work. From these values it can

be seen that the needs of humans are very important and continuous with each other to achieve the American Dream.

Those related studies are similar to the researcher's theories which analyze in this research about how American Dream implemented the MMA fighters that could change their life and also entertain the American sports business. Also, the difference between those related studies and the researcher study is the objective of the studies. The researcher concern is not only focusing on the american dream values of MMA fighter, but it could make motivation for viewers and development of American sports entertainment like MMA.

#### **E. Research Method**

In this study the researcher used a qualitative descriptive method in the process of this research. The purposes off the descriptive method are in analyzing and interpreting data with the current situation perspective and attitudes. Qualitative research is defined by more than simply using words instead of numbers to describe phenomena: discovery, open research questions, flexible and evolving that description, and unexpected findings as a success condition are all important, as is the use of relevant my thoughts for enhancing credibility (Elliot, 1999). Qualitative research is a type of social science results that collect and work with non numerical data and that seek to interpret meaning from this data that help us understand social life through the study of targeted population or places (Ashley Crossman, 2021).

Every research always has a process that must be taken through. it can be made-up of the sources data including main data and supporting data, methods and technique off collecting data.

## **1. Data and Source of Data**

### a) Primary Data

The researcher collected the main data from documentaries video of American MMA documentary taken mostly contain of the journey before and after fight, dialogues, and scenes that figured in the documentary videos. There are *Conor McGregor: Notorious (2017)* from Netflix, *Charles Oliveira and Kamaru Usman Documentary Videos by Patrick Gavia (2022)* from Youtube. They were analyzed and interpreted using the theory presented before.

## **2. Method of collecting data**

This section, the researcher describes about technique to collect the data. To do that process, the researcher uses documentaries and internet research. Techniques for collecting the data were an important step because has purpose of this term to find and collect the data of the research (Sugiyono, 2014 :308). The observation can be divided into two there are participant observation and non participant observation (Sugiyono, 2014 :204). This research used non participant observation because the researcher did not participate directly in the event.

The data collecting procedure is done as follows ;

1. Downloading or finding the MMA documentary videos
2. Watching the MMA Fighters documentary videos several times
3. Observe the american dream values of fighters that related.
4. Screen capture the scene that become the object of this research
5. Analyze the data by implementing the theories of this research

## **3. Method of analyzing data**

As the process to validate the data, the researcher implemented in minimum two theories which from different disciplines, Those categorized key words were analyzed by using

the theory of Popular Culture that used to represent the existence with development of Sport especially MMA documentary movie and the theory of American Dream represent the journey to reach fighters succeed, to answer the questions of the research. In this case, the researcher uses a descriptively qualitative method supported by an American studies approach of an interdisciplinary study. The last, the researcher makes a conclusion based on the data collected from this research.

#### **F. Presentation**

In this study the author divides into 4 parts, the first is explained about the research problem, problem formulation, study objectivity, scope of the study, review of the related studies, research methodology, theoretical approach, and presentation. In the second part there is an analysis, then in the third part there are conclusions and suggestions, the last one is a bibliography and appendix.