

Acceptance of Anime among University Students

Penerimaan Anime dalam Kalangan Pelajar Universiti

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ABSTRACT

Television was the largest influence on anime, the Japanese animation and most of the shows were for both male and female. In the twenty first century, anime changed significantly and incorporates the breath of Malaysians lifestyle. This article studies the acceptance of anime among university students' behaviour in an exertion to provide the reader with an understanding of anime, their social structures and the issues behind these popular cultural products. Hence, the aims of this research are to examine the university students' initial attitudes towards anime aired on television, and to study their acceptance on the anime character, characterization, and storyline of anime aired on television. This paper will analyse data from a survey of 247 university students in Malaysia. Findings revealed that students' acceptance towards anime are more to the positive side and they are not too obsessed towards the anime character.

Keywords: *Acceptance, Anime, university students.*

ABSTRAK

Televisyen memberikan pengaruh yang terbesar ke atas anime, iaitu suatu animasi Jepun dan kebanyakan siaran anime adalah untuk keperluan kedua-dua kaum lelaki dan perempuan. Pada abad ke 21, anime telah mengalami perubahan secara signifikan dan turut mempengaruhi keadaan cara hidup rakyat Malaysia. Kajian ini melihat kepada penerimaan anime dalam kalangan tingkahlaku pelajar-pelajar universiti sebagai medium untuk menyediakan pembaca dengan suatu pemahaman mengenai anime yang meliputi struktur sosialnya dan isu-isu yang wujud daripada produk-produk budaya popular ini. Justeru, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji tingkahlaku awal pelajar-pelajar universiti terhadap anime yang disiarkan dalam televisyen, dan juga untuk mengkaji sejauhmana penerimaan mereka terhadap watak, perwatakan dan jalan cerita anime yang disiarkan dalam televisyen. Kajian ini akan menganalisis data yang dikutip daripada satu soal selidik ke atas 247 pelajar-pelajar universiti di Malaysia. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa penerimaan pelajar-pelajar universiti terhadap anime adalah lebih bersifat positif dan mereka tidak terlalu obsesi terhadap watak anime.

Kata kunci: *Penerimaan, anime, pelajar universiti.*

Introduction

Anime and manga are terms that are often used interchangeably even though they define two different art forms. Anime initially entails of drawings of cartoon and come together with storylines. Manga is a graphic novel and comic book of anime. Manga was the base upon

which anime was built. The first manga book with high sale was the Dragonball series in year 2000 (Brienza, 2009). Later anime started to be aired to reach its audience. According to Fukunaga (2006), most the people in the world found that narrative style of anime is very well accepted.

Anime was reserved for many years at the fringe of culture, as a genre either too childish or too violent and pornographic (Sato, 2005). University students' concerns with the connection to anime issues have largely been bypassed. The number of anime programs aired on television are increasing and students are the important audience for these services. Society's perception and behaviour can be affected by the university students' perception and behaviour on anime. The use of some symbolic examples among other people such as the image of Jung's face, 1967 "Sergeant Pepper" album of the Beatles (Hauke, 2000), or a poster with the picture of Tetsuo, a character from the post-apocalyptic anime "Akira", saying "That's Begun!" on the wall of a house in the ruins during the Siege of Sarajevo (Napier, 2005) can be considered as influential factor.

To date, data concerning to university students' acceptance of anime aired on television and their understanding regarding several issues of anime is still lacking. This study will emphasis on exploring the acceptance of anime among university students in a large scale survey focused in Malaysia. This study will identify the relationship between positive and negative impacts of anime aired on television with the genders of respondents. The aim is to understand the relationship of genders on the acceptance of anime.

This study will divide the overall structure into three main phases to fulfil the objectives of the research. The three main phases will be conducted to investigate the initial acceptance among university students towards anime aired on television, the acceptance between anime and genders, and the post acceptance behaviour between genders. Two research questions were constructed as guidelines to achieve the aim of this study.

1. What are the male and female university students' initial attitudes towards anime aired on television?
2. How do male and female university students accept the character, characterization and storyline of anime aired on television?

Literature Review

There is not much work that associate university student's postulates with anime studies. Okabayashi, (2007) & Drazen, (2003) stated there are the stories of anime with standard and mythological references. However, there is still not a methodology for anime's audience analysis by means of analytical psychology, or even a subjective corroboration of anime's acceptance on young people or university students through image and archetypal patterns.

In Asia, Japanese comics and animation have been significant since 1980s to present. To date, the Japanese animated television series have penetrated the culture in major Asian cities including Malaysia. Products of Japanese cartoon character, such as *Hello Kitty*, *Sailormoon*, *Dragonball*, *Naruto* and *Digimon* are extremely popular among children and young people. The products have been exported and imported across national and cultural boundaries. This situation gives positive impact to manufacturers and entrepreneurs to promote their products or services. The scenario showed that youth culture and people's perception on anime has been changed enormously.

Over the past 20 years, anime has grown in popularity in Malaysia. However, the number of Malaysian fans of anime especially young adults is growing although the overall population is still much enjoying the other sort of local television program content such as entertainment and telemovies. The fans have great affection with the characters of anime that they tend to dress up or act like one of these anime characters. Fennell (2012) suggested that anime is able to connect together with images of fantasy from Japanese culture, from other cultures and of concerns relevant to our globalizing world. On the other hand, Saito (2007) referred anime to Japan's "greatest cultural export", probably more "globally pertinent" than the cultural content transmitted in Japanese universities. Animation (anime) highlighted the viewer that it is separated from the reality and thus, anime can be seen as part of "fantasy cape" (Napier, 2005).

The process of identification between the audience and the character is a mechanism through which audience members experience the reception and interpretation of the text from the inside, as if the events were happening to them (Cohen, 2001). He provides a detailed description of what identification is and argued for the importance of not confusing this mechanism with others, such as imitation. Since the influence of anime may change the attitudes and behavior of people over the long term, the theory of identification becomes important at an early stage because it depends on emotions. Cohen also emphasized what is being affirmed here is that for an influence on the individual's identity to exist first there must be an identification with the character through an image, whether real or imagined, so that the audience member then empathizes with the character and adopts the character's identity. It is precisely through the archetypal image that archetypes are made conscious, and the image that carries the archetype becomes a symbol for those who identify with it.

Okuhara (2009) stated that the characters in the anime can become symbols for some people. There are so many different types of characters in anime but still becomes easy to find one with which one can identify. While Erikson (1968) proposed that anime characters are attractive because they give the notion that young adults can also be strong and face their problems like adults. This represents an aspect of Japanese culture concerning the independence of children. Elza (2009) in her study showed that Japanese adults expect their children to be able to do many things without assistance and especially to behave well in front of others. Hence, this phenomenon might help a better understanding of both male and female university students related knowledge, attitudes and behavior on anime.

Methodology

This study employed quantitative research method. 247 respondents participated through convenience sampling for this study. Respondents are university students from four universities which are Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), University of Malaya (UM), Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT).

In fact, 300 students between the ages of 18 and 25 studying in four selected universities has been identified randomly as eligible for the survey based on three different ethnics, namely 180 Malays, 90 Chinese and 30 Indians. However, only 247 responses are eligible to be counted due to uncompleted questions.

As for the instrument, questionnaire was developed in conducting this research. The items in the questionnaire include demographic and impacts (negative and positive) of anime.

Questionnaire was self developed by the researchers thus; pilot test was conducted to check reliability of the instrument. Pilot test revealed a reliability score of .943 which suggested that the questionnaire is valid to be used.

Analysis of data includes comparison between two independent variables; female and male university students. Independent T- test will be used to analyze the comparison.

Findings

Demographic

The results showed that there are 247 respondents participated in this research. The demographic information of the respondents is explained in Table 1. In looking at the comparison on the impacts of anime scores for male and female university students, independent T- Test was conducted. Out of 30 items, 10 items were related to initial attitudes towards anime, 10 items were related to acceptance of anime and 10 items related to post acceptance behaviour. The results are described in Table 3 , Table 4 and Table 5.

There were 247 respondents conducted in this study, in which 30.4% were male respondents while 69.6% were female respondents. All respondents were from age group of 18 years (n=1, 0.4%), 19 years old (n=26, 10.5%), 20 years old (n=84, 34.0%), 21 years old (n=47, 19.0%), 22 years old (n=31, 12.6%), 23 years old (n=28, 11.3%), 24 years old (n=28, 11.3%), 25 years old and 26 years old (n=1, 0.4 respectively). Table 4.4 showed that majority of these respondents were Malay, being 60.3%, while 34.8% were Chinese, 3.6 were Indian and 1.2% of the respondents were from other ethnicity.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Sample (N= 247)

Items	Information	n	%
Gender	Male	75	30.4
	Female	172	69.6
Age	18	1	.4
	19	26	10.5
	20	84	34.0
	21	47	19.0
	22	31	12.6
	23	28	11.3
	24	28	11.3
	25	1	.4
	26	1	.4
Ethnic	Malay	149	60.3
	Chinese	86	34.8
	Indian	9	3.6
	Others	3	1.2
Favourite pastime	Reading books	42	17.0
	Watching television	62	25.1
	Listening to music	50	20.2
	Surfing the internet	55	22.3
	Playing video games	21	8.5
	Sports activities	17	6.9

Hours watching television	Less than 1 hour	49	19.8
	1 – 2 hours	107	43.3
	3 – 4 hours	72	29.1
	Others	19	7.7
With whom watching television	Alone	91	36.8
	Family	103	41.7
	Siblings	24	9.7
	Friends	24	9.7
	Others	5	2.0

Looking at the hours spend on watching TV, majority of them (43.3%) spent about one to two hours per day, 29.1% spent about three to four hours per day, 19.8% spent less than one hour per day and only 7.7% of the respondents spent more than four hours per day watching television.. Amongst the respondents, majority of them watch television with their family (41.7%), while 36.8% prefer to watch television alone and 9.7% of them watching television with siblings and friends. Last but not least, only 2% amongst the respondents watching television with others. Meanwhile, the comparison between genders on the hours spent on watching anime programme per day, the female respondents (48.3%) spent less than one hour per day. Majority of male respondents (36%) spent 1 to 2 hours per day to watch anime as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison Between Genders on Hours Spent on Watching Anime Per Day

Hours watching anime	Comparison between genders	
	Male Frequency Count	Female Frequency Count
less than 1 hours	19	83
1-2 hours	27	44
3-4 hours	13	13
Others(more than 4hours or not watching anime)	16	32
Total	75	172

Initial Attitudes Towards Anime and Gender

In explaining the initial attitude towards anime programme aired on television, there were several statements that revealed the male and female students liking about anime. Table 3 shows that 51% of male students and 37% of female students agreed that anime is fun and enjoyable to watch. Nevertheless, the results showed that 53% of male respondents and 63% of female respondents disagree that they will never miss any episode of the anime programme. Only 16% of male respondents agree that they will never miss watching anime every week. The results also revealed that 36% of male respondents agree that they enjoy watching the characters in every episode shown in anime programme while 49% of female respondents disagree on this matter.

Table 3: Difference of Initial Attitudes Towards Anime Between Genders

	Gender	N	Disagree (n)	Neutral (n)	Agree (n)
Watching anime is fun	Male	75	20% (15)	29.3%(22)	51% (38)
	Female	172	19% (33)	44.2% (76)	37% (63)
Enjoy watching anime programmes	Male	75	24% (18)	24% (18)	52% (39)
	Female	172	30% (51)	34.9% (60)	36% (61)
Watching anime programmes give feeling of satisfaction	Male	75	23% (17)	34.7% (26)	43% (32)
	Female	172	36% (62)	34.9% (60)	29% (50)
Will never miss watching anime programme every week	Male	75	53% (40)	30.7% (23)	16% (12)
	Female	172	63% (108)	25.6% (44)	13% (20)
Enjoy watching characters in every episode shown in anime	Male	75	29% (22)	34.7% (26)	36% (27)
	Female	172	49% (84)	27.3% (47)	24% (41)
Have a various collections of anime merchandised	Male	75	73% (55)	16% (12)	11% (8)
	Female	172	69% (119)	23.3% (40)	8% (13)
Normal for people to dress up like anime character	Male	75	56% (42)	29.3% (22)	15% (11)
	Female	172	54% (93)	32.6 (56)	13% (23)
Normal for people to converse like anime character	Male	75	51% (38)	32% (24)	17% (13)
	Female	172	56.4% (97)	30.2% (52)	13% (23)
Feel annoyed watching anime which contained harassment	Male	75	39% (29)	52% (39)	9% (7)
	Female	172	40% (68)	33.1% (57)	27% (47)
Easily get bored with the anime programme	Male	75	48% (36)	36% (27)	16% (12)
	Female	172	47 % (81)	29.7% (51)	23% (40)

Even though most of the respondents enjoy watching anime programme, majority of the respondents (65%) disagree that they are being obsessed with anime. As a result, 56% of male and 54% female respondents disagree that is it normal for people to dress and converse like anime character.

Acceptance of Anime and Gender

There are many skills and new things that the male and female respondents could learn based from their observation through anime programme. This study revealed that among the 247 respondents, majority of female respondents (40.8%) disagreed that they like the character because it is cool, while only 22.7% of male respondent disagree on this. More than half of

the male respondents (52%) felt that almost all the anime's character shows great skill of dressing while only 33.2% of female respondents agreed on this.

Table 4: Difference of Acceptance of Anime Between Genders

	Gender	N	Disagree (n)	Neutral (n)	Agree (n)
Always identified myself as the main character	Male	75	46.7% (35)	40% (30)	12.8% (22)
	Female	172	59.5% (103)	27.3% (47)	13.4% (10)
Anime show the things that I also like to do	Male	75	37.3% (28)	30.2% (52)	19.8% (34)
	Female	172	50% (86)	45.3% (34)	17.3% (13)
Learn new skills from anime	Male	75	42.7% (32)	41.3% (31)	16.1% (12)
	Female	172	50% (86)	29.7% (51)	20.4% (35)
Like the character because he/she is cool	Male	75	22.7% (17)	37.3% (28)	40% (30)
	Female	172	40.8% (70)	26.2% (45)	33.1% (57)
Like the character's talks in his/her own jargon	Male	75	30.6% (23)	37.3% (28)	32% (24)
	Female	172	44.1% (76)	28.5% (49)	27.3% (47)
Almost all the anime's character shows great skill of dressing	Male	75	26.7% (20)	21.3% (16)	52% (39)
	Female	172	33.7% (58)	33.1% (57)	33.2% (57)
Would still remember last week's episode of anime	Male	75	56.3% (97)	26.2% (45)	26.7% (20)
	Female	172	45.3% (34)	28% (21)	17.5% (30)
Feel like I am part of the show when watching anime	Male	75	42.7% (32)	45.3% (34)	12% (9)
	Female	172	58.7% (101)	23.8% (41)	17.4% (30)
Every scene makes me on the edge of my seat	Male	75	37.4% (28)	33.3% (25)	20.3% (22)
	Female	172	55.2% (95)	27.3% (41)	17.4% (30)
Watching anime makes me feel about becoming someone I would like to be	Male	75	41.4% (31)	33.3% (25)	25.3% (19)
	Female	172	52.4% (90)	19.2% (33)	28.5% (49)

Since most of the respondents like to watch anime, majority of the male respondent (56.3%) disagreed that they can still remember the storyline from the previous episode of anime. However, 17.5% of female respondents agreed on this. It is also found that more than half of the female respondents (55.2%) felt that every scene would make them on the edge of their seat during watching the anime while only 37.4% of male respondents felt so as can be seen in Table 4.

Post Acceptance Behaviour and Gender

As shown in Table 5, the respondents believed that the anime does not make them any happier if they dressed up like anime character. More than half of the respondents (62.7%) disagree that it makes them feel happy if they can dress up like any of the anime character. The results revealed that 68% of male and 70% of female respondents will not spend their money on buying and collecting anime items. This is also supported with the 30% of male and 36% female students agree that collecting the items can be such a waste of money and time.

Table 5: Difference of Post Acceptance Behaviour Between Genders

	Gender	N	Disagree (n)	Neutral (n)	Agree (n)
Feel happy if I can dress up like anime character	Male	75	62.7% (47)	30.7%(23)	6.7% (5)
	Female	172	62.2% (107)	25% (43)	12.8% (22)
Always aware with the latest anime programme	Male	75	56% (42)	16% (12)	27.9% (21)
	Female	172	68% (117)	19.8% (34)	12.2% (21)
Feel excited meeting with other fans of anime programme	Male	75	60% (45)	20% (15)	20.1% (15)
	Female	172	68.6% (118)	18.6% (32)	12.8% (22)
Always get myself involved in any groups of anime event	Male	75	72% (54)	21.3% (16)	6.6% (5)
	Female	172	77.9% (134)	15.1% (26)	7% (12)
Never regret change my appearance like the anime	Male	75	69.3% (52)	25.3% (19)	5.3% (4)
	Female	172	71% (122)	20.3% (35)	8.7% (15)
Feel embarrassed to dress up like the anime character	Male	75	26.6% (20)	42.7% (32)	30.7% (23)
	Female	172	40.1% (69)	25.6% (44)	34.3% (59)
Collecting the items is such a waste of money and time.	Male	75	38.7% (29)	30.7% (23)	30.7% (23)
	Female	172	37.2% (64)	26.2% (45)	36.6% (63)
Feel weird seeing other people to dress like the anime character.	Male	75	36% (27)	41.3% (31)	22.7% (17)
	Female	172	34.2% (59)	39.5% (68)	26.2% (45)
Feel guilty shouting or using bad language to someone like anime character	Male	75	26.6% (20)	46.7% (35)	26.6% (20)
	Female	172	26.2% (45)	40.7% (70)	33.2% (57)
Will never behave aggressively anymore towards other people	Male	75	26.1% (19)	46.6% (34)	27.3% (20)
	Female	172	25.8% (44)	41.5% (71)	32.7% (56)

There are several events related with anime convention. Most of the participants will come and dress like anime characters. However, majority of the respondents disagree (78%) that they will always get themselves involve in any groups of anime event. On top of that, 30% of male respondents agree that it made them feel embarrassed to dress up like the anime character while 40% of female respondents disagree. Although the male respondents indicated that they feel embarrasse to dress up like the anime character, yet 36% of them

disagree that it feels weird to see other people to dress up like the anime character whereas only 26% of female respondents agreed on this matter.

Discussion

Overall, the results clearly reveal that there is still a slight negative stigma to anime, despite attempts to educate people on the nature of anime, and people still believe anime to be a violent art form. However, anime has become more acceptable, as more scholarly research is conducted and more libraries stock on anime.

Anime is a huge industry nowadays even in Malaysia. The understanding and awareness on anime are significant because anime is not just a children's genre anymore. Young adults are also having the same interest in watching anime programs. Both male and female university students agree that watching anime is fun, enjoyable, as well as able to provide satisfaction. The media is said to be able to affect directly to the audience. However, the results show that both male and female university students are not highly influenced to imitate the character of the anime.

Although most of the university students are fans of certain anime, they do not feel that having a collection of anime's merchandise is a must. They feel that it is a waste to spend their money for that hobby. They also do not have the interest to imitate the characterization of the anime especially for the attire and language when they watch the anime aired on television. This shows that they are matured to decide what is good and vice versa. They know that by replicating the characterization of their favourite anime character, they can make themselves look awkward and people around them will feel discomfort. This attitude also can be seen when they are reluctant to identify themselves as the character in the anime.

Eventhough both respondents enjoy watching anime programs, result disclosed that female students are likely to spend more time watching anime on television. However, the time allocated is not significant. Watching anime programs is for relaxation or during free time. Some of the hardcore fans would dressed up or act like one of these anime characters. However, majority of the respondents agreed that they are capable of controlling their interest towards anime. Hence, an identification with the character through an image, whether real or imagined, is essential in order to create an existence of acceptance on the individual to exist (Cohen, 2001).

Media entertainment industry in Malaysia has relied heavily on imported products. This can be supported with the study conducted by the Japanese External Trade Organization (JETRO), as of May 2006, there were animation programs from Japan which broadcasted on Malaysian terrestrial channels. ASTRO, Malaysian direct-to-home satellite pay television services, includes two Japanese related channels, namely NHK World (programs from The Japan Broadcasting Corporation) and Animax (Yamato E., et al., 2011). However, the respondents felt there is no need to waste a lot of time to watch anime programmes or spend money on the appearance as the favorite anime character. Furthermore, the respondents agreed there is no need to imitate and apply the character in their lives, such as in terms of speech, appearance and behaviour. They felt that it was embarrassing to dress up like the anime character. Hence, anime is not a critical culture amongst Malaysian university students.

According to Halsall (2010), numbers of young fans flocking to anime conventions across the country trading cards, collecting art, watching it on television, DVDs, and the big screen every chance they can get. This can be seen when the average respondent does not have a tendency to keep a collection of items related to the anime character that they are interested in. In short, the students are not too obsessed with the characters of the anime as shown on television show. Students aware that anime character is able to become a symbol to some people and each character that is unique in nature (Okuhara, 2009).

Conclusion

To sum, this paper discusses the acceptance of anime among university students. The first phase of this study was to examine the initial attitudes among the university students towards the anime aired on television. The second phase was to investigate the acceptance of anime among the university students. The third phase was then conducted to identify the post acceptance to see how the acceptance influenced the students' life.

This study showed that anime is popular among university students in Malaysia. The population that has been identified was to get satisfaction and enjoyment by watching anime aired on television. This allowed us to forecast that in the near future, more audience will be watching anime programs. Compared to the male students, it was found that the female students are likely to spend more time watching anime on television for relaxation or during their free time. Both male and female students have their own favourite anime character. However, they do not have the interest to spend their money to get the anime's collection. They felt that imitating anime characterization such as dressing and conversing is unnecessary.

The Malaysian culture could be the main contributor to the degree of obsession of anime character among university students. Indeed, the number of Malaysian fans of anime is expanding nowadays, and they would dressed up or act like one of these anime characters in future. Nonetheless, to date, most of the respondents agreed that they are somehow capable in controlling their interests towards anime as they are not obsessed with the anime characters and characterization. They are matured to notice that imitation of the anime character and characterization is somewhat embarrassing. As university students, they know their responsibility is to behave properly in the community, spend economically and to ensure not to be netted and disturbed by excessive anime activities. On top of that, the findings showed that anime does not affect negatively on the respondents' routine. They did not have a tendency to have a collection of items related to their favourite anime character. This study concludes that anime is only a platform for students to seek for enjoyment and also a medium to share information that is relevant to their activities. The positive impacts should be promoted and inculcated into the mind of students. Yet, students should take precautions of this issue. Nevertheless, the decision is still in their hand and thus, these university students still need to be given an ongoing awareness about the risks of anime programmes.

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