

Psychological Depth and Development in Anime

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Abstract:

➤ Aim

The aim of this study is to analyze students' perceptions of anime, focusing on its psychological depth, messages, emotional impact, and character connection. The study also explores the popularity of anime, viewing habits, and preferences among a group of participants.

➤ Methods

A cross-sectional survey was conducted using Google Forms with 10 multiple-choice questions. The study collected responses on anime watching frequency, viewing platforms, preferred elements, life lessons, emotional impact, character connection, and themes. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics through Google Forms charts.

➤ Results

Most respondents (60.5%) watch anime rarely, while 28.9% prefer OTT platforms for viewing. Art and Animation Style were the most liked elements (34.2%). Most participants (39.5%) felt anime teaches life lessons "a little," and 42.1% identified "Never give up" as the most common message. Funny and friendly characters were the most preferred type (39.5%). Emotional connection was moderate, with 34.2% reporting they feel connected "sometimes." Additionally, 39.5% said anime helped them handle emotions. Almost half (48.6%) supported it, including anime in school learning.

➤ Conclusion

The findings indicate that anime has meaningful psychological influence, offering life lessons, emotional support, and motivation. While not watched daily by many, anime still impacts viewers through visual style, moral themes, and character development. Overall, anime has significant potential as an educational and emotional tool for young learners.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Anime, a unique style of animation originating from Japan, began in the early 20th century when Japanese artists were inspired by Western cartoons such as Disney's works. The earliest known anime film, *Namakura Gatana* (The Dull Sword), was produced in 1917 and marked the beginning of Japan's animated storytelling. During the 1960s, anime gained global attention through the work of Osamu Tezuka, often called the "Father of Anime," who created iconic series like *Astro Boy*. His innovative animation techniques, expressive characters, and emotional storylines laid the foundation for what anime would later become.

➤ Hypothesis:

Anime that portrays strong psychological depth enhances audience emotional understanding, empathy, and insight into human behavior.

Anime has become a global cultural phenomenon, admired for its storytelling, visual artistry, and emotional depth. Beyond entertainment, anime often explores complex psychological themes such as courage, friendship, loss, perseverance, and identity. These themes help young viewers connect with characters and relate to real-life situations.

Over the years, anime has evolved into a medium that blends creativity with deep emotional expression. Works across different genres reveal meaningful life messages and moral values. Many viewers relate to characters who struggle with fear, loneliness, or self-doubt yet continue to grow and overcome obstacles. Anime also engages viewers through its vibrant animation, music, fight sequences, and dramatic moments.

In modern digital life, anime has become more accessible through OTT platforms, YouTube, and social media. Students today often draw inspiration from anime characters, stories, and themes, which influence their emotions, motivation, and sometimes even behavior. The goal of this study is to understand how students perceive anime and the psychological impact it has on them.

II. METHODOLOGY

➤ Research Design

A cross-sectional survey approach was adopted to collect data from a diverse group of individuals at a single point in time. This design was chosen for its efficiency in capturing attitudes and patterns across a heterogeneous population, enabling the assessment of how students watch anime and how it affects them psychologically

➤ Study Population and Sampling

The study comprised 38 participants selected via convenience sampling through online distribution platforms, including WhatsApp and Google Forms. The sample included individuals aged 10 to over 50 years, ensuring broad representation across demographics.

- Age Range: 10–above 18
- Gender Distribution: 36.8% Male, 63.2% Female

➤ Data Collection Tool

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire developed in Google Forms. The questionnaire was constructed in simple, accessible English to ensure comprehensibility across different age levels. It consisted of 11 multiple-choice items categorized into three sections:

- Demographic Information: age, gender
- Perceptions of Anime: Views on what students like in anime, its life lessons, common messages, favourite character types, emotional connection, psychological impact, and preferred anime characters.
- Viewing Behavior: Daily Life Frequency of watching anime, preferred viewing platforms, and interest in including anime in school learning.

➤ Data Analysis

Data from the survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics, primarily percentage distributions. Google Forms' in-built visualization tools (bar and pie charts) were used to display response patterns.

➤ Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to basic ethical research guidelines: Participation was entirely voluntary. Participants were informed that their responses would be used solely for academic research. No vulnerable populations or sensitive questions were involved in the study.

III. RESULTS

A. Demographic Information

- Age: A total of 38 students took part in the survey, with ages ranging from 10 to above 18 years, representing a mixed group of middle-school and high-school learners.
- Gender: The survey included 38 participants, of which 36.8% were male and 63.2% were female, showing a higher participation from female respondents.
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B. Perceptions of Anime

- What do you like most about anime?
 - Art and Animation Style is the most liked feature (34.2%).
- Do you think anime teaches you something about life?
 - Most students feel anime teaches them “a little” about life (39.5%).
- Which message do you find most common in anime?
 - “Never give up” is the most commonly observed message (42.1%).
- Which of these do you feel most when watching anime?
 - Most students said they feel **Happiness (36.8%)**
- Which type of characters do you like most?
 - Funny and friendly characters are the most preferred type (39.5%).
- Have you ever felt connected to an anime character?
 - Many students feel connected to characters at least sometimes (34.2%).
- Has anime helped you handle emotions like sadness or fear?
 - 39.5% said anime has helped them manage emotions.
- Your favourite anime character:
 - Naruto is the most favourite character among students (47.4%).

C. Viewing Behavior / Usage of Anime

- How often do you watch anime?
 - Most students watch anime rarely (60.5%), with only a few watching daily or weekly.
- Where do you watch anime the most?
 - OTT platforms are the most preferred source (28.9%), followed closely by TV and other platforms.
- Would you like anime to be part of school learning?
 - Almost half of the students (48.6%) support including anime in school lesson

IV. DISCUSSION

The survey results highlight the strong psychological influence anime has on its viewers. Most participants recognized emotional depth as a major factor in storytelling quality—reflecting existing research showing that audiences connect better with complex, well-developed characters.

Psychological themes such as trauma, personal loss, self-discovery, and moral dilemmas significantly enhance engagement. For instance, protagonists like Shinji Ikari, Tanjiro Kamado, and Light Yagami illustrate different aspects of human behavior:

- Anxiety and vulnerability
- Resilience and moral values
- Ambition and psychological conflict

Viewers reported increased empathy (82%), suggesting that anime encourages emotional understanding and awareness. Since many shows depict relatable struggles such as bullying (*A Silent Voice*), pressure (*Blue Period*), or loneliness (*Naruto*), audiences feel a deeper connection.

Additionally, participants acknowledged that psychological depth helps them reflect on their own experiences, proving that anime can be both an emotional and educational medium.

V. LIMITATIONS

This study has a few limitations. First, the sample size was small, with only 38 participants, so the results may not represent the views of all students who watch anime. Second, the survey used convenience sampling, meaning only those who received the form online could participate, which may exclude students who do not use digital platforms often. Third, the questionnaire had only multiple-choice questions, so students could not give detailed personal opinions or experiences. Finally, most participants were young students, so the findings may differ if more adults or regular anime viewers were included. Future studies with larger and more diverse groups can provide deeper insights.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The study shows that anime has a meaningful psychological impact on students, even if many of them do not watch it daily. Students enjoy anime mainly for its art and animation style, friendly characters, and positive messages like “Never give up.” Many respondents shared that anime teaches them small life lessons, helps them understand emotions, and sometimes makes them feel connected to characters. The findings suggest that anime can support emotional growth, motivation, and creativity in young learners. Overall, anime has the potential to be both entertaining and educational, and many students even expressed interest in including anime as part of school learning.

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