

# EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ANIME FANDOM: A STUDY AMONG UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN UNDERGRADUATES

Olumi, O. B, Omoloso A. I, Adisa R. M, La'aro O. A  
Department of Mass Communication, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Ahmad Fahmi Mahamood, Mohd Izwan Izhar Haris,  
Tengku Kastriafuddin Tengku Yakob, Abdul Jalil Ramli  
Faculty of Business and Communication, University Malaysia Perlis

Zainab Ahmad  
Institute of Teacher Education, Perlis Campus

\*fahmiputra2@gmail.com

**Abstract:** *Social media has significantly enhanced the anime fan community by serving as a platform for spreading awareness of Japanese culture and the global enthusiasm for anime. This research, conducted among undergraduate students at the University of Ilorin, explores the influence of social media on anime fandom, drawing support from the social learning theory through qualitative research methods. In-depth interviews were conducted with 16 informants until saturation was reached, and thematic analysis was employed for data analysis. The study reveals that social media platforms, including anime streaming services such as Anime Tube, HBO Box, and Crunchyroll, have fostered a unique social community where users can connect and communicate. The findings emphasize the need for academics and the anime entertainment industry to comprehend the intricate web of interactions characterizing modern anime fandom experiences. Additionally, the study recommends exploring anime as a means of escapism from reality and encourages further investigation into the motivational factors influencing anime viewers. To understand the impact of anime on its audience, examining complex themes such as despondency, morality, nihilism, and societal concerns addressed in the media is suggested.*

**Keywords:** *influence, anime fandom, Japanese culture, social media, Undergraduates*

2024 JGBSE

Article Received : 06 January 2024, Revised: 12 January 2024, Accepted 26 January 2024

## Introduction

In recent times, social media has become an integral aspect of contemporary society, influencing our social interactions and media consumption. The anime subculture, in particular, has experienced a profound impact on social media, as anime and manga fans across the globe engage with themselves through social media and other forms of mass media (Ahmed Sayed, 2022). Despite previous studies exploring anime fandom and its impact on popular culture (Guo & Zeng, 2020), there exists a notable gap in understanding the role of social media in shaping the anime fandom among university students.

Scholars like Ramrathen (2016) have delved into the anime fandom in South Africa, revealing the rise of Otaku and the potential influence of anime distribution on parallel markets such as

manga and video games. This aligns with previous research highlighting TV anime as a gateway to other Japanese Pop Culture Industries (Antonio, 1996), employing subcultural characteristics like Consistent Distinction, Identity, Commitment, and Autonomy (Hodkinson, 2002). Notably, Ramrathen's ethnographic study in South Africa illustrates a cross-cultural divergence in interpreting products and popular genres, particularly in distinguishing between cartoons and anime.

Another study by Venter and Erasmus (2021) on the impact of popular culture fandom on the quality of life of Comic Con Africa 2019 attendees emphasized the role of social media in event promotion. This aligns with broader research indicating that social media, with platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and Flickr, is predominantly used by the 18 to 29 age group in the United States (Kozinet, 2020).

Lee's work (2011) on participatory media fandom highlights how the globalization of media fandom is driven by consumers mobilizing their intellectual capacities to mediate foreign cultural texts. Fans, utilizing their skills and resources, engage in mediated copying and distribution through online communication, emphasizing the importance of free software availability in their processes.

While various studies have explored aspects of anime fandom globally, the focus on the Nigerian context, particularly in Kwara State and Ilorin, remains unaddressed. With millions of fans actively sharing content on social media platforms, the transformative impact of social media on anime culture is evident (Adarsh, 2023). Despite this, the depth and nature of this influence remain largely unexplored. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between social media and anime culture, examining how platforms have influenced the creation, distribution, and reception of anime content among university students. Social media platforms play a crucial role in connecting individuals with common interests, fostering communities around shared passions (Gooch, 2008). The availability of anime on various social media platforms has made the anime fandom more active and visible than ever. As a subculture heavily reliant on communication, fandom has embraced the internet as a significant resource (Gooch, 2008). However, existing studies have yet to address the specific impact of social media on the exposure and acceptance of anime fandom among university students, making this study on the influence of social media on the anime fandom among University of Ilorin undergraduates particularly relevant and essential.

### **Anime**

Anime, as per Adarsh (2023), denotes the Japanese manifestation of animated television series and enjoys widespread global popularity. According to the Japan Information Network, Japan's export market in this genre approaches over 60 billion dollars, with 60 percent of worldwide TV cartoon shows originating from Japan (Miyake, 2009). This prevalence is evident when considering that a majority of globally aired cartoons fall under the category of anime.

Typically adapted from manga, akin to American comic books, over ninety percent of anime draws its source material from this medium (Miyake, 2009). Manga series, found in weekly or monthly magazines, contribute significantly to anime's diverse storytelling as they hold a revered status in Japan (Poitras, 2008). While manga often serves as the foundation, anime adaptations may deviate from the source material, undergoing alterations or complete rewrites. Additionally, anime draws inspiration from various sources such as legends, history, novels, and even ancient plays and tales (Poitras, 2008), exemplified by series like *Sengoku Basara*, based on Japan's feudal era with characters inspired by historical figures.

Presently, anime is garnering more international acclaim due to its accessibility and popularity, with anime films sharing screens with major Hollywood productions in Western cinemas (Gambino, 2023). Despite this global recognition, there persists a misconception that anime primarily caters to children, impacting the distribution of certain movies (Moon, 2021). The anime industry, diversifying over time, produces a wealth of content tailored to a larger and more varied audience (Wahab & Anuar, 2012). Unlike the 1960s when shows were predominantly for children, today's anime caters to specific demographics, including shows for men, women, and those appealing to both genders (Poitras, 2008).

In Japan, 'Astro Boy', created by Osamu Tezuka, and aired on Fuji TV on January 1, 1963 marked Japan's first ever animated television series (Castro, 2022). This also marked the eventual influence of anime on American cartoons when the show reached the shores of American television on September 7, 1963 (Castros, 2022). Notably, the development of animation in the United States predated anime production in Japan, with early animation programmes targeting children (Napier, 2005). However, the manga culture in Japan has long been established, contributing quality characters and content to anime production (Hernandez-perez, 2019). Adults who grew up reading manga have sustained this culture, influencing the variety of anime content, with printed manga publications continuing to play a pivotal role (Kacsuk, 2018). Today, there is a wide range of shows to choose from, making it easy for diverse categories of audiences to choose particular anime to connect to and resonate with (Ahmed, 2020).

The term 'anime' itself originates from the English word 'animation' in Japan (Napier, 2016), serving as a comprehensive label for all animated cartoons. However, outside Japan, 'anime' specifically refers to Japanese animation (Galbraith, 2014). English literature on anime has seen a notable increase in recent years (Miyake, 2009), and anime products are now analyzed as a distinct mass art form, separate from major American animation companies like Disney (Tomos, 2013).

### **Fandom**

Fandom, at its core, constitutes a community of enthusiasts who establish social connections based on their shared interest in specific texts, involving reading and viewing. These fans contribute by producing materials related to those texts (Gooch, 2008). The evolution of fandom, particularly in science fiction and fantasy genres, is integral to understanding its contemporary manifestation (Jenkins, 2014). The close relationship between fans and professionals in these genres is crucial to the genres' development, making fan history an essential component (Lee, 2011). Notably, the science fiction and fantasy community uniquely documents fandom, setting it apart from other genres (Gooch, 2008). The fan community within these genres has expanded to the point that it is often perceived as a subculture, complete with its own language, or "fanspeak," incorporating a jargon understood by fellow enthusiasts, along with social norms and hierarchies within the community, including dress codes (Bacon-Smith, 1992). Fans engage in creative expressions such as "fan fiction" and "fan art," and even have their form of music known as folk songs (Black, 2009). Given the intricate nature of modern fandom, scholars in media and culture delve into studying fandom as a culture in its own right (Gooch, 2008).

In the era of cyber-fandom, changing perceptions align with technological advancements. The rise of film and television has provided additional avenues for the science fiction genre to connect with fans, amplifying the impact of the fan community on contemporary science fiction

(media science fiction) (Edwards, 2018). Notably, fans wield significant influence in the realm of television (Gooch, 2008).

Among the prominent and actively engaged fan activities, fan fiction stands out, representing any fiction crafted using pre-existing characters, events, or settings to create original stories. Initially featured in fanzines, magazines created by and for fans, the advent of the internet has liberated fan fiction from print constraints, allowing enthusiasts to publish on accessible websites like FanFiction.net (Hellekson, Karen, & Kristina, 2006). This genre mirrors traditional literature classifications, including romance, action/adventure, and drama.

Similarly, fan art involves creating artwork depicting characters, scenes, or settings from science fiction texts. While fan art has existed since the inception of fan communities, it has gained prominence with the emergence of media science fiction. Originally encompassing traditional artistic methods like painting or sketching, fan art has expanded to include computer-generated or altered images. Fan artists often showcase their work through exhibits and fanzines (Gooch, 2008; Bacon-Smith, 1992).

### **Otaku Fandom**

The emergence of Otaku Fandom coincided with a shift towards dramatic storytelling (Hatcher, 2005). While anime had always enjoyed a level of popularity, a dedicated community of avid fans began to take shape during the 1960s, especially with the medium's introduction in America (Napier, 2005). This community came to be known as "Otaku," a term adopted by emerging anime fans to refer to each other (Steinberg, 2012). In 1983, cultural critic Akio Nakamori first commented on this type of fan, labeling them as "Otaku" and depicting them as socially incompetent individuals indulging obsessively in fantasy (Azuma, 2009). However, the negative perception was countered by critic Azusa Nakajima, who emphasized the term's assertion of a shared identity within a social community (Azuma, 2009).

Despite Otaku undeniably favoring fictional worlds in anime, the term suggests a social community where members construct a shared identity (Galbraith, 2014). Fans recognize each other through complex relationships, with information and prestige serving as the currency of exchange, embodying participatory fandom principles. The label "Otaku" remains contested among anime fans, but its flexibility has endured with the rise of digital technologies (Jenkins, 2006).

The evolving digital experience has given rise to a "constellation of 'fannish' cultural logics, platforms, and practices" centered around anime, manga, and Japanese games (Ito, 2006). The Japanese term "Otaku" itself holds multiple meanings, originally denoting "another person's house or family" and often used as an honorific for "you" (Newitz, 2014). While its slang usage as "nerd" or "geek" originated from the consumption of anime (Saito, 2012), recent years have seen Japan embracing the conceptual Otaku as a cultural export, with Western participants contributing to a global community of artists, editors, and remixers (Garner, 2019).

Otaku Fandom stands out as a cultural fan body deserving of scholarly attention, marked by global anime consumption and participatory behaviors that evolved alongside digital technologies (Ito, 2006). Digital platforms now serve as primary hubs for fan communities, but participatory behaviors existed before widespread internet access (Jenkins, 2006). Otaku Culture, continually reinvented alongside digital networks, has become a globalized phenomenon, characterized by diverse cultural contexts surrounding anime consumption

(Garner, 2019). The enigmatic nature of Otaku Culture is evident in its distinct subculture, refusing easy categorization (Eng, 2006).

The complex fan networks that developed in response to the American exposure to anime in the 1960s illustrate Otaku Culture's enigmatic nature (Garner, 2019). To watch and distribute anime, early American Otaku communities cultivated advanced networks based on personal connections, with clubs serving as social spaces for trading fan-subbed tapes and engaging in fan activities (Guo, 2020).

### **Research Method**

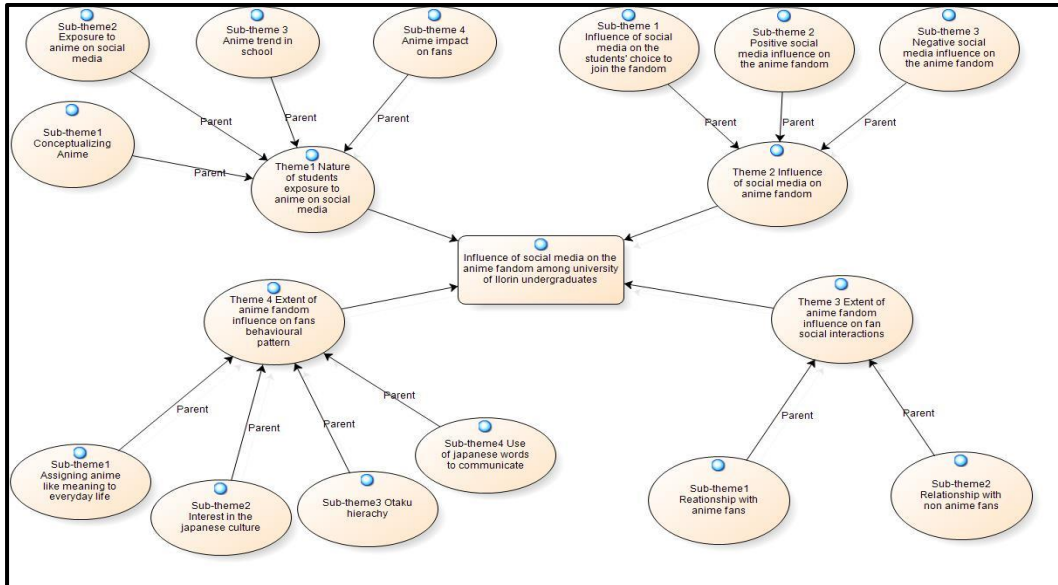
The chosen research methodology for this study is qualitative, with a specific focus on interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), a popular qualitative research method. Qualitative methods are deemed appropriate for this research, given its objective to investigate the influence of social media on a specific group, namely the emergence and growth of anime culture. The study was conducted in Nigeria, Kwara state with undergraduate students in the University of Ilorin constituting the population. Specifically, this comprised undergraduates registered for the 2021/2022 academic session, which according to the Academic Support Services of the University of Ilorin amounts to 55,000. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. This sampling method proves beneficial when studying rare or unique populations or when seeking detailed insights from individuals with specialized expertise. In this case, participants for the study are drawn from the anime fan community within the University of Ilorin. 16 students affiliated to the anime culture thus purposively selected from various departments in the university thus participated in the study upon data saturation.

The limited availability of literature on the Japanese animation industry and fan behaviors led the researchers to opt for in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method. In-depth interviews offer a comprehensive exploration of the subject matter, allowing researchers to delve into intricate details and nuances often overlooked by quantitative approaches. This method facilitates a deeper understanding of individuals' perspectives, experiences, and emotions, providing valuable context to the collected data. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the collected data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method involving a systematic exploration of the dataset to identify, analyze, and report recurring patterns (Barun & Clarke, 2006).

## Data Analysis

### Influence of social media on the Anime Fandom in the University of Ilorin

This section presents data according to the study focus which seeks to find out the influence of social media on the anime fandom in the University of Ilorin. In relations to this, response from the informants are presented and interpreted in the subsequent sections as shown in figure 1.



#### Theme 1: Nature of Students' Exposure to Anime on Social Media

This theme reflects how undergraduates of the University of Ilorin get exposed to anime content through social media as well as their knowledge on anime. The nature of the students' exposure to anime on social media encapsulates their individual understanding of anime, their exposure to anime on social media, the anime trend in their school and how anime has made an impact in their lives.

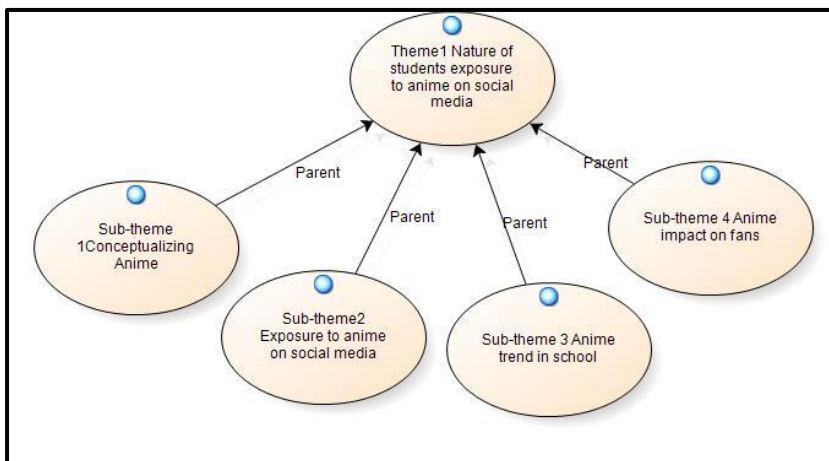


Figure 2 Nature of students' exposure to anime on social media

## **Students' Conception of Anime**

### ***Escape from Reality***

Anime is often regarded as a means of escaping reality, providing fans with a brief respite from their daily lives. Informant 5 expressed this sentiment, stating, "Anime to me is like a way of escape from reality, and since I enjoy it, I'll define it as watching animation that helps me escape from reality" (Informant 5). Similarly, Informant 13 highlighted the stress-relieving aspect of anime, describing it as a medium that transports individuals to an imaginary world with endless possibilities and diverse themes (Informant 13).

### ***Culture and History Incorporated***

The significance of anime as a cultural and historical medium, particularly rooted in Japanese heritage, was emphasized by several informants. Informants collectively asserted that anime is more than just the Japanese word for animation; it has evolved into a distinct art form and industry that preserves Japanese culture. According to Informant 3, "When you are talking about anime, you are talking about a specific kind of art and culture and industry" (Informant 3). This sentiment was reinforced by Informant 15, who shared a personal experience of gaining insights into Japanese culture through anime, citing examples like Samurai X and Naruto (Informant 15).

Additionally, Informant 7 viewed anime as a cultural movement that transcends borders, stating, "Anime is a culture, a cultural movement that crossed the Pacific and came to Nigeria all the way from Japan" (Informant 7). This perspective underscores the global impact of anime as it becomes integrated into diverse entertainment spaces.

### ***Representation of Life***

Anime serves as a representation of life, enabling viewers to connect with characters on an emotional level. Informant 10 described anime as "art as a whole, a representation of how life can be" and cited One Piece as an example that encapsulates various aspects of life, including action, drama, love, and pain (Informant 10). The emotional impact of anime was further illustrated by scenes where characters face mortality, emphasizing the impermanence of life.

### ***Entertainment***

While some appreciate the philosophical and cultural dimensions of anime, others see it primarily as a form of entertainment. Respondent 11 highlighted the diversity of genres in anime, including action, drama, and horror, making it a preferred choice over other series (Respondent 11). Informant 12 argued that anime, like other forms of art, brings imagination to life on the screen, with series delving into deep philosophical matters, as seen in shows like 'Attack of Titans' and 'Chainsaw Man' (Informant 12).

### ***Conversation with Emotions***

For some informants, watching anime is a form of emotional conversation, providing an avenue to connect with their inner selves. Informant 12 emphasized the versatility of anime, noting that individuals can choose shows based on their mood, whether seeking philosophical contemplation or light-hearted amusement (Informant 12). This aspect of anime as a medium for emotional exploration highlights its diverse appeal and impact on personal introspection.

### **Exposure to Anime on Social Media**

The informant exposure to anime on social media is explored, in which the informant discussed their initial exposure to anime, then the platform to which they were exposed to anime content on social media and on an average their duration of exposure.

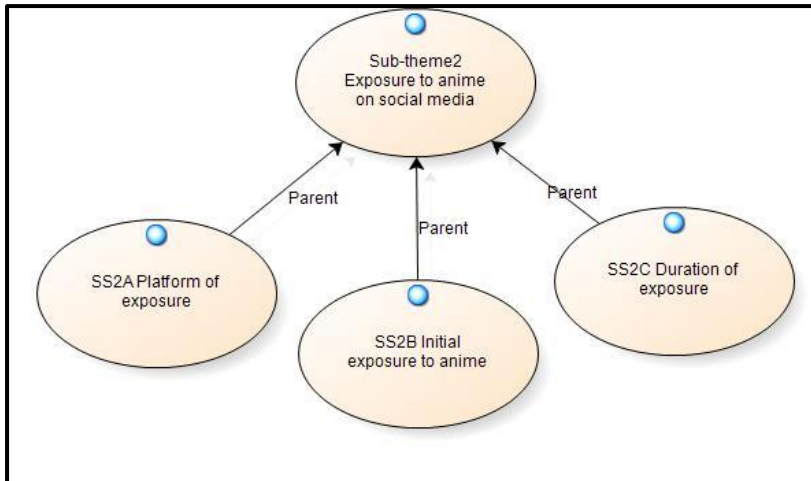


Figure 3 Exposure to anime on social media

### ***Platform of Exposure***

The internet's versatility has given rise to a plethora of social media platforms catering to various user interests. Anime enthusiasts find themselves navigating different platforms, recognizing them as indispensable resources for information and community engagement. Informants attribute their exposure to anime content on social media to algorithmic mechanisms that tailor content based on individual preferences across platforms.

Informant 1 highlighted the role of Instagram and Twitter in fostering their anime interest, stating, "The social media that got me interested in anime, I will say Instagram and Twitter, I am a part of a social media anime community on WhatsApp and Twitter..." (Informant 1). Meanwhile, Informant 7 offered insights into the vibrant anime community on WhatsApp, emphasizing discussions ranging from lighthearted character comparisons to more serious debates about character development (Informant 7).

Some respondents, like Informant 5, rely on the application algorithms to curate their anime content, stating, "I only get my update in two ways, one on WhatsApp from my friends... and the second on Instagram due to the way the algorithm is built..." (Informant 5). Informant 10 recounted their early engagement with anime on platforms like 2go and WhatsApp, with TikTok becoming a recent source due to algorithmic recommendations (Informant 10).

Twitter also emerged as a significant platform for anime discussions. Informant 11 expressed, "People talked a lot about Gear 5 even on Twitter; you'd see people discussing..." (Informant 11). Similarly, Informant 16 emphasized the impact of Twitter on their anime exposure, with the platform's algorithm contributing to a timeline filled with anime-related content and interactions (Informant 16).

Moreover, Informant 12 detailed the influence of short clips on Instagram and TikTok, noting how these platforms sparked interest through engaging snippets and commentary. They also highlighted the role of other streaming platforms like Crunchyroll and HBO Box alongside free streaming apps and websites (Informant 12, 14).



### ***Initial Exposure to Anime***

For many informants, exposure to anime predates their engagement with social media. Informant 2, for instance, stated, "Social media wasn't out when I started watching anime..." (Informant 2). Informant 6 acknowledged early exposure to anime but realized its significance upon entering the University of Ilorin (Informant 6). Informant 15's introduction to anime through TV shows like Samurai Champloo and Naruto occurred during their primary school days, emphasizing that social media was not the initial gateway (Informant 15).

Informants 8, 10, and 7 gained awareness of anime through friends and specific events. Informant 8 noted, "I became interested in anime in the year 2020 through my friend..." (Informant 8). Similarly, Informant 10's deepened connection to anime occurred during a neighbor's birthday party where they binge-watched Naruto (Informant 10). Informant 7, intrigued by a friend playing a Naruto video game, embarked on a journey to understand the anime world (Informant 7).

### ***Duration of Exposure***

The frequency and duration of exposure to anime content play a crucial role in solidifying an individual's connection to the fandom. Informant 2 provided insights into their weekly viewing habits, stating, "In a week, I watch about 3-5 animes in a week..." (Informant 2). Informant 14 outlined their daily commitment, noting, "If I'm not too busy with school, I can spend up to six hours with animes in a day" (Informant 14).

Informant 7 stands out as a daily viewer, emphasizing the abundance of content and continuous releases across different anime series (Informant 7). Others, like Informant 4 and Informant 12, varied their viewing habits based on external factors such as exam periods, indicating a dynamic engagement with anime content (Informant 4, 12).

Informant 15's narrative highlighted intense binge-watching sessions, demonstrating the immersive nature of anime consumption during free periods (Informant 15). Meanwhile, Informant 16 intertwined anime watching with daily activities, describing it as an integral part of their routine, even while eating (Informant 16). These insights illuminate the diverse patterns and significance of anime exposure in the informants' lives.

### ***Anime Trend in School***

Anime has gone beyond animation that is enjoyed by few people in a particular area, now it can be seen as a trend taking the world by storm. The informant discussed the anime in the University of Ilorin as a growing trend that almost everyone wants to be associated with. This subtheme is divided into 4 categories, Pop-culture trend, Peer pressure, Anime community, Anime merch.

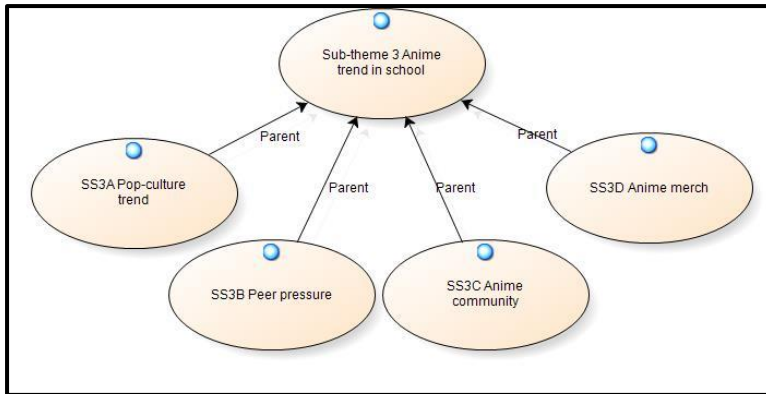


Figure 4 Anime trend in school

### ***Pop-Culture Trend***

Anime has seamlessly woven itself into the fabric of pop culture, attracting students seeking popularity within the undergraduate community. Informant 12 provides an overview of the anime trend at Unilorin, stating, "Since anime became mainstream, a lot of people have decided to give it a chance..." (Informant 12). However, not everyone embraces the trend wholeheartedly, as Informant 2 expresses dissatisfaction with newbies joining merely for popularity, emphasizing, "I don't like the trend, there are a lot of newbies weeps that are involved in the trends, and they are not the real fans" (Informant 2).

### ***Peer Pressure***

The sway of peer pressure becomes evident as students embrace anime to align with the prevailing trend. Informant 7 discusses the impact of peer pressure on students' anime choices, highlighting the desire to be part of conversations and avoid feeling left out (Informant 7). Informant 14 delves into the influence on gender dynamics, revealing how some individuals, particularly females, engage with anime to capture male interest, even if their passion may not align with genuine fandom (Informant 14). Informant 9 expresses mixed feelings towards those who join the trend under pressure, deeming it hypocritical (Informant 9).

### ***Anime Community***

The anime community, a social space for enthusiasts, takes center stage in this category. Informant 15 emphasizes the community-building aspect, describing events and hangouts organized to introduce people to anime beyond its mainstream image (Informant 15). Informant 5 highlights the significance of anime-related programs, specifically mentioning a movie premiere at CISLT dedicated to an anime, signaling a growing recognition of anime culture (Informant 5). Informant 7 sheds light on the robust manga and comic community within the university, offering a multifaceted experience for enthusiasts but acknowledging the potential overwhelming nature for beginners (Informant 7). Additionally, Informant 10 underscores the role of people in influencing trends, citing moments of excitement, such as those in "Demon Slayer," that draw others into the anime world (Informant 10).

### ***Anime Merch***

The trend of donning anime merch, encompassing clothing, jewelry, and figures associated with specific anime, is explored in this segment. Informant 11 discusses the prevalence of fans buying merchandise of their favorite characters and the emergence of a market where students sell pouches, necklaces, and other anime-related items (Informant 11). Informant 14 points out instances where students own anime merch without being avid fans, attracted more by the aesthetic appeal than the anime itself (Informant 14). Similarly, Informant 1 notes that dressing

styles, including inscriptions of anime and characters, serve as visible markers of an individual's association with the anime trend (Informant 1). Informant 9 sheds light on the cosplay trend, celebrating the way anime fosters togetherness and relationships among fans (Informant 9).

### **Anime Impact on Fans**

The profound impact of anime on fans is explored through various lenses, including gender identification, emotional connections, new perspectives on life, and motivation to become better individuals. The overarching theme suggests that anime serves as a transformative force, influencing individuals on a personal and emotional level.

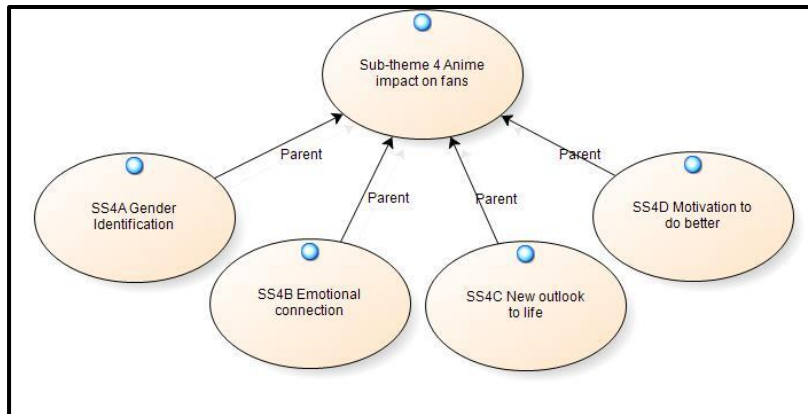


Figure 5 Anime impact on fans

### **Gender Identification**

Individuals form a profound connection with anime characters, often molding their behavior based on these characters. Informant 1 reflects on her experience with the character "Maki" in 'Jujutsu Kaisen,' expressing how Maki's resilience and growth inspire her own journey, stating, "I get inside by her growth and her reaction to life experiences. Yeah, so 'Maki,' in the JJK world, she doesn't have any curse and she was in a prestigious family..." (Informant 1).

### **Emotional Connection**

The emotional connection forged with anime stories and characters is a prevalent theme. Informant 2 shares the impact of "Naruto" on his life, emphasizing the lessons learned about pain and friendship, stating, "Naruto taught me everything about pain, friendship, I watched Naruto while growing up" (Informant 2). Similarly, Informant 11 expresses a deep connection with "One Piece," highlighting how the character Sanji influenced him to become a better person, saying, "That part really impacted me and taught me to let go of past grudges and to move on to be a better person" (Informant 11).

### **New Outlook to Life**

Anime serves as a lens through which informants view life, offering diverse perspectives and societal messages. Informant 12 reflects on the series 'Akame Ga Kill,' revealing its impact on his perception of right and wrong, stating, "This really pushed my perception of what is right and what is wrong" (Informant 12). Informant 9 echoes this sentiment, citing "Attack on Titan" as a series that made him view the world differently in terms of rights, wrongs, segregation, and discrimination (Informant 9).

Informant 7 shares insights from "Boku no Hero," highlighting the pressure faced by the protagonist, Deku, and how it encourages self-defense of beliefs, stating, "For a young boy it is a lot of pressure to hold on to your belief even with the world against you, but he never gave up" (Informant 7).

### ***Motivation to be Better***

Anime serves as a motivational force, inspiring fans to strive for personal improvement. Informant 5 credits the character Naruto for motivating him to overcome adversities, stating, "The fact that his personality and his effort towards achieving his goals...actually had an impact on me, so like I remember him whenever I'm faced with adversities" (Informant 5). Informant 15 draws inspiration from "Dragon Ball," seeing it as motivation to give their maximum effort and embrace a mindset of "This is all or nothing" (Informant 15).

Similarly, Informant 16 shares the motivation derived from the anime "ReZero," highlighting the importance of perseverance and effort even in challenging situations, stating, "It gave me this mindset of don't give up basically. No matter how hard it is" (Informant 16).

The research findings shed light on various perspectives and dimensions through which anime is perceived and consumed by fans at the University of Ilorin. The discussions cover themes such as the role of anime as an escape from reality, its incorporation of culture and history, representation of life, entertainment value, emotional connections, platform exposure, initial exposure to anime, duration of exposure, anime trends in school, and the impact of anime on fans.

### **Recommendations**

**Cultural Integration:** Given the cultural significance of anime, institutions could consider incorporating anime-related events or discussions into cultural programs. This could enhance cross-cultural understanding and appreciation among students.

**Community Building:** Encouraging the formation of anime clubs or communities within educational institutions could provide a space for like-minded individuals to share their passion, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

**Educational Perspectives:** Institutions may explore the academic potential of anime by incorporating it into relevant courses or discussions. This could provide students with an academic framework for analyzing the cultural, social, and artistic aspects of anime.

**Media Literacy:** Given the role of social media in shaping anime exposure, there could be initiatives to enhance media literacy among students. This includes understanding algorithms, discerning credible sources, and promoting responsible consumption of online content.

**Merchandise Authenticity:** Institutions could facilitate discussions on the authenticity of anime merchandise, promoting an understanding of the cultural and narrative significance behind the items. This could encourage genuine fandom rather than trend-driven consumption.

### **Conclusion**

Anime at the University of Ilorin is not merely a form of entertainment; it has become a cultural force that shapes identities, fosters communities, and influences personal growth among students. Understanding and appreciating this cultural phenomenon can contribute to a more nuanced view of the diverse ways in which students engage with and derive meaning from anime.

## References

- Adarsh. (2023, February 10). *How Anime Culture Is Taking Over The Internet*. Retrieved from Game Rant: <http://www.gamerant.com/how-anime-culture-is-taking-over-the-internet/>
- Ahmed, N. N. (2020, July 29). Anime and its global popularity. Retrieved from Medium: <https://natalia-nazeem.medium.com/anime-and-its-global-popularity-521f21520b2e>
- Ahmed Sayed, B. (2022). *Transnational consumption of Japanese popular culture: the case of anime and cosplay subculture* (Doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia).
- Antonia, L. (1996). Samurai from outer space. Understanding Japanese Animation. *Chicago, Open Court*, 33-65.
- Azuma, H. (2009). *Otaku: Japan's database animals*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Bacon-Smith, C. (1992). *Enterprising women: Television fandom and the creation of popular myth*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77.
- Black, R. W. (2009). Online fan fiction, global identities, and imagination. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 397-425.
- Castro, D. C. (2022). American-anime: How Japanese anime influenced American cartoons. Retrieved from: [https://csusmdspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.3/223575/UR\\_A2022WinnerA.pdf?sequence=2](https://csusmdspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.3/223575/UR_A2022WinnerA.pdf?sequence=2)
- Edwards, A. (2018). Literature fandom and literary fans. *A companion to media fandom and fan studies*, 47-64.
- Eng, L. (2012). Strategies of engagement: Discovering, defining, and describing otaku culture in the United States. *Fandom unbound: Otaku culture in a connected world*, 85-104.
- Galbraith, P. W. (2014). The otaku encyclopedia: An insider's guide to the subculture of cool Japan. *Kodansha USA*.
- Gambino, M. (2023, May 25). *Student opinion- Japanese Anime is growing in popularity*. Retrieved from Liberty Champion: <http://www.liberty.edu/champion.com>
- Garner, K. (2019). *The Digital Otaku: Anime, Participatory Culture, and Desire*. California State University, Long Beach, 32-33.
- Gooch, B. (2008). The communication of fan culture: The impact of new media on science fiction. 3. *Georgia Tech Library*, 3.
- Guo, C. (2020). Anime and manga fandom in the 21st century: A close up view. *Scholarworks*, 14.
- Guo, C., & Zeng, C. (2020). Anime and manga fandom in the 21st century: a close-up view. In *Handbook of Research on the Impact of Fandom in Society and Consumerism* (pp. 480-496). IGI Global. doi:<https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-1048-3.ch023>
- Hatcher, J. S. (2005). Of otakus and fansubs: A critical look at anime online in light of current issues in copyright law. *Scripted*, 2, 514.
- Hellekson, K., & Busse, K. (Eds.). (2006). *Fan fiction and fan communities in the age of the internet: new essays*. McFarland. 213-215.
- Hernández-Pérez, M. (2019, April). Looking into the “anime global popular” and the “manga media”: reflections on the scholarship of a transnational and transmedia industry. In *Arts* (Vol. 8, No. 2, p. 57). MDPI.
- Ito, M. (2006). Japanese media mixes and amateur cultural exchange. In *Digital generations: Children, young people, and the new media*. Routledge.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). Fans, bloggers, and gamers: Media consumers in a digital age. *Nova Iorque: New York University Press*. 16-24
- Jenkins, H. (2006). Convergence culture: Where old and new media collid. *New York, NY: New*.

- Jenkins, H. (2014). *Textual poachers: Television fans and participatory culture*. Routledge.
- Kacsuk, Z. (2018, July). Re-examining the “what is manga” problematic: The tension and interrelationship between the “style” versus “made in Japan” positions. In *Arts* (Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 26). MDPI.
- Kozinets, R. (2019). Netnography: The essential guide to qualitative social media research. *Netnography*, 1-472.
- Lee, H. K. (2011). Participatory media fandom: A case study of anime fansubbing. *Media, culture & society*, 33(8), 1131-1147.
- Miyake, L. K. (2009). Japanese visual culture: Explorations in the world of manga and anime. *Monumenta Nipponica*, 64(2), 445-449.
- Moon, K. (2021, July 20). How spirited away changed animation forever. Time. <https://time.com/6081937/spirited-away-changed-animation-studio-ghibli/>
- Napier, S. J. (2016). *Anime from Akira to Howl's moving castle: Experiencing contemporary Japanese animation*. St. Martin's Griffin.
- Napier, S. J. (2005). Anime and Local/Global Identity. In *Anime from Akira to Princess Mononoke: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation* (pp. 15-34). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Newitz, A. (2014). Anime otaku: Japanese animation fans outside Japan. *Political Education for Everyday Life*, 6-7.
- Poitras, G. (2008). Contemporary Anime in Japanese Pop culture. *Knolesge quest*, 49-50.
- Ramrathen, T. (2016). *Rise of the Otaku: investigating the anime fandom in South Africa* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Saito, M. (2012). Understanding ‘Otaku’ culture in contemporary Japan: Anthropological perspectives. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*.
- Steinberg, M. (2012). *Anime's media mix: Franchising toys and characters in Japan Minneapolis*: University of Minnesota Press.
- Venter, D., & Erasmus, T. (2020). The impact of popular culture fandom on the quality of life of visitors to comic con Africa 2019.
- Wahab, J. A. (2012). Global media product and construction of “Japanese Identity”: A case study of anime on Malaysian television. *Jurnal Komunikasi*, 28(2), 1-19.