EXPLORING THE CULTIVATION EFFECTS OF ANIME CONSUMPTION

IN DEVELOPING PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG

MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

PUA WEI YI

A RESEARCH PROJECT
SUBMITTED IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
BACHELOR OF MEDIA AND CREATIVE STUDIES (HONOURS)
FACULTY OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

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APPROVAL FORM

This research paper attached hereto, entitled "Exploring the Cultivation Effects of Anime Consumption in Developing Parasocial Relationships among Malaysian University Students" prepared and submitted by "Pua Wei Yi" in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Media and Creative Studies (Hons) is hereby accepted.

_____   Date: _3/10/23_____

Supervisor

Supervisor's name   Penny Lim

ABSTRACT

There is a gap in existing research on the cultivation effects of long-term exposure to media content in the development of parasocial relationships. With anime's increasing popularity, the purpose of this paper is to explore the cultivation effects of anime consumption in developing parasocial relationships among Malaysian university students aged between 18 and 25. This study aims to (i) determine the impact of heavy anime consumption in developing parasocial relationships, and (ii) investigate the difference in impact between male and female Malaysian university students. A combination of sampling methods including convenience sampling, snowball sampling, and voluntary response sampling were used to distribute a web-based, self-administered survey questionnaire consisting of 36 close-ended questions to 310 Malaysian university students. The findings revealed that there is a relationship between heavy viewing and the development of parasocial relationships, and that the impact was more prevalent among female than male students. These findings will contribute to the existing gap in research between Cultivation theory and parasocial relationship. The present study is limited by its use of cross-sectional data. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies utilise longitudinal designs to investigate the long-term impacts of anime consumption on the development of parasocial relationships.

DECLARATION

I declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be they printed, electronic or personal.

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Date   : 22nd September 2023

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Anime has been a popular form of entertainment among Malaysians for many years, going back as far as the 1980s (Abdul Wahab et al., 2012). Anime is a style of animation originating from Japan. It is sometimes synonymous with the terms 'Japanese animation' and 'Japanimation' (Ruh, 2014). The lifting of COVID-19 lockdowns saw not only a revival but also gave rise to a new wave of anime fandom in Malaysia and the global arena. In 2022, it was reported that 48% of the Malaysian population watches anime, taking the 8th spot in global rankings for having some of the largest consumers of anime in the world (Azuar, 2022). This was a significant rise from 2020 when anime only made up 15% of the most popular media genres among Malaysians (Statista Research Department, 2022). Global consumption of anime also saw a similar rise between 2020 and 2022, where demand for the media rose from 4.2% in 2020 to 7.1% in 2022 (Tiushka, 2023).

The increased consumption of anime also saw the rise of the trend to claim on-screen characters as one's 'husbandos' and 'waifus' - a term given by viewers to the anime characters they have a strong affinity for (MODKNIGHT, 2018). This trend was especially prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-COVID-19 lockdowns as reports of parasocial activity increased during the period (Jarzyna, 2021). Parasocial relationships with anime characters have been around for a long time, going back as far as anime was first introduced. However, seeing that the recent, increasing trend coincides with the increased consumption of anime poses the question if there is a relationship between the two.

Statement of the research problem

The rise in the parasocial relationship trend among anime viewers and the increased consumption of anime point to an existing gap in academia in the areas of cultivation theory and parasocial relationships. Studies of cultivation theory have traditionally been concerned with investigating the amount of viewing time and its impact on viewer's perceptions and worldviews. Likewise, studies on parasocial relationships have traditionally been concerned with the motivations of viewers that drive their parasocial activities. Additionally, academic research in anime is still lacking despite the rising prominence of the Japanese cultural media in recent years (Ruh, 2014).

With these in mind, this study seeks to address the existing gap in research with the following research questions and objectives:

Research Questions

1. RQ1: What is the impact of heavy anime consumption on developing parasocial relationships among Malaysian university students?
2. RQ2: What are the differences in the impact of anime consumption between male and female Malaysian university students on the development of parasocial relationships?

Research Objectives

The study seeks:

1. To determine the role of heavy anime consumption in the development of parasocial relationships with the characters in anime.

2. To investigate the difference in the impact of anime consumption between male and female Malaysian university students on the development of parasocial relationships.

Significance of Study

This study holds a degree of significance as it investigates the amount of anime consumption and its impact on the rise of parasocial relationship trends among anime viewers. The relationship between the two theories are heavily understudied area in academia despite the rising phenomenon of parasocial relationships among anime viewers coinciding with the rise of anime consumption. Understanding the relationship between the two can serve as a guide to future researchers of cultivation and parasocial relationships to explore these areas of the theory further. This study also seeks to expand on the existing definitions and frameworks of cultivation theory and parasocial relationships as the digital landscape and media consumption habits of viewers continue to evolve rapidly. Ultimately, this study will contribute to the discussions on the nature of their understudied relationship among researchers, as well as fill a gap in the existing literature between the two theories.

Keywords

anime, cultivation theory, parasocial relationship, otaku, heavy viewers

Keywords definition

No.	Keywords	Definition
1.	Anime	A style of animation originating from Japan (Abdul Wahab et al., 2012; Ruh, 2014)
2.	Cultivation theory	A theory postulated by George Gerbner where prolonged television exposure is more likely to shape the perceptions and worldviews of the viewers (Glynn & Jeong, 2003; Mosharafa, 2015; Stacks et al., 2015)
3.	Parasocial relationship	One-sided relationships viewers form with media characters or figures that are non-reciprocal (Jarzyna, 2021)
4.	Otaku	Heavy consumers of Japanese cultural products, such as anime and manga (Yamato, 2013)
5.	Heavy viewers	Viewers who watch a media for more than 4 hours (Glynn & Jeong, 2003)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The study's objectives touch upon several theories and concepts, namely cultivation theory and parasocial relationships. A critical review of existing literature was made to learn more about what has been done in past research and to identify if there are other gaps in research regarding the topic of study which may need to be addressed. This chapter will discuss the findings of existing literature according to each research objective, the related theories, and the research framework of this study.

Past research findings

Heavy anime consumption in shaping perceptions and the development of parasocial relationships

According to Gerbner's cultivation theory, "heavy viewers" are individuals who spend at least four hours a day watching television (Glynn & Jeong, 2003). As they are exposed to more violent content on television, they are more likely to view the world as much more violent than it actually is, which Gerbner dubs the "Mean World Syndrome" (Glynn & Jeong, 2003; Lane, 2001). In other words, heavy viewers who spend more time watching television are more likely to perceive the world as those portrayed on television than those who watch less of it. This is supported by Jahng (2019)'s study, in which heavy viewers of reality television shows had stronger materialistic beliefs than light viewers, as they were more likely to view wealth depicted in these shows to be more attainable and prevalent in real life than light viewers.

Heavy viewers of media such as reality television shows have been extensively studied by past Cultivation researchers. They have since expanded this area of research to include other forms of media such as anime where the medium has been gaining prominence over the years. For heavy viewers of anime, researchers such as Yamato (2013) describe them as "otaku", meaning heavy consumers of Japanese popular culture products, especially anime (Yamato, 2013). However, little scholarly attention has been given to investigating the general consensus for the amount of time spent for one to be considered an "otaku". Based on the little literature available, the studies by Yamato (2013) and Yamato (2014) found that respondents who generally identified as "otaku" are people who have been a consumer of anime for a long period of time, which is usually over the course of several years (Yamato, 2013). This suggests that heavy consumers of anime generally identify themselves, and is perceived by the general public, as one only if they have consumed it for over a long period of time. This supports the argument of past cultivation researchers that the effects of media are cumulative and long-term, which can be seen in Yamato (2013) and Yamato (2014)'s studies (Glynn & Jeong, 2003). This was similarly described in a systematic review of Cultivation theory by Mosharafa (2015) in that heavy viewers are usually those who spend three or more hours watching prime time, without specifying a timeframe for the amount of time spent (i.e. per day). However, these studies contrast with Gerbner's original definition such as that heavy viewers spend at least four hours watching television a day (Glynn & Jeong, 2003).

Numerous past studies have shown the effects of long-term exposure in shaping worldviews in other forms of media (Glynn & Jeong, 2003; Mosharafa, 2015; Stacks et al., 2015). However, within the confinements of anime, Yamato (2014) and Paee et al. (2020)'s studies have reported otherwise. The study by Yamato (2014) revealed that most respondents

were well aware that the social realities portrayed in anime were not real. They also claimed that they do not accept them as part of their perceptions of social reality due to certain areas of cultural and religious conflicts (Yamato, 2014). Despite this, respondents revealed that the moral values portrayed in anime "give them an opportunity to reflect upon their surroundings or themselves", which was similarly reported by Paee et al. (2020)'s study. Meanwhile, the study by Paee et al. (2020) discovered that participants seemed to have retained their ability to discern between social reality and the fantasy world, as they claim to know their limitations when it comes to viewing the realities as portrayed on anime media. Due to the nature of anime as an animated medium, anime may reflect lesser of social realities as opposed to other media such as reality television shows (Mosharafa, 2015). This would explain why the realities portrayed in anime convince less of its audiences to perceive them as social realities, therefore impacting the effects of cultivation on anime consumers (Mosharafa, 2015). Despite this, these findings support those of Scharrer & Blackburn (2018a) and Scharrer & Blackburn (2018b) which found that the amount of time spent watching reality television had much lesser impact in shaping participants' worldviews than originally thought. Instead, both studies by Scharrer & Blackburn (2018a) and Scharrer & Blackburn (2018b) discovered that genre had more impact in shaping these perceptions among participants. These literature suggests that other factors such as genre could be a determining factor in influencing the perceptions of anime viewers.

Despite this, since most available literature only studied the effects of anime consumption without taking into account the participants' overall viewing time within a certain timeframe (e.g. a week), this study will seek to investigate if there is a direct relationship between overall viewing time per week and the development of perceptions within the confinements of anime to understand whether it has any actual impact or not.

While extensive studies have been done to investigate the role of overall viewing time in shaping perceptions and worldviews, little has been done to investigate whether it has a mediating effect in the development of parasocial relationships, especially in anime where parasocial relationships are extant and prevalent among its fans and communities (MODKNIGHT, 2018). However, some studies investigating anime consumption habits have found correlations between long-term consumption and the development of empathy and character identification, such as in the studies by Yamato (2014) and Goh (2014). The study by Yamato (2014) discovered that respondents who empathized with Japanese anime characters they saw as a hero or heroine felt that their stories were relatable as they grew up watching the series. Meanwhile, the study by Goh (2014) revealed that its participants identified with the characters and emotions found in Japanese dramas. It further revealed that participants engaged with the drama's story through empathy and emotion by putting themselves in the character's shoes to understand their behaviours and decisions within the story (Goh, 2014). Feelings of empathy and relatability have been known to be strong predictors in the development of parasocial relationships, as reported in the studies by Hwang & Zhang (2018) and Scherer et al. (2022). Therefore, these findings suggest that long-term exposure to media is a factor in the development of empathy and relatability, which in turn is a predictor of parasocial relationship development.

Difference in the impact of anime consumption between males and females in the development of parasocial relationships

Extensive studies have been done to investigate the impact of media consumption and how it differs between male and female audiences. However, studies have shown polarising results

where both males and females can be impacted more than the other, depending on the type of media and genre that is studied. The study by Scharrer & Blackburn (2018a) revealed that television impacted men more than women in shaping their perceptions of male gender norms (Scharrer & Blackburn, 2018). In contrast, a separate study by Scharrer & Blackburn (2018b) found that reality television shows like docusoaps had more impact on women in normalising verbal aggression that is depicted in the show by female celebrities due to resonance (Scharrer & Blackburn, 2018b). However, both studies discovered that genres of television had more impact in shaping these views than the amount of television viewing between different genders (Scharrer & Blackburn, 2018a, 2018b). These studies suggest that in terms of media consumption's effects and impacts, genres of television may have a more distinctive role in shaping perceptions and worldviews of social realities than the amount of television viewing does among gender groups.

Despite this, little academic attention was given to investigating the difference in impact between males and females in consuming anime media. Therefore, this study will seek to understand whether the same scenarios found in past literature apply to anime consumption, by first investigating if overall anime viewing has an impact on male and female audiences, and whether there is a difference in impact between these two groups.

In a niche media like anime, little academic attention was given to investigating the difference in impact between males and females. Despite this, a small number of studies on anime consumption found that the impact of long-term consumption is stronger on female audiences than on male audiences, such as those by Gonçalves et al. (2021) and Reysen et al. (2020). The study by Gonçalves et al. (2021) discovered that female respondents are more driven to consume anime for longer periods than male respondents due to stronger motivations to seek

escapism in anime (Gonçalves et al., 2021). The females in their study explained that their desire

to see the "character's evolution throughout the series", their feelings toward the characters or

series, and learnable life lessons from the series are what motivates them to consume more anime

(Gonçalves et al., 2021). Gonçalves et al. (2021) concluded that gender is among the predictors

of audiences' motivations towards their frequency of anime consumption (Gonçalves et al.,

2021). In the separate study by Reysen et al. (2020), which explored the relationship between

gender and the dimensions of parasocial connection toward the participants' favourite anime

favourite characters, discovered that female respondents showed stronger connections with

anime characters than male respondents, as they carried stronger feelings of identification and

similarities with the anime characters than male respondents (Reysen et al., 2020).

Since there is still little done to investigate the impact between male and female viewers,

especially concerning the development of parasocial relationships, this study will seek to

investigate the impact of anime consumption between male and female viewers in the

development of parasocial relationships.

Related theories

Cultivation theory

Cultivation theory was first theorised by George Gerbner that examined the role of overall

television viewing in shaping viewers' perceptions of social realities. Gerbner postulated that

people who watch more hours of television are more likely to view the world as is portrayed on

television than those who watch fewer hours (Stacks et al., 2015). The theory views television as

a "symbolic function" and "message system" that plays a pervasive role in disseminating media

messages that viewers come to be exposed to. Television is a vital source of information that

provides viewers with information about the world around them, including the lives of people, the history of the world, the inner workings of nature, and the latest issues around the globe (Mosharafa, 2015; Stacks et al., 2015). However, they don't always carry realistic portrayals of the cultural, personal, and social elements of the real world, as institutions such as the media influence what messages are being presented on television (Mosharafa, 2015). Therefore, television often only focuses on certain, specific issues depending on the interest and will of the controlling institutions behind the media messages portrayed (Mosharafa, 2015).

According to cultivation theory, these messages are disseminated in the form of "storytelling" which Mosharafa (2015) described that there are three types: (1) fictional stories that portray the hidden dynamics of human lives, (2) news stories that appear to "confirm" the "visions, rules, and goals" of a society, and (3) stories about human choices and values, such as cultural and religious values (Mosharafa, 2015). As such, these messages are often "dramatized" and "exaggerated" versions of the actual norms and values of society (Moyer-Gusé et al., 2008). They are then repeatedly broadcast to the masses, and through repeated exposure, these will be absorbed by television viewers over time (Mosharafa, 2015; Stacks et al., 2015). This repetitive nature would then lead to the formation of the viewer's worldviews. According to the systematic review by Mosharafa (2015), viewers are more likely to remember information that was recently, frequently, and dramatically presented.

Numerous studies have found that these messages have developed "distorted" perceptions of reality among television viewers, especially heavy viewers who rely on television as their main source of information about the world around them (Stacks et al., 2015). Gerbner, in his theory of Cultivation, stated that there are two types of television viewers: (1) heavy viewers who watch at least 4 hours of television a day, and (2) light viewers who watch less than 4 hours

of television a day (Glynn & Jeong, 2003). This definition was first developed to explain the

distorted perceptions heavy viewers have of the world as a much more violent place. Heavy

viewers who perceived the world as so were dubbed to have suffered from the "Mean World

Syndrome" which Gerbner proposed (Glynn & Jeong, 2003; Mosharafa, 2015). However, many

scholars have criticised this aspect of the theory and notion that heavy viewers of television, or

television viewers in general, are those who primarily consume violent television content only, in

addition to the ascribing of a specific numerical value defining heavy viewers, or heavy

television viewing in general (Glynn & Jeong, 2003; Moyer-Gusé et al., 2008). Despite this,

many scholars have explored this area of the theory in other types of television genre, such as

reality television, to investigate the relationship between heavy television viewing and the

shaping of perceptions toward topics such as materialism, wealth, and so on, albeit with different

definitions of heavy viewers of their own (Jahng, 2019; Mosharafa, 2015).

     Cultivation theory has stated that the impacts of television are profound on an individual

level, especially among heavy viewers. These viewers tend to rely on television for more

information about the world around them, as television is an accessible media that does not

require any precedent skills such as literacy to access its information and content (Mosharafa,

2015; Stacks et al., 2015). Television in general is a vital source of information for everyone

regarding the world around them. However, being overly dependent on this medium can have

profound risks, as they are subjected to the control of media institutions which can manipulate

the information presented to their own will and best interests (Mosharafa, 2015). For heavy

viewers who rely on specific media like television for information, they will face greater risks of

having their perceptions of the world distorted, biased, and stereotyped as they do not seek for

other means to compare the information presented to them via the said media (Mosharafa, 2015).

Parasocial relationships

Parasocial relationships are relationships viewers develop with the characters or figures in media. These are typically one-sided, as the media character or figure is unaware of this connection and relationship with the viewer (Cleveland Clinic, 2023; Jarzyna, 2021). In this instance, the viewer is considered a "stranger" to the media character throughout the relationship (D. C. Giles, 2002).

These one-sided relationships are considered 'parasocial' because the connection exists beyond the viewer's real-life social network (D. Giles & Maltby, 2006). The viewer may feel a certain closeness with the media character, but they do not actually know them personally in real life. Most scholars generally agree that reciprocity is also a major factor in determining whether a relationship is real or parasocial (Jarzyna, 2021). Since the media character is unaware of its existence, as well as the viewer's, the relationship carries an unreciprocated connection with little to no communication or feelings from the media character returned to the viewer, making it parasocial (Jarzyna, 2021).

There are many factors that contribute to the development of parasocial relationships between audience members and the media characters in question. Some scholars have identified social attraction as one of the factors in parasocial relationship development (D. C. Giles, 2002). Other studies have identified that feelings of similarity and relatability with the media characters are also one of the strong predictors of parasocial relationships (D. C. Giles, 2002; Reysen et al., 2020). These feelings typically encompass the "attitudes, appearance, and background" of the figure to those of the viewer's own (D. C. Giles, 2002). Therefore, the development of parasocial relationships and its depth can vary between different types of media figures.

The study by D. Giles & Maltby (2006) describes the three different levels of parasocial relationships viewers can form with the media character, based on past literature. The first level

is 'entertainment-social' where viewers only consider themselves as casual fans of the media figure that view them as a source of entertainment (raayan, 2022). The second level is 'intense-social', where viewers experience "intense and compulsive feelings" for the celebrity to the point of obsession (raayan, 2022). Usually, viewers who experience second-level parasocial relationships consider the media figures as their 'soul mates' (raayan, 2022). The third and final level is the 'borderline-pathological' where viewers experience "uncontrollable behaviours and fantasies" about the media figures that border on delusion (raayan, 2022). These viewers are usually considered 'stalker fans' due to the intensity of their feelings toward the media figure (raayan, 2022).

Other than these factors, scholars have identified other factors that have a hand in parasocial relationship development. In the systematic review by D. C. Giles (2002), they identified that consecutive encounters with the media figure (e.g.: appearing in several, consecutive episodes in a television series) and their frequent appearance across different medias facilitates the development of parasocial relationships (D. C. Giles, 2002). Other factors including co-viewing a series and discussing the media figure with other people also play a role in the development of parasocial relationships (D. C. Giles, 2002).

Research Framework

A research framework is developed for this study based on the existing literature as well as the frameworks of cultivation theory and parasocial relationships. This framework (refer to Figure 1) seeks to explore and address the research objectives of this study by attempting to explain the processes involved in the development of parasocial relationships, as well as to fill the existing

gap in research on the relationship between heavy media consumption and the development of parasocial relationships.

Figure 1 shows the research framework of this study. Firstly, viewers are exposed to the media messages of anime as they watch for a period of time. In the figure, 'long-term exposure' refers to watching anime for more than 4 hours a week (heavy viewers), while 'short-term exposure' refers to watching anime for less than 4 hours a week (light viewers). For heavy viewers, they are repeatedly exposed to the media messages of anime over longer periods of consumption (long-term exposure). After this period, their perceptions and views of the world will begin to take shape as they immerse themselves in the series longer. Over time, they will begin to share the beliefs and perceptions of anime characters as prolonged exposure allows them to engage in the stories of anime from the character's standpoint of view longer. Likewise, the more they feel that their beliefs and perceptions with the characters are similar, the more they will believe that these reflect those of reality as a result of cultivation effect (Burnham, 2021). This explains why the arrow indicated at this stage in Figure 1 is bi-directional as they can influence the development of one another concurrently,

Next, these will then evolve into feelings of empathy and relatability with the anime characters as they grow to find more similarities in their beliefs, attitudes, and worldviews with the characters over time. The connection at this stage is also explained with a bi-directional arrow in Figure 1 because while perceived similarities in their beliefs deepen their emotional connection with the anime characters, likewise, their connection also allows them to understand the character's point of view more (Goh, 2014). These feelings will then drive heavy viewers to consume more anime as they are motivated by these feelings to learn more about the anime

characters, as reported in Gonçalves et al. (2021)'s study. This explains why an arrow at this stage goes back to the 'Anime exposure and viewing' box in Figure 1.

Afterwards, heavy viewers will begin to develop character identification with the anime characters and will seek to imitate or emulate their behaviours in their daily lives as a result (Rain & Mar, 2021). Lastly, viewers will make an attempt to "contact" the characters by engaging in parasocial activities such as cosplay events, listening to character songs or CDs, etc. in an attempt to deepen the emotional bond with them further. In turn, these parasocial relationships will also serve as a drive and motivation for heavy viewers to engage in heavier anime consumption habits in order to remain connected with the anime characters, as those reported in Gonçalves et al. (2021)'s. This is indicated by an arrow at this stage that goes back to the first box of 'Anime exposure and viewing' box in Figure 1.

As for short-term exposure, since cultivation theory states that light viewers were less likely to perceive the world as those portrayed on television, they are thus less likely to reach the next stage of the development process ('development of empathy and relatability with anime characters') as they do not immerse themselves in anime long enough for them to understand the character's point of view better in order to develop any sense of empathy or relatability with the characters.

Figure 1. *The research framework of this study*

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study involves human participants, which have obtained ethical approval from the UTAR Scientific and Ethical Review Committee to be conducted between January 2023 to January 2024. This section will discuss the methods used for this study, from its research design, location and subjects of the study, population and sampling procedures, research instruments, operationalization of variables, validity and reliability of the research instrument, data collection procedure, to its data analysis methods.

Research Design

This study seeks to explore the relationship between the amount of anime consumption (cultivation theory) and the development of parasocial relationships with anime characters. Currently, there is little to no attention given to investigating the possible relationship between the two theories. To investigate their relationship in depth, this study will employ a combination of research designs to fill this gap in research.

Since the relationship between the two theories is understudied, this research project will take on an explanatory approach to conduct preliminary research into their relationship by obtaining data using survey forms from anime fans, as this particular group is known for being long-term consumers of anime based on past literature (Paee et al., 2020; Yamato, 2014).

Past studies such as those by Yamato (2013), Goh (2014), Paee et al. (2020), Yamato (2013, 2014), and Yamato et al. (2011) have utilised qualitative approaches such as interviews to obtain data on anime consumers' perceptions and experiences toward anime consumption and its

effects. However, this study seeks to explore if there's a causal relationship between the amount of anime consumption and the development of parasocial relationships. Therefore, data collection and analysis for this study will utilise a quantitative descriptive approach to discover the trends in the relationship between the respondents' anime consumption habits and their frequency of engagement with parasocial activities. As explanatory research, the preliminary results obtained from these data will serve as the groundwork for future researchers as a hypotheses-generating tool to analyze their relationship further.

Due to the time limitation allocated for this research project, a cross-sectional research design is used to observe the relationship between the study's various variables during the point of the research project period.

Location and subjects of the study

To expand on existing literature about Malaysian anime consumption such as those by Yamato (2013), Goh (2014), Paee et al. (2020), Yamato (2013, 2014), and Yamato et al. (2011), the location of this study will be conducted in Malaysia on Malaysian university students aged between 18 to 25. In past literature, it was discovered that the type of occupational lifestyle influenced anime consumption habits across different groups of anime consumers (Gonçalves et al., 2021). The study by Gonçalves et al. (2021) in particular found that students tend to consume more anime than those who work, as they have fewer priorities and responsibilities than those who do. As this study seeks to understand whether heavy anime consumption has a role in the development of parasocial relationships, the occupation for this study's subjects is restricted to students as their lifestyle makes it ideal to investigate this relationship.

Population and sampling procedures

The study's population concerns anime fans who are Malaysian university students. It will sample 310 respondents ($N = 310$) from this population as larger sample sizes produce more accurate results since they represent the studied population better (Andrade, 2020; Charlesworth Author Services, n.d.). As this study involves a niche population, a combination of non-probability sampling methods were used to obtain samples of this population.

Firstly, convenience sampling is utilised to reach out to known individuals and groups across different social circles who are consumers of anime, including those within the researcher's immediate social circle, public groups such as local ACG, anime, and cosplay activity groups on Facebook, Instagram, and Discord, as well as Japanese cultural clubs and societies in addition to anime societies of all local public and private institutions across the country. From here on out, snowball sampling is used as those within the researchers' immediate and non-immediate social circles will distribute the study's survey to other known potential respondents of the study from their immediate circles to fill out the survey form. Afterward, voluntary response sampling is used as these potential respondents may choose to voluntarily or involuntarily participate in this study's survey.

Research instruments

A self-administered, web-based survey questionnaire created using Google Forms is utilised for this study, as it can reach potential respondents easily regardless of the respondents' geographical location, in addition to being a cost-effective measure to obtain large samples of the study's population (Vasantha Raju & N.S., 2016).

The questionnaire contains a total of 36 close-ended questions, consisting of a mixture of Likert-scale items, multiple-answer questions, and multiple-choice questions across five different sections, each tackling a different aspect of the study. The first section explores the demographic background of the respondents, while the second section explores their anime consumption habits such as weekly viewing hours. The remaining three sections explored the core sections of the study's objectives, with the third section investigating the changes in perceptions of social reality among respondents as a result of their anime consumption habits, while the fourth section investigated the formation of parasocial relationships as a result of their weekly viewing hours. The fifth section investigated the development of parasocial activities as a result of weekly viewing hours, and the formation of the relationship that arose from it as a result.

Operationalization of the variables

Table 3.1

Operationalization of Variables

Variables	**Operationalization**	**Item (example)**
Heavy anime consumption	A viewer who watches more than 4 hours of anime a week	Weekly Anime Viewing Hours (More Than 4 Hours)
Males and females	Gender groups	What is your gender? (Male/Female)

Impact of anime consumption	The change in perceptions, development of emotional bonds, the degree of emotional bonds, and the level of emotional bonds maintained among viewers	1. Anime's Impact on Worldviews 2. Alignment of Worldviews, Moral Values, and Beliefs with Anime Characters 3. Developing Emotional Bonds with Anime Characters Over Time 4. Describing Emotional Bond with Anime Characters 5. Level of Emotional Connection Maintained After An Anime Character or Series Ends

Parasocial Relationships	Engagement with parasocial behaviours and activities	1. Adoption of Anime Character Traits in Real Life 2. Frequency of Engagement in Anime Character Activities

Validity and reliability of the instrument

To ensure that the study's research instrument can measure consistently through repeated measurements, as well as its ability to measure the data collected as intended for the study, a reliability and validity test is conducted for each aspect (Louangrath, 2018; Taherdoost, 2016).

To test the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's alpha test is used while Pearson Correlation Analysis is used to test its validity. Each item in the study seeks to predict the likelihood of the respondent progressing to the next stage of the parasocial relationship process as described in the research framework. This is characteristic of criterion validity that requires the correlation analysis as recommended by Taherdoost (2016).

Tavakol & Dennick (2011) stated that the reliability of an instrument does not depend on its validity. Additionally, larger sample sizes are recommended for validity and reliability tests to obtain high-reliability estimates and aggregate data (Kennedy, 2021; Taherdoost, 2016) Therefore, the reliability and validity tests will be conducted separately using different values of n, with the reliability test using N = 310, and the validity test using n = 302.

Table 3.2 shows the Cronbach's alpha, α of the 7 core items used in the survey questionnaire to investigate the respondents' view on their development of worldviews, emotional bonds, and parasocial relationships with anime characters. The overall Cronbach's alpha, α of these items is 0.773. According to most researchers, a good Cronbach's alpha, α is generally accepted to be 0.7 and above for a research instrument to be highly reliable (Louangrath, 2018; K. S. Taber, 2018; Taherdoost, 2016). As the overall Cronbach's alpha, α is higher than 0.7, this indicates their ability to measure consistently and repeatedly with high levels of reliability.

Table 3.2

Cronbach's alpha, α for the overall items used in this study's research instrument.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.773	7

Table 3.3 shows the Cronbach's alpha, α value for each item used in the research instrument. Most items have a Cronbach's alpha, α value of 0.454 and above, except for item "Describing Emotional Bond with Anime Characters" which has a Cronbach's alpha, α value of 0.441, and "Frequency of Engagement with Anime Character Activities" which has a Cronbach's alpha, α value of 0.349. According to a systematic review by Taber (2018), many scholars generally consider a Cronbach's alpha, α value of 0.45 and above to be acceptable and sufficient in terms of reliability. As most items described in Table 3.4 have a Cronbach's alpha, α value of more than 0.45, this indicates they have attained acceptable and sufficient levels of reliability to be included in the research instrument, and therefore, are able to measure consistently and

repeatedly in experiments. As for the items "Describing Emotional Bond with Anime Characters" and "Frequency of Engagement with Anime Character Activities", they will proceed to be used for this explanatory study to investigate the patterns in the relationship between the amount of anime consumption and the level of parasocial relationship formed ("Describing Emotional Bond with Anime Characters"), as well as the frequency of engagement with anime characters activities, as this is part of the last stage of the parasocial relationship development as described in the model by Giles (2002), in which respondents attempt to make contact with anime characters. However, it would not be recommended to include this item for future studies as it has a Cronbach's alpha, α value lower than the generally accepted value of 0.45 among scholars (K. S. Taber, 2018).

Table 3.3

Cronbach's alpha, α value to each of the 7 items used in the study's survey questionnaire

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Anime's Impact on Worldviews	18.48	14.211	.509	.742
Alignment of Worldviews, Moral Values, and Beliefs with Anime Characters	18.77	14.039	.572	.728
Developing Emotional Bonds with Anime Characters Over Time	18.27	13.912	.580	.726
Describing Emotional Bond with Anime Characters	20.71	16.415	.441	.758
Adoption of Anime Character Traits in Real Life	19.01	14.026	.491	.746
Level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends	18.65	14.183	.542	.734
Frequency of Engagement with Anime Character Activities	19.10	15.760	.349	.772

Table 3.4 shows the values of Pearson coefficient between each item using the correlation analysis tested at a significance level, p of 0.01 (2-tailed), with n = 302. From the table, it can be observed that all items have a significance level lower than $p = 0.01$, indicating high statistical significance and a strong correlation between all items used in the research instrument. As the significant values, p of all items is less than 0.01, therefore, all items are valid.

Secondly, it is observed that the Pearson Correlation coefficient to all items in the research instrument is higher than the Pearson r product moment, 0.148019 at degrees of freedom, $df = 300$, significance level, $p = 0.01$ (refer to Table 3.5). Therefore, they are valid.

In conclusion, the research instrument and its items have attained sufficient levels of reliability and validity to be used in this study, with an overall Cronbach's alpha, α of 0.773, Cronbach's alpha, α value of 0.45 and higher for most items in the research instrument, significance level for all items lower than 0.01 when tested against a significance level of $p = 0.01$, and Pearson's coefficient higher than the r product moment at $df = 300$, significance level, $p = 0.01$ (refer to Table 3.5).

Table 3.4

Correlation Analysis using Pearson's r for the validity of the study's research instrument

Correlations

		Anime's Impact on Worldviews	Alignment of Worldviews, Moral Values, and Beliefs with Anime Characters	Developing Emotional Bonds with Anime Characters Over Time	Describing Emotional Bond with Anime Characters	Adoption of Anime Character Traits in Real Life	Level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends	Frequency of Engagement with Anime Character Activities
Anime's Impact on Worldviews	Pearson Correlation	1	.398**	.398**	.316**	.342**	.328**	.196**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	302	302	302	302	302	302	302
Alignment of Worldviews, Moral Values, and Beliefs with Anime Characters	Pearson Correlation	.398**	1	.419**	.285**	.440**	.352**	.285**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	302	302	302	302	302	302	302
Developing Emotional Bonds with Anime Characters Over Time	Pearson Correlation	.398**	.419**	1	.325**	.332**	.495**	.283**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	302	302	302	302	302	302	302
Describing Emotional Bond with Anime Characters	Pearson Correlation	.316**	.285**	.325**	1	.258**	.346**	.243**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	302	302	302	302	302	302	302
Adoption of Anime Character Traits in Real Life	Pearson Correlation	.342**	.440**	.332**	.258**	1	.346**	.210**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	302	302	302	302	302	302	302
Level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends	Pearson Correlation	.328**	.352**	.495**	.346**	.346**	1	.299**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	302	302	302	302	302	302	302
Frequency of Engagement with Anime Character Activities	Pearson Correlation	.196**	.285**	.283**	.243**	.210**	.299**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	302	302	302	302	302	302	302

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3.5

Pearson's Correlation Table

df\α	0.2	0.1	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.001	df\α	0.2	0.1	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.001
1	0.951057	0.987688	0.996917	0.999507	0.999877	0.999999	35	0.215598	0.274611	0.324573	0.380976	0.418211	0.518898
2	0.800000	0.900000	0.950000	0.980000	0.990000	0.999000	40	0.201796	0.257278	0.304396	0.357787	0.393174	0.489570
3	0.687049	0.805384	0.878339	0.934333	0.958735	0.991139	45	0.190345	0.242859	0.287563	0.338367	0.372142	0.464673
4	0.608400	0.729299	0.811401	0.882194	0.917200	0.974068	50	0.180644	0.230620	0.273243	0.321796	0.354153	0.443201
5	0.550863	0.669439	0.754492	0.832874	0.874526	0.950883	60	0.164997	0.210832	0.250035	0.294846	0.324818	0.407865
6	0.506727	0.621489	0.706734	0.788720	0.834342	0.924904	70	0.152818	0.195394	0.231883	0.273695	0.301734	0.379799
7	0.471589	0.582206	0.666384	0.749776	0.797681	0.898260	80	0.142990	0.182916	0.217185	0.256525	0.282958	0.356816
8	0.442796	0.549357	0.631897	0.715459	0.764592	0.872115	90	0.134844	0.172558	0.204968	0.242227	0.267298	0.337549
9	0.418662	0.521404	0.602069	0.685095	0.734786	0.847047	100	0.127947	0.163782	0.194604	0.230079	0.253979	0.321095
10	0.398062	0.497265	0.575983	0.658070	0.707888	0.823305	125	0.114477	0.146617	0.174308	0.206245	0.227807	0.288602
11	0.380216	0.476156	0.552943	0.633863	0.683528	0.800962	150	0.104525	0.133919	0.159273	0.188552	0.208349	0.264316
12	0.364562	0.457500	0.532413	0.612047	0.661376	0.779998	175	0.096787	0.124036	0.147558	0.174749	0.193153	0.245280
13	0.350688	0.440861	0.513977	0.592270	0.641145	0.760351	200	0.090546	0.116060	0.138098	0.163592	0.180860	0.229840
14	0.338282	0.425902	0.497309	0.574245	0.622591	0.741934	250	0.081000	0.103852	0.123607	0.146483	0.161994	0.206079
15	0.327101	0.412360	0.482146	0.557737	0.605506	0.724657	300	0.073951	0.094831	0.112891	0.133819	0.148019	0.188431
16	0.316958	0.400027	0.468277	0.542548	0.589714	0.708429	350	0.068470	0.087814	0.104552	0.123957	0.137131	0.174657
17	0.307702	0.388733	0.455531	0.528517	0.575067	0.693163	400	0.064052	0.082155	0.097824	0.115997	0.128339	0.163520
18	0.299210	0.378341	0.443763	0.515505	0.561435	0.678781	450	0.060391	0.077466	0.092248	0.109397	0.121046	0.154273
19	0.291384	0.368737	0.432858	0.503397	0.548711	0.665208	500	0.057294	0.073497	0.087528	0.103808	0.114870	0.146436
20	0.284140	0.359827	0.422714	0.492094	0.536800	0.652378	600	0.052305	0.067103	0.079920	0.094798	0.104911	0.133787
21	0.277411	0.351531	0.413247	0.481512	0.525620	0.640230	700	0.048427	0.062132	0.074004	0.087789	0.097161	0.123935
22	0.271137	0.343783	0.404386	0.471579	0.515101	0.628710	800	0.045301	0.058123	0.069234	0.082135	0.090909	0.115981
23	0.265270	0.336524	0.396070	0.462231	0.505182	0.617768	900	0.042711	0.054802	0.065281	0.077450	0.085727	0.109385
24	0.259768	0.329705	0.388244	0.453413	0.495808	0.607360	1000	0.040520	0.051993	0.061935	0.073484	0.081340	0.103800
25	0.254594	0.323283	0.380863	0.445078	0.486932	0.597446	1500	0.033086	0.042458	0.050582	0.060022	0.066445	0.084822
26	0.249717	0.317223	0.373886	0.437184	0.478511	0.587988	2000	0.028654	0.036772	0.043811	0.051990	0.057557	0.073488
27	0.245110	0.311490	0.367278	0.429693	0.470509	0.578956	3000	0.023397	0.030027	0.035775	0.042457	0.047006	0.060027
28	0.240749	0.306057	0.361007	0.422572	0.462892	0.570317	4000	0.020262	0.026005	0.030984	0.036773	0.040713	0.051996
29	0.236612	0.300898	0.355046	0.415792	0.455631	0.562047	5000	0.018123	0.023260	0.027714	0.032892	0.036417	0.046512
30	0.232681	0.295991	0.349370	0.409327	0.448699	0.554119							

Data collection procedure

The survey questionnaire is distributed online to various online communities such as ACG convention groups, anime groups, and cosplay groups on Discord and Facebook via authorised postings by group admins, as well as to those from the researcher's immediate circles such as friends who meet the criteria for this study on Instagram and WhatsApp. Distribution to the Japanese cultural clubs, societies, and anime societies of all local public and private institutions was done through Facebook and Instagram by providing the link to the survey questionnaire to the administrators of the clubs and societies to be shared with their club members to fill in. Distribution of the survey and data collection will take place in August 2023.

Data analysis

As explanatory research, descriptive analysis such as crosstabulations and frequency tables will be used to uncover the patterns of the relationship between the main and dependent variables of this study. IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software will be used to compute the crosstabulations and frequency tables.

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter will elaborate on the demographic characteristics and anime consumption habits of

the respondents, the findings for research objectives 1 and 2, the outcomes of statistical analyses,

and discuss the findings relating to past research and the theories involved.

Demographic Characteristics and Anime Consumption Habits of the Respondents

This section describes the demographic characteristics and anime consumption habits of the

respondents from the data obtained.

Section I - Demographic Information

This section describes the respondents' basic demographic information, such as their gender,

age, entry qualifications, and number of siblings.

Table 4.1 shows that the majority of respondents are male (51.9%), and the rest of the

respondents are female (48.1%).

Table 4.1

Frequency of respondents' gender

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	161	51.9	51.9	51.9
	Female	149	48.1	48.1	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2 shows that most respondents are 21 years old (24.2%), followed by those who are 20 years old (16.5%), and those who are 22 years old (16.1%). The ages with the least number of respondents are those who are aged 18, 25, and 23. Those who are aged 18 only accounted for 16 respondents (5.2%) out of 310 respondents, followed by 18 respondents who are 25 years old (5.8%), and 29 respondents who are 23 years old (9.4%).

Table 4.2

Frequency of respondents' age

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	16	5.2	5.2	5.2
	19	39	12.6	12.6	17.7
	20	51	16.5	16.5	34.2
	21	75	24.2	24.2	58.4
	22	50	16.1	16.1	74.5
	23	29	9.4	9.4	83.9
	24	32	10.3	10.3	94.2
	25	18	5.8	5.8	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3 shows that most respondents (75.2%) hold an Undergraduate (Bachelor's degree) qualification, followed by respondents with Pre-university qualifications (22.6%), and respondents with Postgraduate (Masters / PhD) qualifications (2.3%).

Table 4.3

Entry Qualifications

Entry Qualification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Pre-university (e.g. Foundation, Matriculation, STPM, etc.)	70	22.6	22.6	22.6
	Undergraduate (Bachelor's degree)	233	75.2	75.2	97.7
	Postgraduate (Masters / PhD)	7	2.3	2.3	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.4 shows that most respondents have two siblings (33.5%), followed by respondents who have more than three siblings (30.6%), have one sibling (29.0%), and are an only child in the family (6.8%).

Table 4.4

Number of Siblings

Number of Siblings

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I'm an only child	21	6.8	6.8	6.8
	1	90	29.0	29.0	35.8
	2	104	33.5	33.5	69.4
	3 and above	95	30.6	30.6	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Section II - Background of Anime Consumption

This section describes the findings of the respondents' background of anime consumption, which includes their starting point of anime viewing journey, weekly anime viewing hours, anime watching patterns, medium to watch anime, anime audio language, anime subtitle language, anime selection factors, anime character appeal factors, anime character activities engaged in, starting points of engagement with anime character activities, and frequency of engagement with anime character activities.

Table 4.5 shows that most respondents began watching anime when they were in primary school (51.0%), followed by those who started in high school (25.2%), and those who started in kindergarten (20.0%). Only a handful of respondents started watching anime in later life, with only 10 respondents (3.2%) watching anime beginning in university/college, and 2 respondents (0.6%) who started recently (within the past year).

Table 4.5

Start of Anime Watching Journey

Start of Anime Watching Journey

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	When I was in kindergarten	62	20.0	20.0	20.0
	When I was in primary school	158	51.0	51.0	71.0
	When I was in high school	78	25.2	25.2	96.1
	When I was in university/college	10	3.2	3.2	99.4
	I just started recently (within the past year)	2	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.6 shows that most respondents watch anime for more than 4 hours a week (29.4%), followed by those who spend only 2-4 hours a week (28.4%), and those who spend only 1-2 hours a week (26.5%). Only 49 respondents (15.8%) out of 310 respondents watch less than an hour of anime a week.

Despite the majority being made up of those who watch more than 4 hours of anime a week, most respondents are 'light viewers' according to Gerbner's definition under Mean World Syndrome theory, with a total of 219 respondents (70.6%) out of 310 that spends less than 4 hours a week watching anime (Glynn & Jeong, 2003). In contrast, those who watched more than 4 hours a week only made up 29.4% of the total number of respondents. According to Gerbner, heavy viewers are those who watch television for more than 4 hours consecutively in a sitting (Glynn & Jeong, 2003). Therefore, heavy viewers made up the minority among respondents with only 91 respondents (29.4%) out of 310 respondents.

Table 4.6

Frequency of respondents's weekly anime viewing hours

Weekly Anime Viewing Hours

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than an hour	49	15.8	15.8	15.8
	1-2 hours	82	26.5	26.5	42.3
	2-4 hours	88	28.4	28.4	70.6
	More than 4 hours	91	29.4	29.4	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.7 shows that most respondents prefer to watch anime in a single session (e.g.: 2 to 3 hours continuously at once) (61.3%). This supports the discussion by Paee et al. (2020)

whereby individuals who consume anime were more likely to binge-watch due to the addiction

arising from the immersive nature of anime. Binge-watching means watching at least two or

more episodes, or at least two hours of television, in one sitting (Alam, 2021; Kandola, 2022).

On the other hand, 120 respondents (38.7%) out of 310 respondents watch anime at different

points throughout the day (e.g.: 1 hour in the afternoon, 1 hour at night, etc.).

Table 4.7

Frequency of respondents' anime-watching patterns

Anime Watching Patterns

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	At different points throughout the day (e.g.: 1 hour in the afternoon, 1 hour at night, etc.)	120	38.7	38.7	38.7
	In a single session (e.g.: 2-3 hours continuously at once, etc.)	190	61.3	61.3	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.8 shows that most respondents watch anime online (96.%). In contrast, only 11

respondents (3.5%) out of 310 respondents watch anime offline (e.g.: DVD, BluRay, television

satellite, etc.). These findings are consistent with recent market statistics of the rise of digital

anime consumption, such as those by MarketSplash which reported in 2021 that more than half

of global Netflix users watch anime content (Tiushka, 2023).

Table 4.8

Frequency of Medium to Watch Anime

Medium to Watch Anime

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Online (e.g.: Netflix, Disney+, Crunchyroll, 9anime, Torrent, etc.)	299	96.5	96.5	96.5
	Offline (e.g.: DVD, BluRay, Television Satellite, etc.)	11	3.5	3.5	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.9 shows that most respondents watch anime in Japanese language audio (95.8%), followed by Chinese audio (2.3%), English audio (1.6%), and Malay audio (0.3%).

According to the study by Utsugi et al. (2019), Japanese audio language in anime media is characterized by their unique, distinguishing character voices that feature stronger delivery of harmonic sounds compared to normal speeches. This may play a role in contributing to the immersive nature of anime, as well as the characters themselves, as described in Paee et al. (2020)'s study that drives respondents to watch anime (Paee et al., 2020). This would explain why most respondents in the study prefer to watch anime in its original Japanese audio language.

Table 4.9

Frequency of Anime Audio Language

Anime Audio Language

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Japanese	297	95.8	95.8	95.8
	English	5	1.6	1.6	97.4
	Malay	1	.3	.3	97.7
	Chinese	7	2.3	2.3	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.10 shows that most respondents prefer to watch anime with English subtitles (60.3%), followed by Chinese subtitles, irrespective of the type of scripts used (35.8%). Only a handful of respondents watch anime in other subtitle languages, with only 2 respondents (0.6%) who watch them with Malay subtitles, and another 2 respondents (0.6%) who watch it in other subtitle languages not listed in the question. There were 8 respondents (2.6%) that do not use any subtitles when watching anime.

As the Japanese language is a foreign language to Malaysia, the majority of respondents who reported watching anime with English subtitles may rely on them to understand the contexts and storylines of the series, as reported in similar studies conducted on other groups of Malaysian media consumers (Munirah Mazlan & Akmal Ahmad Kamal, 2022). This is because other than Bahasa Malaysia, English is a recognized language by the Malaysian government and is spoken widely by the population as a second language, with 84.6% of the population able to speak the language fluently (Admin MM2H, n.d.; Cultural Atlas, n.d.; United Nations, n.d.). Additionally, the use of English subtitles, or other subtitle language native to the viewer, may aid viewers in learning and understanding Japanese cultural contexts further. This in turn deepens

their interest and serves as a motivation for respondents to continue watching anime to learn more about Japanese culture and the language, like those reported in the study by Alsubaie & Alabbad (2020) and Paee et al. (2020).

Table 4.10

Frequency of Anime Subtitle Language

Anime Subtitle Language

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	English	187	60.3	60.3	60.3
	Malay	2	.6	.6	61.0
	Chinese (Traditional / Simplified)	111	35.8	35.8	96.8
	Others (e.g.: Japanese, Cantonese, Spanish, etc.)	2	.6	.6	97.4
	I do not use subtitles	8	2.6	2.6	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.11 shows that respondents considered five out of the six listed factors to be 'important' and 'very important' when it comes to selecting an anime series to watch. Among them, most respondents agree that 'storyline and plot progression' is the most important factor out of all of them (69.7%). The next most important factor is the characters and their development (50.6%), followed by 'genre and themes of the anime' (47.1%), 'overall appeal and likability' (42.3%), and 'animation style and visuals' (40.6%).

Among all factors, 'popularity within the community' was the least important factor to respondents when selecting an anime, with 87 respondents (28.1%) responding that it's not important to them, while another 58 respondents (18.7%) believed that it's somewhat important.

These findings support those from Paee et al. (2020)'s study which discovered that most of its respondents indicated that the storylines, characters, and settings of the anime are some of the identified impacts of their decision to consume anime.

Table 4.11

Frequency of Anime Selection Factors

	Not Important		Somewhat Important		Neutral		Important		Very Important		Total	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Characters and their development	1	0.3%	8	2.6%	26	8.4%	118	38.1%	157	50.6%	310	100.0%
Storyline and plot progression	0	0.0%	6	1.9%	6	1.9%	82	26.5%	216	69.7%	310	100.0%
Genre and themes of the anime	5	1.6%	21	6.8%	58	18.7%	80	25.8%	146	47.1%	310	100.0%
Popularity within the community	87	28.1%	58	18.7%	93	30.0%	41	13.2%	31	10.0%	310	100.0%
Animation style and visuals	5	1.6%	16	5.2%	41	13.2%	122	39.4%	126	40.6%	310	100.0%
Overall appeal and likability	5	1.6%	13	4.2%	49	15.8%	112	36.1%	131	42.3%	310	100.0%

Note: 1 = Not Important, 2 = Somewhat Important, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Important, 5 = Very Important

Table 4.12 shows that respondents considered four out of the five listed factors as 'very important' when it comes to finding appeal in anime characters. Among these, most respondents felt that the character's unique personalities and attitudes were the most important of all (54.5%), followed by the characters' visual appearances and character design (46.5%), their role and significance in the story (41.6%), and their general likability and charm (37.7%).

The only factor that the respondents did not view strongly was the characters' relatability to real-life experiences, where 19 respondents (6.1%) responded that it was not important to them, the highest for any factor compared to other factors.

Table 4.12

Frequency of Anime Character Appeal Factors

	Not Important		Somewhat Important		Neutral		Important		Very Important		Total	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Their role and significance in the story	8	2.6%	14	4.5%	49	15.8%	110	35.5%	129	41.6%	310	100.0%
Their visual appearance and character design	2	0.6%	16	5.2%	38	12.3%	110	35.5%	144	46.5%	310	100.0%
Their unique personality and attitude	1	0.3%	9	2.9%	23	7.4%	108	34.8%	169	54.5%	310	100.0%
Their relatability to real-life experiences	19	6.1%	38	12.3%	79	25.5%	89	28.7%	85	27.4%	310	100.0%
Their general likability and charm	3	1.0%	24	7.7%	52	16.8%	114	36.8%	117	37.7%	310	100.0%

Note: 1 = Not Important, 2 = Somewhat Important, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Important, 5 = Very Important

Table 4.13 shows that the most popular anime character activity among respondents was listening to character songs and drama CDs (72.6%), followed by the purchase and collection of merchandise (57.5%), and participating in online communities and forums (49.4%).

Among the 11 listed activities above, the least popular activity among respondents was writing fan letters or messages (98.7%), followed by cosplay (72.9%), and creating fan art/fan fiction/fan videos (69.0%).

Table 4.13

Frequency of Anime Character Activities Engaged In

	No		Yes		Total	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Cosplay / Role-Playing	226	72.9%	84	27.1%	310	100.0%
Creating Fan Art / Fan Fiction / Fan Videos	214	69.0%	96	31.0%	310	100.0%
Purchase and Collect Merchandise	133	42.9%	177	57.1%	310	100.0%
Participate in Online Communities and Forums	157	50.6%	153	49.4%	310	100.0%
Character Interaction	202	65.2%	108	34.8%	310	100.0%
Attending Events	179	57.7%	131	42.3%	310	100.0%
Following Fan Subculture Trends	197	63.5%	113	36.5%	310	100.0%
Listening to Character Songs and Drama CDs	85	27.4%	225	72.6%	310	100.0%
Write Fan Letters or Messages	306	98.7%	4	1.3%	310	100.0%
Watch Entertainment Media	172	55.5%	138	44.5%	310	100.0%
Others	267	86.1%	43	13.9%	310	100.0%

Table 4.14 shows that most respondents (54.8%) began engaging in anime character activities listed in Table 4.13 when they were in high school, followed by those who started engaging in these activities in university or college (20.6%), and those who started in primary school (13.9%). Only 28 respondents (9.0%) began engaging in these activities recently or within the past year, while only 5 respondents (1.6%) began when they were in kindergarten.

Table 4.14

Frequency of Respondents' Starting Point of Anime Viewing Journey

Starting Points of Engagement with Anime Character Activities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	When I was in kindergarten	5	1.6	1.6	1.6
	When I was in primary school	43	13.9	13.9	15.5
	When I was in high school	170	54.8	54.8	70.3
	When I was in university/college	64	20.6	20.6	91.0
	I just started recently (within the past year)	28	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.15 shows that most respondents occasionally engage with the anime character activities listed in Table 4.13 (47.7%), followed by those who rarely participate in these activities (20.3%) and those who engage with them often (20.3%). Only 23 respondents (7.4%) engage with these activities very often, and 13 respondents (4.2%) who never engage with the anime character activities listed in Table 4.13.

Table 4.15

Frequency of Engagement with Anime Character Activities

Frequency of Engagement with Anime Character Activities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	13	4.2	4.2	4.2
	Rarely	63	20.3	20.3	24.5
	Occasionally	148	47.7	47.7	72.3
	Often	63	20.3	20.3	92.6
	Very Often	23	7.4	7.4	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Results

This section presents the results obtained from the crosstabulation of data with SPSS software for

research objective 1 and research objective 2.

Results for Research Objective 1

Table 4.16 presents the crosstabulation of data between weekly anime viewing hours and

anime's impact on worldviews with column percentages.

Table 4.16

Weekly Anime Viewing Hours and Its Impact on Worldviews (Column Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours									
		Less than an hour		1-2 hours		2-4 hours		More than 4 hours		Total	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Anime's Impact on Worldviews	Not At All	7	14.3%	3	3.7%	2	2.3%	1	1.1%	13	4.2%
	Little	5	10.2%	7	8.5%	7	8.0%	4	4.4%	23	7.4%
	Moderately	11	22.4%	27	32.9%	24	27.3%	18	19.8%	80	25.8%
	Significantly	17	34.7%	36	43.9%	37	42.0%	36	39.6%	126	40.6%
	Very Significantly	9	18.4%	9	11.0%	18	20.5%	32	35.2%	68	21.9%
	Total	49	100.0%	82	100.0%	88	100.0%	91	100.0%	310	100.0%

Note: 1 = Not At All, 2 = Little, 3 = Moderately, 4 = Significantly, 5 = Very Significantly

Table 4.17 presents the crosstabulation of data between weekly anime viewing hours and

anime's impact on worldviews with row percentages respectively.

Table 4.17

Weekly Anime Viewing Hours and Its Impact on Worldviews (Row Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours									
		Less than an hour		1-2 hours		2-4 hours		More than 4 hours		Total	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Anime's Impact on Worldviews	Not At All	7	53.8%	3	23.1%	2	15.4%	1	7.7%	13	100.0%
	Little	5	21.7%	7	30.4%	7	30.4%	4	17.4%	23	100.0%
	Moderately	11	13.8%	27	33.8%	24	30.0%	18	22.5%	80	100.0%
	Significantly	17	13.5%	36	28.6%	37	29.4%	36	28.6%	126	100.0%
	Very Significantly	9	13.2%	9	13.2%	18	26.5%	32	47.1%	68	100.0%
	Total	49	15.8%	82	26.5%	88	28.4%	91	29.4%	310	100.0%

Note: 1 = Not At All, 2 = Little, 3 = Moderately, 4 = Significantly, 5 = Very Significantly

Table 4.18 shows the crosstabulation between weekly anime viewing hours and alignment of worldviews, moral values, and beliefs with anime characters with column percentages.

Table 4.18

Weekly Anime Viewing Hours and Its Impact on Alignment of Worldviews, Moral Values, and Beliefs with Anime Characters (Column Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours									
		Less than an hour		1-2 hours		2-4 hours		More than 4 hours		Total	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Alignment of Worldviews, Moral Values, and Beliefs with Anime Characters	Not At All	2	4.1%	2	2.4%	4	4.5%	4	4.4%	12	3.9%
	Slightly	8	16.3%	15	18.3%	10	11.4%	5	5.5%	38	12.3%
	Moderately	23	46.9%	35	42.7%	32	36.4%	25	27.5%	115	37.1%
	Very	11	22.4%	22	26.8%	35	39.8%	39	42.9%	107	34.5%
	Completely	5	10.2%	8	9.8%	7	8.0%	18	19.8%	38	12.3%
	Total	49	100.0%	82	100.0%	88	100.0%	91	100.0%	310	100.0%

Note: 1 = Not At All, 2 = Slightly, 3 = Moderately, 4 = Very, 5 = Completely

Table 4.19 shows the crosstabulation between weekly anime viewing hours and alignment of worldviews, moral values, and beliefs with anime characters with row percentages.

Table 4.19

Weekly Anime Viewing Hours and Its Impact on Alignment of Worldviews, Moral Values, and

Beliefs with Anime Characters (Row Percentages)

| | | Weekly Anime Viewing Hours | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Less than an hour | | 1-2 hours | | 2-4 hours | | More than 4 hours | | Total | |
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Alignment of Worldviews, Moral Values, and Beliefs with Anime Characters	Not At All	2	16.7%	2	16.7%	4	33.3%	4	33.3%	12	100.0%
	Slightly	8	21.1%	15	39.5%	10	26.3%	5	13.2%	38	100.0%
	Moderately	23	20.0%	35	30.4%	32	27.8%	25	21.7%	115	100.0%
	Very	11	10.3%	22	20.6%	35	32.7%	39	36.4%	107	100.0%
	Completely	5	13.2%	8	21.1%	7	18.4%	18	47.4%	38	100.0%
	Total	49	15.8%	82	26.5%	88	28.4%	91	29.4%	310	100.0%

Note: 1 = Not At All, 2 = Slightly, 3 = Moderately, 4 = Very, 5 = Completely

Table 4.20 presents the crosstabulated data between weekly anime viewing hours and the

level of development of emotional bonds with anime characters over time with column

percentages.

Table 4.20

Weekly Anime Viewing Hours and Its Impact on Developing Emotional Bonds with Anime

Characters Over Time (Column Percentages)

| | | Weekly Anime Viewing Hours | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Less than an hour | | 1-2 hours | | 2-4 hours | | More than 4 hours | | Total | |
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Developing Emotional Bonds with Anime Characters Over Time	Less Intimate	3	6.1%	2	2.4%	3	3.4%	0	0.0%	8	2.6%
	Somewhat Less Intimate	5	10.2%	6	7.3%	5	5.7%	3	3.3%	19	6.1%
	Moderate Intimacy	10	20.4%	20	24.4%	19	21.6%	17	18.7%	66	21.3%
	Somewhat More Intimate	22	44.9%	33	40.2%	41	46.6%	25	27.5%	121	39.0%
	More Intimate	9	18.4%	21	25.6%	20	22.7%	46	50.5%	96	31.0%
	Total	49	100.0%	82	100.0%	88	100.0%	91	100.0%	310	100.0%

Note: 1 = Less Intimate, 2 = Somewhat Less Intimate, 3 = Moderate Intimacy, 4 = Somewhat

More Intimate, 5 = More Intimate

Table 4.21 presents the crosstabulated data between weekly anime viewing hours and the level of development of emotional bonds with anime characters over time with row percentages.

Table 4.21

Weekly Anime Viewing Hours and Its Impact on Developing Emotional Bonds with Anime Characters Over Time (Row Percentages)

| | | Weekly Anime Viewing Hours | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Less than an hour | | 1-2 hours | | 2-4 hours | | More than 4 hours | | Total | |
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Developing Emotional Bonds with Anime Characters Over Time	Less Intimate	3	37.5%	2	25.0%	3	37.5%	0	0.0%	8	100.0%
	Somewhat Less Intimate	5	26.3%	6	31.6%	5	26.3%	3	15.8%	19	100.0%
	Moderate Intimacy	10	15.2%	20	30.3%	19	28.8%	17	25.8%	66	100.0%
	Somewhat More Intimate	22	18.2%	33	27.3%	41	33.9%	25	20.7%	121	100.0%
	More Intimate	9	9.4%	21	21.9%	20	20.8%	46	47.9%	96	100.0%
	Total	49	15.8%	82	26.5%	88	28.4%	91	29.4%	310	100.0%

Note: 1 = Less Intimate, 2 = Somewhat Less Intimate, 3 = Moderate Intimacy, 4 = Somewhat More Intimate, 5 = More Intimate

Table 4.22 presents the crosstabulated data between weekly anime viewing hours and the level of the Parasocial Relationship formed ('Describing Emotional Bond with Anime Characters') with column percentages.

Table 4.22

Influence of Weekly Anime Viewing Hours and the Level of Parasocial Relationship Formed

(Column Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours									
		Less than an hour		1-2 hours		2-4 hours		More than 4 hours		Total	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Describing Emotional Bond with Anime Characters	I enjoy anime characters as a form of entertainment and casual interest.	36	73.5%	50	61.0%	61	69.3%	50	54.9%	197	63.5%
	I feel a deep and personal connection to anime characters, sometimes experiencing intense emotions for them as if we wer	11	22.4%	25	30.5%	20	22.7%	28	30.8%	84	27.1%
	My connection to anime characters is so strong that it influences my thoughts and behaviours, verging on the realm of de	2	4.1%	7	8.5%	7	8.0%	13	14.3%	29	9.4%
	Total	49	100.0%	82	100.0%	88	100.0%	91	100.0%	310	100.0%

Table 4.23 presents the crosstabulated data between weekly anime viewing hours and the

level of the Parasocial Relationship formed ('Describing Emotional Bond with Anime

Characters') with row percentages.

Table 4.23

Influence of Weekly Anime Viewing Hours and the Level of Parasocial Relationship Formed

(Row Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours									
		Less than an hour		1-2 hours		2-4 hours		More than 4 hours		Total	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Describing Emotional Bond with Anime Characters	I enjoy anime characters as a form of entertainment and casual interest.	36	18.3%	50	25.4%	61	31.0%	50	25.4%	197	100.0%
	I feel a deep and personal connection to anime characters, sometimes experiencing intense emotions for them as if we wer	11	13.1%	25	29.8%	20	23.8%	28	33.3%	84	100.0%
	My connection to anime characters is so strong that it influences my thoughts and behaviours, verging on the realm of de	2	6.9%	7	24.1%	7	24.1%	13	44.8%	29	100.0%
	Total	49	15.8%	82	26.5%	88	28.4%	91	29.4%	310	100.0%

Table 4.24 presents the crosstabulated data between weekly anime viewing hours and the adoption of anime character traits in real life with column percentages.

Table 4.24

Weekly Anime Viewing Hours and Its Impact on The Adoption of Anime Character Traits in Real Life (Column Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours									
		Less than an hour		1-2 hours		2-4 hours		More than 4 hours		Total	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Adoption of Anime Character Traits in Real Life	Never	7	14.3%	7	8.5%	6	6.8%	3	3.3%	23	7.4%
	Rarely	12	24.5%	20	24.4%	15	17.0%	14	15.4%	61	19.7%
	Occasionally	7	14.3%	27	32.9%	41	46.6%	30	33.0%	105	33.9%
	Often	15	30.6%	23	28.0%	21	23.9%	29	31.9%	88	28.4%
	Very Often	8	16.3%	5	6.1%	5	5.7%	15	16.5%	33	10.6%
	Total	49	100.0%	82	100.0%	88	100.0%	91	100.0%	310	100.0%

Note: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often

Table 4.25 presents the crosstabulated data between weekly anime viewing hours and the adoption of anime character traits in real life with row percentages.

Table 4.25

Weekly Anime Viewing Hours and Its Impact on The Adoption of Anime Character Traits in Real Life (Row Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours									
		Less than an hour		1-2 hours		2-4 hours		More than 4 hours		Total	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Adoption of Anime Character Traits in Real Life	Never	7	30.4%	7	30.4%	6	26.1%	3	13.0%	23	100.0%
	Rarely	12	19.7%	20	32.8%	15	24.6%	14	23.0%	61	100.0%
	Occasionally	7	6.7%	27	25.7%	41	39.0%	30	28.6%	105	100.0%
	Often	15	17.0%	23	26.1%	21	23.9%	29	33.0%	88	100.0%
	Very Often	8	24.2%	5	15.2%	5	15.2%	15	45.5%	33	100.0%
	Total	49	15.8%	82	26.5%	88	28.4%	91	29.4%	310	100.0%

Note: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often

Table 4.26 presents the crosstabulated data between weekly anime viewing hours and the level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends with column percentages.

Table 4.26

The Relationship Between Weekly Anime Viewing Hours and The Level of Emotional Connection Maintained After an Anime Character or Series Ends (Column Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours									
		Less than an hour		1-2 hours		2-4 hours		More than 4 hours		Total	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends	Not Connected at All	4	8.2%	4	4.9%	2	2.3%	2	2.2%	12	3.9%
	Slightly Connected	7	14.3%	12	14.6%	9	10.2%	6	6.6%	34	11.0%
	Moderately Connected	18	36.7%	19	23.2%	31	35.2%	21	23.1%	89	28.7%
	Quite Connected	18	36.7%	37	45.1%	39	44.3%	38	41.8%	132	42.6%
	Extremely Connected	2	4.1%	10	12.2%	7	8.0%	24	26.4%	43	13.9%
	Total	49	100.0%	82	100.0%	88	100.0%	91	100.0%	310	100.0%

Note: 1 = Not Connected At All, 2 = Slightly Connected, 3 = Moderately Connected, 4 = Quite Connected, 5 = Extremely Connected

Table 4.27 presents the crosstabulated data between weekly anime viewing hours and the level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends with row percentages.

Table 4.27

The Relationship Between Weekly Anime Viewing Hours and The Level of Emotional Connection Maintained After an Anime Character or Series Ends (Row Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours									
		Less than an hour		1-2 hours		2-4 hours		More than 4 hours		Total	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends	Not Connected at All	4	33.3%	4	33.3%	2	16.7%	2	16.7%	12	100.0%
	Slightly Connected	7	20.6%	12	35.3%	9	26.5%	6	17.6%	34	100.0%
	Moderately Connected	18	20.2%	19	21.3%	31	34.8%	21	23.6%	89	100.0%
	Quite Connected	18	13.6%	37	28.0%	39	29.5%	38	28.8%	132	100.0%
	Extremely Connected	2	4.7%	10	23.3%	7	16.3%	24	55.8%	43	100.0%
	Total	49	15.8%	82	26.5%	88	28.4%	91	29.4%	310	100.0%

Note: 1 = Not Connected At All, 2 = Slightly Connected, 3 = Moderately Connected, 4 = Quite Connected, 5 = Extremely Connected

Table 4.28 presents the crosstabulated data between weekly anime viewing hours and the frequency of engagement with anime character activities with column percentages.

Table 4.28

The Relationship Between Weekly Anime Viewing Hours and The Frequency of Engagement with Anime Character Activities (Column Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours									
		Less than an hour		1-2 hours		2-4 hours		More than 4 hours		Total	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Frequency of Engagement with Anime Character Activities	Never	5	10.2%	2	2.4%	3	3.4%	3	3.3%	13	4.2%
	Rarely	14	28.6%	20	24.4%	17	19.3%	12	13.2%	63	20.3%
	Occasionally	21	42.9%	43	52.4%	44	50.0%	40	44.0%	148	47.7%
	Often	7	14.3%	13	15.9%	20	22.7%	23	25.3%	63	20.3%
	Very Often	2	4.1%	4	4.9%	4	4.5%	13	14.3%	23	7.4%
	Total	49	100.0%	82	100.0%	88	100.0%	91	100.0%	310	100.0%

Note: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often

Table 4.29 presents the crosstabulated data between weekly anime viewing hours and the frequency of engagement with anime character activities with row percentages.

Table 4.29

The Relationship Between Weekly Anime Viewing Hours and The Frequency of Engagement with

Anime Character Activities (Row Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours									
		Less than an hour		1-2 hours		2-4 hours		More than 4 hours		Total	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Frequency of Engagement with Anime Character Activities	Never	5	38.5%	2	15.4%	3	23.1%	3	23.1%	13	100.0%
	Rarely	14	22.2%	20	31.7%	17	27.0%	12	19.0%	63	100.0%
	Occasionally	21	14.2%	43	29.1%	44	29.7%	40	27.0%	148	100.0%
	Often	7	11.1%	13	20.6%	20	31.7%	23	36.5%	63	100.0%
	Very Often	2	8.7%	4	17.4%	4	17.4%	13	56.5%	23	100.0%
	Total	49	15.8%	82	26.5%	88	28.4%	91	29.4%	310	100.0%

Note: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often

Results for Research Objective 2

Table 4.30 presents the crosstabulated data between gender and anime's impact on worldviews with weekly anime viewing hours as the layered variable, and with column percentages.

Table 4.30

Impact of anime consumption between males and females in forming worldviews (Column Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours																			
		Less than an hour				1-2 hours				2-4 hours				More than 4 hours				Total			
		Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender			
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Anime's Impact on Worldviews	Not At All	3	13.0%	4	15.4%	3	6.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	4.8%	1	2.2%	0	0.0%	7	4.3%	6	4.0%
	Little	4	17.4%	1	3.8%	3	6.5%	4	11.1%	2	4.3%	5	11.9%	2	4.3%	2	4.4%	11	6.8%	12	8.1%
	Moderately	7	30.4%	4	15.4%	16	34.8%	11	30.6%	13	28.3%	11	26.2%	11	23.9%	7	15.6%	47	29.2%	33	22.1%
	Significantly	4	17.4%	13	50.0%	19	41.3%	17	47.2%	20	43.5%	17	40.5%	15	32.6%	21	46.7%	58	36.0%	68	45.6%
	Very Significantly	5	21.7%	4	15.4%	5	10.9%	4	11.1%	11	23.9%	7	16.7%	17	37.0%	15	33.3%	38	23.6%	30	20.1%
	Total	23	100.0%	26	100.0%	46	100.0%	36	100.0%	46	100.0%	42	100.0%	46	100.0%	45	100.0%	161	100.0%	149	100.0%

Note: 1 = Not At All, 2 = Little, 3 = Moderately, 4 = Significantly, 5 = Very Significantly

Table 4.31 presents the crosstabulated data between gender and anime's impact on worldviews with weekly anime viewing hours as the layered variable, and with row percentages.

Table 4.31

Impact of anime consumption between males and females in forming worldviews (Row Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours																		
		Less than an hour				1-2 hours				2-4 hours				More than 4 hours				Total			
		Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender			
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Anime's Impact on Worldviews	Not At All	3	42.9%	4	57.1%	3	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	7	53.8%	6	46.2%
	Little	4	80.0%	1	20.0%	3	42.9%	4	57.1%	2	28.6%	5	71.4%	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	11	47.8%	12	52.2%
	Moderately	7	63.6%	4	36.4%	16	59.3%	11	40.7%	13	54.2%	11	45.8%	11	61.1%	7	38.9%	47	58.8%	33	41.3%
	Significantly	4	23.5%	13	76.5%	19	52.8%	17	47.2%	20	54.1%	17	45.9%	15	41.7%	21	58.3%	58	46.0%	68	54.0%
	Very Significantly	5	55.6%	4	44.4%	5	55.6%	4	44.4%	11	61.1%	7	38.9%	17	53.1%	15	46.9%	38	55.9%	30	44.1%
	Total	23	46.9%	26	53.1%	46	56.1%	36	43.9%	46	52.3%	42	47.7%	46	50.5%	45	49.5%	161	51.9%	149	48.1%

Note: 1 = Not At All, 2 = Little, 3 = Moderately, 4 = Significantly, 5 = Very Significantly

Table 4.32 presents the crosstabulated data between gender and the alignment of worldviews, moral values, and beliefs with anime characters with weekly anime viewing hours as the layered variable, and with column percentages.

Table 4.32

Impact of anime consumption between males and females and feelings of alignment of worldviews, moral values, and beliefs with anime characters (Column Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours																		
		Less than an hour				1-2 hours				2-4 hours				More than 4 hours				Total			
		Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender			
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Alignment of Worldviews, Moral Values, and Beliefs with Anime Characters	Not At All	1	4.3%	1	3.8%	1	2.2%	1	2.8%	3	6.5%	1	2.4%	1	2.2%	3	6.7%	6	3.7%	6	4.0%
	Slightly	2	8.7%	6	23.1%	9	19.6%	6	16.7%	6	13.0%	4	9.5%	1	2.2%	4	8.9%	18	11.2%	20	13.4%
	Moderately	14	60.9%	9	34.6%	20	43.5%	15	41.7%	16	34.8%	16	38.1%	16	34.8%	9	20.0%	66	41.0%	49	32.9%
	Very	4	17.4%	7	26.9%	12	26.1%	10	27.8%	17	37.0%	18	42.9%	19	41.3%	20	44.4%	52	32.3%	55	36.9%
	Completely	2	8.7%	3	11.5%	4	8.7%	4	11.1%	4	8.7%	3	7.1%	9	19.6%	9	20.0%	19	11.8%	19	12.8%
	Total	23	100.0%	26	100.0%	46	100.0%	36	100.0%	46	100.0%	42	100.0%	46	100.0%	45	100.0%	161	100.0%	149	100.0%

Note: 1 = Not At All, 2 = Slightly, 3 = Moderately, 4 = Very, 5 = Completely

Table 4.33 presents the crosstabulated data between gender and the alignment of worldviews, moral values, and beliefs with anime characters with weekly anime viewing hours as the layered variable, and with row percentages.

Table 4.33

Impact of anime consumption between males and females and feelings of alignment of worldviews, moral values, and beliefs with anime characters (Row Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours																			
		Less than an hour				1-2 hours				2-4 hours				More than 4 hours				Total			
		Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender			
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Alignment of Worldviews, Moral Values, and Beliefs with Anime Characters	Not At All	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	3	75.0%	1	25.0%	1	25.0%	3	75.0%	6	50.0%	6	50.0%
	Slightly	2	25.0%	6	75.0%	9	60.0%	6	40.0%	6	60.0%	4	40.0%	1	20.0%	4	80.0%	18	47.4%	20	52.6%
	Moderately	14	60.9%	9	39.1%	20	57.1%	15	42.9%	16	50.0%	16	50.0%	16	64.0%	9	36.0%	66	57.4%	49	42.6%
	Very	4	36.4%	7	63.6%	12	54.5%	10	45.5%	17	48.6%	18	51.4%	19	48.7%	20	51.3%	52	48.6%	55	51.4%
	Completely	2	40.0%	3	60.0%	4	50.0%	4	50.0%	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	9	50.0%	9	50.0%	19	50.0%	19	50.0%
	Total	23	46.9%	26	53.1%	46	56.1%	36	43.9%	46	52.3%	42	47.7%	46	50.5%	45	49.5%	161	51.9%	149	48.1%

Note: 1 = Not At All, 2 = Slightly, 3 = Moderately, 4 = Very, 5 = Completely

Table 4.34 presents the crosstabulated data between gender and the level of emotional bond developed with anime characters over time with weekly anime viewing hours as the layered variable, and with column percentages.

Table 4.34

Impact of anime consumption between males and females and the development of emotional

bonds with anime characters over time (Column Percentages)

		Less than an hour				1-2 hours				2-4 hours				More than 4 hours				Total			
		Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender			
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Developing Emotional Bonds with Anime Characters Over Time	Less Intimate	2	8.7%	1	3.8%	1	2.2%	1	2.8%	2	4.3%	1	2.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	3.1%	3	2.0%
	Somewhat Less Intimate	3	13.0%	2	7.7%	4	8.7%	2	5.6%	4	8.7%	1	2.4%	2	4.3%	1	2.2%	13	8.1%	6	4.0%
	Moderate Intimacy	6	26.1%	4	15.4%	13	28.3%	7	19.4%	11	23.9%	8	19.0%	12	26.1%	5	11.1%	42	26.1%	24	16.1%
	Somewhat More Intimate	8	34.8%	14	53.8%	19	41.3%	14	38.9%	18	39.1%	23	54.8%	14	30.4%	11	24.4%	59	36.6%	62	41.6%
	More Intimate	4	17.4%	5	19.2%	9	19.6%	12	33.3%	11	23.9%	9	21.4%	18	39.1%	28	62.2%	42	26.1%	54	36.2%
	Total	23	100.0%	26	100.0%	46	100.0%	36	100.0%	46	100.0%	42	100.0%	46	100.0%	45	100.0%	161	100.0%	149	100.0%

Note: 1 = Less Intimate, 2 = Somewhat Less Intimate, 3 = Moderate Intimacy, 4 = Somewhat

More Intimate, 5 = More Intimate

Table 4.35 presents the crosstabulated data between gender and the level of emotional bond developed with anime characters over time with weekly anime viewing hours as the layered variable, and with row percentages.

Table 4.35

Impact of anime consumption between males and females and the development of emotional

bonds with anime characters over time (Row Percentages)

		Less than an hour				1-2 hours				2-4 hours				More than 4 hours				Total			
		Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender			
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Developing Emotional Bonds with Anime Characters Over Time	Less Intimate	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	62.5%	3	37.5%
	Somewhat Less Intimate	3	60.0%	2	40.0%	4	66.7%	2	33.3%	4	80.0%	1	20.0%	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	13	68.4%	6	31.6%
	Moderate Intimacy	6	60.0%	4	40.0%	13	65.0%	7	35.0%	11	57.9%	8	42.1%	12	70.6%	5	29.4%	42	63.6%	24	36.4%
	Somewhat More Intimate	8	36.4%	14	63.6%	19	57.6%	14	42.4%	18	43.9%	23	56.1%	14	56.0%	11	44.0%	59	48.8%	62	51.2%
	More Intimate	4	44.4%	5	55.6%	9	42.9%	12	57.1%	11	55.0%	9	45.0%	18	39.1%	28	60.9%	42	43.8%	54	56.3%
	Total	23	46.9%	26	53.1%	46	56.1%	36	43.9%	46	52.3%	42	47.7%	46	50.5%	45	49.5%	161	51.9%	149	48.1%

Note: 1 = Less Intimate, 2 = Somewhat Less Intimate, 3 = Moderate Intimacy, 4 = Somewhat

More Intimate, 5 = More Intimate

Table 4.36 presents the crosstabulated data between gender and the level of parasocial relationship ('describing emotional bond with anime characters') with weekly anime viewing hours as the layered variable, and with column percentages.

Table 4.36

Differences in the intensity level of parasocial relationship with anime characters between males and females (Column Percentages)

		Less than an hour				1-2 hours				2-4 hours				More than 4 hours				Total			
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Describing Emotional Bond with Anime Characters	I enjoy anime characters as a form of entertainment and casual interest.	20	87.0%	16	61.5%	30	65.2%	20	55.6%	33	71.7%	28	66.7%	26	56.5%	24	53.3%	109	67.7%	88	59.1%
	I feel a deep and personal connection to anime characters, sometimes experiencing intense emotions for them as if we wer	2	8.7%	9	34.6%	12	26.1%	13	36.1%	11	23.9%	9	21.4%	14	30.4%	14	31.1%	39	24.2%	45	30.2%
	My connection to anime characters is so strong that it influences my thoughts and behaviours, verging on the realm of de	1	4.3%	1	3.8%	4	8.7%	3	8.3%	2	4.3%	5	11.9%	6	13.0%	7	15.6%	13	8.1%	16	10.7%
	Total	23	100.0%	26	100.0%	46	100.0%	36	100.0%	46	100.0%	42	100.0%	46	100.0%	45	100.0%	161	100.0%	149	100.0%

Table 4.37 presents the crosstabulated data between gender and the level of parasocial relationship ('describing emotional bond with anime characters') with weekly anime viewing hours as the layered variable, and with row percentages.

Table 4.37

Differences in the intensity level of parasocial relationship with anime characters between males and females (Row Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours																			
		Less than an hour				1-2 hours				2-4 hours				More than 4 hours				Total			
		Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender			
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Describing Emotional Bond with Anime Characters	I enjoy anime characters as a form of entertainment and casual interest.	20	55.6%	16	44.4%	30	60.0%	20	40.0%	33	54.1%	28	45.9%	26	52.0%	24	48.0%	109	55.3%	88	44.7%
	I feel a deep and personal connection to anime characters, sometimes experiencing intense emotions for them as if we wer	2	18.2%	9	81.8%	12	48.0%	13	52.0%	11	55.0%	9	45.0%	14	50.0%	14	50.0%	39	46.4%	45	53.6%
	My connection to anime characters is so strong that it influences my thoughts and behaviours, verging on the realm of de	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	2	28.6%	5	71.4%	6	46.2%	7	53.8%	13	44.8%	16	55.2%
	Total	23	46.9%	26	53.1%	46	56.1%	36	43.9%	46	52.3%	42	47.7%	46	50.5%	45	49.5%	161	51.9%	149	48.1%

Table 4.38 presents the crosstabulated data between gender and frequency of adoption of anime character traits in real life with weekly anime viewing hours as the layered variable, and with column percentages.

Table 4.38

Difference in the frequency to adopt anime character traits in real life between males and females (Column Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours																			
		Less than an hour				1-2 hours				2-4 hours				More than 4 hours				Total			
		Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender			
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Adoption of Anime Character Traits in Real Life	Never	4	17.4%	3	11.5%	5	10.9%	2	5.6%	4	8.7%	2	4.8%	2	4.3%	1	2.2%	15	9.3%	8	5.4%
	Rarely	7	30.4%	5	19.2%	12	26.1%	8	22.2%	10	21.7%	5	11.9%	6	13.0%	8	17.8%	35	21.7%	26	17.4%
	Occasionally	2	8.7%	5	19.2%	11	23.9%	16	44.4%	18	39.1%	23	54.8%	17	37.0%	13	28.9%	48	29.8%	57	38.3%
	Often	7	30.4%	8	30.8%	16	34.8%	7	19.4%	13	28.3%	8	19.0%	15	32.6%	14	31.1%	51	31.7%	37	24.8%
	Very Often	3	13.0%	5	19.2%	2	4.3%	3	8.3%	1	2.2%	4	9.5%	6	13.0%	9	20.0%	12	7.5%	21	14.1%
	Total	23	100.0%	26	100.0%	46	100.0%	36	100.0%	46	100.0%	42	100.0%	46	100.0%	45	100.0%	161	100.0%	149	100.0%

Note: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often

Table 4.39 presents the crosstabulated data between gender and frequency of adoption of anime character traits in real life with weekly anime viewing hours as the layered variable, and with row percentages.

Table 4.39

Difference in the frequency to adopt anime character traits in real life between males and females (Row Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours																		
		Less than an hour				1-2 hours				2-4 hours				More than 4 hours				Total			
		Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender			
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Adoption of Anime Character Traits in Real Life	Never	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	5	71.4%	2	28.6%	4	66.7%	2	33.3%	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	15	65.2%	8	34.8%
	Rarely	7	58.3%	5	41.7%	12	60.0%	8	40.0%	10	66.7%	5	33.3%	6	42.9%	8	57.1%	35	57.4%	26	42.6%
	Occasionally	2	28.6%	5	71.4%	11	40.7%	16	59.3%	18	43.9%	23	56.1%	17	56.7%	13	43.3%	48	45.7%	57	54.3%
	Often	7	46.7%	8	53.3%	16	69.6%	7	30.4%	13	61.9%	8	38.1%	15	51.7%	14	48.3%	51	58.0%	37	42.0%
	Very Often	3	37.5%	5	62.5%	2	40.0%	3	60.0%	1	20.0%	4	80.0%	6	40.0%	9	60.0%	12	36.4%	21	63.6%
	Total	23	46.9%	26	53.1%	46	56.1%	36	43.9%	46	52.3%	42	47.7%	46	50.5%	45	49.5%	161	51.9%	149	48.1%

Note: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often

Table 4.40 presents the crosstabulated data between gender and the level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends, with weekly anime viewing hours as the layered variable, and with column percentages.

Table 4.40

Differences in the level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends between males and females (Column Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours																		
		Less than an hour				1-2 hours				2-4 hours				More than 4 hours				Total			
		Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender			
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends	Not Connected at All	3	13.0%	1	3.8%	2	4.3%	2	5.6%	2	4.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	4.4%	7	4.3%	5	3.4%
	Slightly Connected	3	13.0%	4	15.4%	10	21.7%	2	5.6%	6	13.0%	3	7.1%	4	8.7%	2	4.4%	23	14.3%	11	7.4%
	Moderately Connected	11	47.8%	7	26.9%	12	26.1%	7	19.4%	17	37.0%	14	33.3%	11	23.9%	10	22.2%	51	31.7%	38	25.5%
	Quite Connected	4	17.4%	14	53.8%	17	37.0%	20	55.6%	17	37.0%	22	52.4%	21	45.7%	17	37.8%	59	36.6%	73	49.0%
	Extremely Connected	2	8.7%	0	0.0%	5	10.9%	5	13.9%	4	8.7%	3	7.1%	10	21.7%	14	31.1%	21	13.0%	22	14.8%
	Total	23	100.0%	26	100.0%	46	100.0%	36	100.0%	46	100.0%	42	100.0%	46	100.0%	45	100.0%	161	100.0%	149	100.0%

Note: 1 = Not Connected At All, 2 = Slightly Connected, 3 = Moderately Connected, 4 = Quite Connected, 5 = Extremely Connected

Table 4.41 presents the crosstabulated data between gender and the level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends, with weekly anime viewing hours as the layered variable, with row percentages.

Table 4.41

Differences in the level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends between males and females (Row Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours																		
		Less than an hour				1-2 hours				2-4 hours				More than 4 hours				Total			
		Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender			
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends	Not Connected at All	3	75.0%	1	25.0%	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	7	58.3%	5	41.7%
	Slightly Connected	3	42.9%	4	57.1%	10	83.3%	2	16.7%	6	66.7%	3	33.3%	4	66.7%	2	33.3%	23	67.6%	11	32.4%
	Moderately Connected	11	61.1%	7	38.9%	12	63.2%	7	36.8%	17	54.8%	14	45.2%	11	52.4%	10	47.6%	51	57.3%	38	42.7%
	Quite Connected	4	22.2%	14	77.8%	17	45.9%	20	54.1%	17	43.6%	22	56.4%	21	55.3%	17	44.7%	59	44.7%	73	55.3%
	Extremely Connected	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	5	50.0%	5	50.0%	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	10	41.7%	14	58.3%	21	48.8%	22	51.2%
	Total	23	46.9%	26	53.1%	46	56.1%	36	43.9%	46	52.3%	42	47.7%	46	50.5%	45	49.5%	161	51.9%	149	48.1%

Note: 1 = Not Connected At All, 2 = Slightly Connected, 3 = Moderately Connected, 4 = Quite Connected, 5 = Extremely Connected

Table 4.42 presents the crosstabulated data between gender and the frequency of engagement with anime character activities with weekly anime viewing hours as the layered variable, and with column percentages.

Table 4.42

The difference in the frequency of engagement with anime character activities between males and females based on their weekly anime viewing hours (Column Percentages)

		Weekly Anime Viewing Hours																			
		Less than an hour				1-2 hours				2-4 hours				More than 4 hours				Total			
		Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender			
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Frequency of Engagement with Anime Character Activities	Never	2	8.7%	3	11.5%	2	4.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	7.1%	2	4.3%	1	2.2%	6	3.7%	7	4.7%
	Rarely	8	34.8%	6	23.1%	11	23.9%	9	25.0%	10	21.7%	7	16.7%	6	13.0%	6	13.3%	35	21.7%	28	18.8%
	Occasionally	11	47.8%	10	38.5%	25	54.3%	18	50.0%	25	54.3%	19	45.2%	19	41.3%	21	46.7%	80	49.7%	68	45.6%
	Often	2	8.7%	5	19.2%	6	13.0%	7	19.4%	9	19.6%	11	26.2%	13	28.3%	10	22.2%	30	18.6%	33	22.1%
	Very Often	0	0.0%	2	7.7%	2	4.3%	2	5.6%	2	4.3%	2	4.8%	6	13.0%	7	15.6%	10	6.2%	13	8.7%
	Total	23	100.0%	26	100.0%	46	100.0%	36	100.0%	46	100.0%	42	100.0%	46	100.0%	45	100.0%	161	100.0%	149	100.0%

Note: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often

Table 4.43 presents the crosstabulated data between gender and the frequency of engagement with anime character activities with weekly anime viewing hours as the layered variable, and with row percentages.

Table 4.43

The difference in the frequency of engagement with anime character activities between males

and females based on their weekly anime viewing hours (Row Percentages)

		Less than an hour				1-2 hours				2-4 hours				More than 4 hours				Total			
		Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender				Gender			
		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Frequency of Engagement with Anime Character Activities	Never	2	40.0%	3	60.0%	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	100.0%	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	6	46.2%	7	53.8%
	Rarely	8	57.1%	6	42.9%	11	55.0%	9	45.0%	10	58.8%	7	41.2%	6	50.0%	6	50.0%	35	55.6%	28	44.4%
	Occasionally	11	52.4%	10	47.6%	25	58.1%	18	41.9%	25	56.8%	19	43.2%	19	47.5%	21	52.5%	80	54.1%	68	45.9%
	Often	2	28.6%	5	71.4%	6	46.2%	7	53.8%	9	45.0%	11	55.0%	13	56.5%	10	43.5%	30	47.6%	33	52.4%
	Very Often	0	0.0%	2	100%	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	6	46.2%	7	53.8%	10	43.5%	13	56.5%
	Total	23	46.9%	26	53.1%	46	56.1%	36	43.9%	46	52.3%	42	47.7%	46	50.5%	45	49.5%	161	51.9%	149	48.1%

Note: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often, 5 = Very Often

Outcomes of statistical analysis

As explanatory research, this study uses descriptive analysis to examine the patterns between the variables of the study, which will serve as a groundwork for future researchers to investigate this area of research further. Since it is primarily descriptive, the key findings and interpretations are presented based on frequency counts and their corresponding percentages.

Research Objective 1

Table 4.16 and Table 4.17 presented the crosstabulation of data between weekly anime viewing hours and anime's impact on worldviews with column percentages and row percentages respectively. According to Table 4.16, it is observed that most respondents (39.6%) who watched more than 4 hours a week felt that anime had a significant impact on their worldviews, followed by those who felt that the impact was very significant (35.2%). Additionally, Table 4.17 showed that most respondents (47.1%) who felt that the impact was very significant were also those watched more than 4 hours a week. These findings indicate that the impact on worldviews is greater among respondents who consume anime for longer periods (heavy viewers), supporting

the theory of cultivation in that heavy viewers were more likely to perceive the world as those

portrayed on television through prolonged, repeated exposure (Glynn & Jeong, 2003)

Table 4.18 and Table 4.19 presented the crosstabulation of data between weekly anime

viewing hours and alignment of worldviews, moral values, and beliefs with anime characters

with column percentages and row percentages respectively. According to Table 4.18, it is

observed that most respondents (42.9%) who watched more than 4 hours a week felt that their

worldviews, moral values, and beliefs with anime characters aligned very strongly with theirs.

Furthermore, Table 4.19 showed that most respondents (36.4%) who felt that the alignment of

worldviews with theirs was very strong were those who watched more than 4 hours a week.

Similarly, Table 4.19 showed that most respondents (47.4%) who felt that the worldviews of

anime characters aligned with theirs completely were also those who watched more than 4 hours

a week. These findings suggest that the feelings of alignment in terms of worldviews, moral

values, and beliefs become stronger when participants consume anime for longer periods of time.

This could be due to the relatability of the anime characters viewers experience as they learn

about them over time while watching anime, in turn leading to character identification which is a

known predictor of parasocial relationships (Hall, 2019; Leite & Baptista, 2022; Perez, 2021; L.

Taber et al., 2019).

Table 4.20 and Table 4.21 presented the crosstabulation of data between weekly anime

viewing hours and the development of emotional bonds with anime characters over time with

column percentages and row percentages respectively. According to Table 4.20, most

respondents (50.5%) who watched more than 4 hours a week felt that their emotional bonds with

anime characters became more intimate over time. Furthermore, Table 4.21 reported that most

respondents (47.9%) who felt that the emotional bond developed over time was more intimate

were also those that watched more than 4 hours a week. These findings indicate that emotional

bonds with anime characters become stronger as participants consume anime for longer periods

of time. This could be due to the amount of time given for characters to "share" their experiences

with the viewers over time, leading to increased feelings of intimacy in the viewers toward the

characters that eventually develop into long-term bonds with them (Rain & Mar, 2021).

Table 4.22 and Table 4.23 presented the crosstabulation of data between weekly anime

viewing hours and the level of the Parasocial Relationship formed ('Describing Emotional Bond

with Anime Characters') with column percentages and row percentages respectively. According

to Table 4.22, most respondents (63.5%) form first-level parasocial relationships

('entertainment-social') with anime characters ('I enjoy anime characters as a form of

entertainment and casual interest') irrespective of their weekly viewing hours. This could be due

to the escapist nature of anime that provides participants an avenue to relieve themselves from

the stress of their hectic lives as university students (Gonçalves et al., 2021; Paee et al., 2020;

Yusof et al., 2023). Despite this, Table 4.23 showed that most respondents who form second-

level ('I feel a deep and personal connection to anime characters, sometimes experiencing

intense emotions for them as if we were soulmates') (33.3%) and third-level ('My connection to

anime characters is so strong that it influences my thoughts and behaviours, verging on the realm

of delusions, including fantasies about them') (44.8%) parasocial relationships are those who

watched more than 4 hours a week. This could be due to the depth of emotional bond developed

with anime characters over time as they watch anime for longer periods (Rain & Mar, 2021).

Table 4.24 and Table 4.25 presented the crosstabulation of data between weekly anime

viewing hours and the adoption of anime character traits in real life with column percentages and

row percentages respectively. According to Table 4.24, most respondents (33.9%) adopt anime

character traits occasionally in their lives. However, among them, most (71.4%) were those who watched less than 4 hours a week, especially those who watched 2-4 hours a week (39.0%) according to Table 4.25. In contrast, most respondents (33.0%) who adopt these character traits often were those who watched more than 4 hours a week. Similarly, most respondents (45.5%) who adopt these traits very often were also those who watched more than 4 hours of a week. These findings suggest that those who watch anime for longer periods are more likely to adopt anime character traits more frequently than those who watch less. This might be due to respondents that watch longer periods may develop a stronger liking for the characters they imitate, or as a result of the identification they develop over time due to feelings of relatability with the characters (D. C. Giles, 2002; Rain & Mar, 2021). According to Rain & Mar (2021), one is more likely to make little shifts in their behaviours to match those with one's favourite media figure that they look up to or identify with, such as their personality and demeanor.

Table 4.26 and Table 4.27 presented the crosstabulation of data between weekly anime viewing hours and the level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends with column percentages and row percentages respectively. According to Table 4.26, most respondents (41.8%) who watched more than 4 hours a week felt that they remained quite connected to the anime character or series after their endings or demise, followed by those who felt extremely connected (26.4%). Furthermore, Table 4.27 shows that most respondents (55.8%) who remained extremely connected were also those who watched more than 4 hours a week. These findings suggest that individuals who watched for longer periods were more likely to develop more enduring bonds with anime characters than those who watched less. This could be because those who watch longer spend longer to "establish relations" with the anime characters, which can lead to the development of deeper, enduring bonds over time (Gonçalves et al., 2021).

Table 4.28 and Table 4.29 presented the crosstaublation of data between weekly anime viewing hours and the frequency of engagement with anime character activities with column percentages and row percentages respectively. According to Table 4.28, most respondents (47.7%) occasionally engage in anime character activities listed in Table 4.13. Furthermore, Table 4.29 showed that most of them (73%) were those who watched less than 4 hours a week, especially those who watched 2-4 hours a week (29.7%). This could be due to their lives as university students which can be packed with assignments and projects that fill up their time (Yusof et al., 2023). In contrast, most respondents (36.5%) who engage in these activites often were those who watched more than 4 hours a week. Similarly, most respondents (56.5%) engage with them very often were also those who watched more than 4 hours of a week. These findings suggest that people who watched more anime were more likely to engage in these activities more often than those who watched less. As anime characters are fictional, these activities may give participants a feeling of connection with the characters as a way to interact with them. Its immersive nature is also what drives them to engage in these activities more frequently (Gonçalves et al., 2021).

Research Objective 2

Table 4.30 and Table 4.31 presented the crosstabulation of data between gender and anime's impact on worldviews with column percentages and row percentages respectively. Table 4.30 and Table 4.31 showed that there was no significant difference between the gender groups on the impact of anime on their worldviews. For instance, Table 4.30 showed that most male (36.0%) and female (45.6%) respondents felt that anime impacted their worldviews significantly. However, Table 4.31 showed that there were more females (54.0%) than males who felt this

way. Also, there were more males (55.9%) than females who felt that the impact was very

significant. The mixed results support past research findings suggesting that there aren't

significant differences between gender groups in cultivation effects (Callanan & Rosenberger,

2015; Mosharafa, 2015). However, past research investigating genre-specific television has

found significant differences in the impact between genders, such as the study by Scharrer &

Blackburn (2018a) which found that masculine gender norms portrayed on television were more

likely to shape the perceptions of those in men than in women, while the study by Scharrer &

Blackburn (2018b) discovered that verbal aggression portrayed in reality television shows were

more likely to impact women than men. The present study is limited in that it only focuses on

weekly viewing hours and its impact on cultivation and parasocial relationship development.

Therefore, the lack of genre-specific variables may impact the current findings.

Table 4.32 and Table 4.33 presented the crosstabulation of data between gender and the

alignment of worldviews, moral values, and beliefs with anime characters with column

percentages and row percentages respectively. According to Table 4.32, most female respondents

(36.9%) felt that their worldviews, moral values, and beliefs aligned very strongly with anime

characters. Furthermore, Table 4.33 showed that there were more females (51.4%) than males

who felt this way, especially among those who watched more than 4 hours a week (51.3%). This

could be due to males having a higher perception of reality than females as reported in past

literature (Mosharafa, 2015). Also, females who identify with an anime character are more likely

to immerse themselves in fictional realities more often than other groups, which increases the

likelihood for their perceptions of the real world to be shaped by those portrayed in fictional

realities, especially those of the characters through character identification (Burnham, 2021; Rain

& Mar, 2021).

Table 4.34 and Table 4.35 presented the crosstabulation of data between gender and the level of emotional bond developed with anime characters over time with column percentages and row percentages respectively. According to Table 4.34, most female respondents (41.6%) felt that their emotional bonds with anime characters became somewhat more intimate over time, followed by those who felt that their emotional bonds became more intimate (36.2%). It is also observed that most female respondents (62.2%) who watched more than 4 hours a week felt that their emotional bond with anime characters became more intimate. Furthermore, Table 4.35 showed that among those who watched more than 4 hours a week, there were more females than males (60.9%) who felt that their emotional bond with anime characters became more intimate over time. These findings suggest that females are more likely to develop stronger and more intimate emotional bonds with anime characters than males, especially those who watch more than 4 hours a week. According to Reysen et al. (2020), females were more likely to develop stronger connections with anime characters than males because they find greater similarity and stronger identification with anime characters compared to males. This could explain why females in this study develop deeper emotional connections with anime characters over time than males.

Table 4.36 and Table 4.37 presented the crosstabulation of data between gender and the level of parasocial relationship formed ('describing emotional bond with anime characters') with column percentages and row percentages respectively. According to Table 4.36, most respondents, regardless of their genders, formed a first-level parasocial relationship ('I enjoy anime characters as a form of entertainment and casual interest') with anime characters. Despite this, Table 4.37 showed that there were more male than female respondents (55.3%) that formed a first-level parasocial relationship with anime characters. On the other hand, there were more female than male respondents that developed second-level ('I feel a deep and personal

connection to anime characters, sometimes experiencing intense emotions for them as if we were

soulmates') (53.6%) and third-level ('My connection to anime characters is so strong that it

influences my thoughts and behaviours, verging on the realm of delusions, including fantasies

about them') (55.2%) with anime characters. Despite this, the findings from both tables do not

indicate any significant difference between the gender groups across all subgroups of weekly

viewing hours, suggesting that the amount of time spent does not have a direct impact on the

intensity and level of parasocial relationships formed. Past studies such as those by Reysen et al.

(2020) have identified that one of the plausible reasons females tend to develop stronger, deeper

connections with anime characters is that females have a greater ability to identify and find

similarities with anime characters than males can. This could explain why there were more

females in the study that experienced second-level and third-level parasocial relationships than

males, and why weekly viewing hours have little to no impact on the development of these levels

and intensities of parasocial relationships.

Table 4.38 and Table 4.39 presented the crosstabulation of data between gender and

frequency of adoption of anime character traits in real life with column percentages and row

percentages respectively. From Table 4.38, it is observed that there was no significant difference

between the gender groups in their frequency of character trait adoption, as most respondents

from both groups reported that these traits were adopted often and occasionally. For instance,

most female respondents (38.3%) reported that they adopt anime character traits occasionally,

followed by those who adopt them frequently (24.8%). On the other hand, most male

respondents (31.7%) reported that they adopt these traits often, followed by those who adopt

them occasionally (29.8%), suggesting that both genders are equally likely to adopt anime

character traits in real life. Next, Table 4.39 showed that there was also little difference between

gender groups across subgroups of weekly viewing hours. These suggest that weekly viewing hours have little impact on the adoption of anime character traits in real life among gender groups.

Table 4.40 and Table 4.41 presented the crosstabulation of data between gender and the level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends with column percentages and row percentages respectively. From Table 4.40, it is observed that most female respondents (49.0%) remained quite connected with the anime character or series after their endings. Likewise, most male respondents (36.6%) also remained quite connected with the anime character or series after their endings. Despite this, Table 4.41 showed that there were more female respondents (55.3%) than male respondents who remained quite connected with anime characters. The findings suggest that females were more likely to develop more enduring connections with anime characters than males. This could be due to females' ability to develop stronger identification and familiarity with anime characters, which can lead to stronger connections with the characters over time leading to stronger parasocial relationships, which itself means "long-term bonds that extend beyond the initial moment of exposure" (Cohen, 2003; Rain & Mar, 2021; Reysen et al., 2020). However, Table 4.41 showed that most of these females who remained quite connected were those who watched less than 4 hours a week, such as among the subgroup that watches 2-4 hours a week (56.4%). Despite this, among those who felt extremely connected, there were more females than males (58.3%) among the subgroup of those who watched more than 4 hours a week. These findings suggested that weekly viewing hours may not have a significant impact on the level of emotional connection maintained after an anime character or series ends between both genders.

Table 4.42 and Table 4.43 presented the crosstabulation of data between gender and the frequency of engagement with anime character activities with column percentages and row percentages respectively. According to Table 4.42, most female respondents (45.8%) engage in anime character activities occasionally. Likewise, most male respondents (49.7%) also engage in anime character activities occasionally. This could be due to their lives as university students which can be packed with assignments and projects that fill up their time (Yusof et al., 2023). Despite this, Table 4.43 showed that there were slightly more females (52.4%) than males that engage in these activities often. Likewise, there were also more females (56.5%) than males that engage in these activities very often. These findings suggest that females were more likely to engage in anime character activities more often than males. The study by Gonçalves et al. (2021) revealed that female participants were driven by the immersive, escapist nature of anime character activities that allowed them to connect with the characters on a deeper, parasocial level. They further stated that this would explain their "significantly regular presence" at these activities (Gonçalves et al., 2021). Therefore, this could explain why there were more females who frequently engage in these activities than males. Additionally, it is observed that there is little difference between males and females across all subgroups of weekly viewing hours. These findings suggest that weekly viewing hours may have little to no impact on the frequency of engagement in anime character activities across both gender groups.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Discussion

Prior research has discovered that there is a correlation between long-term media consumption and the development of parasocial relationships (Gonçalves et al., 2021; Jahng, 2019), and that empathy and relatability have a role in the development of this relationship (Goh, 2014; Hwang & Zhang, 2018; Rain & Mar, 2021; Scherer et al., 2022; Yamato, 2014). This study sought to understand whether heavy consumption has a role in the development of parasocial relationships with anime characters, as well as whether there's a difference in its impact between males and females. The findings reported contribute to this area of study in several ways. Generally, the findings demonstrated that heavy consumption has a role in developing parasocial relationships with anime characters through the cultivation of worldview alignment with anime characters, development of empathy and relatability, formation of enduring bonds, and influencing parasocial relationship behaviours and activities.

Firstly, heavy viewers were more likely to align and identify with the beliefs and worldviews of anime characters through the process of relatability and character identification with the characters. The findings support cultivation theory in that television not only has the ability to shape perceptions of its viewers toward the world but also shape their moral values and beliefs as those pushed by the figures on television (Rain & Mar, 2021).

Secondly, heavy viewers were more likely to develop enduring, emotional bonds with anime characters that lasted even after a character's demise or the end of their series. Heavy viewers were also more likely to develop second- and third-level parasocial relationships (D. Giles & Maltby, 2006; raayan, 2022), supporting the findings from previous literature by Preiss

et al. (2006) which found that people who indicated higher levels of parasocial relationships watched more hours of television. These findings also support the notion of parasocial relationships that are "enduring, long-term bonds with characters that extend beyond the initial point of exposure" (Rain & Mar, 2021). Therefore, the study's findings indicate that a parasocial relationship was successfully developed in this group of viewers as a result of heavy viewing.

Thirdly, heavy viewers were more likely to engage in parasocial activities frequently such as adoption of character traits and participating in anime character activities. According to D. C. Giles (2002), behavioural outcomes of parasocial relationships, such as imitative behaviour and anime character activities, depending on the number of encounters viewers have with media characters. As heavy viewers "encounter" anime characters more often as they watch more anime, hence they are more likely to mimic their behaviours or engage in parasocial activities such as anime character activities.

Overall, the findings showed strong links between heavy consumption and the development of parasocial relationships at different stages. The findings would provide a new research framework for future researchers to study this area of cultivation theory and parasocial relationships further. The argument of this study is that long-term exposure to television would lead to the cultivation of worldviews, moral values, and beliefs that align with those of the anime character. In turn, this alignment would give rise to feelings of empathy and relatability that would determine the next stage of the parasocial relationship development, which is imitative behaviour and an attempt to engage with anime characters as the final stage of the development based on D. C. Giles (2002) framework of the parasocial relationship process. The study's findings have found consistent links between long-term exposure to anime and the development of parasocial relationships at each of these stages.

The findings also demonstrated that there is indeed a difference in impact between gender groups in the development of parasocial relationships. The study found that the impact was more prevalent among females than males, especially among those who have heavier consumption habits.

Firstly, while the overall impact of anime on worldviews does not have significant differences between gender groups, the alignment of worldviews, beliefs, and moral values with characters was slightly more prevalent among females than males. This supports the findings by Burnham (2020) who discovered that females who have stronger identification with a media character are more likely to immerse themselves in anime for longer periods, and are thus more likely to be influenced by the beliefs, views, moral values portrayed especially from the standpoint of the character, which can be explained by cultivation theory in that long-term exposure to television shapes the viewer's perceptions, moral values, and beliefs of the world (Burnham, 2021; Mosharafa, 2015).

Secondly, females showed higher tendencies to develop second- and third-level parasocial relationships (D. Giles & Maltby, 2006; raayan, 2022) than males, where weekly viewing hours did not appear to impact these levels. On the other hand, females tend to develop more enduring emotional bonds over time with anime characters than males that lasts even after a characters' or series demise, especially among female heavy viewers despite the difference was slight compared to other weekly viewing hours subgroups. The findings support those of Cohen (2003) and Reysen et al. (2020) who discovered that females were more likely to develop stronger parasocial relationships with media characters than males through greater character identification and relatability. The findings also support those by Burnham (2020) which revealed that females who have stronger emotional connections with media characters tend to

immerse themselves in fictional worlds longer than other groups. These findings support the notion that parasocial relationships are "enduring, long-term bonds with characters that extend beyond the initial point of exposure" (Rain & Mar, 2021). Therefore, the study's findings suggest that a parasocial relationship was successfully developed in this group of viewers as a result of heavy viewing.

Thirdly, there were no significant gender differences in the adoption of anime character traits, and that the weekly viewing hours did not appear to have an impact on the frequency of this adoption. However, female participation and engagement with anime character activities were more noticeably more prevalent than males. The findings support previous studies that reported "higher frequency and intensity of engagement in parasocial activities" among females than males (Cohen, 2003; Gonçalves et al., 2021; Hoffner, 1996; Maltby et al., 2005). The study by D. C. Giles (2002) on the parasocial relationship model stated that the number of encounters with media characters influenced behavioural outcomes of parasocial relationships such as anime character activities. As females are driven by the escapist, immersive nature of these activities, therefore, they are more likely to engage in these activities that allow them to connect with anime characters on a deeper, social level (Gonçalves et al., 2021)

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that heavy viewers were more likely to develop parasocial relationships with anime characters, while females were more likely to develop parasocial relationships with the characters, especially among those who are heavy viewers. Despite this, the majority of the audience still seem to enjoy anime characters as a casual interest and form of entertainment, which could be due to their occupational status as students in order to relieve their stress from studies and serve as a platform for them to escape from real-world complexities that exist in their life as students (Gonçalves et al., 2021; Paee et

al., 2020; Yusof et al., 2023). However, since this study is explanatory, these findings have to be interpreted with caution as the findings are primarily descriptive. Despite this, the patterns observed from this analysis could serve as a groundwork for future researchers to explore this area of research further with the appropriate statistical tests.

Summary of research

This study sought to investigate if there was a relationship between the amount of anime consumption and the development of parasocial relationships, as well as the difference in its impact between males and females. It was conducted on 310 Malaysian university students aged between 18 to 25 to investigate this relationship. As explanatory research, descriptive analysis was used to observe the trends and patterns between the variables concerned.

The findings suggest that there is indeed a relationship between the amount of anime consumption and the development of parasocial relationships, where it was found that heavy viewers of anime were more likely to develop parasocial relationships with anime characters. The findings also discovered that there is a difference in the impact on parasocial relationship development between males and females, in which the findings revealed that females were more likely to develop parasocial relationships with anime characters, especially among those who are heavy viewers. The findings of this study are intended to serve as a groundwork for future researchers to investigate this relationship further, as the popularity of anime continues to rise.

Answering research objectives

The findings obtained provided deeper insight into the trends and patterns of anime consumption and its impact on the development of parasocial relationships, as well as its impact between

different groups of gender. Therefore, the findings have managed to answer the two research objectives of this study.

Conclusion findings

In conclusion, the study has shed light on the impacts of heavy anime consumption on the development of parasocial relationships among viewers, in addition to its impact being more prevalent among females than males. The following key findings emerged from this study:

Research Objective 1:

1. Heavy viewers were more likely to be impacted by the messages of anime on their worldviews than light viewers

2. Heavy viewers were more likely to share their worldviews, moral values, and beliefs with anime characters than light viewers

3. Heavy viewers were more likely to develop more intimate, enduring emotional bonds with anime characters than light viewers

4. Heavy viewers were more likely to develop second- and third-level parasocial relationships ('intense-social' and 'borderline-pathological' (D. Giles & Maltby, 2006))

5. Heavy viewers were more likely to engage in parasocial behaviours and activities more frequently than others (adoption of anime character traits, and engagement in anime character activities

Research Objective 2:

1. There were no significant differences in the impact of weekly anime viewing hours on the worldviews of both genders

2. Females, especially heavy viewers, were more likely to share their worldviews, moral values, and beliefs with anime characters than males and light viewers

3. Females, especially heavy viewers, were more likely to develop enduring, emotional bonds with anime characters than males and light viewers

4. Females were more likely to develop second- and third-level parasocial relationships ('intense-social' and 'borderline-pathological' (D. Giles & Maltby, 2006))

5. There were no significant differences in the impact of weekly anime viewing hours and the adoption of anime character traits between both genders

6. Females were more likely to engage in anime character activities more frequently than males, while weekly viewing hours appeared to have little impact on the frequency of participation across both gender groups.

Limitations of the Study

This study only focused on weekly anime viewing hours and their impact on the development of parasocial relationships. It did not include genres of anime, which in past studies revealed that genre-specific media has a more profound effect in shaping perceptions and worldviews, especially among different gender groups. Therefore, this may impact the current findings of this study in terms of the difference in impact between males and females. Secondly, the study was conducted with a limited time frame. Therefore, only cross-sectional data is available about their relationship. As cultivation theory states that prolonged exposure to media has a long-term,

cumulative effect on the viewers (Glynn & Jeong, 2003), the findings of this study were not able to predict the long-term effects of prolonged anime consumption in the development of parasocial relationships. Thirdly, since this is an explanatory study, descriptive analysis was used to analyse the findings. Since it is primarily descriptive, the findings should be interpreted with caution.

Recommendations and Implications

The study informs cultivation and parasocial relationship researchers that there is indeed a relationship between the amount of viewing hours and the development of parasocial relationships. This includes finding relationships between the weekly anime viewing hours and the development of enduring emotional bonds, as well as the frequency of engagement with anime character activities (parasocial activities). Therefore, cultivation and parasocial relationship researchers should now consider exploring these areas further to better understand their relationship in a world of rapidly evolving media and viewing consumption habits.

However, should researchers wish to proceed to explore this area of research further, it is recommended that they utilise a longitudinal design in their future studies. Past literature has recommended the use of longitudinal studies to investigate the long-term effects of media consumption (Jahng, 2019). However, for this study, a cross-sectional design was employed due to the time limitation given for this undergraduate thesis. Therefore, only the consumption habits during the point of the study were investigated, which may not reflect the long-term effects of the amount of anime consumption on the development of parasocial relationships. Therefore, it is recommended for future studies utilise longitudinal studies to study the same group of people

over time to understand if consistent, continuous long-term consumption provides the same impact.

Despite this, there have been criticisms toward longitudinal studies where these long-term studies can be influenced by external environmental factors which can impact the study of the cause-and-effect relationship (Glynn & Jeong, 2003). Therefore, longitudinal studies should be used with caution by minimising as much of these environmental influences on the participants as much as possible to produce more reliable and valid results.

Suggestions for further research

Some available literature has suggested that genres have a role to play in the development of parasocial relationships other than the amount of time spent, such as the studies by Scharrer & Blackburn (2018a) and Scharrer & Blackburn (2018b). Therefore, future research could consider exploring anime genres in depth in whether they impact the development of parasocial relationships among anime audiences with anime characters as well, other than the amount of time spent viewing anime.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

Exploring the Cultivation Effects of Anime Consumption in Developing Parasocial Relationships among Malaysian University Students

Greetings!

I am Pua Wei Yi, a final-year Media and Creative Studies student from the Faculty of Creative Industries, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman.

I'm currently conducting a study to investigate the impact of anime consumption in developing parasocial relationships among Malaysian university students aged 18 to 25. Anime consumption means the time spent watching anime media, while parasocial relationships refer to one-sided relationships a viewer or audience member become emotionally attached to a media character (real or fictional).

You are invited to participate in this research study if you meet the following criteria:

1. Young adults aged between 18 to 25,
2. A Malaysian citizen,
3. A student enrolled in a (tertiary) educational institution, and
4. Is an anime fan.

This online survey should take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary, and responses will be kept private and utilised strictly for academic purposes only. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time without penalty.

Your participation in this survey is deeply appreciated, as it will help me learn more about the relationship between anime consumption and the development of parasocial relationships. If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, feel free to reach out by emailing puaweiyi@1utar.my.

Thank you and have a great day ahead!

* Indicates required question

Email *

☐ Record my email address with my response

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

Please tick the following check box to proceed with this survey. *

☐ I agree and hereby give my consent to the use and management of my personal information for this study

Section I: Demographic Information

This section explores the demographic background of the participants.

1. Gender *

○ Male

○ Female

2. Age *

○ 18

○ 19

○ 20

○ 21

○ 22

○ 23

○ 24

○ 25

3. What is your current entry qualification? *

○ Pre-university (e.g. Foundation, Matriculation, STPM, etc.)

○ Undergraduate (Bachelor's degree)

○ Postgraduate (Masters / PhD)

4. How many siblings do you have? (not including yourself) *

○ I'm an only child

○ 1

○ 2

○ 3 and above

Section II: Background of Anime Consumption

This section explores the participants' background and viewing habits of anime consumption.

1. When did you first start watching anime? *

○ When I was in kindergarten

○ When I was in primary school

○ When I was in high school

○ When I was in university/college

○ I just started recently (within the past year)

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

2. On average, how much time do you spend watching anime in a week? *

○ Less than an hour

○ 1-2 hours

○ 2-4 hours

○ More than 4 hours

3. How do you typically watch anime? *

○ At different points throughout the day (e.g.: 1 hour in the afternoon, 1 hour at night, etc.)

○ In a single session (e.g.: 2-3 hours continuously at once, etc.)

4. Where do you typically watch anime? *

○ Online (e.g.: Netflix, Disney+, Crunchyroll, 9anime, Torrent, etc.)

○ Offline (e.g.: DVD, BluRay, Television Satellite, etc.)

5. What language do you usually watch anime in (dubbed audio)? *

○ Japanese

○ English

○ Malay

○ Chinese

○ Others (e.g.: Cantonese, Spanish, etc.)

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

6. Which language do you prefer for anime subtitles? *

○ English

○ Malay

○ Chinese (Traditional / Simplified)

○ Others (e.g.: Japanese, Cantonese, Spanish, etc.)

○ I do not use subtitles

7. To what extent do you consider the following aspects important in deciding to   *
watch an anime series or franchise? On a scale of 1 to 5, rate each aspect
according to its importance (1 = Not Important, 5 = Very Important)

	1 = Not Important	2 = Somewhat Important	3 = Neutral	4 = Important	5 = Very Important
Characters and their development	○	○	○	○	○
Storyline and plot progression	○	○	○	○	○
Genre and themes of the anime	○	○	○	○	○
Popularity within the community	○	○	○	○	○
Animation style and visuals	○	○	○	○	○
Overall appeal and likability	○	○	○	○	○

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

8. To what extent do you consider the following aspects important when finding   *
appeal in anime characters? On a scale of 1 to 5, rate each aspect according to its
importance (1 = Not Important, 5 = Very Important)

	1 = Not Important	2 = Somewhat Important	3 = Neutral	4 = Important	5 = Very Important
Their role and significance in the story	○	○	○	○	○
Their visual appearance and character design	○	○	○	○	○
Their unique personality and attitude	○	○	○	○	○
Their relatability to real-life experiences	○	○	○	○	○
Their general likability and charm	○	○	○	○	○

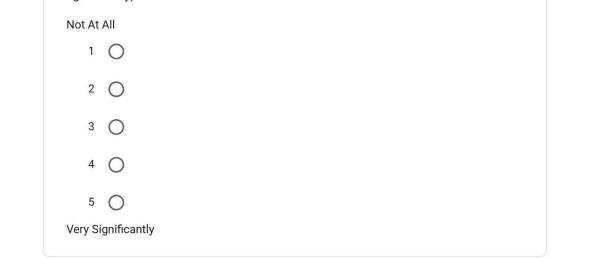**Section III - Anime and Perceptions of Social Relationships**

This section investigates the changes in perceptions of social reality among participants as a result of their viewing habits of anime consumption.

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

1. How has watching anime influenced your perception of the world? Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Not At All, 5 = Very Significantly) *

Not At All

1   ◯

2   ◯

3   ◯

4   ◯

5   ◯

Very Significantly

2. To what extent has the time spent watching anime influenced these perceptions of the world? Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Not At All, 5 = Very Significantly) *

Not At All

1   ◯

2   ◯

3   ◯

4   ◯

5   ◯

Very Significantly

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

3. To what extent do you believe that attitudes, beliefs, and interactions of anime *
characters in the series reflect those of the real world? Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1
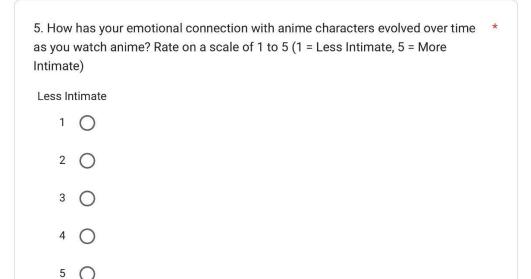= Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Strongly Disagree

1 ○

2 ○

3 ○

4 ○

5 ○

Strongly Agree

4. To what extent do you believe that the time spent watching anime enhances *
your ability to understand and empathize with anime characters' perceptions and
views of the world? Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly
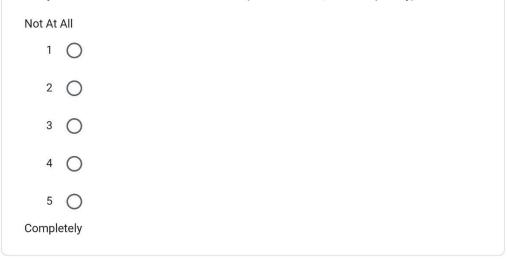Agree)

Strongly Disagree

1 ○

2 ○

3 ○

4 ○

5 ○

Strongly Agree

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

5. How has your emotional connection with anime characters evolved over time *
as you watch anime? Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Less Intimate, 5 = More
Intimate)

Less Intimate

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

More Intimate
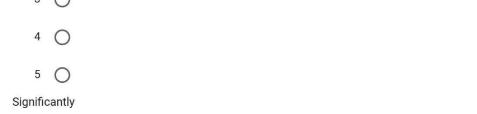
6. How much do the anime characters' worldviews, moral values, and beliefs align *
with your own? Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Not At All, 5 = Completely)

Not At All

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Completely

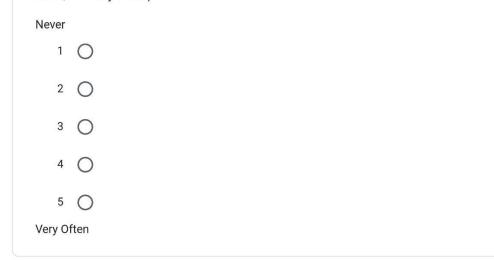Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

7. To what extent does your emotional connection with anime characters influence your perceptions of social norms and worldviews? Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Not At All, 5 = Significantly) *

Not At All

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Significantly

8. Do you incorporate or imitate the values, attitudes, beliefs, or behaviours of anime characters shown in anime into your real life? Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Never, 5 = Very Often) *

Never

1 ◯

2 ◯

3 ◯

4 ◯

5 ◯

Very Often

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

9. To what extent do you believe that the time spent watching anime has influenced this incorporation or imitation? Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Not At All, 5 = Significantly) *

Not At All

1 ○

2 ○

3 ○

4 ○

5 ○

Significantly

Section IV - Anime and Parasocial Relationships

This section investigates the formation of parasocial relationships as a result of the time spent watching anime.

1. Please select the statement that best represents your imitation of traits or values from anime characters in your real-life interactions. *

○ I consciously adopt positive qualities from anime characters to enhance my personal growth.

○ I unintentionally imitate certain character traits or behaviors in my daily life due to relatability with the characters.

○ I imitate the traits or values of anime characters to feel closer to those I admire, strengthening our connection.

○ Incorporating character traits from anime affects my self-expression and identity, enabling connections with like-minded individuals.

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

2. Which description best reflects your emotional connection to anime characters? *

○ I enjoy anime characters as a form of entertainment and casual interest.

○ I feel a deep and personal connection to anime characters, sometimes experiencing intense emotions for them as if we were soulmates.

○ My connection to anime characters is so strong that it influences my thoughts and behaviours, verging on the realm of delusions, including fantasies about them.

3. To what extent do you turn to your connection with anime characters as a way to manage or cope with emotional challenges? Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Never and 5 = Very Often) *

Never

1 ○

2 ○

3 ○

4 ○

5 ○

Very Often

4. Please select the statement that best describes your general attachment style (which reflects how you typically relate to and form emotional bonds with others): *

○ I feel good about myself and others. I'm okay with making emotional bonds and trust I can have healthy relationships.

○ I often seek reassurance and worry about how others see me. I might struggle to feel secure in relationships and get preoccupied with them.

○ I value my independence and might find it hard to get close emotionally. I focus on being self-reliant and avoid depending too much on others.

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

5. Do you see anime characters in any of these roles in your life? Select all that apply. *

☐ Friend or confidant

☐ Role model or aspiration

☐ Source of emotional support or guidance

☐ Someone you feel a strong connection with or relate to

6. Rank the level of emotional connection you maintain with anime characters after their respective series or show comes to an end. (1 = Not Connected at All, 5 = Extremely Connected) *

Not Connected At All

1 ○

2 ○

3 ○

4 ○

5 ○

Extremely Connected

Section V - Anime in the Real World

This section investigates the activities and impact of parasocial interactions and relationships as a result of the time spent watching anime.

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

1. How often do you discuss anime characters with different groups? Rank on a   *
scale of 1 to 5 to each that apply (1 = Never and 5 = Very Often):

	1 = Never	2 = Rarely	3 = Occasionally	4 = Often	5 = Very Often
Friends / close friends	○	○	○	○	○
Family	○	○	○	○	○
Online communities	○	○	○	○	○
People who share similar interests	○	○	○	○	○

2. Please rate your overall enjoyment of discussing and sharing your thoughts   *
about anime characters with various groups on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Not
Enjoyable At All, 5 = Very Enjoyable).

	1 = Not Enjoyable At All	2 = Slightly Enjoyable	3 = Moderately Enjoyable	4 = Enjoyable	5 = Very Enjoyable
Friends / close friends	○	○	○	○	○
Family	○	○	○	○	○
Online communities	○	○	○	○	○
People who share similar interests	○	○	○	○	○

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

3. *Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 for each of the following statements based on your level of agreement. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)* *

To what extent does the time you spend watching anime and your emotional connection with the anime character impact your:

	1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
Existing real-world relationships	○	○	○	○	○
Ability to form new connections with individuals	○	○	○	○	○
Communication skills in real-life interactions	○	○	○	○	○
Empathy and understanding of others' perspectives	○	○	○	○	○

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

4. To what extent does watching anime contribute to your personal life and emotional experiences? Please rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree): *

	1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
It allows me to emotionally connect with fictional characters that resemble real-life relationships.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
It provides emotional relief and addresses unmet needs in my real-world interactions.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
It serves as a safe haven for me to escape from real-world complexities.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
It cultivates a sense of emotional fulfillment that complements my real-world interactions	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

5. Which of the following activities do you engage in with the anime characters in *
addition to watching the shows? Select all that apply:

☐ Cosplay / Role-Playing

☐ Creating Fan Art / Fan Fiction / Fan Videos

☐ Purchase and Collect Merchandise (e.g.: Official series merchandise, official collaboration merchandise, etc.)

☐ Participate in Online Communities and Forums (e.g.: Reddit, Twitter, Facebook, etc.)

☐ Character Interaction (e.g.: Follow cosplayer's social media accounts, etc.)

☐ Attending Events (e.g.: Anime conventions, screenings, meetups, etc.)

☐ Following Fan Subculture Trends (e.g.: Memes, trends, TikTok challenges, etc.)

☐ Listening to Character Songs and Drama CDs

☐ Write Fan Letters or Messages

☐ Watch Entertainment Media (e.g.: Variety shows, live Streams, Q&A Sessions, etc.)

☐ Others

6. When did you begin engaging in these activities? *

○ When I was in kindergarten

○ When I was in primary school

○ When I was in high school

○ When I was in university/college

○ I just started recently (within the past year)

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

7. How often do you engage in activities related to the anime characters in addition to watching the shows? *

○ Very often

○ Often

○ Occasionally

○ Rarely

○ Never

8. To what extent has the time you've spent watching the anime series influenced * your decision to participate in these activities? Please rate your response on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = No Influence, 5 = Very Strong Influence).

No Influence

1 ○

2 ○

3 ○

4 ○

5 ○

Very Strong Influence

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"

9. To what extent do the following statements apply to your participation in the activities above? Please rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree): *

	1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
Engaging in these activities allows me to connect with the anime characters on a deeper level and feel like I'm a part of their lives.	○	○	○	○	○
Participating in these activities makes me feel a sense of belonging and being part of a community.	○	○	○	○	○
Engaging in these activities provides emotional fulfillment and relief that is unmet in real life.	○	○	○	○	○
Engaging in these activities serves as a safe haven for me to escape from real-world complexities.	○	○	○	○	○

Get link

Pre-fill responses, then click "Get link"