UNDERSTANDING THE ACCEPTANCE OF

ANIME RECOGNITION AND CULTURAL AMONG GENERATION Z

LIM JUN MIN

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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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Approval Form

This research paper attached hereto, entitled "Understanding the Acceptance of Anime Recognition and Cultural Among Generation Z" prepared and submitted by Lim Jun Min in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Media and Creative Studies (Honours), is hereby accepted.

_____   Date: _____

Supervisor

Dr Chong Eu Choong

Abstract

Japanese animation, known as anime, has transformed from a niche subculture into a global phenomenon with its growing popularity, particularly among today's generations. The medium's rise began with its increasing presence on social media in the 2000s and has since become more widespread. Anime has become a significant cultural and entertainment medium for many young people and adults. This research adopts a quantitative approach, with data collected from 50 respondents between the ages of 18 to 34. The study revealed that there's a wide acceptance of anime among Generation Z participants. Participants revealed that they're mostly comfortable with anime being used and integrated into today's society. This study examines the cultural acceptance and recognition of anime among Generation Z, aiming to provide insights into how openly anime is embraced as a cultural medium.

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.

Name   :   LIM JUN MIN

Student ID   :   21UJB02317

Signed   :

Date   :   13th May 2025

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<center>**Chapter 1**</center>

<center>**Introduction**</center>

1.1 Background of Study

Japanese animation more commonly known as anime, in today's generation are animation produced and made in Japan. Today, anime is a unique animation style of its own, with countries such as China producing their anime more commonly known as 'donghua.' The earliest anime can be traced back to the year 1917 when it first began its production (Yasuo, 2013). Ever since Anime was introduced to the world it has slowly gained more attention in the animation market starting from the year 2000s (Ng, 2002). With COVID-19 occurred in 2020, and the world was in lockdown, people were restrained in their homes and only had access to social media to interact. According to Parrot Analytics (2022) data, the global demand for anime content has grown by 118% between the year 2020 to 2022. Furthermore, Azuar (2022), reported that Malaysia in 2022 holds the 8th spot globally for watching anime movies, which is 48% of the Malaysian population.

Generation Z is essential for this study, as the generation that grew up surrounded by digital media, who are between the age range of 13 – 28 (Brunjes, 2025). The generation's constant exposure to digital media makes them one of the most active anime content consumers. With the increased consumption of anime content within Generation Z. A question should be asked is, whether anime is much more recognizable and more culturally acceptable in Generation Z.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the growing increasing popularity of anime, there's a lack of comprehensive understanding of how Generation Z perceives anime and whether they accept it. More specifically, in terms of its culture and recognition as a source of mainstream media. Anime fans are associated with certain stereotypes such as being introverted, obsessed, and socially awkward nerds among others (Reysen et al. 2016). Studies on social media engagement theory suggest that users build a relationship with the content they consume through active engagement, which in this context, the content is anime. Furthermore, the user and gratification theory suggest that, users who consume anime for their satisfaction or have certain motivations or goals towards it. In addition, there's still a lack of academic research on anime, despite its increasing rise in popularity and gaining prominence in the Japanese cultural media (Ruh, 2014).

With a basic understanding of anime and its recent viewership trends, this study aims to address the following research gaps through the research questions and objectives:

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the main factors that contribute to anime's recognition among Generation Z?
2. How does Generation Z perceive anime as a form of media and a cultural product?

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To identify the influence of anime on media consumption and its cultural acceptance among Generation Z.

2. To understand how widely anime is recognized as a form of media and cultural product among Generation Z.

1.5 Significance of Study

This study holds significant academic value as it enhances the understanding of anime consumption, recognition, and cultural acceptance among Generation Z. With the rise in global demand for anime, its consumption plays a crucial role in shaping how young people perceive and engage with cultures beyond their own. The influence of anime extends across cultural boundaries, impacting the worldview and identity formation of Generation Z, both locally and globally. By examining the relationship between anime recognition and cultural acceptance, this research provides valuable insights into how media consumption is evolving. Furthermore, by utilizing the theories mentioned in the problem statement, this study explores the motivations behind anime consumption on social media and its long-term effects on users. It also expands on the application of these theories in the context of anime, offering a foundation for further academic research. Ultimately, this study contributes to a broader discussion on how anime is perceived among Generation Z, filling a gap in existing literature that has yet to address the anime context.

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Chapter 2

Literature Review

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2.1 Introduction

This study touches upon several theories, mainly social media engagement theory, and user and gratification theory. This literature review is to review existing literature that has done past research before on a similar topic to our current study. It also reviews what the theories mean and suggest. This chapter overall, will explore the findings of existing literature that's like the current topic and the related theories.

2.2 Existing Literature

2.2.1 The Global Rise of Anime

Lent (2015), mentions that manga aesthetics are widely known and have inspired consumers around the world, including the Asian countries such as Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. A study done by Razak and Ibnu (2022), finds that anime and manga have an influence on new media student's creative development, which the study finds out that, although some may perceive it as entertainment, others find it helpful and manage to pick up the positive value from it, especially in the creative thinking development. In other words, anime today has been growing and is reaching a much wider audience and is also perceived as a source of inspiration to learn from. This is also supported by Sanchez (2023) who mentions that anime has also been further used as a source of advertising, as brands are quickly tapping into the rising popularity of East Asian pop culture. Anime has grown more popular among Generation Z compared to Millennials and Generation X (Sanchez, 2023).

With the growing popularity of anime, anime has become both an educational and entertainment use, where some people use it for their satisfaction and viewing pleasure, while others use it to learn, be inspired, and gain creative knowledge. Which helps to further enhance new media people to further persuade their interest (Razak and Ibnu, 2022). As Razak and Ibnu (2022) conducted a study, their participants mentioned that "manga and anime have inspired them to pursue their interest in animation and drawings and enroll in new media courses."

2.2.2 Anime as a Culture

In recent years, anime has gone from being a source of entertainment to a subculture of its own. Where fans of anime are considered part of the anime culture. Guzzanti (2024) mentions that "anime has evolved from being a niche interest into mainstream phenomena." The anime culture today consists of cosplaying, drawing, or illustrating fan art or fan fiction of their favorite anime series, and even have their very own dedicated anime conventions, where artists and cosplayers gather to sell their anime-themed merchandise and meet with like-minded people. Virtual YouTubers (Vtubers), are also part of today's anime culture as they use virtual character models with the anime art style. A study conducted by Mamat et al. (2022), found that Malaysian students who are currently studying Japanese are into Vtubers and are recognized around Malaysia. Additionally, Mamat et al. (2022) studies show that respondents have a strong belief in their religion, culture, and upbringing, and consuming anime media, doesn't affect their viewpoint on today's culture.

2.3 Related Theories

2.3.1 Social Media Engagement Theory

The theory of social media engagement was built upon Prahalad and Ramaswamy's (2004) co-creation model and adapting it to develop a theoretical framework for understanding social media engagement (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016).

This theory focuses on the individual itself that actively participate and engages with the content through social media (Rachmad, 2024). This participation and engagement can be in the form of sharing to others, commenting or liking the content itself via a post or a video. The individuals can express how they felt towards certain content they consume.

2.3.2 User and Gratification Theory (UGT)

User and gratification theory were introduced by Blumler and Katz's around the 1940s (Sichach, 2024). This theory helps to understand the reason of an individual selection on certain type of media for their own satisfactory (Bhatiasevi, 2024).

The theory suggests that unlike traditional form of media, the digital media empowers the individuals to not only consume but also actively share, engage and interact with the content (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010).

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explore the study research methodology. Including the research design, research instrument, population and sampling method, the ethical consideration and limitations of the study. This study will involve participants from across Malaysia. The study has obtained approval from UTAR Ethical Review Committee, to be conducted between November 2024 to April 2025.

3.2 Research Design

This research design seeks to explore what anime is recognized for and its cultural acceptance among Generation Z. Currently, there are not a lot of studies conducted on anime recognition and cultural acceptance. Additionally, this study also seeks to see if there's a connection between the recognition and cultural acceptance of the two theories. By investigating this in-depth, it helps to fill a research gap.

A past study conducted by Mamat et al. (2022) utilized a quantitative approach among 104 participants who are Japanese language learning students from Malaysia, to obtain data on anime consumption and their cultural acceptance with the effects that it may have on them. However, this study seeks to explore if the theory is related to what makes anime recognition and cultural acceptance more prominent among Generation Z. Therefore, a quantitative research design will be used to efficiently collect data and analyze them on time.

3.3 Research Instrument

The research instrument is to gather participants' responses and as well as gain insightful data on the responses easily. Google Forms will be utilized for this study, as it's a web-based survey and doesn't require any cost, it can reach endless respondents by sharing a link with the participants. Not only that google form is effective in collecting information easily and efficiently, making it the ideal choice for a questionnaire (Manggaberani & Darlis, 2024).

The questionnaire consists of 5 sections with a total of 23 close-ended questions, that consist of a mixture of Likert-scale questions, multiple-choice questions, and multiple-answers questions, each having a different aspect for the study. The first section is an introduction to the questionnaire with the question asking for the participant consent before proceeding. The second section explores the participant's demographics, such as their age, gender, and academic qualification. The third section explores participants' anime consumption habits such as their watch time, engagement with anime activities, and language preferences. The fourth section explores anime recognition among its participants, this area explores what they think anime is popular for, do they use any anime references, and even when they all start to engage in anime activities. The fifth and last section explores anime cultural acceptance, where respondents answer how comfortable are they with being open to certain groups about their anime, and how much they think anime should be integrated into certain industries.

3.4 Population and Sampling

This study's population concerns anime fans across Malaysia who are between the age of 18 – 34, Generation Z. The sample will include a minimum of 50 participants as required for this thesis. As this study has a niche population, a few non-probability sampling methods, mainly convenience sampling and snowball sampling will be utilized to help achieve the minimum number of participants required.

Convenience sampling helps to sample participants for the questionnaire easily, as they're the easiest to access and can be done by anyone (Edgar & Manz, 2017).

Snowball sampling is used to quickly get more participants for the questionnaire, by asking current participants to share the questionnaire with people they know who are eligible to answer the questionnaire (Edgar & Manz, 2017).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

To avoid any disagreement or refusal of participation in this research. For ethical considerations, the first section of the questionnaire will have the participants consenting or agreeing to take part in this questionnaire. By doing so, all their personal data provided will only be used for the completion of this Final Year Project and strictly for academic purposes. As stated by Manti and Licari (2018), the informed consent must be written in a language that the participant can easily read and understand and must have ample time to consider their participation.

Additionally, this is to minimize any coercion or influence that may have an impact on the research, and the participant of the said research upon agreeing to the consent, has an understanding of the research and the risk it will undergo (Manti & Licari, 2018).

Chapter 4

Findings & Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will elaborate on the data collected from the quantitative research sampling method, on the demographic, anime consumption, anime recognition and anime cultural acceptance from 50 respondents. All 50 respondents have consented to agreeing to participate in this questionnaire.

4.2 Findings

This section explores 50 of the participating respondent's data from their demographic characteristic, anime consumptions, the recognition and the cultural acceptance.

4.2.1 Demographic

This section of the findings explores the respondent's basic demographic information, like their gender, age and academic qualification

Table 1.1

Respondents Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
14 - 17	1	1
18 - 24	42	84
25 - 34	7	14
Total	50	100

Table 1 shows the ages of the respondents that are participating in this questionnaire. 42 of the respondents are from the age range of 18 – 24 (84%), making it the majority, following with 7 respondents from the age range of 25 – 34 (14%) and lastly with 1 respondent from the age range of 14 – 17 (1%)

Table 1.2

Respondents Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	27	54
Female	23	46
Total	50	100

Table 1.2 shows the respondents gender, with 27 of the participating respondents are male (54%) and the remaining 23 of the participating respondents are female (46%)

Table 1.3

Respondents Highest Academic Qualification

Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High school certificate	2	4
Foundation	3	6
Diploma	7	14
Bachelor's degree	38	76
Master	0	0
PhD	0	0
Total	50	100

Table 1.3 shows the respondents highest academic qualification they have achieved or currently studying when answering the questionnaire. 38 respondent's highest academic qualification are bachelor's degree (76%), while the 2nd highest, consist of 7 respondents whose academic qualification are diploma (14%), following with foundation having 3 respondents (6%) and 2 respondents whose highest academic qualification are high school certificate (4%), with Master and PhD having no respondents (0%)

4.2.2 Anime Consumption Background

This section explores the respondents background on anime consumption such as their

interest, viewing hours and involvement in other anime related activities

Table 1.4

Respondents First Time Finding Out About Anime

Found out about Anime	Frequency	Percentage (%)
During kindergarten	8	16
During primary school	31	62
During secondary school	10	32
During university / college	1	2
Found out just recently	0	0
Total	50	100

Note. Found out just recently is within the past year

Table 1.4 shows when the respondents first found out about anime. 31 of the respondents

found out about anime during their primary school (62%), while 10 respondents discover

anime for the first time during secondary school (32%), 8 of the respondents found out anime

for the first time during kindergarten (16%), with only 1 respondent finding out anime for the

first time during university or college (2%) and lastly, no respondents has found out about

anime for the first time just recently (0%)

Table 1.5

Respondents Interest Rate in Anime

Interest Rate	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – Not interested at all	1	2
2 – Slightly interested	7	14
3 - Neutral	5	10
4 - Interested	19	38
5 – Very interested	18	36
Total	50	100

Table 1.5 shows the respondents interest rate towards anime. 19 of the respondents has shown they're interested towards anime (38%), while 18 respondents show they're very interested towards anime (36%), 7 respondents has slight interest in anime (14%), while 5 respondents have a neutral rate towards anime (10%) and only 1 respondent isn't interested in anime at all (2%)

Table 1.6

Respondents Engagement Rate Towards Anime-related Activities

Engagement Rate	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – Never	3	6
2 – Rarely	7	14
3 - Sometimes	7	14
4 - Often	10	20
5 – Very often	23	46
Total	50	100

Table 1.6 shows the respondents engagement rate towards anime-related activities. 23 of the respondents have very often engage in anime-related activities (46%), while 10 respondents often engages in anime-related activities, 7 respondents sometimes engage in the activities (14%) follow by another 7 respondents that rarely engages in anime-related activities and only 3 respondents never engage in anime-related activities

Table 1.7

Respondents Hours Spent to Watch Anime Per Week

Hours Spent	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I don't watch anime regularly	15	30
Less than an hour	4	8
1 – 2 hours	11	22
2 – 4 hours	15	30
More than 4 hours	5	10
Total	50	100

Table 1.7 shows the respondents hours spent on watching anime per week. 15 respondents watches anime 2- 4 hours per week (30%), while another 15 respondents doesn't watch anime regularly (30%), following with 11 respondents watching anime for 1 – 2 hours per week (11%), with 5 respondents watching anime more than 4 hours per week (5%) and 4 respondents watches anime for less than an hour per week (4%)

Table 1.8

Respondents Preferred Medium to Watch Anime

Preferred Medium	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Online	50	100
Offline	0	0
Total	50	100

Note. Online medium such as YouTube, Bilibili, Anime Streaming Website and offline medium such as TV, DVD, Blu Ray

Table 1.8 shows the respondents preferred medium to watch anime. All respondents, 50 in total, preferred to watch anime through online medium (100%), and none of the respondents prefers to watch it offline (0%)

Table 1.9

Respondents Preferred Language to Watch Anime for Dubbed Audio

Preferred Language	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Japanese	48	96
English	1	2
Chinese	1	2
Malay	0	0
Others	0	0
Total	50	100

Table 1.9 shows the respondents preferred audio language to watch anime in dubbed. Majority or 48 respondents preferred to watch anime in the Japanese language dubbed audio (96%), while 1 respondent preferred to watch it in English (2%) and another 1 respondent preferred to watch it in Chinese (2%), and 0 respondent preferred to watch it in Malay nor other languages in dubbed audio (0%)

Table 1.10

Respondents Preferred Language for Subtitles while Watching Anime

Preferred Language	Frequency	Percentage (%)
English	33	66
Chinese (Traditional / Simplified)	17	34
Malay	0	0
Others (Japanese, Tamil, etc)	0	0
I don't use subtitles	0	0
Total	50	100

Table 1.10 shows the respondents preferred language for subtitle while watching anime. 33 respondents preferred their subtitles to be in English language (66%), while 17 respondents preferred Chinese (Traditional / Simplified) to be their subtitle language (34%), and 0 respondents preferred their subtitle language to be in Malay or other languages (0%) and 0 respondents preferred not to use subtitles (0%)

4.2.3 Anime and its Recognition

This section explores the respondents background on its recognition towards anime.

Recognition such as which anime style they prefer, what aspect they think anime is most

recognized for, how often do you notice anime references or influences in social media etc.

Table 1.11

Respondents Preferred Anime Style

Preferred Anime Style	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Japanese Anime	31	62
Chinese Anime	1	2
Both	18	36
Total	50	100

Table 1.11 shows the respondents preferred anime style. 31 respondents preferred the

Japanese anime style (62%), while 18 respondents preferred both, Japanese and Chinese

anime style (36%), and lastly, 1 respondent preferred Chinese anime style (12%)

Table 1.12

Respondents Data on Anime Most Recognize Aspect

Most Recognize Aspect	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Characters and their development	36	72
Storyline and the plot	42	84
Genre and theme	31	62
Community	8	16
Music and soundtrack	31	62

Table 1.12 shows the respondents data on which of the following aspect provided they think is most recognized for. Among the following aspect, majority of the respondents think that the storyline and the plot of the anime is what make it recognizable (84%), followed by the characters and their development throughout the storyline (72%) and following with both the genre and theme and the music and soundtrack receiving the same number of respondents (62%), and lastly only a few respondents think that the community is what makes anime recognizable (16%)

Table 1.13

Respondents Notice Rate on Anime References or Influences in Non-anime Media

Notice Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – Never	1	2
2 – Rarely	8	16
3 - Sometimes	19	38
4 - Often	16	32
5 – Very frequently	6	12
Total	50	100

Note. Non-anime media is referred to anime outside of their own media or sites, such as movies, TV shows, ads, or social media, etc.

Table 1.13 shows the respondents notice rate on how often they see anime references or influences in non-anime media. Most of the respondents notice it sometimes (38%), following with 16 respondents noticing it often (32%), with 8 respondents rarely noticing it (16%), follow by 6 respondents notice it very frequently (12%) and only 1 respondent never notice it (2%)

Table 1.14

Respondents First Time Engaging in Anime Activities

Engage in Anime Activities	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I have never engaged in anime activities	5	10
During kindergarten	3	6
During primary school	10	20
During secondary school	19	38
During university / college	12	24
Engage just recently	1	2
Total	50	100

Note. Engage just recently is within the past year

Table 1.14 shows the respondents when they first engage in any anime activities. 19 respondents started to engage during their secondary school year (38%), while 12 respondents started during their university / college year (24%), follow by 10 respondents starting off during primary school year (20%), with 5 respondents never engaged in any anime activities (10%), followed by 3 respondents started engaging during kindergarten (6%), and only 1 respondent started to engage in anime activities for the first time just recently (2%)

Table 1.15

Respondents Data in Engaging in the Following Anime Activities

Anime Activities	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I don't engage in anime activities	6	12
Cosplay / Role-playing	19	38
Creating Fan Art / Fan Fiction / Fan Videos	17	34
Purchasing and Collecting Merchandises	34	68
Participating in Online Communities and Forums	18	36
Influencer Interaction	26	52
Attending Anime Events	30	60
Watch Entertainment Media	21	42

Table 1.15 shows the respondents data in engaging in the following anime activities. Majority of the respondents engage in purchasing and collecting merchandises (68%), following with 30 respondents attending anime event (60%), while 26 respondents interact with anime related influencer (52%), follow by 21 respondents watch anime entertainment media (42%), with 19 respondents cosplaying or role-playing (38%), while 18 respondents participate in online communities and forums (36%) follow by 17 respondents creating fan art, fan fiction or fan videos (34%), and lastly 6 respondents doesn't engage in anime activities (12%)

Table 1.16

Respondents Usage Rate of Anime Reference in the Following Aspects

Aspects	1		2		3		4		5	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Assignments	28	56	9	18	7	14	4	8	2	4
Work / Professional Presentation	26	52	13	26	7	14	1	2	3	6
Casual Conversations	7	14	8	16	19	38	9	18	7	14
Social Media Posts	11	22	9	18	12	24	7	14	11	22
Creative Project	11	22	10	20	9	18	8	16	12	24
Fashion & Style	15	30	12	24	12	24	7	14	4	8

Note. 1 – Never, 2 – Rarely, 3 – Sometimes, 4 – Often, 5 – Very Often

Table 1.16 shows the data of the respondent's usage of anime reference among the 5 aspects

provided. For assignments, majority of the respondents never use anime references in it

(56%). In a professional or work setting for presentation, majority also never use any anime

references in it (52%). However, for casual conversation, majority sometimes uses anime

references in them (38%). When it comes to social media posts, majority of the respondents

sometimes uses anime references (24%). In creative projects, majority of the respondents

very often uses anime references in them (24%), while fashion & style where they wear

clothes resembling any anime character in their daily life, majority never uses any anime

references in them for their dress up (30%)

4.2.4 Anime in Today's Culture

This section explores the respondent's data for anime in today's culture. Exploring context such as how comfortable they are in discussing and going to anime events with certain groups, how anime has influence red their viewpoints, have they ever been judged before and what aspect they think anime can be integrated into.

Table 1.17

Respondent Rating on How Much Anime Has Influenced Their Viewpoint on Today's Culture

Influenced Rate	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – Not at all	5	10
2 – Slightly influenced	4	8
3 - Moderately influenced	15	30
4 - Strongly influenced	15	30
5 – Heavily influenced	11	22
Total	50	100

Table 1.17 shows the data of respondents for their rate on how much anime has influenced their viewpoint on today's culture. 15 respondents reported that they're strongly influenced by it (30%), following with another 15 respondents reported that they're moderately influenced (30%), while 11 respondents are heavily influenced (22%), 5 respondents are not influenced by anime on their viewpoint at all (10%) and 4 respondents are slightly influenced (8%)

Table 1.18

Respondents Data on Whether They Been Judged for Engaging with Anime

Judged Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, frequently	9	18
Sometimes	15	30
No, never	26	52
Total	50	100

Table 1.18 shows the respondents data on whether they have been judged for engaging with anime contents. Majority of the respondents have never been judged (52%), while 15 respondents have sometimes been judged (30%) and only a few have been judged frequently by others (18%)

Table 1.19

Respondents Comfortable Scale on Discussing Anime Topic with Various Groups

Groups	1		2		3		4		5	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Family	10	20	12	24	15	30	7	14	6	12
Friends / Close Friends	1	2	1	2	7	14	16	32	25	50
Online Community	2	4	5	10	11	22	16	32	16	32
People who shared similar interest	1	2	0	0	9	18	16	32	24	48

Note. 1 – Very Uncomfortable, 2 – Somewhat Comfortable, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Comfortable,

5 – Very Comfortable

Table 1.19 shows the comfortable scale of respondents for discussing anime topics with

various groups. Out of the 4 various groups, friends / close friends have the highest

comfortable rating for discussing anime topics (50%), follow by people who shared similar

interest with the respondents (48%). Online community shares a comfortable rating balance

between comfortable and very comfortable (32%), and family having a neutral rating from

majority of the respondents (30%)

Table 1.20

Respondents Comfortable Scale on Attending Anime Events with Various Groups

Groups	1		2		3		4		5	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Family	21	42	7	14	13	26	8	16	1	2
Friends / Close Friends	2	4	0	0	5	10	20	40	23	56
Online Community	7	14	6	12	12	24	15	30	10	20
People who shared similar interest	3	6	2	4	9	18	16	32	20	40

Note. 1 – Very Uncomfortable, 2 – Somewhat Comfortable, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Comfortable,

5 – Very Comfortable

Table 1.19 shows the comfortable scale of respondents for attending anime events with

various groups. From the data, it is reported that majority of the respondents are very

uncomfortable in attending anime events together with family members (42%), while with

friends / close friends have the highest very comfortable rating (56%). For online community,

majority respondents reported that they're comfortable with attending anime events with

them (30%), while people who shared similar interest with most of the respondents have a

very comfortable rating (40%)

Table 1.21

Respondents Agreement Scale to Integrating Anime-related Content in the Following Aspects

Aspects	1		2		3		4		5	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Marketing & Advertisements	3	6	2	4	16	32	12	24	17	34
Movies & TV Shows	2	4	3	6	10	20	18	36	17	34
Entertainment Media	3	6	0	0	10	20	19	38	18	36
Cafes & Attractions	4	8	0	0	11	22	15	30	20	40

Note. 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree

Table 1.21 shows the agreement scale from respondents for integrating anime-related activities into the following aspects. Marketing & Advertisements, majority of the respondents strongly agree to it (34%), while movies & TV shows have majority of the respondents agreeing to it (36%), following with entertainment media having most of the respondents agreeing to it as well (38%) and cafes & attractions have most of the respondents strongly agree to it (40%).

Table 1.22

Respondents Agreement Scale on Integrating Anime into the Following Industries

Industries	1		2		3		4		5	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Entertainment & Media	1	2	0	0	8	16	18	36	23	46
Gaming Industry	2	4	0	0	4	8	16	32	28	56
Fashion & Beauty	3	6	1	2	18	36	18	36	10	20
Marketing & Advertisements	2	4	2	4	16	32	17	34	13	26
Retail & Consumer Goods	2	4	3	6	7	14	20	40	18	36
Food & Beverage	4	8	0	0	16	32	13	26	17	34

Note. 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree

Table 1.22 shows the data on agreement scale by respondents for integrating anime into the following industries. From this data, we can visually see that entertainment & media, from majority of the respondents strongly agree to having anime integrate into it (46%), while gaming industry received 28 respondents for strongly agreeing (56%). Fashion & beauty on the other hand, have majority of the respondents reported that they are both neutral and agreeing to it (36%), while marketing & advertisements have majority of the respondents agreeing to it (34%), with retail &consumer goods also having majority of the respondents agreeing to it (40%) and lastly food & beverages having most of the respondents, strongly agreeing to it (34%).

Chapter 5

Discussion & Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discuss about the data found in chapter 4 and relating them to the theories involved. Concluding this research study and noting any research limitations this research may have, for future researchers who would like to use this study for their own thesis.

5.2 Discussion

The findings of this study reveal several insights into the recognition and cultural acceptance of anime among Gen Z. The questionnaire highlights that anime style, storyline, and character development are the most recognized factors for anime. In terms of cultural acceptance, a pattern was discovered that most respondents felt comfortable sharing their anime interests with peers, and the same for people who shared the same interests as them. While sharing it with family is neither comfortable nor uncomfortable. More importantly, over half of the respondents have never been judged for engaging with anime. Furthermore, the findings confirm that anime is more culturally accepted among Gen Z, which is true with the global trend in anime among Gen Z. As Wong and Melnizek (2024) mention that Gen Z is consuming more anime on a weekly basis, which is consistent with the findings of this study, where 30% of the respondents consume anime 2 – 4 hours per week, 22% of them consume 1 – 2 hours per week and with 10% of them consuming it for more than 4 hours per week.

5.3 Relation to Social Media Engagement Theory

The study shows that it aligns with social media engagement theory, where when an individual has continuous participation with a certain content on social media their relationship strengthens with them. In the study, it is found that many respondents engage with anime on social media, where 52% of them follow or interact with anime-related influencers, and 36% join online forums and communities. Such engagement in anime activities contributes to active engagement that raises anime exposure. There are also 38% of respondents who often notice anime references in mainstream media while 12% very frequently notice it, this suggests that social media are spreading more anime references into everyday media. The constant exposure through social media channels helps explain why anime is more widely recognized and accepted among Gen Z. Where respondent's data showed that they're more open to having anime integrate into the marketing and entertainment industry, which implies that social media engagement has normalized anime content. In short, Gen Z's active online participation and engagement with anime builds up familiarity and approval, consistent with social media engagement theory.

5.4 Relation to User and Gratification Theory

The behavior of respondents suggests there are several gratifications in the process. Firstly, many respondents spend substantial time watching anime, where 30% of the respondents consume anime 2 – 4 hours per week, 22% of them consume 1 – 2 hours per week, and 10% of them consume it for more than 4 hours per week. There are also 68% of respondents who collect anime merchandise, indicating enjoyment and investing in a hobby. Secondly, there are also 38% of respondents engage in cosplay, 34% create fan art or fan fiction and 36% of respondents participate in online communities and forums, suggesting that they choose these anime activities to satisfy their desires. There's also the comfort level, where 50% of respondents are very comfortable with discussing anime with their friends / close friends. Moreover, 30% of respondents felt that anime has strongly affected their cultural viewpoint and another 30% felt it moderately, suggesting that it fulfills the cognitive needs to relate to culture exploration. In short, Gen Z viewers appear to consume anime as a form of entertainment and it helps them to collect with peers, along with fulfilling their needs and desires by actively participating and engaging in anime activities, as how user and gratification theory would suggest.

5.5 Research Question Findings

Research Question 1:

1. Most respondents were introduced to anime during their primary school years or even earlier during kindergarten

2. Respondents overwhelmingly recognized anime for its storyline and plot and character development

3. Over half of respondents frequently or very frequently noticed anime references in non-anime media such as advertisements, TV shows, and social media

4. Active engagement in anime-related activities such as purchasing merchandise, attending events, and interacting with influencers helps sustain and reinforce anime's presence and visibility among Gen Z's

5. The preference for Japanese audio with English subtitles highlights the globalized accessibility of anime content

Research Question 2:

1. Respondents were not only regular consumers of anime content but also widely agreed that anime should be integrated into entertainment industries such as movies, TV shows, and gaming

2. High comfort levels when discussing anime with friends and like-minded communities

3. While most respondents were comfortable sharing their anime interests with peers, they were less comfortable doing so with family

4. Most respondents reported that anime had at least a moderate to strong influence on their view of today's culture

5. Over half of the respondents had never experienced judgment for their anime engagement indicates that Gen Z are more open with anime

5.6 Conclusion

To conclude, this research study has highlighted the recognition and cultural acceptance of anime. Where Generation Z, has the highest interest rate towards anime and anime activities. Many participants stated that the main factors that make anime recognizable are its storyline, plot, and character development throughout the series. Also, many participants have been exposed to anime content during their early years. With anime activities being actively engaged and enjoyed by Generation Z.

While for cultural acceptance, Generation Z perceives it as not only an entertainment medium but also wants it to be integrated into certain industries such as the gaming industry and retail & consumer goods industry. Furthermore, the findings highlight a high comfort level when it comes to discussing anime-related content with friends and like-minded people. With family being the only not-so-comfortable form to discuss with. When it comes to cultural products, purchasing and collecting anime merchandise would be the main form for Generation Z, followed by attending anime events, to satisfy their wants for anime.

Lastly, this study helps to contribute to understanding Generation Z's perspective towards anime content. In short, Generation Z has recognized and accepted anime as a culture. The findings help to uncover a wider knowledge of anime expanding exposure in today's youth culture.

5.7 Research Limitations

There are two notable limitations to this research, which are the amount of participants sampled, and the lack of qualitative data.

The amount of participants for this research is the minimum requirement for this study. However, to be able to measure a larger scale of participants within a population, a minimum of 200 participants is preferred (White, 2023). So that a much more appropriate analysis can be done for a population of participants sampled from

Another research limitation is the lack of qualitative data gathered. This research mainly uses quantitative data as its main source of research. Qualitative is also essential as it helps to understand an individual experience, interest, and motivation (Agius, 2013).

5.8 Suggestions for Future Research

For future researchers who would like to explore similar areas to this. Highly suggest exploring some literature reviews that have done similar studies on this. For anime culture studies done by Yusof et al. (2023), and Arsyad et al. (2024). For the type of research methodology to be used in the research study, one should review studies by Firdaus et al. (2021). Reviewing both the literature and research methodology done by other researchers, helps them gain a basic understanding of the topic they are diving into. Therefore, researchers who want to do similar research can consider getting more participants involved and exploring each individual's viewpoint on anime, rather than having quantitative data without an in-depth analysis of the participants.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Section 1: Agreement to participate in this questionnaire

1. Agreement to participate in this questionnaire

☐ I agree to participate in this questionnaire

Section 2: Demographic

2. Age

☐ 14 – 17

☐ 18 – 24

☐ 25 – 34

3. Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

4. Academic Qualification

☐ High School Certificate

☐ Foundation

☐ Diploma

☐ Bachelor's degree

☐ Master

☐ PhD

Section 3: Anime Consumption Background

5. When did you first found out about Anime

□ During kindergarten

□ During primary school

□ During secondary school

□ During university / college

□ Found out just recently (within the past year)

6. Rate on a scale of 1 to 5, how interested are you in Anime?

1 - Not interested at all

2 - Slightly interested

3 – Neutral

4 – Interested

5 – Very interested

7. How often do you engaged with Anime-related activities? (Watching anime, reading

manga, cosplaying, collecting merchandise, discussing with others, etc.)

1 – Never

2 – Rarely

3 – Sometimes

4 – Often

5 – Very often

8. How many hours do you spend watching anime per week?

□ I don't watch Anime regularly

□ Less than an hour

□ 1 - 2 hours

□ 2 - 4 hours

□ More than 4 hours

9. Which medium do you prefer to use to watch Anime?

□ Online (YouTube, Bilibili, Anime Streaming Website etc)

□ Offline (TV, DVD, Blue Ray etc)

10. Which language do you prefer to watch Anime in? (Dubbed audio)

□ Japanese

□ English

□ Chinese

□ Malay

□ Others

11. Which language do you mainly use for Anime subtitles?

□ English

□ Chinese (Traditional / Simplified)

□ Malay

□ Others (Japanese, Tamil, etc.)

□ I don't use subtitles

Section 4: Anime and its Recognition

12. Which of the following Anime style would you prefer?

□ Japanese Anime

□ Chinese Anime

□ Both

13. Which of the following aspect do you think is Anime most recognize for?

□ Characters and their development

□ Storyline and the plot

□ Genre and theme

□ Community

□ Music and soundtrack

14. How often do you notice anime references or influences in non-anime media (Movies, TV shows, ads, or social media, etc.)

1 – Never

2 – Rarely

3 – Sometime

4 – Often

5 – Very Frequently

15. When did you first engage in Anime activities?

□ I have never engaged in anime activities

□ During kindergarten

□ During primary school

□ During secondary school

□ During university / college

□ Found out just recently (within the past year)

16. Which of the following Anime activities do you engage in, other than watching Anime?

  □ I don't engage in Anime activities

  □ Cosplay / Role-playing

  □ Creating Fan Art / Fan Fiction / Fan Videos

  □ Purchasing and Collecting Merchandises (Official Merchandise, Collaboration

  Merchandise, Fan Merchandise, etc.)

  □ Participating in Online Communities and Forums (Facebook group, Reddit, Discord

  server etc.)

  □ Influencer Interaction (Follow cosplayer's social media accounts, etc.)

  □ Attending Events (Anime conventions, screenings, gathering etc.)

  □ Watch Entertainment Media (Live streams, Q&A sessions, podcast, etc.)

17. On a scale of 1 to 5, how often do you use anime references in the following aspects?

	1 = Never	2 = Rarely	3 = Sometimes	4 = Often	5 = Very Often
Assignments	□	□	□	□	□
Work/Professional Presentations	□	□	□	□	□
Casual Conversations	□	□	□	□	□
Social Media Posts	□	□	□	□	□
Creative Projects (Art, Writing, Events, etc.)	□	□	□	□	□
Fashion & Style	□	□	□	□	□

Section 5: Anime in Today's Culture

18. Rate on a scale of 1 to 5, has Anime influenced your viewpoint on today's culture?

    1 - Not at all

    2 - Slightly influenced

    3 - Moderately influenced

    4 - Strongly influenced

    5 - Heavily influenced

19. Have you ever been judged for engaging with anime related activities or content?

    □ Yes, frequently

    □ Sometimes

    □ No, never

20. On a scale of 1 to 5, how comfortable do you feel discussing Anime topic with various

    groups?

	1 = Very Uncomfortable	2 = Somewhat Comfortable	3 = Neutral	4 = Comfortable	5 = Very Comfortable
Family	□	□	□	□	□
Friends / Close Friends	□	□	□	□	□
Online Communities	□	□	□	□	□
People who shared similar interests	□	□	□	□	□

21. On a scale of 1 to 5, how comfortable are you attending anime events with various groups?

	1 = Very Uncomfortable	2 = Somewhat Comfortable	3 = Neutral	4 = Comfortable	5 = Very Comfortable
Family	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friends / Close Friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Online Communities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People who shared similar interests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. To what extend do you agree with integrating anime-related contents (cosplaying, anime-themed, etc.) into the following aspect?

	1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
Marketing and Advertisements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Movies & TV Shows	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Entertainment Media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cafes & Attractions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23. To what extent do you agree with integrating anime into the following industries?

	1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
Entertainment & Media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gaming Industry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fashion & Beauty	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Marketing & Advertisement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Retail & Consumer Goods	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Food & Beverage	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐