



Web Student Self-Concept Due to Action Anime: Case Study in Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University, Tangerang

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A B S T R A C T

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Anime is a Japanese cartoon film that is very popular among adults, teenagers, and children. As a result, many people change their self-concept to their life behavior to be the same as anime characters. This study aims to elaborate on the formation of the self-concept of a weeb or anime lover in everyday life. The research method used is a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach. Data collection was carried out by interviews and observations on anime lovers at Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University's 7th-semester Communication Science study program. This research focuses on how individuals or weeps find their identity and concepts in themselves after watching anime films. This research applies Sven Windahl's theory of uses and effect. The results showed that this self-experience encouraged subjects to learn Japanese and also gave freedom to imagine and interacting with their favorite anime characters.

Introduction

The development of technology has brought transformation over time. It can be seen that from the time before the existence of the internet to the rapid development of complex internet technology as it is today. Such developments will make a difference in the way we communicate (Pratiwi & Pritanova, 20). Thanks to technological advancements, we can easily access various information according to our needs, one of which is watching movies. The film is one of the mass media that can convey messages and target many different audiences in terms of religion, ethnicity, status, age, and place of residence. It can act as an acquisition channel for a particular message. By watching movies, we can get information and images about a selected fact or reality (Aidil, 2019).

Lately, many teenagers and adults liked animated films from Japan, commonly known as anime. This Japanese-made cartoon or cartoon film is very popular in Indonesia. Because anime has an important role as a means of strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries, although anime was first introduced to Indonesia, it has not shown its influence. However, over time, anime was able to become a form of cooperation between Japan and Indonesia. So that anime was able to change the views of Indonesians who saw Japan as a colony, but not so when anime began to be accepted, and finally Japan was seen as friendly to maintain its culture, then it was well received during the New Order government. Its culture has so far been widely accepted by the people of Indonesia (Audria, 2019).

Anime has many different genres, such as action, romance, life reality, comedy, sports, and more. Anime audiences are also divided into categories. In general, anime target audiences are divided by age and gender, for example (1) Shōnen with teenage male audiences; (2) Shōjo with underage female viewers; (3) Seinen with an adult male audience; (4) Josei with an adult female audience; and (5) Kodomo with its children's audience segment (Rahadiani, 2023).

Like other communication media, anime also has an impact on its audience. Previous research written by Hanifah Nurdin entitled "Message Analysis and Impact of Action Anime Genre on Students of Ar-Raniry State Islamic University Banda Aceh" suggested that anime affects the lifestyle of students in activities, studying, dressing, talking, eating, and psychologically, when they like it, carried away by the story, imitating Japanese culture and following some actions carried

out by the cartoon characters. In addition, there is a study written by Ulivana Restu Handaningtias with the research title “Communication Events in the Formation of Anime Otaku Self-Concept” which shows that these self-experiences encourage subjects to seek communities that allow them to imagine and interact freely with their favorite cartoon characters. In the first study conducted by Hanifah, the number of research subjects mentioned did not match between the words and the informant details table. The researcher mentioned 12 informants, while the number of informants shown in the table was only 9. As for this study, only one informant was the subject of research. The second research conducted by Uliviana did not clearly mention the subject of her research, making readers confused and the credibility of the source was still questionable. While in this study it is clearly stated who is the subject of the research. From the two previous studies studied, there is a difference with this study, namely that this study focuses on how self-concept is formed after watching action anime.

There are also surprising findings regarding anime and its extreme impact. The frequency of watching anime in the action genre can change the minds and opinions of the audience. Some like to be called crazy, and some don't (Nurdin et al., 2023). As reported by Kompas.com in July 2021, a 59-year-old man killed his parents in anger at being bullied while watching anime. The suspect stored the victim's body in a refrigerator or freezer. The suspect did that out of stress taking care of his father and mother. And it turns out that the suspect is a madman and psychopath who kills people because he is inspired by action cartoon characters.

In Indonesia, there is a unique phenomenon where there is a stereotype that many people believe in, namely that there is a strong correlation between anime fans and Islamic spiritual students (rohis) who obey religious commands. Several expressions from netizens have voiced this phenomenon, such as the question asked by Latifah Febriani on the question-and-answer site Quora, which asked, “Why are the weeb generally Islamic spiritual (rohis)? Or are weeaboo usually religious?”. A similar question was also asked by an account user named *Appropriate_Twist447* on the Reddit site, who asked for opinions regarding the origins of the phenomenon where Rohis also double as anime fans. This reflects that in Indonesia, many religious students, including those on Islamic campuses such as the Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University (UNIS), enjoy weeaboo or anime culture.

Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University is the first university established in Banten. The campus has 6 faculties and 15 study programs. One of the highlights is that many students love movies, one of which is anime. Of the many anime fans, not many of them can make anime a positive thing so that they change their lifestyle and can use anime in their daily lives. Researchers are interested in one of the students of the 7th-semester Communication Science study program who can make anime useful and motivate her in her daily life. Although UNIS students do not murder due to watching anime, based on pre-research observations, UNIS students who love action genre anime have bad habits. Bad habits shown such as speaking rudely using Japanese or Indonesian, lack of socialization, hallucinating, dressing, and using accessories worn by the characters in the anime. With a qualitative approach, this study resulted in findings that anime lovers of this action genre have high imaginative power after watching for a long duration.

Method

The method used is qualitative with a case study approach. This method was chosen because the problem studied is a social and dynamic problem that cannot be measured using numbers. The primary data source in this study is anime fans who are members of the community or not members of the community, obtained through interviews and observations. Secondary data sources include books or references relevant to the research theme, which are obtained through documentation and literature studies with the help of print media and internet media as well as field notes when researchers make observations. The object of this research is one of the 7th-semester students majoring in Communication Sciences, Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University, Tangerang.

The primary data source in this study is anime fans who are members of the community or not members of the community, obtained through interviews and observations. Researchers are interested in taking samples from one of these UNIS students because it is seen from its character that is different from students in general. This student really likes anime and can use it for more positive things. For example, when watching anime, he thinks is not only fond of anime characters but also uses anime to learn Japanese and he can control herself and divide her time in the midst of his busy studies and work. From these characters, researchers are interested in researching it and want to know how the formation

of such a self-concept. This study used data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. The validity of this study uses the source triangulation technique, which is by comparing and checking data with various sources to be more reliable if it is extracted from different data sources. The source of data referred to here is the primary data source, namely data obtained from informants using interviews and observations. The data analysis technique in this study uses Miles and Hubberman's interactive analysis model, which is an analysis that is carried out continuously until the data becomes saturated. This analysis process goes through four stages, namely the stage of data collection, data reduction, data presentation and the last is concluding.

This research uses the theory of uses and effects. The theory of uses and effects is a theory that explains the relationship between mass communication delivered through mass media, which causes an effect on users of the mass media. This theory focuses on fulfilling a particular function related to an existing expectation. This theory was first put forward by Sven Windahl in 1979. This theory is a synthesis of the previous theory of traditional uses and gratification theory of effects. The uses and effects theory assumes that individual characteristics, expectations, and perceptions of the media, and the degree of access to the media, will lead individuals to the decision to use or not to use mass media content. The theory of uses and effects places more emphasis on the individual need to just be the one that causes (Adawiyah, 2020).

So the theory of uses and effects is a theory that explains the relationship between mass communication delivered through mass media, which causes an effect for users of the mass media. Examples of use and effects theory can be seen from the habit of someone watching or listening to mass media in an individual's daily life, for example, the habit of people watching Korean dramas that cause an effect of what is seen. In this study, the basic principle contained is, that mass media users get an effect after using certain mass media. The mass media that is of concern to researchers is the action genre anime film. This study explains the effects caused by an anime fan after watching action genre anime.

Self-concept can be broadly defined as a person's beliefs, views, or judgments about themselves. A person is said to have a negative self-image if they believe and see themselves as weak, helpless, incapable of doing anything, incompetent, failed, unhappy, unattractive, hated, and not interested in enjoying life (Fitriawati,

2016). The dimension of self-concept can penetrate his opinions and judgments about himself. The penetrated dimension of the self-concept dimension includes the physical self, the individual self, the family self, the moral-ethical self, and also the social self-resulting from interactive processes experienced and taking place in everyday life. Aspects of self-concept such as gender, religion, ethnicity, education, experience, and physical appearance, are internalized through statements from others (feedback) that confirm those aspects to the other, thus forcing the person to behave according to the one generated (Yulian, 2019).

Everyone lives their lives, of course, it cannot be separated from the communication process carried out. In the communication he does there is interaction between individuals, so it requires symbols as a tool to exchange messages. This symbol can be either verbal or non-verbal. These messages certainly contain meanings that are understood by individuals who interact during the communication process (Wijayadiningrat, 2020). This research will describe how the formation of the self-concept of an action-genre anime fan and what changes fans experience after watching action-genre anime.

Findings and Discussion

Indonesia is the largest Japanese popular culture fandom in Asia. Due to cultural globalization, in Indonesia, there are popular cultures from Japan such as dorama, Japanese music, manga, cosplay, and anime. Of all these, the most popular are cosplay, manga, and anime or Japanese cartoons.

Anime can attract the attention of many Indonesian people from children and even adults, as one of the popular cultures, anime has factors behind it becoming popular. These factors include the following: The popularity of anime has increased interest in anime among the people of Indonesia, especially its fans. This is certainly a concern because anime's interest in Japanese popular culture causes the younger generation to become curious about Japanese culture rather than Indonesian culture itself. Even today most people who are already obsessed with one of these Japanese cultures have considered anime as a part of their lives, most of them are interested in watching anime because of its diverse, unique, creative, and funny stories.

Especially action anime or action genre anime, namely films that deal with exciting, tense, dangerous action scenes, murders, fights, shootouts, races,

explosions, chases, races against time, and other actions. Action genre anime have a fast storyline. This genre always attracts many viewers to enjoy action genre films, because this genre is devoted to provoking the adrenaline of the audience, conflicts or problems that occur in action films are not only limited to physical battles of the characters but also about the inner conflicts experienced by the characters.

Impact After Watching Anime

Based on the results of interviews that have been conducted, there are several impacts or messages that arise after watching action genre anime. This positive message makes UNIS students continue to watch anime and continue to carry out their obligations as female students. Positive messages often come from a variety of sources and experiences in our lives. One form of positive message that can provide inspiration and motivation is interest in learning a foreign language, such as Japanese. For a student at Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University (UNIS), this interest became an entrance to a colorful and enriching world of her knowledge and life experience.

First: Anime fans interested in learning Japanese



Figure 1. Post of Interviewee's Work
Source: Speaker's Instagram account (@erohkhumaeroh16)

In social life, many young people find creative ideas to learn new things to create works that can bring benefits to themselves. From the results of interviews

that researchers have conducted, it turns out that watching anime can create creative ideas for anime fans in making works and learning new.

“After watching a lot of anime, I was also inspired to learn Japanese, and have attended Japanese free online classes several times. In addition, I have also attended N5 paid Japanese classes for one month, where classes are held online through meet and 3 meetings a week.”

From the results of the interview excerpt above, the resource person who is one of the students of Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University Tangerang admitted that he was inspired to learn Japanese by taking intensive Japanese online classes up to the N5 level which is the basic level in testing the understanding and use of vocabulary, basic grammar, as well as hiragana, katakana, and basic kanji. N5 is one of the levels of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT), an internationally recognized Japanese language proficiency test.

Learning Japanese is not just a linguistic study, but also a window into a rich and unique culture. Japanese has different writing systems, namely kanji, hiragana, and katakana, which provide their own challenges for learners. However, this UNIS student sees the challenge as an opportunity to develop herself and understand more deeply Japanese society and culture.

Previous research proved that students' interest in anime shows significantly increased their interest in learning Japanese. At Widyatama University, Indonesia, many Japanese Language Study Program students hone their Japanese language skills through anime because the language style is easier to understand (Jaohari & Kuraesin, 2021). In Malaysia, it was revealed that exposure to anime among students increased their interest in learning Japanese and sparked interest in Japanese culture (Pae, Mamat, & Rashid, 2020). In Australia, a complex relationship was found between anime fans, their motivations, consumption patterns, and intentions to learn Japanese in formal, informal, and non-formal contexts (Iida & Armour, 2019).

Second: Anime motivates her in living his life so far

In addition to language, her interest in Japanese culture is also manifested in her interest in anime. Anime is a great source of inspiration for many people, including this UNIS student. One of the anime genres that he is most interested

in is action. Action anime not only offers exciting fight scenes but also conveys moral messages and deep life values.

Anime, for this female student, is not just entertainment. She sees anime as a means to motivate herself in dealing with everyday life. The strong characters and inspiring stories in action anime provide a tremendous boost of encouragement. Every story faced by the characters in the anime becomes a mirror for herself to keep fighting and not give up in the midst of the twists and turns of college life.

“In addition to action, I also like the genre about the spirit of life where the character never gives up under any circumstances, and that can motivate me in life.”

Then the obsession of this female student who also calls herself a weeb towards this action genre anime because this film teaches the spirit of life where the main character in this genre anime never gives up under any circumstances, so this is what always motivates her in living her life so far.

This finding is interesting, as it states that anime can provide positive life motivation for its audience in Indonesia. It turns out that the positive values taught in this anime are in harmony with the values of Muslim life in Indonesia, such as always making an effort. Several findings abroad have shown that anime can have negative impacts, such as hikikomori syndrome, the inability to maintain social communication (Chiara, 2023), or other effects, such as self-harm and eating disorders (Hansen, 2015).

Third: Anime has an effect on imagination and emotions

The influence of action anime on its emotional changes is also noteworthy. The epic battles and brave decisions of the characters in the action anime teach her not to be afraid to face challenges and take risks in life. She learned that failure is not the end of everything, but rather a valuable lesson for growing and developing. Through this journey, UNIS students found that positive messages not only come from textbooks or lectures on campus, but also from hobbies and personal interests. Learning Japanese and loving action anime gives a new color to her life, inspires her to keep improving, and gives her the courage to face challenges.



Figure 2. Speakers Watching Anime
Action genre.

Source: Personal Documents

“For example, if I finish watching anime that has the power to shoot without using a weapon, he just talks about it and shoots that person. Now that’s sometimes I think I want to have that kind of power.”

Such positive messages create an environment that supports personal growth and self-development. This UNIS student is an example of the diversity of interests and hobbies that can be a source of extraordinary strength in achieving dreams and facing daily life with a positive spirit. Along with the development of technology and globalization, understanding foreign languages and cultures such as Japanese becomes a valuable asset that can open up new opportunities and inspire positive change in oneself.

But she also feels a negative impact after watching anime, especially the action genre with a long duration, there is a high imaginative effect produced by watching it such as when watching anime with characters who have superpowers, there is a desire and hope from the source to have the same power and this is even more passionate when there is a relevant event that occurs in real life. Although it didn’t last long because the source was able to control himself, sometimes there was also verbal communication that occurred spontaneously and was related to the action anime watched by the source.

In this case, the media can give an effect to the audience to create creative

ideas through anime shows. Therefore, through case studies that have been conducted by researchers, the theory used in this study is “Uses and Effects” proposed by Sven Windahl. This theory assumes that individual characteristics, expectations, and perceptions of media, and the degree of access to media will lead individuals to decisions to use media content that has been exposed for a long period.

According to Sven, knowledge of media use and its causes can predict the outcome of a mass communication process. If the content of the media is the main cause of the results, then this is referred to as effect. But if media users are the main cause of the results, then this is called consequences. These consequences or consequences eat if after using the media and its content an individual is satisfied by accessing the media. The use of media and media content simultaneously will cause a result called consequences or a combination of consequences and effects. Of course, excessive things will be a bad thing. Often watching action genre anime causes the mindset and perspective of lovers to vary. Some like it so much that it is called a maniac, some are not.

Previous research shows varying results regarding the impact of anime on audiences. In China, findings show that after watching anime, viewers develop healthy personalities and can form positive ideological values (Wang, 2023). On the other hand, anime viewers in Taiwan who watched *Love is War* negatively influenced their emotional aspects without learning positive values (Tan & Chung, 2023).

Conclusion

Anime that has many fans in Indonesia signifies the entry of foreign cultures that can cause Indonesian cultural values to fade if this continues and is consistent. A lifestyle that tends to imitate Japanese culture can eliminate interest in one's own culture.

The influence that has been caused by watching action genre anime for a long time causes the mindset and point of view of the audience to cause different reactions, but in the case study obtained, action genre anime lovers have high imaginative power, especially after watching a long duration (marathon film). This can be manifested in cognitive, conative, and affective behavioral lifestyles such as being excited if you discover new anime and having the view that Japanese anime is a movie that will be watched to give a positive message and impression

in life and ignore negative behaviors that exist in viewing.

So there is a need for boundaries for society to be able to filter or select outside cultures that enter and self-control that must fortify themselves when they have entered the phase of obsession with anime to still be able to balance between likes and obligations as humans. The suggestion for future research is to research more about what factors cause changes in one's lifestyle and mindset after watching anime.

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