



The Influence of Online Anime towards Children

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Abstract

Online *anime* has been a major influence towards the growth of children in Malaysia. Therefore this study investigates the online *anime* that influence children in their everyday lives. The study also discusses the influence of online *anime* that contributed to positive interaction in the discussion between the children. The study involves 10 nine year olds subjects from a class of one school in Putrajaya. The children were selected based on their experience in watching online *anime*. The subjects were interviewed. They were in groups of 3 to 4. They discussed about the characters, setting and storylines from the online *anime* that they had watched and the conversation were taped and analyzed. Selected extracts were analysed and discussed by using the discourse analysis method. It is found that subjects were strongly influenced by the characters, setting and storylines from the online *anime*. They were happy and contented to be like the characters in the story. It is hoped that online *anime* were able to give positive influence towards children in their everyday lives.

Keywords: Online Anime, Influence, Discussion, Interaction, Communication



Introduction

Anime has been the liking for youngsters from early age of 5. There were not only for youngster but also for teenagers as well as adults. *Anime* has been introduced by the Japanese where it consists of beautiful drawings of cartoon and has storyline accompanied. *Anime* started with *Manga* where according to Brienza (2009) in Cooper-Chen (2011) there were 200 million *Manga* books in the *Dragonball* series originally published in Japanese by Shueisha have been sold worldwide. The selling has increased since 2002 with 60 million to 210 million in 2007 but unfortunately due to economic downturn it declined in 2008.

Due to the high demand of *manga* in year 2000 onwards, online *anime* were introduced due to the high demand reader from all over the world (Cooper-Chen, 2010). There were large number of series collection of *anime* and there were also involved in large recruiting of staff involved in the drawings. There were also courses in the universities in Japan specially majored in *anime*. It was really a crucial time when there were lack of talented *anime* artists and therefore the courses in this field were introduced. Until now, there were not only *manga* but also online *anime* were sold worldwide and a large number of the selected *anime* were transferred to dramas and movies. The movie *Hana Yori Danga* was filmed in 1995. The same storyline was then features in the drama series *Meteor Garden* (2001) from Taiwan and were famous with the *Flower Four* handsome boys where later on the same drama were produced by the Japanese, *Hana Yori Danga* (2005) and *Hana Yori Danga Returns* (2007). From there, the same storyline from the *manga* was used in the drama series *Boys Over Flowers* (2009) by the Korean where the drama series were accepted worldwide. Here, it can be seen that *manga* and *anime* were accepted no matter in the form of storybooks, dramas, movies or even online *anime* (Richmond, 2009).

Research on online *anime* was also researched by Umi Khattab & Gin Chee Tang (2012) on *animes* like *Doraemon* and *Pokemon* and were popular most in Taiwan and Indonesia. The results of the study confirmed that the popularity of *anime* in Asian countries was due to the same cultural proximity. Umi Khattab & Gin Chee Tang (2012) also stated that their finding on the *anime* and video games were not 100% from the Japanese culture. That includes the character, setting and some of the items in the *anime* were not appropriate for the Japanese culture. This has negative impact towards the readers outside Japan to understand the

Japanese culture. Some of the culture that was introduced was Chinese culture and some of the settings were in Europe and Paris but still they tried to include the Japanese culture.

Sheuo Hui Gan (2012) states in the research that there were differences in identity between the *Sky Crawlers* and *Evangelion*. The characters in *Sky Crawlers* were bored and unmotivated whilst the characters in *Evangelion* were full of youthful energy, even though it might be anxiety or even anger. Sheuo Hui Gan (2012) results stated that characters played an important role in an interesting *anime*. According to Norhaslini Abd Alim (2012) in her article stated that Malaysian community has accepted animation in the form of movies. For instance the movies like, *Putih, Usop Santorian, Upin and Ipin, Keluang Man, and Kampung Boy*. The characters in the movies were ideas from Malaysian cartoonist and animation. These had led to the near level of Malaysian artists with the cartoonist at Walt Disney. In 2007, the movie *Saladin* has won an award at the Tokyo Big Sight Award and this showed that Malaysian artists are very talented.

Another research by Fukunaga (2006) showed the narrative style of *anime* where it has been an interesting as well as accepted by most people in the world. *Anime* has looked into various themes like fantasy, everyday lives in Japan, food, action, journey, self-defense, sports, romantic drama, comedy and the relationship between people. Norris (2009) mentioned that Japanese culture has given the relationship of *manga* and *anime* in culture, gender and religion. On the other hand, Normaliza Abd Rahim (2012) research on cartoons has given high impact towards the learning of foreign language. The cartoons were influenced by Japanese *anime* and were favourites among the students at Hankuk University of Foreign Language, Korea. The subjects had high confidence in speaking the target language after watching a few series of Malay cartoons.

In accordance to the research done on *anime*, *manga* or the media technology, this study investigates the online *anime* that influence children in their everyday lives and also discusses the influence of online *anime* that contributed to positive interaction in the discussion between the children.



Methodology

The study involves 10 nine year olds subjects from a class of one school in Putrajaya. The children were selected based on their experience in watching online *anime*. The subjects were interviewed. They were in groups of 3 to 4. They discussed about the characters, setting and storylines from the online *anime* that they had watched and the conversation were taped and analyzed. Selected extracts were analysed and discussed by using the discourse analysis method.

Results and Discussion

The Influence of Character in Online *Anime*

There were a large number of favourite characters in online *anime* and the characters played an important role in giving great influence to the subjects. Since there were nineteen top online *anime*, there were also more than nineteen characters that made favourites towards the subjects. The lists of favourite characters were listed according to the subjects' favourites. 10 subjects liked the characters in *Bleach*, 9 subjects for *Naruto Shippuuden*, 9 subject for *One Piece*, 9 subjects for *Ao No Exorcist*, 9 subjects for *Fairy Tale*, 9 subjects for *Naruto*, 8 subjects for *Kaichou Wa Maid-sama*, 8 subjects for *Freezing*, 8 subjects for *Beelzebub*, 8 subjects for *Eyeshield 21*, 8 subjects for *Mayo Chiki*, 7 subjects for *Nurarihyon No Mago*, 7 subjects for *Deadman Wonderland*, 7 subjects for *Hidan No Aria*, 7 subjects for *Sekai Ichi Harsukoi*, 7 subjects for *Seikon No Qwaser*, 6 subjects for *Uta No Pr*, 6 subjects for *Detective Conan* and 5 subjects for *Inazuma Eleven*. The above characters chosen from the online *anime* had great influenced towards the subjects. The numbers showed that the subjects preferred the characters in the online *anime* stated. The characters either the male or female characters were being the major influence on the subjects and they did not miss watching the *anime* online.

The subjects mentioned that the characters were interesting, good looking, pretty, strong and also clever. The subjects stated that, 'The character has the ability to see the ghost. Really superb!', 'Madoka is really magical', 'The mermaid princess and Lucia are both pretty together', 'Vesper was really strong. He fought the alien', 'The Royal Princess is really pretty!' and 'Higurashi has a powerful jewel in his body'. The statements given by the subjects were merely on the characters. It seemed that the subjects were really interested in the characters and they were explaining about the characters to their friends. Most of the



subjects seemed to know about the story mentioned and they were telling each other about the characters. They even argued about their favourite characters when some of their friends did not like the characters that they mentioned. But overall, they seemed to know the characters well and they were enthusiastic to talk about it.

The Influence of Setting in Online *Anime*

Setting of the online *anime* also influenced the subjects in liking the online *anime*. The setting had made the subjects imagine the different places that they had read from other online *anime*. They had chosen the best setting for their favourites. The subjects stated that their favourite setting were as follows, '10 subjects liked the settings in *Bleach*, 7 subjects for *Naruto Shippuuden*, 6 subject for *One Piece*, 7 subjects for *Ao No Exorcist*, 7 subjects for *Fairy Tale*, 8 subjects for *Naruto*, 8 subjects for *Kaichou Wa Maid-sama*, 8 subjects for *Freezing*, 9 subjects for *Beelzebub*, 9 subjects for *Eyeshield 21*, 7 subjects for *Mayo Chiki*, 6 subjects for *Nurarihyon No Mago*, 6 subjects for *Deadman Wonderland*, 8 subjects for *Hidan No Aria*, 6 subjects for *Sekai Ichi Harsukoi*, 9 subjects for *Seikon No Qwaser*, 9 subjects for *Uta No Pr*, 8 subjects for *Detective Conan* and 7 subjects for *Inazuma Eleven*. The statements above showed that all ten subjects liked the setting from the online *anime* *Bleach*. It showed that the subjects liked the setting about ghosts and fighting scenes. The settings in the online *anime* were changed most of the time and it was so colourful and interesting that the subjects felt like real when they watched it. Next were *Beelzebub*, *Eyeshield*, *Seikon*, *No Qwaser*, and *Uta No Pr* where nine subjects preferred the setting from the online *anime*. They mentioned that they setting were interesting and related to the storyline in the online *anime*.

The subjects also mentioned that they were amazed to see the setting from the favourite online *anime*. The settings were related to the storyline and at the same time were different with the other online *anime*. They were stunned to see the creativity that the authors and illustrators for the setting had. They stated, 'The setting in *Beelzebub* were beautiful. It has amazing buildings', 'In *Inazuma Eleven*, the setting were spectacular. The scenery in the forest were so detailed', '*Naruto* had good setting as well', 'I like the setting in *Uta No Pr* the best', and 'Really interesting to have such setting in *Eyeshield*. Looked really real!'. The statements from the subjects showed that they loved the setting and the setting had made them want to watch more. The subjects were contented with the setting when they mentioned that the setting in the online *anime* were really detailed even the tiny bits were in the setting. They



looked happy to explain and tell about the setting to their friends and their friends agreed to most of the statements.

The Influence of Storylines in Online *Anime*

The influence of storylines in online *anime* was also being discussed among the subjects. The subjects were excited to tell each other about the storyline from the online *anime*. They were also seen laughing and giggling when they were telling each other about the same story. Most of the subjects were seen involved and were trying to tell about their own version of the story. The subjects stated that their favourite storyline were as follows, ‘10 subjects liked the settings in *Bleach*, 6 subjects for *Naruto Shippuuden*, 9 subject for *One Piece*, 8 subjects for *Ao No Exorcist*, 8 subjects for *Fairy Tale*, 7 subjects for *Naruto*, 9 subjects for *Kaichou Wa Maid-sama*, 9 subjects for *Freezing*, 8 subjects for *Beelzebub*, 9 subjects for *Eyeshield 21*, 8 subjects for *Mayo Chiki*, 6 subjects for *Nurarihyon No Mago*, 7 subjects for *Deadman Wonderland*, 9 subjects for *Hidan No Aria*, 9 subjects for *Sekai Ichi Harsukoi*, 8 subjects for *Seikon No Qwaser*, 8 subjects for *Uta No Pr*, 7 subjects for *Detective Conan* and 9 subjects for *Inazuma Eleven*. The numbers chosen for each online *anime* were based on the subjects’ favourite storyline. All the subjects had chosen *Bleach* as their favourite storyline. This was due to the fact that all the subjects liked the story about ghost and the fighting scenes in the story. Although it was fighting scenes but the scenes were to fight against the ghost. Next, nine subjects had chosen *One Piece*, *Kaichou Wa Maid-sama*, *Freezing*, *Eyeshield 21*, *Hidan No Aria*, *Sekai Ichi Harsukoi*, *Inazuma Eleven* as their favourite storylines. The subjects had chosen the storyline about energetic, handsome, pretty, strong and love storylines for their favourite. The stories were interesting and they mentioned that most of the time they felt like it was real and had happy endings where the characters won in the battle or the characters left with good deeds.

The subjects also gave comments on the storyline of their favourite online *anime*. The subjects were trying their best to tell each other what they knew and some of the subjects were trying to argue about the storyline of the online *anime*. The subjects stated, ‘The bad guy supposed to be caught by the hero!’, ‘The dolphin was not captured!’, ‘What happened to the sword? It was taken, right!’, ‘Where did the ghost gone to? It was not there in the last episode!’, ‘The boy was so good looking when he fought the alien’, and ‘The cute boy had flew up in the sky to fight! That was cool!’. The statements from the subjects seemed to be



about the storyline. The subjects were trying to explain or even get assurance from the friends about the storyline that they had forgotten. The other subjects were giving answers to the questions and the rest were seen nodding their heads. They were happy to continue reminding each other about the story line and as the matter of fact, the girls were seen giggling when they mentioned about the male hero in from the story. The boys were giving odd remarks on their faces when they were talking about the male heroes. Towards the end of the discussion, the subjects were happy and contented to have given their version of the storylines.

To sum up, the results and discussion of the study postulate that the subjects showed confidence during the discussion. The subjects had given their thoughts about their favourite online *anime*. Here, it can be seen that technology has played a major role in boosting up their confidence level in speaking and giving ideas and leaving comment. The subjects also managed to retell the story among the group. Here, it was obvious that the online *anime* has a great influence to the subjects. The results of this study is parallel to the results from the research done by Normaliza Abd Rahim (2011) where technology has played a major role in giving them the space in speak up, giving ideas and at the same time confident in arguing about the matter that they were good at. This study also has the same results as Sheuo Hui Gan (2012) where characters has played a major role in an interesting *anime* or *manga* and also the characters must be able to attract the reader or viewers.

Conclusion

The author concludes that this study implicates not only researchers but also educators and students from all over the world. *Anime* has succeeded in attracting most people in the world and will continue to make them satisfied with their reading and viewing. Moreover this study will help the ministry of higher education in offering new courses in *anime* so that new artists with talent will pursue their studies in a higher level. It is hoped that future research will look at Malaysian viewers in the perspective of culture and content.



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