Animé and its Influence in the Shaping of Humanistic Values among Filipino College Students

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ABSTRACT

The Filipino society has successfully assimilated animés rooted in Japan. The current study examined whether these animés can contribute to the development of humanistic values contrary to an observation that they are violent and semi-pornographic. The researcher conducted a survey of 865 college students at a state university in the central Philippines. Findings reveal that friendship, love of family, concern for health and well-being, are among the values identified by the respondents as evident in the animés. Moreover, animés tend to reinforce the relational nature of Filipinos. These findings offer a significant contribution to the study on the effects of new non-native media on Filipino youth values.

Keywords: Animés, manga, humanistic values, cosplay, imitation, arousal, desensitization, catharsis, cultivation.

INTRODUCTION

Some Filipino youth of this generation are interestingly avid animé otakus (fans). The word animé (a-nih-may) refers to Japanese animation. Historically, it links directly to the Manga, the original Japanese comics popularized in Japan after World War II by Ozamu Tezuka. Manga and the animated films or animés had its beginnings with this artist. Tezuka's Treasure Island published in 1947, served as the groundbreaking work that eventually brought cinematic forms of expression to Manga, and it left a profound impact on the succeeding cartoonists. Part of the history of the animated cartoon could be linked to the Manga Astro Boy. Astro Boy was produced on Japanese television. Masterpieces generated by the pioneering Manga artist include Kimba the White Lion, a great drama set in Africa; Princess Knight, the adventures of a princess who was forced to disguise herself as a prince; and the human drama Black Jack, which was about a doctor. These masterpieces came one after the other to the extent that Tezuka's various outputs had been admired then and until this very day. In his lifetime, the cartoonist produced more than 500 titles (Okada et al., 2007).

The sustained popularity of the Manga and its patronage reinforced through animé films and series on television, episodes in the YouTube, online games, commercials, toys and merchandise of animé characters. In some universities, students are influenced by animés through cosplaying (wearing the costumes of their favorite animé characters and others) in acquaintance parties, programs, street parades, and fashion shows. Even children at home are hooked on the television for some hours just to

watch animés and sometimes mimic the stunts and mantras of their favorite character.

Intrigued by the popularity of the animés, the researcher sought to find out whether humanistic values needed in the 21st century are promoted by these animés, instead of the observed violence and pornography. To do this, the researcher conducted a survey of college students at a state university in Central Philippines. Findings of this study offer significant contributions to the literature on the cultural and behavioral influences of animés to viewers as there is still little known about this line of inquiry in the Philippines. The succeeding sections of the paper review the literature on the relationship between humanistic values and animés, discuss the methodology used and the results of the study and interpret the results within certain theoretical and practical considerations.

Literature Review

Humanistic values, according to Gerald Larue (1998), view the world as a place where everyone is free, not enslaved by the "whims and wishes and desires of others," nor used as "a tool to satisfy the lusts or greed or ambitions of others"; a world in which everyone "shall be wanted, welcomed, and is an esteemed member of the one human family." As Adams (2003) argued, "Humanistic values are things, features, or conditions that satisfy the normative requirements of or somehow enhance the selfhood of human being or satisfy the requirements of the culture or the social order in a way that makes the persons, culture, and social order involved more fully what they ought to be" (p. 66).

Adam's definition of humanistic value fits well in the concept of values in the Philippines which is relational and based on notions of *loob* (relational will) and *kapwa* (together with the person) (Reyes, 2015). Reyes pointed out that Filipino values tend to be relational in contrast to the western individualistic concept of values. In the Philippines, the self could not be separate from others. In turn, the *loob* and *kapwa* are the pillars that cultivate and give sense to other values such as *pakiramdam* (shared identity), *kagandahang-loob* (shared humanity), *bahala na* (determination), *pakikisama* (companionship), and the like. Without *loob* and *kapwa*, however, some values (e.g., *bahala na*), when singly considered, can be mistakenly regarded as negative attributes (de Guia, 2005; Reyes, 2015).

John Hoad in 1998 discussed areas of reading deemed essential to the humanist. One of these areas is "window on the world," which creates the "awareness" and "insight" into human value brought about by reading materials. Another is the "science literature" which focuses on the "insights and discoveries about human nature and the universal reality" that surrounds people. The "religious literature," in addition, centers on bringing in "anthropological, sociological, and psychological insights" as tools in understanding better the experiences of the people as can be read in the sacred scriptures. Humanistic values, therefore, may be learned from or enhanced by *animés.*

A closer look at the literature, however, reveals two differing views on *animés* and other similar media. On the one hand, some authors argue that these media offer positive influences on the audience, while negative on the other. For example, Campomanes (2005) wrote an article titled "All-American Pop Images and Values in Japanese Anime for Philippine TV – Slam Dunk as Postcolonial Japanese-Filipino-American Popular Culture Form/Text." The information shows the patronage and effect of *animés* to university students in Metro Manila. His curiosity led to his analysis of Slam Dunk characters which resulted in the discovery that "an inter-text showing certain displacements which were intended or not were

woven to indigenize the all-American pop forms and values into and through producer (Japanese) and receptor (Filipino) cultural matrices."

Buckingham's paper (2007) on the impact of media on children and the young people focusing mainly on computer games and the Internet discussed the adverse effects of violence, sex, materialism, bullying, vices, among others. As an offshoot of the research, some theories were conceived pointing to the harmful effects of media: (1) Imitation, where people tend to identify with role models in media and learn specific patterns of aggressive behavior from them; (2) Arousal, wherein media can arouse people emotionally and psychologically; thus, an increased level of excitement can lead to aggressive behavior; (3) Desensitization, which means that repeated exposure to media violence promotes acceptance of violence; (4) Catharsis, where viewing violence can reduce or even "purge" aggressive tendencies or psychological tensions that people already possess; and, (5) Cultivation, where the media portray violence in systematically distorted ways like its frequency, thus leading people to have distorted beliefs about the real world.

Buckingham's discoveries blend with the theories utilized in this study. The Cultivation Theory by Gerbner and Gross (1976) states that the more individuals watch television, the more that they are exposed to all forms of violence which are also being equated to the Mean World Syndrome. McQuail and Windahl (2015) added that frequent exposure to television programs creates a precise form of idealism and values. The Uses and Gratification Theory (Blumler & Katz, 1974), on the other hand, discusses that media consumers take active roles in the communication process and have their own goals in using media. Finally, the Media Equation Theory (Reeves & Nass, 1996) exposes that the television can be treated by a person as a human being. In fact, it can lead a person to exhibit either a positive or negative verbal and non-verbal responses.

Albert Bandura (Patterson et al., 2008), also theorized that a person's behavior is influenced by what he observes from other individuals. In a study, he exposed young children to a film with a character showing aggressive behaviors. Same children were individually led to a toy room and there exhibited not only the demonstrated aggressive behavior but also their style. The said study proved that television shows could generate violence.

While some theorists and researchers have shown the negative effects of media on the receivers, others believe that receivers have their own goals and can choose to treat media forms positively. Thus, this current research claims that media are a possible channel to shaping humanistic values. The researcher critically examined the value of these *animés* to show that media consumers are capable of determining their purpose and can delineate the good from the bad. Nonetheless, if they are very young children, parental guidance is still a must.

METHODOLOGY

This study evaluated the influence of *animés* on the shaping of humanistic values among the college students at a state university in the central Philippines. To obtain data, the researcher randomly selected samples from those enrolled in the identified student population. The respondents were 865 college students with varied socio-demographic backgrounds and taking up English and Literature subjects within the school year 2013-2014. Most were residents of Dumaguete City while the rest were residing in nearby towns within the province of Negros Oriental. The majority of the respondents were adolescents aged 20 years old and below (715, 82.72%). There were 154 (17.80%) respondents from the Bachelor of Science in Business

Administration; 105 (12.14%) from the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology; and 86 (9.94%) from the Bachelor of Science in Criminology. The respondents were predominantly Filipinos (858, 99.19%), and Christians; Roman Catholicism (717, 84.05%) was the main religious denomination. The fathers were mostly private employees (342, 39.54%), government employees (102, 11.79%), and people in business (73, 8.44%). A good number were farmers, carpenters, and government retirees. On the other hand, the mothers had similar jobs with the fathers. The combined earnings of the parents disclosed that majority of the parents had a family income below Php1, 000.00 (210, 24.28%), followed by those earning Php5, 001-10, 000.00 (187, 21.62%), and Php1, 0001-5, 000.00 (16.88%) per month. The economic profile of the respondents strengthened the result that a negligible number of them go to the extent of joining cosplay clubs for the fact that cosplaying is a costly hobby.

The study used a survey questionnaire for the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and a researcher-made checklist of the characteristics of the humanistic values with ideas extracted and adapted from Larue. These humanistic values revolve around the meeting of human needs and honing intellectual, emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical capabilities of an individual.

The statistical treatments used in this study were frequency, percentage, weighted mean, Chi-square for the test of independence of variables, and contingency coefficient. The researcher used the SPSS Version 17 for the computations. Using content analysis (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 1999), the researcher was guided by the checklist to identify, analyze, and classify the themes, messages, and meanings of the dialogues extracted from the earliest episodes of the top three *animés* viewed by the respondents.

RESULTS

The respondents' sources of *animé* encounters are through the television and the Internet. Among the television networks, ABS-CBN (200, 23.12%) rules over all the channels whether taken singly or in combination. Also included, however, are Animax, GMA, Disney Channel, and Cartoon Network, as several channels showing *animés*. Aside from the television, there are other sources featuring *animés*. A combination of manga, computer games, friends, and commercials on television (215, 24.86%); *manga,* print ads, computer games, and friends (189, 21.85%); *manga,* computer games, and toys (145, 16.76%) are prevalent. The results show that computer games and the *manga,* though considered as different media forms, contribute to the respondents' awareness and their encounters with *animé* characters. Computer games and the manga consistently appear in the cited combinations.

From the different sources of *animés,* three (3) pairs occupy the first, second, and third ranks. Both *Hunter X Hunter* and *Thundercats* have indicated 857 respondents (99.08%), *Naruto* and *Dragon Ball Z* 831 (96.07%), and *Cardcaptor Sakura* and *Robotech* 822 (95.03%). The results indicate that the respondents have viewed these various *animés* usually shown on television channels even in households without a cable connection.

Among the gains obtained from watching *animés,* learning good values (712, 82.31%) ranked first, followed by a better understanding of the self and others (371, 42.89%) and a better understanding of the Japanese culture (249, 28.79; Table 1). Learning about how to sketch *animé* characters (217, 25.09%), about science and technology (173, 20.00%), and about an understanding of Japanese history (155, 17.92%) were also acknowledged by a considerable

Table 1. Knowledge obtained by the respondents.

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Good values	712	82.31*
Better understanding of self/other people	371	42.89**
Better understanding of the Japanese culture	249	28.79***
How to sketch animé characters	217	25.09
Science and technology	173	20.00
Better understanding of Japanese history	155	17.92
Understanding of the human body	6	0.69
Designing, lay-out, and multi-media principles	5	0.58
Love, unity, and partnership	5	0.58
Important life lessons	4	0.46
Japanese phrases and characters	4	0.46
Art forms	3	0.35
Speak and use the Japanese language	3	0.35
Intelligence in dealing with events	3	0.35
To be investigative like Detective Conan	3	0.35
Japanese words	2	0.23

number of respondents. With learning good values surfacing as the overwhelming benefit gained from watching *animés,* it is worthwhile to determine what values were learned by the respondents.

The data obtained have shown multiple responses on the values learned from watching animés (Table 2). Out of the twenty-five values, more than 70% of the respondents claimed eight (8) of them. These include friendship (710, 99.72%), love of family (674, 94.66%), concern for health (662, 92.98%), concern for people's well-being (617, 86.66%), beauty and elegance (567, 79.63%), responsibility (546, 76.69%), love of work (518, 72.75%), and hard work (516, 72.47%). The results may come probably as a surprise to the adults who are not exposed or who may have an insufficient exposure to animés.

To the respondents, animés also present values that they need to prize and possess. However, it appears that this affection to animés might be contingent on demographic factors, especially age. It is apparent that love for animés is strongest among children and the youth compared to other age groups.

Out of the 865 respondents, 536 respondents (61.97%) applied what they have learned or seen from *animés* and 295 (34.10%) expressed that they did not (Table 3) because, as seen in Table 5, they are merely imaginative (103, 34.92%). The respondents claimed to love the *animés* but they do not imitate the characters and the scenes (99, 33.56%). And similar to the first reason, they considered *animés* as fiction and as just products of a creative mind (45, 15.25%). The findings indicating that respondents did not

Table 2. Values learned from watching animés (n=712).

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Friendship	710	99.72*
Love of family	674	94.66**
Concern for health	662	92.98***
Concern for people's well-being	617	86.66****
Beauty and elegance	567	79.63*****
Democracy	567	79.63
Teamwork	555	77.95
Responsibility	546	76.69
Love of work	518	72.75
Hardwork	516	72.47
Discipline	488	68.54
Determination	477	66.99
Loyalty	437	61.38
Compassion	433	60.81
Patience	426	59.83
Creativity	425	59.69
Diligence	399	56.04
Humility	388	54.49
Sportsmanship	349	49.02
Love of country	328	46.07
Harmony	322	45.22
Respect for others	311	43.68
Charity	301	42.28
Patriotism	267	37.50
Concern for the environment	146	20.51

Table 3. Respondents' real-world application of learnings from animés.

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Applied	536	61.97*
Not applied	295	34.10**
No response	34	3.93
Total	865	100.00

Table 4. Indicators showing how animés are transferred/shown in real life situations (n＝536).

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Moving/acting just like the way my favorite character moves/acts.	518	96.64*
Discussing with other animé lovers things about animé shows	513	95.71**
Sharing with my friends the qualities of my favorite anime character	468	87.31***
Buying CDs, toys, game cards, tumblers, t-shirts and other anime character-bearing products	312	58.21****
Loyalty/continuous patronage	6	1.12
Adopting the good characteristics, principles and philosophy of the characters	5	0.93
Looking forward for the next part of the movie	5	0.93
Following the characters' principles	4	0.75
Interacting with other people showing self-confidence despite my limitations	4	0.75
Joining Cosplay	3	0.56
Carrying the wisdom of Luffy	3	0.56
Listening to Japanese music	2	0.37
None at all	26	4.85

apply what they have seen in the real world may find congruence with the uses and gratification theory which posits that media consumers take active roles in the communication process and are goal-oriented and that their purpose in watching *animés* may only be within the context of entertainment and obtaining information. Nevertheless, additional studies – especially qualitative ones – are needed in elucidating this claim.

Table 4 indicates 536 respondents disclosing how they have transferred/shown in real life the influence *animés* have on them. Results show that 518 respondents (96.6%) imitated the moves and actions of their favorite *animé* characters. Another finding indicates that 513 (95.71%) discussed with other *animé* lovers things about the shows that they have watched, while 468

(87.31%) shared with their friends the qualities of their favorite *animé* character; and 312 (58.21%) even went to the extent of buying *animé* character bearing products. Other responses included cosplaying, listening to Japanese music, carrying the wisdom, philosophy, and principles of their favorite character.

Another interesting actual application of the influence is in the number of respondents who participated in cosplays. The data show that there are only 39 (4.51%) cosplayers out of the 865 respondents, and out of the 39, only 7 were registered members of a cosplaying organization. The parents did not support the cosplaying activity of their children because it was expensive and simply a waste of money. Those who were supportive of their children's cosplaying activity went to the extent of buying the costume, giving

money for cosplay expense, and attending cosplay activities.

From the 39 students who were into cosplaying, ten (10) acknowledged that it is expensive, with six (6) revealing that accessories like wigs, contact lens, and others are costly. Despite the fact that it is somewhat costly, 13 pointed that out of cosplaying, they gained self-confidence, freedom in expressing their passion, and the feeling that they are understood; they also claimed to have become artistic.

Table 5 shows that 103 (34.92%) of the 295 respondents declared that they did not apply what they have learned/seen from the animés because they are simply a work of the imagination. Similarly, 99 respondents expressed that they love animés, but they do not imitate what is in

them. The results imply that the respondents have delineated the world of reality from that of the world of fantasy. A weighted mean of 3.30 shows the extent of influence that animés have on the respondents.

Table 6 shows *animés'* extent of influence on the respondents, as reported by the latter. As shown, the *animés* have influenced to some extent the respondents' lives. This suggests that *animés* have played a role in the lives of the respondents.

Table 7 shows that all demographic variables are significantly associated with the animés' influence on humanistic values. Thus, the influence of animés on the respondents was contingent on their socio-demographic profile. In other words, animés' influence on the humanistic

Table 5. Reasons why respondents do not apply what they have learned/seen from anime shows to the real world (n=295).

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Animés are just imaginative work.	103	34.92*
I love *animé* but I don't imitate them.	99	33.56**
Animés are just products of human's creative mind, simply bunch of fiction.	45	15.25***
No Response	48	16.27
Total	295	100.00

Table 6. Extent of Influence of animés on the respondents (n=354).

Extent	Frequency	Percent	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
To a very great extent	61	17.23		
To a great extent	112	31.64		
To some Extent	88	24.86	3.30	To some extent
To a little extent	58	16.38		
To a very little extent	35	9.89		
Total	354	100.00		

Legend: 1.00-1.80 to a very great extent; 1.81-2.60 to a great extent; 2.61-3.40 to some extent; 3.41-4.20 to a little extent; and, 4.21-5.00 to a very little extent

Table 7. Significant relationship between the socio-demographic profile and the extent of influence of the animés on young viewers.

Socio-Demographic Variables	p-value	α Value	Verbal Description
Age	0.028	0.05	Significant Relationship
Sex	0.011	0.05	Significant Relationship
Course	0.030	0.05	Significant Relationship
Year Level	0.037	0.05	Significant Relationship
Parents' Occupation	0.043	0.05	Significant Relationship
Parents' Income	0.025	0.05	Significant Relationship

values of Filipino students differs according to their socio-demographic characteristics.

This researcher also solicited suggestions and comments from the students. The main advice centered on producing shows that encourage good values for very young viewers (96, 19.55%). These values point to making the respondents better persons, more loving, energetic, friendly, more creative and artistic so that they can make this world a better place to live. A suggestion on developing more updated episodes, new and exciting stories with characters possessing extraordinary powers follow; it should also include science and technology with cool graphics and done in 3D technology (50, 10.18%). The third suggestion is to create *animés* to be shown on television networks that suit children's age or for general patronage since there are scenes that are dangerous for children, thus needing parental guidance (42, 8.55%). The fourth suggestion is to create *animés* that are challenging, entertaining, and adventurous that can make them happy (37, 7.54%). Although there are still a lot of noteworthy suggestions, the final one is to produce *animés* that reflect true to life experience; those that are happening in the society today (30, 6.11%).

As to the comments, 46 respondents answered that *animé* is fun, entertaining, exciting, cheerful, relaxing, thrilling, and satisfying; they can learn values like love, family, friends, teamwork, make them humble, faithful, and others.

Three pairs of *animés* occupy the first three ranks of those personally viewed by the respondents. These are *Hunter x Hunter* and *Thundercats* (857, 99.08%), *Naruto Uzumaki* and *Dragon Ball Z* (831, 96.07%), and *Cardcaptor Sakura* and *Robotech* (822 95.03%). These top 3 pairs were textually analyzed to determine recurring themes and patterns.

The following are ranked the most prioritized humanistic values evident in the 6 *animés*: concern for human well-being; lives of family members are honored and protected; purpose, direction, and a sense of belongingness; and individual rights to autonomy, dignity, free choice, liberty, fraternity, the pursuit of happiness and charity. Second in rank include: cooperation and peaceful living; and, home, institutions, and elsewhere in the *animés* teach the humanistic values. Characters respond to the call for a compassionate and supportive action as proof that they belong to one global community is third in rank. Family members occupy the fourth spot provided with their basic needs for food, housing, health care, nurturing and education for all its members; and, national, ethnic, religious, territorial, ethnic coexistence and cooperation are displayed. Finally,

the fifth rank is shared by individual creativity is recognized, and humanistic values supersede boundaries of nation, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual differences, sexual preferences and others are embraced.

DISCUSSION

The learning of values surfaced as an overwhelming benefit in watching animés on various television networks. These humanistic values/characteristics are found embedded in the top three pairs of *animés, Hunter x Hunter* and *Thundercats* (857, 99.08%), *Naruto Uzumaki* and *Dragon Ball Z* (831, 96.07%), and *Cardcaptor Sakura* and *Robotech* (822, 95.03%). Specifically, they are the concern for human well-being; honoring and protecting the lives of family members; having a purpose, direction, and a sense of belongingness; and individual rights to autonomy, dignity, free choice, liberty, fraternity, the pursuit of happiness (Larue, 1998) and charity. In addition, cooperation, peaceful living, supportive action, provision of the basic needs of the family members, and individual creativity are also noticed.

A combination of the unusual, quite funny, and serious reactions like laughing, crying, stomping one's feet/clapping one's hands, shouting, drawing, and scribbling down beautiful lines emerged in the survey. Close to two-thirds of the entire number of respondents imitate the moves of their favorite characters, discuss with other *animé* lovers what they have seen, share the qualities of the characters with their friends, and even go to the extent of buying *animé* character-bearing products. Nonetheless, the influence of *animé* on the respondents is only to some extent.

A significant relationship between the socio-demographic profile and the extent of influence that *animés* have on the viewers is also revealed. This means that the students know their limitations and although somehow influenced by the presence of the *animés*, they are still grounded in the world of reality.

The results of the study prove that indeed some *animés* viewed by the students are very entertaining and loaded with values; nevertheless, they are also aware that there are shows that are not fit for children. Most of the respondents claim that they learn values from *animés*. Specifically, the most dominant humanistic values are friendship, love of the family, concern for health, concern for people's well-being, beauty and elegance, democracy, teamwork and the like. As inferred from these findings, most of these values are relational, which is line with Reyes' (2015) contention that Filipinos are naturally relational compared to individualistic westerners (see also De Guia, 2005). In other words, *animés* tend to reinforce Filipino youths' relational humanistic values.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the study, the generalization indicates that college students are wiser and more capable of evaluating the kind of *animés* to watch. In fact, the influence of *animés* to the respondents is only "to some extent." Thus, the Uses and Gratification Theory validated the active role that the respondents played while watching *animés*. Nonetheless, the overwhelming presence of humanistic values in the *animés* prevails, proving that as a genre, *animés* present both the black and the white. However, some respondents recommended that *animés* apart from being more current should continue to perpetuate moral values based on their observations that some are not suited for very young audiences. Finally, since the study is limited to the earliest *animé* episodes and titles, it is recommended that more recent episodes and titles be studied to validate the present results.

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