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# People's Perception of Anime

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# People's Perception of Anime

By  
Jonathan Patterson

## **Background (Pre-Introduction):**

Anime has been a part of my life ever since I was young watching Pokémon, Yu-Gi-Oh!, and Digimon. Back then I did not know the difference between anime and American cartoons. Anime was mostly off of my radar for the majority of school until around the middle to end of middle school which was 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade for me or 2007 – 2008. On occasion my friends and I would talk about it on a bus ride to or from school but I wouldn't remember the name of the show we were talking about. I still didn't see much of a difference and during my early childhood I would still see anime along with my other Saturday morning cartoons but again, nothing in my head was saying "You're watching anime right now". It wasn't until my junior year of high school around 2010 where I really started noticing anime as Japanese cartoons and something different than American cartoons. Since I never had cable when I was younger I never grew up watching Dragon Ball Z like most other kids my age so the first anime I decided I was going to watch was Dragon Ball Z. After that I was hooked, even though it was a show that came out during the late 80s to the early 90s it was still very good. I began doing my own research and looking up other shows that I might be interested in and watched what I could during my free time. My knowledge has greatly expanded since then including how to find anime, what to look for when I want to watch one, what to consider while watching some, etc. During that time since 2010/2011 I have watched about 200 anime series consisting of roughly 7,000+ episodes (I have an account on myanimelist.net so it adds everything up for me), I have been going to anime conventions (mainly AnimeNEXT) for 3 years now meeting all sorts of fans and people of the anime/manga industry both American and Japanese, and I don't see myself slowing down anytime soon.

## **Introduction:**

Anime is such a big part of my life and I obviously know how I got into it as well as some of my friends back home but I realize that everyone doesn't like the same shows and might have gotten interested in the medium in a very different way compared to myself. That is why I picked this topic and the following initial question: "How do people perceive anime?" I hope that I might be able to find a pattern between their interest in anime, their knowledge of anime, and their interests (their major).

## **Materials and Methods (Procedures):**

I used strictly surveymonkey.com as the online survey but I distributed it through Facebook, college email, and some of my friends at work as well as back home. I selected this method because it was the website that was provided by the instructor. I did not consider other ways of creating a survey or interviews and used surveymonkey.com. It seemed to be a simple and user friendly website that fit my needs to create my survey so I had no need to search for an equivalent. I was provided a master account that the university uses which gave more options and little to no restrictions. I wanted to gather enough information about people to figure out if their knowledge of anime and their interests affect their interest in anime.

## **Results:**

There were a total of 37 participants including those who did not finish the survey. Some of the results of this survey were going to be obvious from the start. Due to how I was sharing the survey, my location, and the ratio at this college most of the Basic Information section was predetermined. Some of the results for Basic Information were as followed:

- Q1. Gender
  - Male: 14 (37.84%)
  - Female: 22 (59.46%)
  - Other: 1 (2.70%)

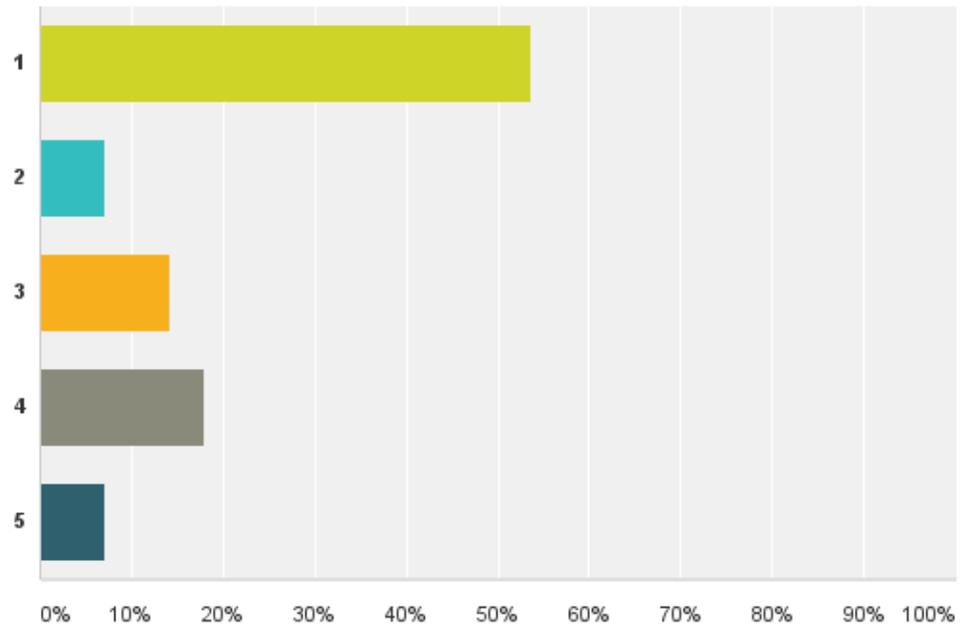
- Q2. Age
  - 18-24: 35 (94.59%)
  - 39-44: 1 (2.70%)
  - 45 and up: 1 (2.70%)
- Q3. Are you currently enrolled in school?
  - Yes, 2 Year College/University: 2 (5.41%)
  - Yes, 4 Year College/University: 31 (83.78%)
  - Yes, Graduate Program: 1 (2.70%)
  - No, I am not enrolled in school: 3 (8.11%)

After I asked if they were enrolled in school question 4 asked for either their major/focus or their occupation. There were 8 Computer Science/Technology, 4 Biology, 4 Psychology, and either 1 or 2 from other majors including Education, Math, and Political Science.

As soon as it moved to the second page 10 people left and did not complete the survey for a new total of 27 for the remainder of the survey. Question 5 asked the person their knowledge of anime from a scale of 1 – 5. 15 (55.56%) of the people gave a 1 which was also expected while all other answers received less than 20% each and 5 or less people marking those options. See the figure on the next page.

**Q5 How would you rate your knowledge of anime?1 being "I do not know anime at all except 1 or 2 shows"5 being "I have seen a lot of anime"**

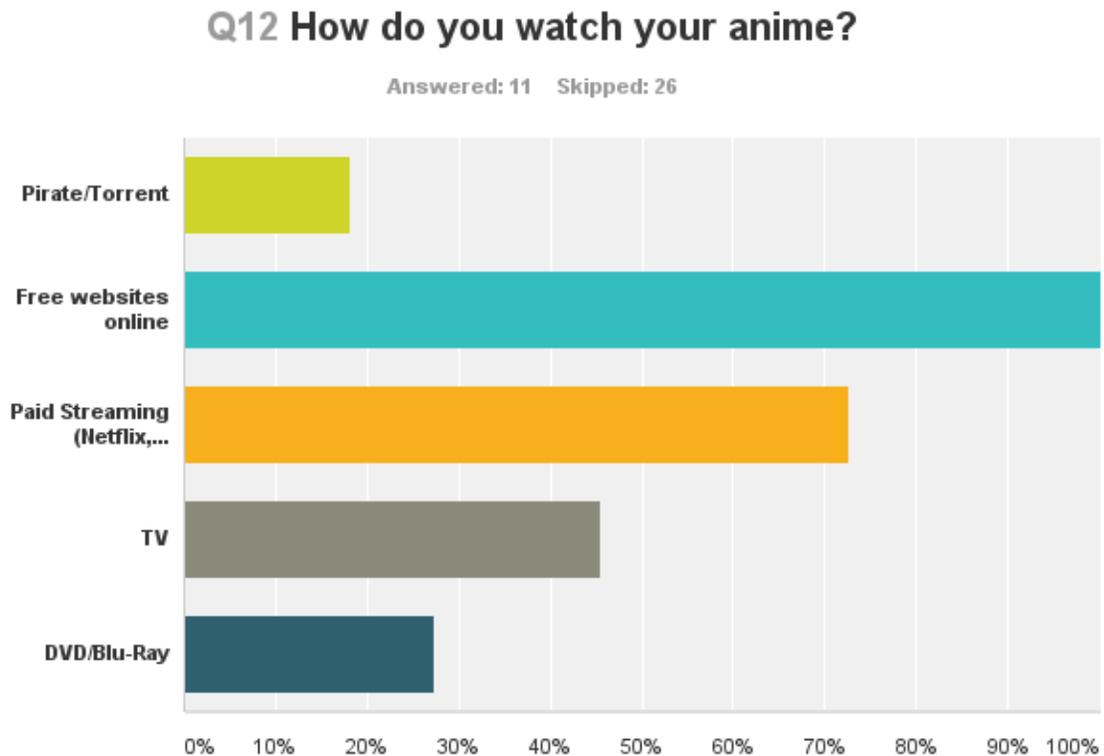
Answered: 28 Skipped: 10



Questions 6 – 8 asked their observations of anime, how they would define it, their perception of it, and what about it is appealing to them. Everybody who answered said that it was either "Japanese Animation", cartoons, or in some way mentioned that it originates from Japan. People have varied perceptions of anime both positive, where they say that it is awesome or they are a fan of it, and negative, where they say that they do not like it or it is something they are not interested in. Most said that the art, style, and colors of anime appeals to them the most while the ones who said before that they were not interested in anime replied saying "Nothing". Questions 9 and 10 had the same results. One stated if you read manga and the other asked if you watch

anime, 11 people said yes to both and 16 said no to both. After question 10 depending on if they said yes or no they were redirected to another page.

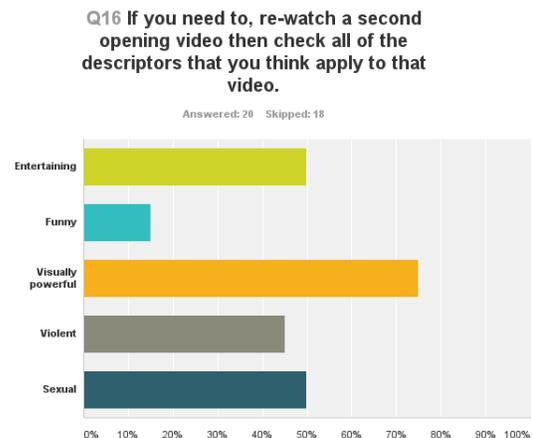
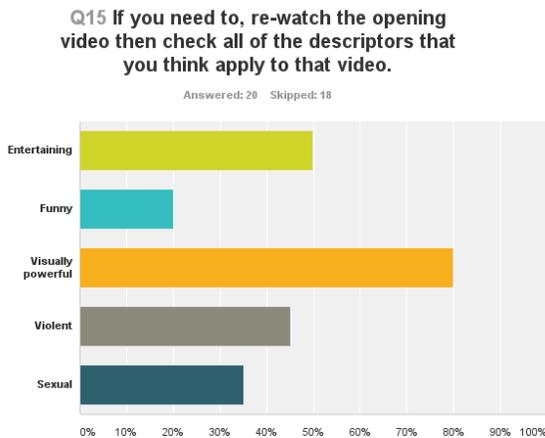
Following the 11 people who said yes we move to, coincidentally, question 11 which asks how often they watch anime during a week and they could provide either episodes per week or hours. 7 out of 11 said anywhere between 0 – 5 episodes a week which would be the equivalent of about 0 – 2 hours per week. The remaining 4 said 10 or more episodes or 10+ hours per week. Question 12 asked how they watch their anime and were allowed to check off all of the options that they use. The results are this chart shown below:



The remaining 16 who answered no to question 10 were given only one question; Why? Specifically why they are not interested and would they ever be willing to watch anime. Some say that they are not interested in it while others say that they are "too old for cartoons" or that

they dislike the style. Others gave better explanations such as "I am not drawn to the medium of animation in most forms. I would watch a show if the subject matter interested me." Most avoided the second question but for those who did answer most of them said they would give it a try if it was something they would be interested in.

The final page suffered another loss of participants giving us a final total of 19 people who answered every question. I asked them to watch at least one opening video from the 6 that I had provided and tell me which ones they had watched. There wasn't one that was more favored over the others. The following two questions were to pick one opening (for each question for a total of 2) and check all descriptors that applied to that opening as well as reply with what opening they are speaking for. Only 4 did not leave a reply with the opening that they watched but did check of descriptors. Below are the charts for the final two questions containing the descriptors. The descriptors are as follows: Entertaining, Funny, Visually Powerful, Violent, and Sexual.



## **Discussion:**

Question 1. The gender ratio was a bit predetermined because I used Facebook and sent it out to fellow students and because of the gender ratio here I assumed I would get more females than males even though I asked my friends back home as well. I looked at the person who replied with Other and all of their answers appear to be serious so either they did not want to disclose their gender or they really might be Other. From my experience I originally thought more guys like anime over women but after going to some conventions and meeting more people the ratio is pretty even between guys and girls.

Question 2. As stated in question 1 everyone who I asked to fill out this survey is currently in college or recently graduated. I specifically asked and emailed two professors for their feedback otherwise the 18 – 24 age range would have been 100%. In the future I'd find other places to post such as Tumblr, forums, or other websites. The other age ranges would be able to provide a range of what group of people are interested the most in anime as well as do you drop it as you get older.

Question 3 and 4. As mentioned in questions 1 and 2 everyone is in or recently graduated from college. I got a good range of majors but having people who are out of school, employed, and who either have a full time job/career or part time job would have made the answers more diverse and given a better range of responses.

Questions 5 – 8. As I have said before if more people were given my survey either one number would stand out more or they would become more even (question 5). People might give more varied definitions of anime as well as varied perceptions of anime.

Question 11. I was able to pick out who my friends were in this section because they were the ones who do the same thing as me which is watch a handful of shows that are currently

airing this season and watch those throughout the week. On average it would be 10-13 different series which is 10-13 episodes a week of anime right there.

Question 13. Some of the people who replied to this question gave very good responses. Two honorable mentions that I want to put in this section are "I am not drawn to the medium of animation in most forms. I would watch a show if the subject matter interested me." and "I have watched a lot of Bleach and all of Death Note and popular anime films of course like Spirited Away and Kiki's Delivery Service and I enjoyed the shows at the time and still do enjoy the movies. I just don't like cartoons as much as live action anymore (I don't mean this in an "animated things are for kids" kind of way though)". I have a saying as well as a theory. There are so many anime series out there with varied themes, genres, and oriented towards both genders that there is most likely one perfect anime out there for everyone, the problem is finding it.

Question 14 – 16. I picked too many openings and I should condense it into 3 or just one specific one so that the results show everyone's perception of the same video.

### **Conclusion:**

What I wanted to find out through this research was how do people perceive anime? Is it based on their major/career or interests? Or is it based solely on the person as well as multiple factors? There are sure to be more factors than what I asked of the survey takers especially after writing my Background Information section I realized that there were questions that I had left out like "What was one of your first experiences with anime?" as an example. Most who aren't interested have the "animated things are for kids" mindset and because of that they do not give things such as anime a chance. That was a common response that I had found through most of the people who said they were not interested in anime that they considered it the same as

children's cartoons and they are an adult so they are not interested in it. I would expand on some of the questions that I would ask the survey takers as well as cast a wider net across the internet as well as real life to get more varied answers as well as similar answers. Doing that would make it easier to discover patterns and similar themes between different people. How do people perceive anime? That is a pretty broad and open ended question looking back at it, but that is a good thing and by asking such a broad question you can receive all sorts of answers. As I have stated before, there is that one perfect anime out there for everyone you just need to look for it. Anime is not for everyone, that is easily understandable but with a little nudge in the right direction you might find that one anime that you enjoy.

## Appendix:

### Survey Question Outline

#### Page 1

1. What is your gender?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Other
2. What is your age?
  - a. 17 and under
  - b. 18-24
  - c. 25-32
  - d. 33-38
  - e. 39-44
  - f. 45 and up
3. Are you currently enrolled in school?
  - a. Yes, High School
  - b. Yes, 2 Year College/University
  - c. Yes, 4 Year College/University
  - d. Yes, Graduate Program
  - e. No, I am not enrolled in school
4. If you answered Yes to Question 3, what is your major/focus? If you answered No to Question 3, please state your current occupation.

#### Page 2

5. How would you rate your knowledge of anime? 1 being "I do not know anime at all except 1 or 2 shows" and 5 being "I have seen a lot of anime".
  - a. 1
  - b. 2
  - c. 3
  - d. 4
  - e. 5
6. How would you define anime?
7. What is your current perception of anime?
8. What about anime appeals to you the most? You may write as many things as you'd like.
9. Do you currently or have you read manga?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

#### Page 3

10. Do you currently or are interested in anime?
  - a. Yes (Continue to page 4)
  - b. No (Redirect to page 5)

#### Page 4

11. On average, how often do you watch anime during a week? (Episodes or Hours per week)
12. How do you watch your anime? (Redirect to page 6)
  - a. Pirate/Torrent
  - b. Free online sites
  - c. Paid streaming (Netflix, Funimation.com, Crunchyroll, etc.)
  - d. TV
  - e. DVD/Blu-ray

Page 5

13. Why are you not interested in anime? Would you ever try to watch anime or be interested in watching anime?

Page 6

14. Please watch at least one of the anime opening videos provided. Please note that some of these videos are Not Safe For Work and others have spoilers.  
Attack on Titan <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXMgHfHxKVM>  
High School DxD <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pqu982I1Kks>  
The Testament of Sister New Devil <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5p9exf6dq4>  
Fairy Tail Opening 16 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmUJXDvO8D4>  
Kill la Kill <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scRQ3AXe4hw>  
Gurren Lagann [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C\\_t47BVtPuE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_t47BVtPuE)  
Please list which one(s) you watched.
15. If you need to, re-watch the opening video then check all of the descriptors that you think apply to that video.
  - a. Entertaining
  - b. Funny
  - c. Visually Powerful
  - d. Violent
  - e. Sexual
  - f. Other (For anime title)
16. If you need to, re-watch a second opening video then check all of the descriptors that you think apply to that video.
  - a. Entertaining
  - b. Funny
  - c. Visually Powerful
  - d. Violent
  - e. Sexual
  - f. Other (For anime title)