

**EXPLORING MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES JAPANESE LANGUAGE
STUDENTS' VIEWS ON THE EFFECTS OF LGBT ELEMENTS
IN ANIME AND MANGA**

¹Rokiah Pae, ²Roswati Abdul Rashid, ^{*3}Roslina Mamat & ⁴Normah Ahmad

¹ Faculty of Language and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak,
94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia.

² Centre of Fundamental and Continuing Education, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu,
21030 Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia.

³ Faculty of Modern Language and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia.

⁴ Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.

*Corresponding author: linamm@upm.edu.my

Received: 21.03.2023

Accepted: 20.06.2023

ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: Anime and manga have drawn a global audience and become popular in a wide range of genres, including in Malaysia. These two popular cultures occasionally include LGBT elements in their storylines. This article examines Malaysian university students' views on LGBT elements in anime and manga. The specific objectives were to (1) identify anime and manga that incorporate LGBT elements, which are consumed by university students in Malaysia, and (2) investigate their views on the effects of consuming these materials.

Methodology: Online Google survey forms were distributed to students studying the Japanese language at five public universities in Malaysia. In these universities, Japanese is offered as an elective or part of a core course and is taken by students from various faculties. 280 students responded to the survey. However, only data from 150 respondents was analysed. There were 56 (37%) male and 94 (63%) female respondents.

Findings: 34 (22.7%) respondents mentioned anime and manga titles that have LGBT elements, with some titles fitting under the LGBT genre. According to 96 (64%) of respondents, consuming anime and manga with LGBT elements has negative consequences, including the normalisation of the LGBT concept, which may lead to individuals identifying themselves as part of the LGBT community, excessive sexual content, going against the norm, the extinction of humans, and becoming anime and manga addicts. In contrast, 37 (24.7%) respondents believe consuming such materials has a positive effect. This group argues that, despite the controversial LGBT elements, anime and manga promote positive ideals in their storylines while also raising awareness of LGBT communities.

Contributions: This study reveals that the consumption of anime and manga featuring LGBT elements has an impact on the acceptance of the LGBT concept among Malaysian youth, despite its contradiction with the religious and cultural values of local communities.

Keywords: Anime, manga, LGBT, Malaysia, Public university students.

Cite as: Pae, R., Abdul Rashid, R., Mamat, R., & Ahmand, N. (2023). Exploring Malaysian public universities Japanese language students' views on the effects of LGBT elements in anime and manga. *Journal of Nusantara Studies*, 8(2), 203-223. <http://dx.doi.org/10.24200/jonus.vol8iss2pp203-223>

1.0 INTRODUCTION

LGBT is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender. Some may expand this acronym to LGBTIQ, of which I is for Intersex and Q is for Queer. Due to its violation of Eastern cultures, religious tenets and ethics, the LGBT community in Malaysia is a controversial issue and is viewed as a taboo by Malaysian society (Mohamad, 2015). The 126th Conference of Rulers declared LGBT behaviour is unlawful to practise as a way of life on December 13, 1989. (Haridi, 2016). As a result, the government and religious organisations have implemented a variety of measures, including banning LGBT rights-related events and programmes and censoring content and scenes that promote LGBT lifestyles in music, films and social media like TikTok as they are considered to be inappropriate (Bernama, 2022). Universities also promote negative LGBT stances by creating platforms to deliver anti-LGBT sentiments and conducting anti-LGBT programmes. (Human Right Watch, 2022).

However, the internet's stability, readily available websites, and lax enforcement of online media freedom made it simple for media with LGBT elements to be widely available. According to Madill (2021), to meet consumer demands, authors or producers of mainstream television shows and movies are also occupying this space by incorporating LGBT elements