

# How does Anime Influence the Perception of Physical Violence in Teenagers?

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# INTRODUCTION

Anime's global popularity has grown significantly due to globalization, becoming a distinct Japanese animation with diverse genres and compelling storylines. Its evolution into a cultural product and major export commodity for Japan is evident (Fennell et al., 2012). In Indonesia, anime has garnered immense interest, with only 11.58% of respondents being unfamiliar with it, and 29.54% enjoying anime content daily (Licorice, 2017).

While anime brings positive effects such as motivation and stress coping (Reysen et al., 2021), it also has negative impacts, notably on teenagers' perception of physical violence, potentially influencing their behavior (Andina, 2014). Teenage violence in Indonesia is prevalent, with physical violence being the most common form, raising concerns about the role of anime in shaping these behaviors (KPPPA, 2018).

Anime's portrayal of violence, once limited to specific genres, has expanded, making teenagers more susceptible to imitation (Allison in Andina, 2014). During identity exploration, teenagers may unknowingly identify with violent characters and imitate their behaviors, leading to negative effects (Suryadi, 2013).

To address these concerns, quantitative research is needed to determine the influence of anime on teenagers' perceptions of violence. This literature review serves as a foundation for such research and supports the development of regulations for a violence-free Indonesia by 2030.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Anime refers to a distinct form of Japanese animation or cartoons characterized by its unique artistic style, vibrant characters, and diverse storytelling. It encompasses a wide range of genres, catering to various audiences worldwide. Anime has evolved beyond being just a form of entertainment and has become a significant cultural product, with Japan being a major exporter of anime content (Fennell et al., 2012).
2. Perception of physical violence refers to an individual's understanding and interpretation of violent acts committed by others. This perception can be influenced by various factors, including media exposure, societal norms, personal experiences, and cognitive processes. In the context of anime, teenagers' perception of physical violence may be influenced by the portrayal of violent scenes and actions depicted in anime content (Andina, 2014).
3. Santrock (2012) defines teenagers as individuals who are in the stage of adolescence. Adolescence typically encompasses the ages between 13 and 19, marking the transitional period between childhood and adulthood. During this stage, teenagers undergo significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes as they move towards becoming independent individuals.

# METHOD

A literature review on the impact of anime on teenagers' perception of physical violence was conducted based on 15 studies published between 2011 and 2023. These studies consist of 10 English-language studies, 4 Indonesian-language studies, and 1 Malay-language study. The literature used in this review was collected through searches on Google Scholar, Science Direct, and APA PsycNet using keywords such as "anime," "violence," and "teenagers."



# FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Title of the Article	Author(s)	Year
<i>The Perceived Impact of Anime on School Children's Aggressive Behaviour</i>	Sharina, I., & Iqmar, F.	2011
<i>Anime dan Persepsi Budaya Kekerasan pada Anak Usia Sekolah</i>	Andina, E.	2014
<i>Video Games and Gender-based Violence</i>	Gutiérrez, E. J. D.	2014
<i>Examination of Anime Content and Associations between Anime Consumption, Genre Preferences, and Ambivalent Sexism</i>	Reysen, S., Katzarska-Miller, I., Plante, C. N., Roberts, S. E., & Gerbasi, K. C.	2017
<i>Dragon Ball: Body Control and Epic Excess in Manga and Anime</i>	Suvilay, B.	2018
<i>Hubungan Anime dengan Akhlak Remaja Islam: Kajian Rintis di Selangor</i>	Yusof, N. A., Mastor, K. A., Ibrahim, M., Hazwani, F., Siran, H., Haron, H., & Yussof, A. S.	2018
<i>The Influence of Japanese Anime on the Values of Adolescent</i>	Sen, L., & Rong, Z.	2019
<i>The Impact of Cartoon Programs on Children's Physical Health, Intelligence, Behavior and Activities</i>	Parvin, F., & Islam, S.	2020
<i>Effects of Prosocial Cartoon Models on Aggressive Cognitions and Aggressive Behaviors</i>	Zhang, Q., Cao, Y., Tian, J., El-Lim, K., & Gentile, D. A.	2020
<i>Anime and Social Disorders among Secondary School Adolescents</i>	Yusof, N. A., Mastor, K. A., Haron, H., Basir, A., & Alias, J.	2021
<i>Perubahan Gaya Hidup Mahasiswa Jurusan Sosiologi Universitas Negeri Malang dengan Hadirnya Budaya Populer Jepang</i>	Jusuf, M. R. H., Nikma, D. A. U., Mahbubah, I., Paluvy, N. E., & Surya, S. H.	2022
<i>Violence as a Key Form of Entertainment in the Comics Industry</i>	Musin, A.	2022
<i>Hentai and the Pornification of Childhood: How the Porn Industry Just Made the Case for Regulation</i>	Dines, G., & Sanchez, M.	2023
<i>Ijime terhadap Psikologis Remaja di Jepang dalam Anime "Koe No Katachi" Karya Reiko Yoshida</i>	Simbolon, E. H.	2023
<i>Menonton Anime Attack on Titan terhadap Perubahan Perilaku Anak SMA Kelas 2 SMA Swasta Eria Medan</i>	Zarfitra, R. A.	2023

Table 1. Results of Literature Review

# FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the literature review, it appears that anime shows do **not necessarily lead to negative effects** on their viewers. The effects of anime shows are closely related to the high level of imitation behavior that occurs during adolescence, a period characterized by identity crisis and self-identity exploration (Erikson in Santrock, 2012). This imitation behavior can be explained by Albert Bandura's social learning theory.

Bandura (in Santrock, 2012) proposes that human behavior involves continuous interactions between cognition, behavior, and environmental influences. Behaviors are primarily learned through observation and modeling, where observed behaviors act as guides for future actions. **Bandura's social learning theory includes three main concepts: observational learning, the role of mental conditions in learning, and the absence of a guarantee that learning will result in behavior changes.** This theory forms the basis to assess anime's impact on teenagers' perceptions of physical violence.

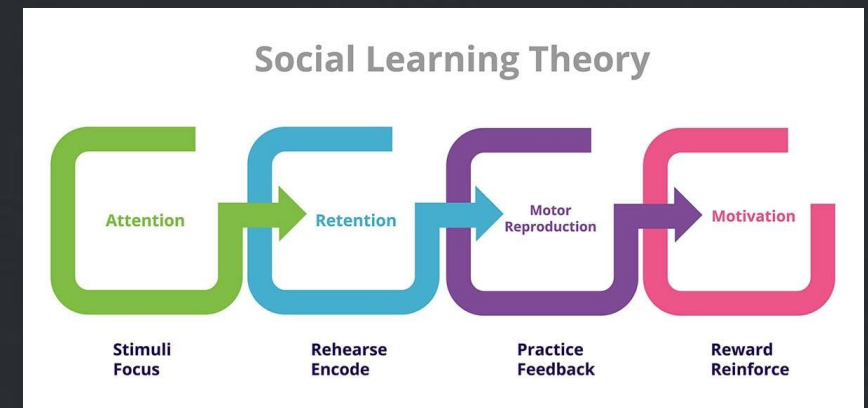


Figure 1. Process of social learning theory

# FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Anime with violent scenes has the potential to be imitated by teenagers, leading to aggressive behaviors such as **hitting, attacking, and hurting others** (Sharina & Iqmar, 2011; Reysen et al., 2017; Parvin & Islam, 2020).

This influence can extend to "ijime" behavior, where teenagers **use power to emotionally, physically, or psychologically hurt others, causing trauma and feelings of powerlessness** (Simbolon, 2023). The behavior's formation is linked to the normalization of violence among teenagers influenced by comic products, including anime. Musin's study (2022) showed that many teenagers perceive violent scenes as "normal," leading to **aggression toward peers**.

Certain anime also indirectly normalize gender-based violence, portraying **females as victims of violence and perpetuating sexist attitudes** (Gutierrez, 2014; Reysen et al., 2017). Such exposure may lead to **aggressive sexist behavior** among teenagers (Reysen et al., 2017) and increase interest in sexual content, including **sexual violence** (Dines & Sanchez, 2023). As per the social learning theory, witnessing these scenes may shape teenagers' perceptions of physical and sexual violence (Butler in Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018).



Figure 2. Scenes of violence in anime *Tokyo Revengers* (top) and *Jujutsu Kaisen* (bottom)



# FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Certain anime may theoretically lead teenagers to develop perceptions of physical violence, but research suggests that the influence of violent anime on teenagers **is not solely negative**. Andina (2014) and Jusuf et al. (2022) found that anime serves as a supporting factor to other influences, and its effects can be both positive and negative, **depending on individual viewers**.

Studies on specific anime like *Dragon Ball* and *Attack on Titan* show that **not all viewers imitate violent behavior depicted in the anime**. Suvilay (2018) and Zarfitra (2023) reveal that some teenagers **differentiate between real violence and symbolic violence** portrayed in anime.

Factors like **socio-professional background, place of residence, gender, and cognitive abilities** influence teenagers' reception of anime violence (Sen & Rong, 2019; Suvilay, 2018). Additionally, **the frequency of watching anime** plays a role in shaping teenagers' perceptions of violence (Yusof et al., 2018, 2021).

Besides potential negative effects, anime containing violence can also have positive impacts, such as **fostering creativity and cultivating responsible, kind, and respectful individuals** (Yusof et al., 2018). Reysen et al. (2021) find that anime can build **motivation and serve as a coping mechanism** for stress.

**Emphasizing prosocial scenes** in anime can be more influential than violent scenes, leading to positive behavior perceptions (Zhang et al., 2020). Therefore, anime has the potential to yield positive impacts on teenagers who watch it.



Figure 3. Positive scenes in anime *Dragon Ball* (top) and *Attack on Titan* (bottom)



# CONCLUSION

Based on the review, it can be concluded that **anime shows do not definitively shape teenagers' perceptions of physical violence due to the various factors influencing the formation of such perceptions.** Additionally, anime shows can have positive impacts if the emphasis is placed on prosocial scenes rather than violent ones.

Therefore, it is recommended to pay more attention to **age restrictions and censorship regulations for anime shows.** The purpose of this **is to adjust the content of anime to suit the age of teenagers,** thus minimizing the development of perceptions of physical violence among them. Implementing such regulations can be a starting point in reducing the occurrence of violence among teenagers and supporting the goal of achieving a violence-free Indonesia for women, children, and teenagers by 2030.

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# THANK YOU!

