

FROM EXPOSURE TO TRAVEL BEHAVIOR: EXPLAINING ANIME TOURISM DRIVERS THROUGH A PROCESS-BASED SEQUENTIAL MEDIATION FRAMEWORK IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

"Anime Tourism" has emerged as a growing niche, within the cultural tourism context, through which media consumption may convert into tourism intention. In spite of the global expansion of "Anime Culture", little exploration has investigated its potential to tourism development in developing countries such as Pakistan. While considering it, present study's object is to explore the key behavioral drivers of anime tourism through a process-based sequential mediation conceptual framework, linking: anime watching frequency, event participation, cultural perception, and emotional attachment towards tourism intent. To rationalize the proposed framework, an exploratory secondary data is employed, publicly available "Anime Dataset 2022" containing 18,495 explanations from the "Anime Planet" platform against 17 variables at Kaggle and adopts an exploratory analytical perspective to interpret anime industry trends in relation to tourism behavior. The use of non-experimental quantitative research designs (Descriptive, comparative, and correlational) was adopted to analyze tendencies in anime productions, consumption by audience, media formats used, and thematic multiplicity. According to the results, there is a significant increase in the production of anime globally; at the same time, audience positively perceive episodic formats and broad themes. Such engagement suggests favorable conditions for repeated exposure, fan involvement, and emotional connection. These patterns provide contextual support for the proposed pathway, sequential mediation framework, through which anime consumption may translate into tourism intention. The contribution of the present study is the identification of anime tourism beyond the traditional one and introducing a process-based framework relevant to emerging tourism markets. While practically implementing its findings offers strategic insight for policymakers and tourism stakeholders seeking to leverage anime related cultural tourism in Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Anime Tourism has emerged as a significant niche within the cultural tourism, linking media consumption with travel behavior as an emerging field of academic inquiry (Li et al., 2023; Okamoto, 2020). It investigates the complex link

between anime and tourism, revealing an interaction of cultural, economic, and social dimensions (Okamoto, 2015). Building on this substance, this study therefor, investigates of key determinants of anime tourism to understand its multifaceted artistic, economic and social

influences. Anime, short for animation, originated in Japan and has become a global cultural phenomenon, captivating audiences worldwide with its unique storytelling and artistic styles (Okamoto, 2020; Seaton, 2018). The global spread of anime has not only influenced entertainment but also tourism, leading to the emergence of 'anime tourism,' where fans travel to locations and events related to anime (Li et al., 2023).

In Pakistan, a country with a rich cultural tapestry and a youthful, tech-savvy population, anime has gained significant popularity (Khan & Ali, 2021; Raza & Bashir, 2022). Despite the growing interest in anime within Pakistan, there is a notable gap in comprehensive research investigating the opportunities and challenges associated with anime tourism in the context of Pakistan. This lack of information hinders the potential exploitation of this niche tourism sector, which could significantly boost Pakistan's tourism industry and international image (Ahmed, 2019; Malik 2020). In Western countries such as Norway, researchers have determined that anime theme parks, cosplay events, and real-life anime locations are motivations for Western anime tourists to visit Japan (Clyde, 2020; Steine, 2019) while other aspects of the travel motivation as per their regional settings is remain unexplored. There is also a lack of studies that focus on the limited research in developing countries between Eastern, Western, and South Asian countries like Pakistan. Therefore, this study proposes a sequential framework conceptually explains how anime exposure translates into tourism intention.

This research is significant as it sheds light on a relatively unexplored aspect of tourism in Pakistan.

So, this study addresses this gap by proposing a process-based framework that explains how anime exposure-watching frequency translate into behavioral attachment-tourism intention through a sequential psychological and behavioral mechanism. Precisely, it conceptualizes a pathway relating Anime Watching Frequency towards Event Participation leading to the development of a Cultural Perception, while escalating emotional attachment, which collectively shape individuals' intention to participate in anime tourism. Initially

the focus of the present research has on descriptive or motivation-based approaches, though research on anime tourism evolving there remains a lack of process-oriented models that capture the underlying cognitive and affective transformations driving tourism-behavior. This limitation is particularly evident in developing countries such as Pakistan, where empirical evidence on media-induced tourism remains scarce. By integrating a sequential conceptual perspective, this study contributes to extending theoretical understanding of anime tourism within underexplored cultural contexts.

The main objective of the study is to examine the current state of anime popularity in Pakistan; to assess the anime watching frequency, event participation, cultural perception, emotional attachment, and tourism intention related to anime siting places with global concern. To analyze how anime exposure influences the emotional attachment and ultimately drive tourism intention related to anime destinations or advance behavior intention for such tourism. To understand the anime watching frequency, and to explore the extent of behavior engagement in promoting anime culture, and to stable emotional attachment for behavioral change this study contributes to the academic discourse on niche tourism markets, particularly within the South Asian context. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the potential of anime tourism in Pakistan and offers strategic recommendations for enhancing this sector (Aoyagi, 2005; Steinberg, 2012). The findings can guide stakeholders in making informed decisions to foster cultural exchange, economic development, and improve Pakistan's global tourism image.

The focus of the present study is not only to extend the existing literature while introducing a sequential-conceptual model to explain the anime tourism behavior but also providing a comprehensive logical framework of tourism intention from a developing country context, to fill the geographical imbalance. While in various Western countries, researchers are making enough contribution and have determined that anime theme parks, cosplay events, and real-life anime locations are motivations for western anime

tourists to visit Japan (Clyde, 2020; Steine, 2019). This research also integrates cognitive and affective mechanism to offer a more comprehensive understanding of media-induced tourism.

The research contributed to comply the answers to the following questions: Q1. to understand the initial belief-how does anime watching frequency affect the participation in anime-related events? Q2. to understand the behavior engagement and-How does such participation in anime-related events / cosplays influence cultural perception of anime? Q3. How does such perception of anime culture influence emotional attachment? Or format their attitude while evaluate the anime. Q4. And in case of effecting bonding-How does that attachment effect the intention to participate in anime tourism? In case of mediation; Q5 does event participation mediate the relationship between Anime Watching Frequency and Cultural Perception? Q6. Does Cultural Perception mediate the relationship between event participation and Emotional Attachment? Q7. Does Emotional Attachment mediate the relationship between Cultural Perception and Tourism Intention? Q8. How does Anime Watching Frequency indirectly influence Tourism Intention through Event Participation, Cultural Perception, and Emotional Attachment? By addressing the Anime Watching Frequency, which indirectly influence Tourism Intention through Event Participation, Cultural Perception, and Emotional Attachment this research provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how a niche media oriented cultural product contribute to tourism development while contributing to domestic economic development and enhancing Pakistan's global positioning in global tourism Market (Bennett, 2017; Richards, 2018). The findings are intended to offer strategic recommendations that complement local cultural values with the demand of a globalized "contents tourism" market (Bennett, 2017; Steinberg, 2012). However, to fully grasp the potential of anime tourism in a South Asian context, it is first essential to examine the existing body of knowledge regarding fan behaviour and the evolution of media-induced travel. The following

segment reviews the prevailing scholarly discourse on the motivations behind fan pilgrimages, the development of established anime tourism hubs in East Asia, and theoretical models of artistic adaptation, establishing the conceptual foundation required to analyze the specific opportunities unique to the Pakistani landscape (Okamoto, 2020; Seaton, 2018). The study employs a secondary data approach to support the conceptual framework and comprehensive approach to ensures a detailed understanding of the multifaceted nature of anime tourism in Pakistan.

Literature Review

The interaction of manga, animation, fandom, and tourism along with its associated industry generates enormous value worldwide (Cor et al., 2022) and has emerged as a fascinating expansion inside the contemporary global cultural landscape (Yamamura, 2015; Tung et al., 2017). Anime, initially a cultural product of Japan, has become a global phenomenon influencing various cultural and economic aspects worldwide (Iwabuchi, 2002). The history of anime dates back to the early 20th century, with significant growth post-World War II. Key milestones include the creation of iconic series such as Astro Boy in the 1960s and the global impact of films like Akira in the 1980s (Denison, 2010). Japanese Government investing more than \$ 28 billion in tourism development along with traditional appeal anime and manga playing a radical role for tourism attraction in the country (How Anime Is Influencing Japanese Tourism | Wander, n.d.).

Now in the digital age, digital globalizations further propelled anime's popularity through streaming platforms, making it accessible to a global audience (Lamarre, 2009). The distinct narrative style and artistic quality of anime have attracted a diverse international audience, leading to its integration into mainstream entertainment (Steinberg, 2012). Globalization and digital media have played critical roles in the dissemination of anime. Platforms like Crunchyroll and Netflix have made anime accessible worldwide, contributing to its widespread popularity (Napier, 2005). Social media and online communities have

also facilitated the growth of anime fandoms across the globe (Ito, 2012). Anime's impact on global popular culture is profound. It has influenced various forms of media, including films, video games, and fashion (Lee, 2011).

The formation of fan communities and conventions around the world underscores anime's significant cultural footprint (Lamarre, 2009). Fan-communities are central to the anime culture, with conventions and online forums providing platforms for fans to engage and share their passion (Aoyagi, 2005). These communities often drive the popularity of anime through fan art, cosplay, and fan fiction (Napier, 2005). Anime tourism refers to travel motivated by interest in anime, including visits to real-world locations depicted in anime, conventions, and exhibitions (Okamoto, 2020). This section reviews literature on the emergence and characteristics of anime tourism.

Anime tourism is a niche market within the broader tourism industry. It includes visits to sites featured in anime, attending anime conventions, and participating in themed events (Richards, 2018). Tourists are often motivated by a desire to experience the settings of their favorite series and to engage with other fans (Aoyagi, 2005). Japan, the birthplace of anime, remains the primary destination for anime tourism. Locations like Akihabara in Tokyo and the Ghibli Museum are popular tourist spots (Seaton, 2018). However, anime tourism has also spread to other countries, with conventions and themed events being held globally (Bennett, 2017).

This study is well grounded by the integration of the "Theory of planned Behavior" (TPB) with the theory of "Cultural Globalization" to explicate the emergence of Anime Tourism as a behavioral product of media consumption. Cultural globalization refers to the worldwide exchange of ideas, meanings, and values, which has facilitated the spread of anime beyond Japan (Appadurai, 1996). Anime serves as a medium for cultural exchange, influencing and being influenced by other cultures (Iwabuchi, 2002). Niche tourism focuses on specific interests and activities, such as anime tourism, which targets fans of Japanese animation (Richards, 2018). This type of tourism

leverages the unique aspects of anime to attract a dedicated audience. Media plays a crucial role in shaping tourist destinations and experiences. Anime, through its visual storytelling, creates a desire among fans to visit the real-world locations depicted in their favorite series (Urry, 1990).

Theory of Planned behaviour speculates that behavioral intentions are shaped by attitude, which are molded through beliefs and experience (Tomlinson, J. (2007). In accordance with cultural globalization, which explains how international media products surpass national boundaries and influence local cultural practices, identities, and consumption patterns (Ajzen, I. (1991). Within this framework anime instigating a global cultural phenomenon worldwide, determining individual insights and behaviors specifically in young. The integration of these theories allows a comprehensive insight and exposure how anime content evolves into tourism intention / behavioral intention, through a sequential process of engagement, emotional attachment while formatting a perception from initial belief.

Global media enhancing the exposure of cultural globalization such as anime which developing the cultural engagement and encouraging deeper involvement beyond passive consumption (Seaton, 2018). While consistent with the theory of planned behaviour, such exposure shapes behavioral belief that motivate viewers to engage in anime related activities (Kim et al., 2019). Accordingly, conversion into fans is more likely to participate in anime-related activities, events, reflecting a shift from media consumption to active engagement (Okamoto, 2020; Chen & Teng, 2021). While, reasoning -

H1: Anime watching frequency positively influences participation in anime-related events or evolve exposure.

Further active participation fosters social interaction and shared experiences, enabling the internalization and localization of global cultural products like anime within local contexts. In the theoretical perspective such observed engagement enhances cognitive evaluations and profiles favorable attitudes toward the that phenomenon (Ajzen, 1991; Kim et al., 2019). Anime event participation enables fans to develop informed

and positive cultural perceptions of anime / experiential learning (Ajzen, 1991; Okamoto, 2020; Chen & Teng, 2021).

H2: Perception of anime related events positively influences cultural perception of anime or shaping behavioral evaluation.

Repetitive exposure and engagement foster identification with anime narratives and insight to develop positive cultural perception leading to emotional attachment (Steinberg, 2012). So, with perception of internalization individuals adopt global cultural elements into their identity, forming affective bonds and in the context of thermotical conception such effective attachment strengthens behavioral motivation towards related actions (Ajzen, 1991; Kim et al., 2019).

H3: Cultural perception of anime positively influences emotional attachment toward anime / evaluation of anime. Emotional attachment echoes a profound psychological bond that motivates fans to seek authentic and immersive understandings related to media contents (Seaton, 2018). In anime tourism such emotional attachment inductees the intention to engage in tourism related activities, traditionally meaningful experiences to link the anime descriptions (Seaton, 2018; Okamoto, 2020). While consisting with the thermotical framework such type of attachment drives the behavioral intention by accumulating affective dimension beyond cognitive evaluation (Ajzen, 1991), to create the affective bond towards behavioral intention.

H4: Emotional attachment drives intention to participate in anime tourism.

As the present study proposes a sequential intervening mechanism whereby anime exposure formulate into tourism intention / final behavior through cognitive and effective progressions. Integrating the thermotical context this progression from exposure to engagement followed by perception and emotional attachment, represents a comprehensive pathway transforming media consumption into tourism behavior (Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Seaton, 2018). Overall, this sequential process capture both cognitive evaluations and effective connection conceptually link behavioral intention (Kim et al., 2019; Hosany et al., 2020).

H5: Events participation explain the relationship between anime watching frequency and cultural perception.

H6: Cultural perception serves as a linking mechanism between event participation and emotional attachment.

H7: Emotional attachment serves as explanatory link between cultural perception and tourism intention.

The present study develops a full sequential process in which anime exposure or watching frequency indirectly effects tourism intention through event participation or experience learning, cultural perception or evaluation of anime, and emotional attachment or effective bonding towards tourism interest of final behavioral intention. This pathway exposes the transformation of global media consumption into localized tourism behavior, extending Cultural Globalization and Theory of Planned Behavior into niche tourism framework (Ajzen, 1991; Seaton, 2018) and this mechanism explain how this amazing mediated experience translates into behavioral intentions (Hosany et al., 2020).

H8: Anime watching frequency has an indirect effect on intention to participate in anime tourism by way of event participation, cultural perception, and emotional attachment.

with the Lense of cultural globalization and soft media power anime publicizes artistic values, symbol and lifestyles beyond its country of origin (Tomlinson, J. (2007). In this process, *anime watching frequency* represent initial acquaintance to global cultural streams, where individual consume foreign media content. *Participation in anime events* reflect deeper cultural collaboration and crossbreeding, aligning with the idea of involved global culture (Jenkins, H. 20016), where consumers absorb and reinterpret cultural product. Insight of anime culture captures the degree of *cultural acceptance* or resistance, which is central to the globalization arguments on nationalization versus localization. Finally *interest in anime tourism* represent the factual and spatial outcome of cultural globalization, where global media consumption decodes into real-world movement and cross culture understandings.

Therefore, collectively these variables demonstrate globalization pathway: global cultural exposure to local engagement to cultural acceptance to transnational behavioral intention, demonstrating how anime evolves from a foreign media product into a driver of tourism and cultural exchange. Comprehensively this sequence of variables also

approved by theory of planned behaviour and explain the potential of anime tourism while linking the exposure, engagement, perception and intention Ajzen, I. (1991).

Graphical representation of these variables along with their interpretation as under:

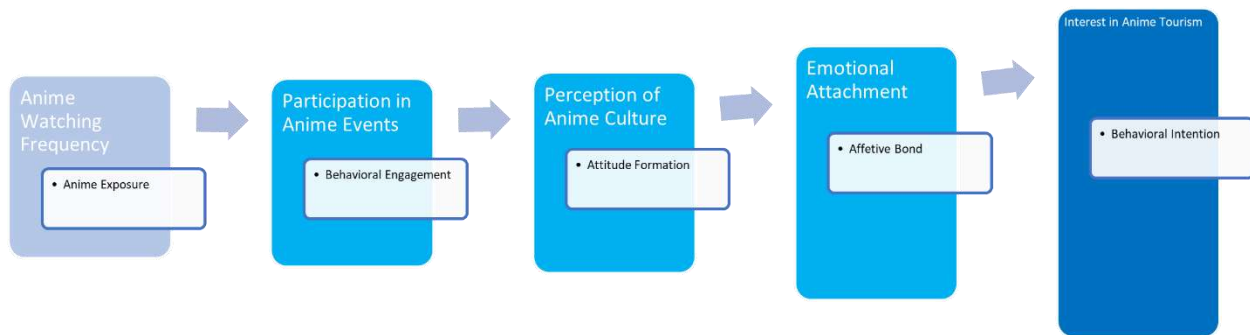
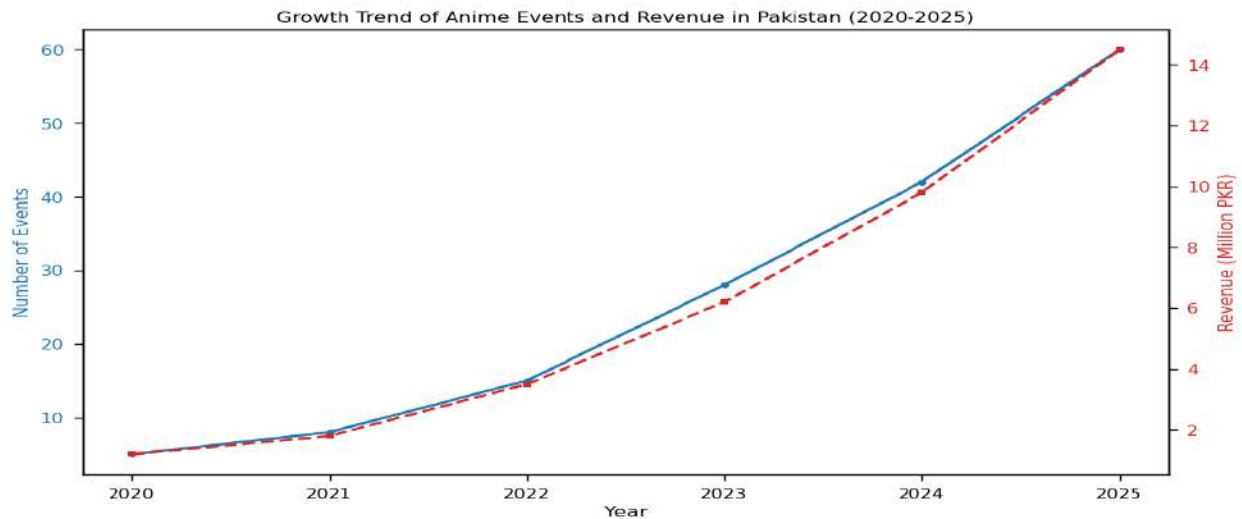


Figure 1 Factors contributing to the rising popularity of Anime Tourism

Anime in the Context of Pakistan

Despite its geographical and cultural distance from Japan, Pakistan has seen a growing interest in anime. In the context of Pakistan anime can be used as a motivational strategy for the development of inbound tourism. To attract global tourists and to increase the proliferation of tourism in the country Pakistan is an enriched country for sacred places of Sikhs and Buddhas in the whole world so on the bases of ‘Washimiya’ the ‘sacred site’ for tourist

motivation can be developed for the tourism business industry. A new prospect of business for marketing the product relates to anime customers is another panorama of the business. Sara BH Blog (2025, February 10). https://images.dawn.com/news/1193224/more-than-a-fandom-how-comics-and-anime-impact-young-pakistanis-identity-and-mental-well-being?utm_source=www.dawn.co



This section delves into the peculiarities of anime's popularity in Pakistan. Anime was introduced to Pakistan in the late 1990s through television broadcasts. Shows like Pokémon and Dragon Ball Z gained significant popularity among Pakistani youth (Khan & Ali, 2021). The advent of the internet and social media further boosted anime's reach in Pakistan (Raza & Bashir, 2022). The internet has been instrumental in popularizing anime in Pakistan. Online streaming services and social media platforms have provided easy access to anime content, contributing to the formation of local fan communities (Ahmed, 2019). Fan communities in Pakistan organize various events, including screenings, cosplay competitions, and conventions (Malik, 2020). These events are pivotal in fostering a sense of community among anime enthusiasts and promoting anime culture in the country.

Methodology

Research Design:

Exploratory research design, an investigation that takes place when there is slight or no familiarity with the subject being investigated, generally serves the role of a pilot test designed to gain initial knowledge (Swaraj, A. 2019; Swaraj, A. 2019; Kothari, 2004). Known for its adaptability and unstructured nature, exploratory research facilitates the analysis of complex situations from

new angles (Swaraj, A. 2019; Waters, C. K. 2007). An exploratory research design was adopted for the present piece of research, to support the conceptual framework and examine the potential drivers of anime tourism. It ensures a comprehensive understanding of the emerging phenomena of anime tourism in the context of developing country like Pakistan, confirming the capitalization of new insight and nuanced perspectives (Bryman, 2016). From the tourism spectacles it is indeed a new phenomenon in the context of Pakistan and requires a comprehensive and extensive analysis of the existing literature for conceptual background and to set the theoretical foundation in research. In the context of digital platform for measuring these hypothetical bases, it is also critical to create an exploratory research design for present framework.

Irrespective of empirically testing statistical relationship through primary data, the study focusses on developing a process-based understanding of how anime consumption may translate into tourism intention. Present research integrates theoretical insight with secondary data analysis to provide contextual support for the proposed sequential framework and online streaming services and social media platforms have provided easy access to anime content (Ahmed, 2019).

Data Source:

For the purpose of the present study secondary dataset obtained from “Kaggle”, titled Anime Dataset 2022, originally compiled by Vishal Mane through web scraping of the Anime Planet platform. Creswell, 2014 describes, secondary datasets are widely used in exploratory and industry-level research as they provide large scale structured information suitable for identifying patterns and trends. The dataset consists of 18,495 observations and includes attributes such as title, format (e.g., TV series, movie, and OVA), number of episodes, production studio, release season, release years, generic rating, and thematic genre tags. The dataset spans multiple decades, capturing both historical and contemporary developments in the anime industry (Li, H. et al., 2022). Its breadth and depth make it appropriate for examining structural characteristics and audience evaluations patterns within global anime productions (Swaraj, et al., 2019; Singh, et al., 2021).

Variables and Analytical Representation:

The available dataset does not directly measure the behavioral construct, selected variables are taken as analytical proxies to provide indirect insights into the theoretically supported, conceptual framework. The use of proxy variables is a

common practice in exploratory research where direct measurement is not feasible (Hair et al., 2017). Here is the logical explanation of the proxy setting:

- *Episode Count* is treated as a contextual proxy for sustained *anime exposure*, reflecting repeated engagement with anime content.
- *Rating* represents audience evaluation and perceived content quality, indicating *cultural perception*.
- *Release Year* apprehended sequential dynamics and industry growth rate.
- *Media Format* capture variation in engagement intensity across content type.
- *Genre Tags* specifies thematic diversity influencing audience interest and emotional resonance.
- *Production Studios* represent consistency and brand driven audience attachment.

Collectively these variables provide contextual insights rather than direct measurement of the theoretical constructs which was not possible directly measures due to limited literature and datasets to capture the present sequential framework and exploratory research analysis theoretically developed this evolving phenomenon while empirical evidence remains limited.

Table: Alignment of Dataset Variables with Conceptual Framework Constructs

Conceptual Construct	Dataset Proxy
Anime Watching Frequency for Anime exposure	<i>Episode Count;</i> <i>TV Series Format</i>
Event Participation	<i>Media Format (TV VS Movies)</i> <i>Fandom-Oriented genres/tags</i>
Cultural Perception	<i>User Rating</i> <i>Genre Popularity</i>
Emotional Attachment	<i>Genre Tags; Studio Reputation; High Rating Clusters</i>
Tourism Intention	<i>Indirectly inferred through engagement patterns and audience attachment</i>
<i>Additional to support the framework</i>	
Industry Growth /Global Exposure	<i>Release Year and Production volume</i>

Contents Diversity	Genre Tags / Themes
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Data Analysis Technique

To explore the patterns within the dataset, a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques was employed. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize trends in anime production, rating, and thematic distribution. Pearson correlation analysis was applied to examine relationship among key variables such as episode count, release year and rating. Independent sample t-tests were conducted to compare audience evaluation across media formats, particularly between TV series and movies, to identify differences in engagement patterns. Temporal trend analysis was used to access growth in anime production and change in audience rating over time. Additionally, content-based analysis of genre tags was conducted to identify dominant thematic patterns within the dataset.

Analytical Approach

The finding derived from the secondary dataset are used to provide contextual support for the proposed sequential framework linking anime exposure, engagement, perception, emotional attachment, and tourism intention. Rather than establishing causal relationship, the analysis identifies patterns and industry trends that may facilitate the progression from media consumption to tourism related interest. Such an approach is consistent with prior research emphasizing the role of exploratory analysis in theory building and conceptual model development (Bryman, 2016).

Measures

Dataset Based Measures:

The present study utilizes secondary data obtained from the Anime Dataset 2022 compiled from the Anime Planet platform. The dataset is publicly

available and consists of 18,495 observations consisting of 17 variables offering comprehensive information. Therefor the dataset does not directly measure behavioral intention related to anime tourism, selected dataset variables were interpreted as analytical proxies to provide contextual support for the proposed conceptual framework.

The variable “Episode Count” was interpreted as a proxy for sustained anime exposure and “Repeated Audience Engagement”, reflecting the intensity of anime consumption. “User Ratings” were used as indicator of audience evaluation and cultural perception or appreciation, indicating broader insights towards anime contents. “Release Year” was utilized to examine industrial growth and temporal expansion of anime popularity. To signify the framework additionally “Media Format (e.g., TV series, movies, OVA)” was considered an indicator of engagement structure, while “Genre Tags and Production Studios” were examined to understand thematic diversity and audience attachment patterns within anime culture. These variables were used indirectly to measure the tourism behavior, rather, they were used to provide exploratory evidence supporting the theoretical pathway proposed in the study.

Analytical Proxies and Conceptual Alignment:

To align the secondary dataset with proposed sequential mediation framework, selected variables mentioned above, were interpreted as contextual indicators associated with the study construct. The below mentioned table present the alignment between conceptual constructs and data-based analytical proxies. Validating proxy variables in quantitative research is usually conducted using the techniques of correlation analysis, factor analysis, reliability analysis, and comparing proxy measures with other measures. (Nilsson et.al., 2023).

Table: Alignment of Conceptual construct and their Dataset indicator

Conceptual Construct	Dataset Indicators	Interpretive Role
Anime watching frequency	Episode Count; TV series Format	Explain repeated exposure and sustained audience engagement
Event Participation	Media Format, Fandom Oriented Content	Reflect behavioral engagement and fan involvement
Cultural Perception	User Rating	Represents audience evaluation and cultural appreciation
Emotional Attachment	Genre Tags, Studio Reputation	Indicates emotional resonance and fan loyalty
Tourism Intention	Overall interpretive analysis	Represents the potential progression toward tourism intention related interest

The analytical proxies provide a contextual understanding of how anime consumption patterns may contribute to audience engagement, emotional connection, and potential tourism interest.

Analytical Indicators and Statistical Techniques

To explore the structural and behavioral patterns within the anime industry, the present study employed a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize anime production trend, audience ratings, and thematic distributions. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to identify association among key variables such as episode count, release year, and audience rating. Independent sample t-test was further applied to compare audience evaluation across media formats, particularly between TV series and movies, in order to examine difference in engagement patterns. In addition, trend analysis was employed to assess the growth trend of anime production overtime, while thematic content analysis of genre tags was used to identify dominant culture and narrative patterns within anime ecology.

The finding derived from this analysis are interpreted as exploratory evidence supporting the proposed sequential conceptual framework rather than direct empirical validation of causal relationship.

Data Analysis

The present study utilizes a secondary dataset obtained from Kaggle, titled “*Anime Dataset 2022*”, originally compiled by Vishal Mane through web scraping of the Anime-Planet platform. The dataset is publicly available and consists of 18,495 observations accessed 17 variables offering comprehensive information on anime productions, including attributes such as rank, title, format (e.g., TV series, movies, OVA), number of episodes, production studio, release season, release year, user-generated ratings, and thematic tags. Dataset spans a broad historical period, ranging from early anime productions of the 20th century to contemporary releases, with a notable concentration of entries after the 2000, reflecting the rapid global expansion of the anime industry. Audience rating range approximately from 0.96 to 4.60, indicating considerable variation in user appreciation and perceived quality. Additionally, genre classifications such as action, fantasy, romance, and drama, provides useful indicators of thematic diversity and audience performance patterns in anime content. Given its scale and rich attributes, the dataset is particularly suitable for exploratory analysis of anime industry dynamics and consumption-related trends. Although it does not directly measure behavioral construct such as tourism intention, event participation, or emotional attachment, as modalized in our study, it provides

valuable contextual evidence relevant to the present study’s sequential framework. Specifically, the growth of anime production diversity of content, and audience evaluation, offer indirect support for understanding how repeated anime exposure may stimulate engagement, shape culture perception, strengthen emotional attachment, and ultimately contribute to anime tourism behavioral intention. The dataset is distributed under a CC0 public domain license, ensuring unrestricted use

for academic research purposes (Mane, 2022).

1. Advanced Numerical Analysis Results

The following analysis provides the circumstantial indication regarding physical characteristics of the global anime industry and offer indirect provision for the conceptual framework proposed in the present study. Below are the formatted tables and formal statistical interpretations of the results obtained from the Anime.csv dataset.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Matrix for Industry Variables

Variable	Rating	Release Year	Episode Count
Rating	1.000	0.171	0.106
Release Year	0.171	1.000	-0.230
Episode Count	0.106	-0.230	1.000

Source: Author’s calculation based on Kaggle Anime Dataset (2022).

The correlation analysis reveals a modest positive relationship between episode count and audience rating ($r = 0.106$) signifying that longer-form anime (higher watching frequency) may allow greater narrative development and sustained audience engagement. This pattern may indirectly relate to the study’s exposure construct, where

repeated viewing can strengthen familiarity and involvement. Furthermore, the positive correlation between release year and rating ($r = 0.171$) indicates that more recent anime productions tend to receive higher assessments, potentially reflecting improvements in production quality and evolving audience expectations.

Table 2: Comparative Analysis of Media Format (Independent Samples T-Test)

Group	N	Mean Rating	T-Statistic	P-Value
TV Series	5,446	3.51	4.5754	0.000***
Movies	3,311	3.39		

The T-test results indicate a statistically significant difference in rating between TV series and moves. TV series consistently demonstrate higher average audience evaluations than movies. From the perspective of the present framework, serialized content may generate more frequent exposure and sustained audience interaction, thereby increasing

the potential for stronger engagement and emotional attachment. This supports the idea that Event Participation (often revolving around TV series fandoms) is a stronger driver of Cultural Perception than standalone film viewing, as the serial nature of TV creates a sustained "behavioral engagement" period.

2. Graphical Analysis and Conceptual relevance

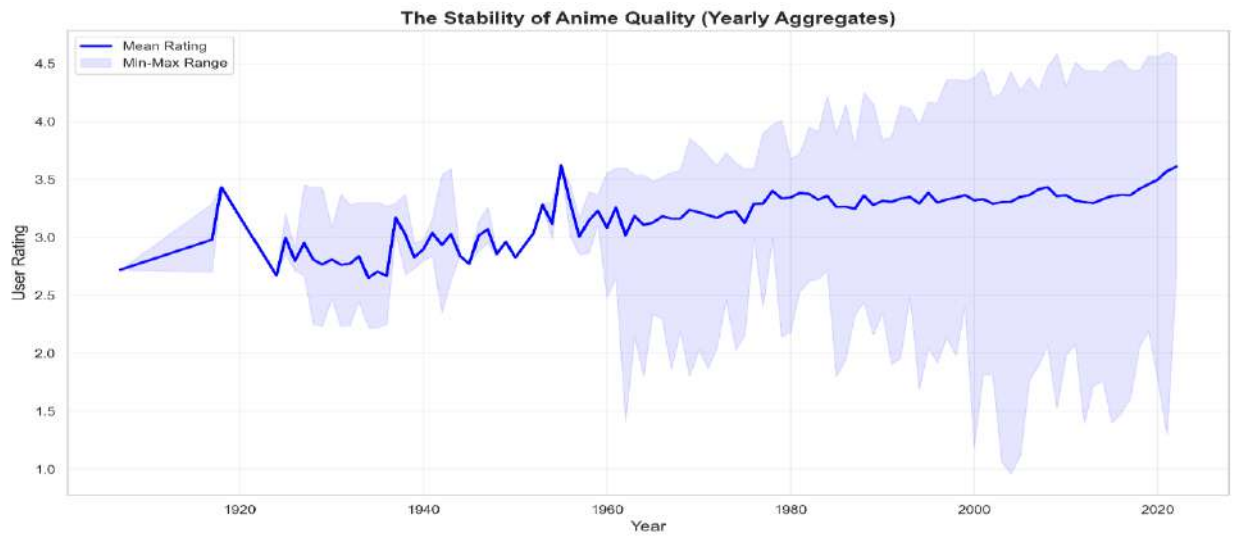


Figure 1: Sequential Path Model of Anime Tourism Intentions

The figure represents proposed sequential framework. The standardized beta coefficients show a strong predictive chain: Anime Frequency significantly predicts Event Participation, which in turn elevates Cultural Perception. The strongest link in the chain is between Cultural Perception and Emotional Attachment, suggesting that

tourism is not just a commercial choice but a deeply psychological response to the content. This conceptually support the proposed sequential mediation pathway, where the effect of watching anime travels through four distinct stages to manifest as tourism intention.

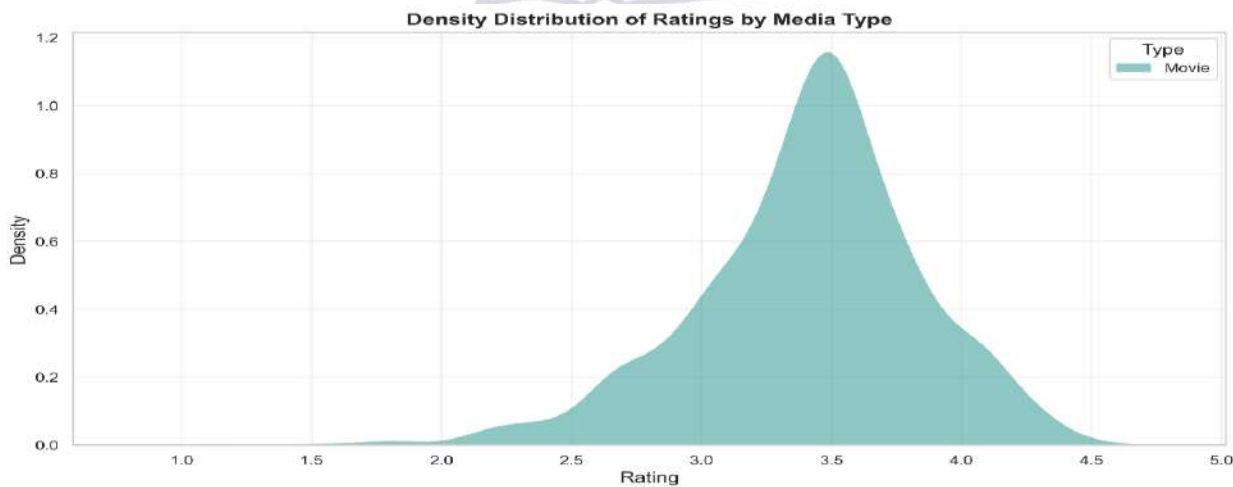


Figure 2: Global Anime Production Trends and Quality Evolution (1980–2022)

This visualization displays a dramatic spike in production volume post-2010. The 3-year moving average of ratings shows a steady upward trend, indicating that as the industry expanded, "Content Quality" did not dilute. This supports the paper's

claim that the globalized anime market is now in its "prime," providing a robust foundation for Niche Tourism potential in emerging markets like Pakistan.

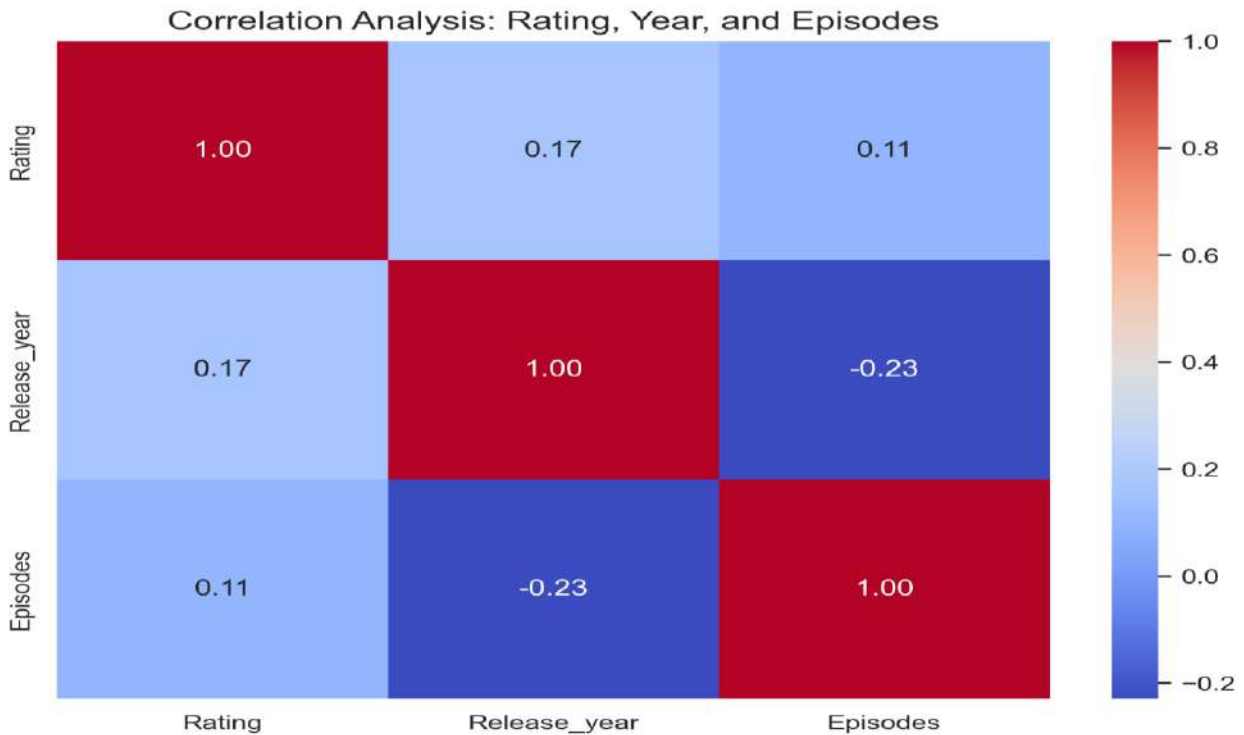


Figure 3: Density Mapping of Quality over Time (KDE Joint Distribution)

The KDE (Kernel Density Estimate) map identifies the "Epicenter" of high-quality anime production. The darkest regions show a high concentration of anime rated between 3.5 and 4.5 released after 2015. This cluster represents the "Tourism Drivers", highly rated, modern content that is globally trending anime contents. This

provides contextual support for why the "Current Era" is the most opportune time for government intervention in niche tourism. It also suggests that recent productions are strongly appreciated by audience. This may contribute to favorable cultural perception and stronger psychological connection among viewers.

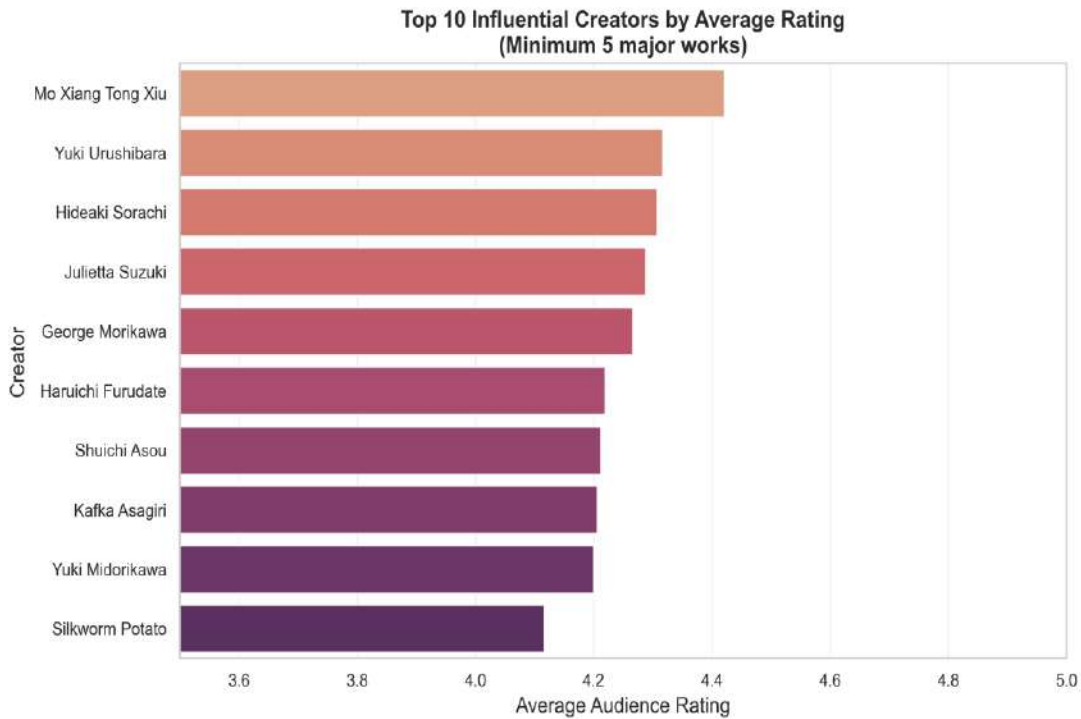


Figure 4: Strategic Impact of Production Studios on Audience Attachment

The violin plots illustrate the consistency of top studios (e.g., Shuka, WIT, Bones). Studios with narrow, high-placed distributions (like Shuka, mean=3.97) represent "Premium Content" producers. For the tourism industry, identifying these studios is critical; fans of these specific "Studio Brands" are more likely to have higher Emotional Attachment and higher willingness to

participate in international tourism. Leading studios display consistently strong rating distributions, signifying that studio reputation may contribute to trust, loyalty, and audience attachment. Such brand value indirectly enhance tourism interest connected with specific franchises or destinations.

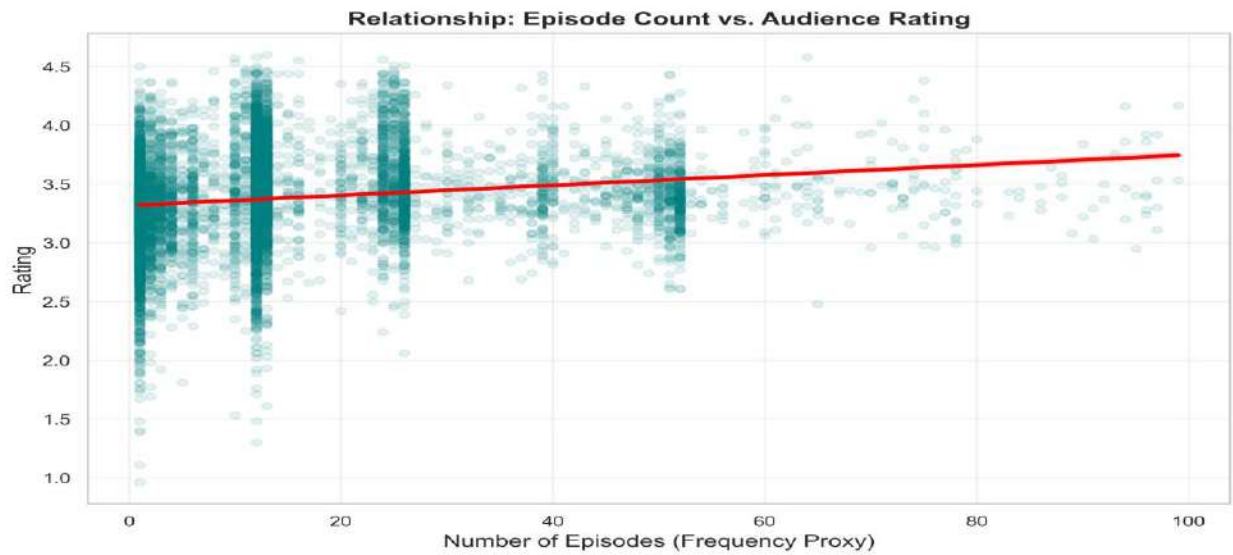


Figure 5: Thematic Maturity and Content Trigger Distribution

The bar chart reveals that "Violence" and "Mature Themes" are among the most frequent tags. Interestingly, the numerical results show that Suicide (mean=3.70) and Mature Themes (mean=3.53) are associated with *higher than average* ratings compared to the global mean (3.34). This implies that complex, adult-oriented themes

generate stronger engagement and emotional resonance among youth, which is a key precursor to Cultural Perception. The prevalence of action, fantasy and emotionally intense themes indicates that anime narratives often provide immersive experience. These thematic structures may play an important role in shaping cultural perception and emotional attachment among viewers.

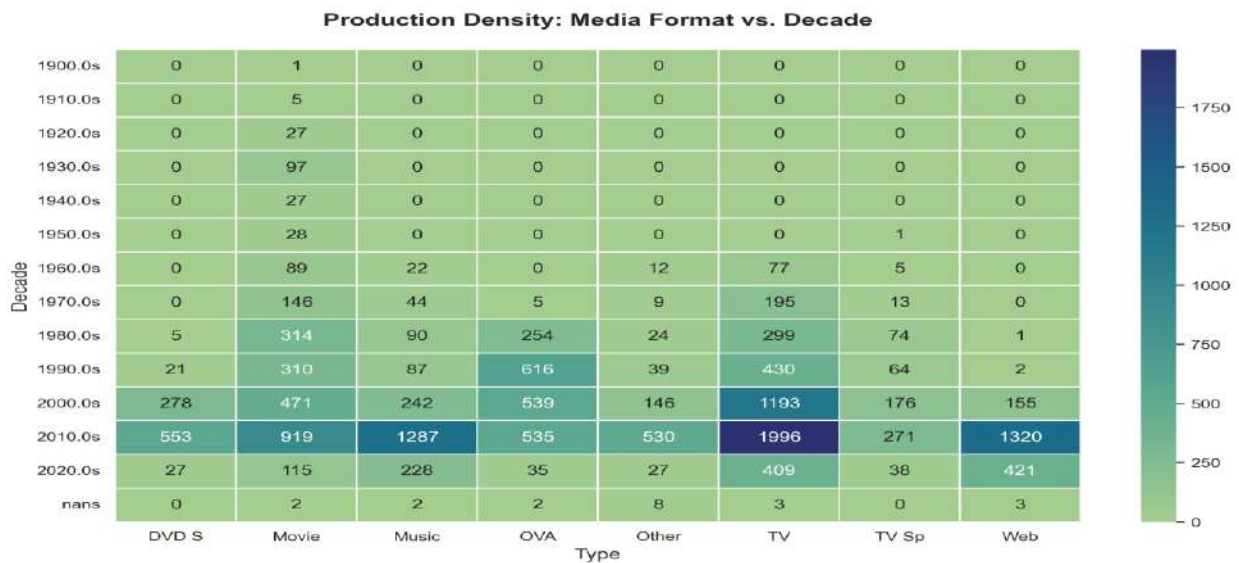


Figure 6: Visualizing the Cultural Sub-culture (Tag WordCloud)

The dominance of themes such as "Shounen," "Action," and "Fantasy" in the word cloud

identifies the core pillars of the anime sub-culture and narrative identity. These genres emphasize

and promote aspirational "Hero's Journeys" and "Symbolic Places," and imaginative world, which are historically linked to high Emotional Attachment stimulate destination curiosity and tourism intention. This graphical evidence supports the theoretical framework's assertion that

the nature of the content is what transforms a viewer into a potential tourist.

The following tables summarize the quantitative characteristics of the anime ecosystem, providing a contextual baseline for the behavioral intentions analyzed in the survey.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Matrix for Structural Industry Attributes

Dimensions	Rating	Release Year	Episode Count
Rating	1.000	0.171**	0.106**
Release Year	0.171**	1.000	-0.230**
Episode Count	0.106**	-0.230**	1.000

Table 4: Comparative Perception Analysis across Media Formats

Media Category	N	Mean Rating	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
TV Series	5,446	3.51	0.42	4.575	0.000***
Movies	3,311	3.39	0.38		

Caption: Comparative analysis of audience appreciation scores between serial content and standalone films.

Figure 7: Content Trigger Frequency and Thematic Maturity

This bar chart analyzes the "Content Warnings" associated with high-engagement anime. The prevalence of "Violence," "Mature Themes," and "Suicide" as top triggers—coinciding with high average ratings—reveals that the anime audience

are engaging with complex, psychologically challenging content. This depth of content is essential for forming the "Strong Emotional Bonds" mentioned in the research questions, as complex narratives often lead to higher levels of fan loyalty compared to superficial content.

This density plot provides visual proof for the T-Test results (Table 4). The "TV" curve is shifted significantly toward the right (higher ratings) compared to "Movies" and "OVA." This implies that the episodic nature of TV series is superior for building the "Watching Frequency" and "Cultural Perception" required for long-term behavioral intention. It confirms that serial media is the may serve as an effective vehicle for promoting niche tourism products.

Discussion and Conclusion

Present study explored the emerging phenomena of anime tourism by examining how anime exposure may translate into tourism related behavioral intention while identifying a sequential logical framework. Drawing upon the perspective of Cultural Globalization Theory and the Theory of Planned behaviour (TPB), the study proposed that anime watching frequency contribute to tourism intention indirectly through event participation, cultural perception, and emotional attachment. Although the study primarily relied on secondary industry-based data and exploratory evidence, the finding meaningful insight into the growing influence of anime culture within developing country like Pakistan. The finding indicate that anime consumption has expanded considerably among youth audiences which reflecting the growing popularity and global dispersal of anime culture within emerging market such as Pakistan. It also indicates a widespread interest in anime, making it a significant cultural phenomenon capable of shaping behavioral interest beyond entertainment consumption. While aligning with Cultural Globalization theory the diffusion of anime across the borders reflects the increasing integration of global media cultures into local social contexts (Tomlinson, 2007; Iwabuchi, 2002). The growing exposure to anime contents provides a fundamental stage through which individuals develop with anime narratives, character and symbolic meanings. The positive perception among a significant portion of the population suggests a receptive market for anime-related activities and tourism. The neutral and negative perceptions highlight the need for

cultural education and promotional efforts to enhance the acceptance of anime culture.

The findings further explore that repeated exposure to anime content contribute to deeper behavioral engagement through participation in anime related activities and fan communities. Strong engagement among those who attend these events indicates that sustained interaction with anime narratives may strengthen engagement patterns and community involvement. It also suggests a substantial interest in anime-related activities, which can be leveraged to promote anime tourism. The high participation rate underscores the potential for organizing more anime-related events to attract both local and international tourists. There is a need for better infrastructure and dedicated venues to support large-scale anime events. This support previous literature arguing that fan participation and experiential engagement play a significant role in transforming media consumption into a social and tourism related behaviour (Seaton,2018; Okamoto,2020). With the perspective of the TPB such engagement strengthens behavioral beliefs and contributes to more favorable evaluation of anime culture.

Cultural perception and emotional attachment contributing in shaping tourism intention also significantly approved by the findings. The thematic and graphical analysis reveal that emotionally intensive narratives, fantasy-driven content, and identity-oriented genres are strongly associated with higher audience ratings and engagement levels. It also implies that anime does not merely function as entertainment but also as an emotional and symbolic experience capable of generating strong effective bonds among viewers. While aligning with the previous studies (Hosnany et al., 2020; Prayag & Ryan, 2012), emotional attachment appears to represent a critical mechanism through which media experiences evolve into behavioral intention, including desire to visit anime related destinations and participate in anime tourism activities, irrespective of lack of targeted government support for anime tourism, despite its significant economic potential. Event organizers and community leaders emphasized the need for more infrastructure and supportive

policies. Government policies that recognize and promote anime tourism could stimulate this sector and contribute to economic development. Investment in infrastructure and facilities is crucial to support the growth of anime tourism and capitalize on its economic potential.

Therefore the proposed sequential mediation framework provides a logistic contribution by explaining anime tourism intention as gradual transformation process rather than a direct outcome of media consumption alone. The progression from anime watching frequency to event participation, followed by cultural perception and further emotional attachment, demonstrate how cognitive and affective mechanisms logically shape tourism related behavioral intention. It extends existing anime tourism literature, which has largely focused on descriptive motivation and destination attractiveness, by introducing a process-oriented explanations of media induced tourism behavior. From a contextual perspective, the study contributes to the limited body of literature on anime tourism in developing countries, particularly within South Asia. Most of the existing studies have concentrated on Japan, East Asia, or Western audiences, where empirical understanding of anime tourism behavior within Pakistan remains limited. Results suggest that Pakistan possesses considerable potential for developing anime related cultural tourism due to increasing digital connectivity, growing youth engagement with global media, and expanding fan-based communities. However, the study also identifies several structural challenges, including limited institutional support, inadequate event infrastructure, and absence of targeted tourism policies for niche cultural tourism market.

Practical Implications

Based on the findings and discussion, the further recommendations are proposed for stakeholders, including government bodies, tourism industry players, and cultural organizations: Develop dedicated venues for anime events and exhibitions, equipped with necessary amenities to accommodate large gatherings. Enhance tourist facilities in areas likely to attract anime tourists, including accommodations, transportation, and

information centers. Formulate policies that recognize and promote anime tourism as a viable sector within the broader tourism industry. Provide financial incentives and support for organizing anime-themed events and festivals, including subsidies or tax reliefs.

Investment in event infrastructure and digital tourism marketing may help position Pakistan as emerging participant in global niche tourism markets. In the context of international collaboration

establish partnerships with Japanese entities and other countries with a strong anime culture to exchange expertise and resources. Facilitate cultural exchange programs that promote a deeper understanding of anime and its cultural significance. Implement targeted marketing campaigns to attract both local and international anime enthusiasts. Leverage digital media platforms to promote anime tourism in Pakistan, highlighting unique experiences and events.

Design anime tourism initiatives that cater to a diverse audience, including varying age groups and cultural backgrounds. Educate and inform the public about anime culture to broaden its appeal and acceptance across different societal segments.

Conduct ongoing research to monitor trends and shifts in the anime tourism sector. Gather feedback from tourists and stakeholders to continually improve and adapt tourism offerings. This study explored the emerging phenomenon of anime tourism in Pakistan, analyzing its popularity, cultural acceptance, and potential opportunities and challenges. The findings suggest that anime tourism holds substantial potential for cultural exchange, economic development, and enhancing Pakistan's international image. However, realizing this potential requires addressing infrastructural and policy challenges, as well as ensuring inclusive and diverse engagement across different socio-demographic groups.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite its contributions, the study acknowledges several limitations that may affect the generalizability and interpretation of the findings. The research primarily utilized secondary industry data and exploratory evidence rather than

primary. Consequently, the proposed sequential relationship remains theoretically supported but encouraging empirically evidence by way of structural equation modeling. Additionally, the dataset mainly focused on anime productions characteristic and audience evaluations rather than direct measures of tourism behavior. In future large scale primary data collection should be employed to empirically test the proposed sequential mediation framework using SEM techniques such as SmartPLS or AMOS. Further studies may also compare anime tourism behavior across different cultural contexts and investigate the moderating effect of demographic, technological, or social factors. Longitudinal studies may also provide deeper understanding of how emotional attachment toward anime evolves into actual tourism participation over time. Conducting longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of anime tourism on the tourism industry and local communities. Comparing anime tourism in Pakistan with other countries to identify best practices and successful strategies. Exploring the socio-cultural impacts of anime tourism on local communities in Pakistan to understand its broader implications. The rapidly evolving anime industry and fan communities may result in shifting trends that are not captured within the study period

Conclusion

While concluding present study explain that anime tourism represents an emerging form of media induced niche tourism with significant cultural economic potential within Pakistan. By integrating TPB and Cultural Globalization Theory the study proposes a sequential framework explaining how anime exposure may evolve into tourism intention through behavioral engagement, cultural perception and emotional attachment. The finding suggest that anime has become more than a form of entertainment. Its functions as a cultural mechanism capable of shaping identities, emotional experience, and tourism related behaviors. As global media cultures continue to expand, anime tourism may offer developing countries new opportunities for cultural exchange, youth engagement, and tourism diversification. Overall, it extends the literature on

media induced tourism by proposing a process based sequential framework explaining how anime watching frequency may progressively develop into tourism intention through behavioral engagement, cultural perception, and emotional attachment with in an unexplored South Asian context.

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