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Psychological well-being of anime subculture representatives

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Abstract. The article presents the results of a study on the psychological well-being of anime subculture representatives. The diagnostic methods used include the Rogers-Diamond Social-Psychological Adaptation Scale adapted by A.K. Osnytsky and the A. Perrudet-Badoux, G. Mendelsohn, J. Chiche Subjective Well-being Scale adapted by M.V. Sokolova. It was found that fans and enthusiasts of the anime subculture have a higher level of subjective well-being. However, representatives of the control group exhibit a higher level of social-psychological adaptation. It was revealed that anime fans have the highest level of self-acceptance, enthusiasts have a higher level of self-rated health, while the control group demonstrates internality. It has been proven that there is a non-linear relationship between the expression of psychological well-being and the social-psychological adaptation of respondents. The perspective for further research lies in identifying the psychological and socio-psychological factors that drive young people's desire to belong to the anime subculture.

Keywords: *well-being, anime, subculture, analyze.*

Problem Statement: The topic of psychological well-being gained popularity in the 1990s and remains relevant today, as studying its structure and regulatory pathways can contribute to enhancing people's welfare. Researchers have long been interested in subcultures or specific groups, which is also reflected in the media for mass consumption. However, negative attitudes towards individuals who differ in their interests from the majority still exist. In recent years, contemporary art and entertainment content from Asia, including music, films, animation, and comics, have gained incredible popularity worldwide. One of the first on this list is Japanese animation, which has gradually become commonplace and no longer evokes the same negative reactions from society as it did a few years ago. Anime and its aspects have been studied by numerous researchers throughout the 21st century. However, a comprehensive approach to the issue of psychological well-being among anime fans is still rare. In particular, less explored aspects are external factors

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indicating the level of psychological well-being, such as indicators of social adaptation.

The aim of the article is to theoretically analyze and empirically investigate the psychological well-being of anime subculture representatives, identifying differences in its manifestations among different groups of respondents. Accordingly, the following objectives were formulated.

Theoretical Foundations of the Research

The topic of psychological well-being is quite popular at the moment. This subject gained momentum from the studies conducted by N. M. Bradburn and his work "The Structure of Psychological Well-Being." Its peak occurred in the 1990s and continues to be of interest until today [1]. Psychological well-being has multiple definitions depending on the approaches taken in its study. Two main approaches are hedonistic and eudaimonic. Representatives of the hedonistic approach include N. M. Bradburn, E. Diener, and D. Kahneman. They define this approach in terms of the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of dissatisfaction [5]. The second approach is based on the idea of focusing on personal development and self-realization. Researchers of the eudaimonic approach include C. Ryff and A.S. Waterman [7]. In particular, C. Ryff developed the well-known "The Scales of Psychological Well-Being" questionnaire, which helps examine the main components of psychological well-being [5].

Furthermore, several theories and additions regarding the significance, characteristics, and components of psychological well-being have been presented. For example, there is the integrative approach proposed by R. Biswas-Diener, T. B. Kashdan, and L. A. King, who believe that aspects of both primary approaches can and should work together for greater effectiveness. T. Taylor, on the other hand, developed the theory of a neutral approach, which suggests criteria for assessing an individual's psychological well-being - markers that align with the main theories of well-being.

The study of psychological well-being among anime enthusiasts requires a special approach, as there is a considerable amount of research on fans of various orientations and subcultures, but the psychological study of anime fans is still underrepresented. These studies largely focus on anime enthusiasts who actively engage in various fan communities [3]. However, it has been found that anime fans often experience the consequences of stigmatization [4].

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Nevertheless, representatives of this group have found ways to overcome these challenges through internal support and trust within the community, as well as through coping strategies such as cosplay and other forms of self-expression [2]. All of these factors, in turn, can contribute to enhancing one's psychological well-being.

Research Methodology.

The study employed various methods, including theoretical (analysis and synthesis, systematization and interpretation), empirical (survey method), mathematical-statistical data processing for quantitative data description and statistical inference, methods for comparing two samples, and correlation analysis. In terms of diagnostic tools, in addition to surveys, the Rogers-Diamond Social-Psychological Adaptation Diagnostic Technique adapted by A. K. Osnytsky and the A. Perrudet-Badoux, G. Mendelsohn, J. Chiche Subjective Well-being Scale adapted by M. V. Sokolova were used.

The study involved 178 respondents, including 120 women and 58 men aged between 15 and 32 (with an average age of 20.6). The respondents were divided into groups based on three criteria: the level of immersion in the subculture, the target audience of the respondents' favorite genre, and the target audience of their favorite anime series. Accordingly, the first classification revealed the following groups: anime enthusiasts, otaku (fans), and a control group. The second classification identified the following groups: control group, respondents representing the target audience of the shōnen genre (male teenagers), and respondents representing the target audience of the seinen genre (young adult males). The third classification yielded similar results to the second one: control group, respondents representing the target audience of shōnen anime (male teenagers), respondents representing the target audience of seinen anime (young adult males), and respondents representing the target audience of shōjo anime (female teenagers).

Table 1

A comparative analysis of the indicators of average psychological well-being among enthusiasts, fans, and the control group.

Scale	Groups of participants			Level of
	Sympathizers	Fans (otaku)	Control group	
Subjective well-being	5,39	5,24	4,73	,177
Stress and sensitivity	12,6	11,4	10,9	,073

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Table continuation 1

Signs accompanying the main psychoemotional symptoms	12,5	11,9	11,8	,687
Mood changes	7,10	6,48	5,88	,076
Significance of social environment	10,1	10,3	9,85	,860
Self-rated health	8,39	8	6,64	,002
Degree of satisfaction with daily activities	11,6	13,1	12,5	,075

Otaku or anime fans have a level of subjective well-being within the normal range. Regarding one component of well-being, the level of satisfaction with everyday activities, otaku have the highest level among all groups. Additionally, the fan group has higher average scores compared to the control group but lower than the enthusiast group. Therefore, we can conclude that the fan group has a lower overall level of subjective well-being compared to the enthusiasts.

Regarding some external indicators of psychological well-being and socio-psychological adaptation, both anime subculture groups have higher average scores than the control group. The fan group has the highest level of self-acceptance ($r = 0.025$) but the lowest level of internality among the three groups. Most indicators on the subjective well-being scale show inverse correlations with the significance levels of the socio-psychological adaptation measures. The highest significance levels are found in the correlations between "Subjective well-being" and "Adaptation" ($r = -0.774$) and between "Subjective well-being" and "Self-acceptance" ($r = -0.694$). The anime enthusiast group shows similar results, suggesting that the higher the level of respondents' adaptation according to the scale measures, the lower their level of subjective well-being.

Anime enthusiasts have a level of subjective well-being within the normal range. Overall, this group has the highest average scores across all well-being scales. Additionally, according to the results of a statistically significant difference, enthusiasts have the highest level of self-rated health ($r = 0.002$). The enthusiast group has the lowest level of self-acceptance among the three groups. All indicators on the subjective well-being scale show inverse correlations

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with the significance levels of the socio-psychological adaptation measures.

The control group also has a level of subjective well-being within the normal range. At a tendency level, there is a difference observed on the subjective well-being scale, where the control group's average scores are lower compared to the two groups associated with the anime subculture. The control group has the lowest level of self-rated health. In terms of average scores, it has the lowest level across all socio-psychological adaptation scales. However, it has the highest level of internality ($r = 0.028$) among the three groups based on the results of a statistically significant difference. Although the control group still maintains a correlation trend according to the results of the correlation analysis, it exhibits significantly lower interrelationship levels between the scales of both measures.

Table 2
Comparative analysis of the average scores of psychological well-being among the control group and the groups of respondents representing the target audience of the Seinen and Shounen genres

Scales	Groups of participants			Level of significance
	Shōnen	Seinen	Control group	
Subjective well-being	5,33	5,24	4,52	,045
Stress and sensitivity	11,4	12	11,3	,526
Signs accompanying the main psychoemotional symptoms	12,5	11,9	11,4	,242
Mood changes	7	6,55	5,76	,063
Significance of social environment	9,72	10,8	9,48	,074
Self-rated health	8,49	7,59	6,36	,000
Degree of satisfaction with daily activities	13,1	12	12	,061

Group of respondents representing the target audience of shounen anime series have a normal level of subjective well-being. In terms of one component of well-being, satisfaction with daily activities, they have the highest level among all

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groups. Overall, this group has the highest average scores across all scales. This is supported by a statistically significant difference, where the group of respondents representing the target audience of shounen genres has the highest level of subjective well-being among the three groups ($p = 0.045$). There is also a statistically significant difference in the "Self-rated Health" cluster, indicating that the group of respondents representing the target audience of shounen genres has the highest level of self-rated health ($p = 0.000$). The groups with favorite genres, on average, have lower scores in adaptation compared to the control group. According to the Kruskal-Wallis criterion, the group of respondents representing the target audience of shounen genres has the lowest level of self-acceptance. The groups of respondents belonging to the anime subculture and having favorite genres show an inverse correlation between most indicators of subjective well-being and the levels of social-psychological adaptation with varying levels of significance.

The group of respondents representing the target audience of seinen genres has a normal level of subjective well-being. Overall, the group of respondents representing the target audience of shounen genres has higher scores on all scales compared to the group of respondents representing the target audience of seinen genres. The level of satisfaction with daily activities is the same as the control group. On average, the group of respondents representing the target audience of seinen genres has the lowest scores on the scales of the social-psychological adaptation methodology.

The control group has scores of subjective well-being within the normal range. There is a tendency of differences in the indicators of subjective well-being, where respondents involved in the anime subculture have higher scores compared to the control group. The control group has the lowest scores of subjective well-being and self-rated health according to the results of the Kruskal-Wallis criterion. On average, this group has the highest scores on the scales of the social-psychological adaptation methodology. Additionally, this group has the highest scores in self-acceptance ($p = 0.026$) according to the results of the Kruskal-Wallis criterion. Although the control group still shows a correlation trend according to the results of the correlation analysis, the level of interconnection between the scales of both methodologies is significantly lower.

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Table 3

A comparative analysis of the average indicators of psychological well-being among the control group and the groups of respondents representing the target audience of seinen and shounen anime series

Scale	Groups of participants			Level of significance
	Shōnen	Seinen	Control group	
Subjective well-being	5,24	5,38	4,5	,042
Stress and sensitivity	11,5	12	11,3	,600
Signs accompanying the main psychoemotional symptoms	12,3	12,3	11,2	,177
Mood changes	6,45	7,63	5,69	,011
Significance of social environment	10,1	10,4	9,35	,162
Self-rated health	7,98	8,29	6,38	,001
Degree of satisfaction with daily activities	13	11,5	12,2	,032

Group of respondents representing the target audience of shounen anime series demonstrates a level of subjective well-being within the normal range. Among the components of well-being, this group has the highest level of satisfaction with daily activities. According to the Kruskal-Wallis criterion, the group of respondents representing the target audience of shounen anime series has the highest level of satisfaction with daily activities ($p = 0.032$). Respondents who belong to the anime subculture and have favorite anime series show an inverse correlation between the indicators of subjective well-being and the indicators of the social-psychological adaptation methodology, with varying levels of significance.

The group of respondents representing the target audience of seinen anime series has a level of subjective well-being within the normal range. Overall, this group has higher average scores on all scales. According to the Kruskal-Wallis criterion, this group has the highest scores in subjective well-being ($p = 0.042$), mood change ($p = 0.011$), and self-rated health ($p = 0.001$). The group of respondents representing the target audience of seinen anime series has

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the lowest average level of indicators in the social-psychological adaptation methodology.

The control group shows indicators of subjective well-being within the normal range. There is a tendency for differences in the indicators of subjective well-being, with anime subculture participants having higher scores compared to the control group. The control group has the lowest indicators of subjective well-being, mood change, and self-rated health according to the Kruskal-Wallis criterion. On average, the control group has the highest scores on the scales of the social-psychological adaptation methodology. This group also has the highest scores in emotional comfort ($p = 0.035$) according to the Kruskal-Wallis criterion. Although the control group still exhibits a tendency according to the correlation analysis, it has a significantly lower level of correlation between the scales of both methodologies.

Conclusions.

It was found that fans of the anime subculture have a higher level of subjective well-being, while representatives of the control group differ with a higher level of social-psychological adaptation. Specifically, anime fans have the highest level of self-acceptance, enthusiasts have a higher level of self-rated health, and the control group shows a higher level of internality. However, among representatives of the anime subculture, a reverse correlation between their experience of psychological well-being and their level of social-psychological adaptation was found, indicating a non-linear relationship and the pronounced nature of these phenomena among the respondents. Therefore, certain behavioral manifestations of anime subculture members, which may appear maladaptive externally, do not necessarily indicate their psychological distress.

Comparing respondents based on their preference for genres or affiliation with specific target groups of anime series also reveals some differences. Depending on the respondents' genre preferences, the highest level of subjective well-being is observed in the group representing the target audience of seinen genres, the highest level of self-rated health in the group representing the target audience of shounen genres, and self-perception in the control group. Based on the respondents' affiliation with the target audiences of anime series, the highest level of subjective well-being, mood change, and self-rated health were found among the group representing the target audience of seinen

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anime series, the highest level of satisfaction with daily activities among the group representing the target audience of shounen anime series, and the highest level of emotional comfort in the control group.

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