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## Abstract

Exploring the psychological process by which anime provides mental comfort

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This study aimed to clarify the psychological process through which watching anime provides “comfort” to viewers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four participants in their 20s who had experienced feeling “comfort” through anime, and an analysis was carried out using Trajectory Equifinality Model. The results revealed several types of [comfort] : [a sense of forgetting reality], [feeling refreshed and calm], and [gaining courage and energy]. The study also clarified the route taken to reach each form of “comfort,” highlighting their diversity and individuality. This research made it possible to demonstrate the process of the psychological experiences of viewers—an area that had not received much attention until now—in a data-driven manner. Furthermore, it was found that viewers reached their respective forms of [comfort] by maintaining a connection with reality while being immersed in the world of the anime, shifting their focus between the anime and themselves according to their own level of engagement. Additionally, the qualitative differences in [comfort] suggested that anime can assist people in navigating their life stories, such as relieving daily stress and contributing to the self-resolution of anxieties.

**Keywords:** anime, comfort, psychological health, Trajectory Equifinality Model, qualitative research

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