

COMPLETION REPORT

Japanese anime: Can it change the attitude towards deaf people?

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Adolescence is a time of self-discovery and learning to relate to other people. Youths may have met people who are very different from themselves (such as deaf people) and may not know how to relate to them. As deafness is an invisible disability, the general hearing population may not be aware of the special needs (e.g., mode of communication) and challenges deaf people face in life (e.g., discrimination). The lack of knowledge and uncertainty of relating to deaf individuals may lead to developing negative attitudes, peer rejection and possible school bullying. These negative attitudes towards deaf peers would also affect the confidence, self-image and self-esteem of the deaf classmate. Studies have shown that films are effective and exciting teaching tool to develop awareness. It is reasonable to believe that films can be effective in educating and creating awareness about the needs and challenges of deaf people. With the increasing popularity of Japanese anime among youngsters in Malaysia, anime might be a good media to create deaf awareness.

Therefore, this study aimed to examine if viewing a Japanese anime that featured a deaf character can change attitude towards deaf people among hearing students. The movie “*A Silent Voice*” (聲の形) was used as the intervention. Sixty students (18 - 21 years old) were recruited for the study. A one-group pre- and post-test design (i.e., before and after watching the film) was used to assess the effect of the anime on participants’ attitude towards deaf people. Results showed that participants reported higher score (i.e., more positive) in the general and affective attitude towards deaf people after viewing the film. There was also an improvement in the social acceptance and more positive opinions about deaf people’s ability after viewing the film.

The findings indicate that the Japanese anime is an effective tool to change the attitude towards deaf people. This invention can assist classroom integration between hearing and deaf students in the mainstream schools. As the film presents a similar inclusive education classroom situation, it brings out controversial issues, challenges your perception and provides new perspectives of interacting with deaf people. Taking a step further, educators can use these themes presented by the film to have open discussions about these issues with the students. Interventions like this prepares the hearing students to better receive the deaf student, and for the deaf student to integrate better in the education setting and society.

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Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

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