

# **Attendee's Experience of Anime Conventions in the United States: A Netnography Study**

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# Introduction



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# Anime Convention

- Anime convention: An event that focused on anime, manga (Japanese comics), cosplay, and Japanese popular culture (Geek Stuff, n.d.; Tung et al., 2017).
- Anime conventions provide the opportunities to:
  - Interact with individuals with the same interest (Jones, 2020; Liu et al., 2022a).
- Anime conventions have become popular (Scrivani, 2021).
  - Anime conventions in the US: 288 in 2012 → 345 in 2019 (Animecon.com, 2012, 2019).
- Yamamura (2015) indicated the challenges and new directions of the anime conventions.
- Lack of studies focused on anime convention attendees' experience.

# User-Generated Content (UGC)

- UGC: The content displayed on reachable public websites without an immediate relationship with a financial profit or marketable interest (Kar et al., 2021).
- Have significant impacts on customers:
  - Decision making process
  - Influence planning behavior
  - Providing trustworthy, contemporary, and comprehensive information (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Song & Yoo, 2016)
- Lack of research on examining the UGCs from anime convention attendees

# Stimuli-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory

- Environmental stimuli (S) result in an emotional reaction or organism (O) that further stimulate the behavior response (R) (Peng & Kim, 2014).
  - Stimuli: the external marketing and environmental factors (Vergura et al., 2019).
  - Organism: the individuals' internal states (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974).
  - Response: the outcomes or decisions from customers (Chen et al., 2022)
- Evaluates customers' experience and decision-making process (Chen et al., 2022; Lam et al., 2011).
- Chen et al. (2019) identified various features of the festival under stimuli, organism, and response dimension.

# Purpose of Research

- Analyze UGCs to understand the attendees' experience during the large anime conventions in the United States





# Methods



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# Sampling

- Six large anime conventions all over the United States
  - More than 10,000 attendees visited
- More than hundreds of UGCs on various platforms (CBS Sacramento, 2021; Erine, 2022; Jones, 2020)
- Collected the UGCs from credible sources (e.g., Yelp and Facebook)





# Anime Conventions

Anime Expo, Los Angeles, CA



Fanimecon, San Jose, CA



SacAnime, Sacramento, CA



Anime Central, Rosemont, IL



Anime Weekend Atlanta, GA



Otakon, Washington D.C.





# Data Collection

- A total number of 739 UGCs were collected (i.e., Facebook and Yelp)
  - 340 from Yelp
  - 399 from Facebook
- The researchers collected:
  - The published date
  - Name of convention
  - Sources
  - Name of participant
  - UGC content





# Data Analysis

- A thematic analysis was conducted.
- Three level coding technique were employed (Liu et al., 2022b).
- Selective and axial coding through the software NVIVO 12.
- 8 themes, 32 subthemes, under 3 major dimensions.



# Results



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# Results

**Table 2: Dimension, Themes and Sub-themes for Each Dimension of SOR Theory**

Dimensions, Themes and Sub-themes	Total count	Total %
<b>Stimuli</b>	<b>3425</b>	<b>65.21</b>
<i>Ambient and Space</i>	768	14.62
• Environment	126	2.40
• Safety/ Security	65	1.24
• Photo opportunity/autograph	111	2.11
• Facilities	304	5.79
• Surrounding area/Location	71	1.35
• Transportation and Parking	91	1.73
<i>Sign and Symbol</i>	75	1.43
• Rules/sign/brochure	52	0.99
• Covid Policy	15	0.29
• Decoration	8	0.15
<b>Service and Product</b>	<b>1405</b>	<b>26.75</b>
• Activity/event	303	5.77
• Staff/volunteer/guest	305	5.81
• Operation/management	268	5.10
• Shopping	183	3.48
• Food	111	2.11
• Ticket/badge	235	4.47
<i>Customer</i>	634	12.07
• Cosplay/costumes	292	5.56
• Socialization with attendees	146	2.78
• Socialization with family/friends	154	2.93
• Age	42	0.80
<i>Social Density</i>	543	10.34
• Waiting Line	355	6.76
• Crowd	163	3.10
• Personal space	25	0.48

# Results (Cont'd.)

*Table 3: Dimension, Themes and Sub-themes for Each Dimension of SOR Theory*

<b>Organism</b>	1075	20.47
<i>Motivation</i>	383	7.29
• Expectation	83	1.58
• Personal Background/Previous Experience	300	5.71
<b>Emotional Status</b>	692	13.18
• Enjoyment	425	8.09
• Distress	177	3.37
• Angry	50	0.95
• Surprise	40	0.76
<b>Response</b>	752	14.32
<i>Behavior intention</i>	752	14.32
• Revisit intention	231	4.40
• Recommendation	163	3.10
• Comparison	221	4.21
• Anime Authentic Experience	137	2.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>5252</b>	<b>100</b>



# Discussion, Implications and Limitations



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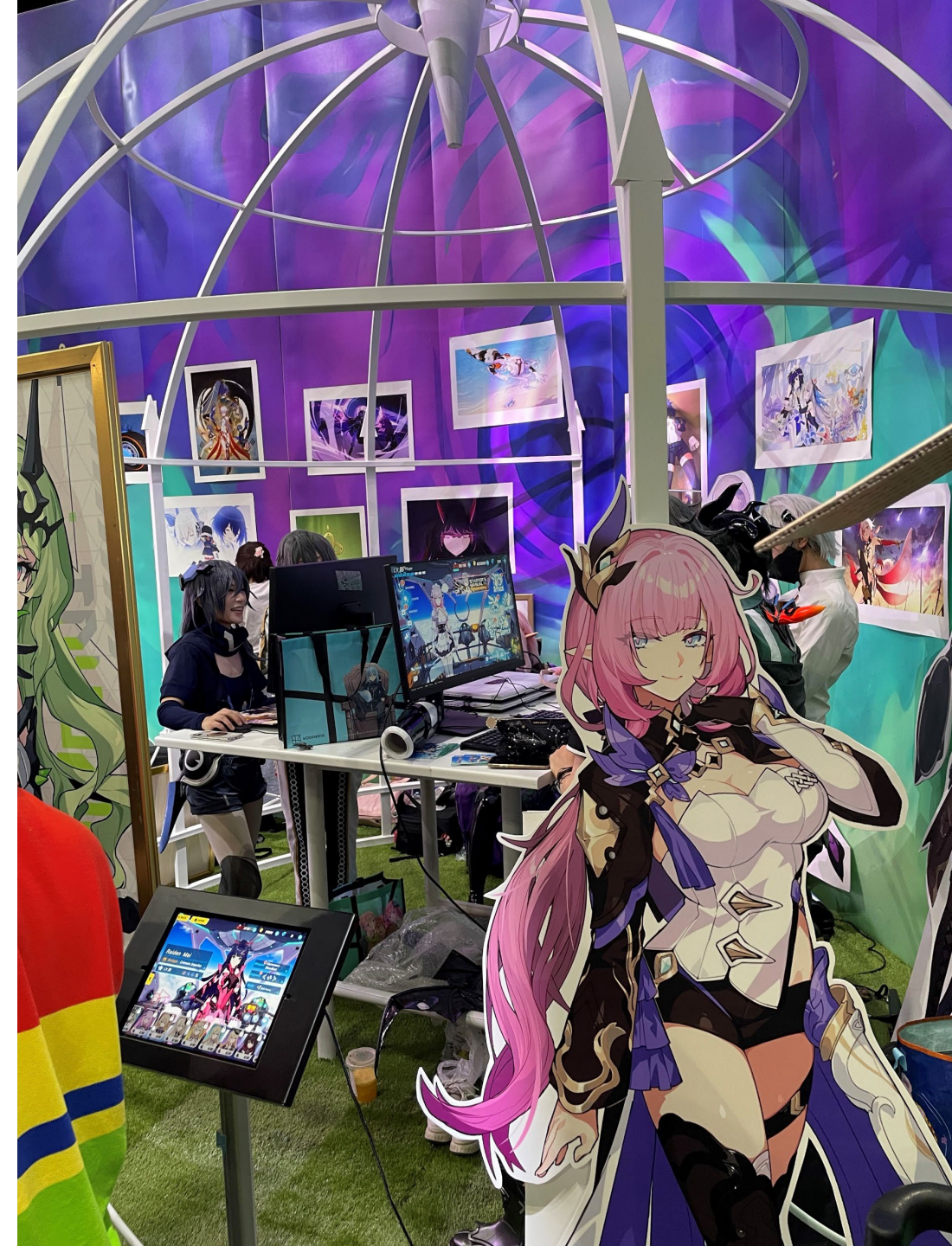


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# Discussion

- **Staffs and volunteers:** Friendly or rude to customers.
- **Environment:** The most frequently reported (Lee, 2012)
- **Wait** in lines for several hours: Receive their ticket and enter the convention center (Liu et al., 2022b)
- **Surprise** emotional status: Both positive and negative
- **Revisit intention:** Higher with positive emotions (Cheng et al. 2020).





# Implications and Limitations

## Theoretical Implications

- Utilized the SOR theory to study attendees' experience
- Extended the use of netnography for anime convention experience

## Practical Implications

- Identified the major issues from anime convention attendees:
  - Crowdedness
  - Wait line
  - Service received from volunteers and staff

## Limitations

- Ignored the differences between attendees' interest level of anime
- Only focused on the conventions in the United States

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# Thank you!

## Q&A



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