

World peace for Otaku

1. Motivation behind Research Paper

What comes to mind when you hear the word "Otaku"? When Japanese people hear "Otaku", they think of otaku as a type of noisy dance performed by fans at concerts, Akihabara, and idols, and many people have negative images. Why am I suddenly talking about otaku, also known as nerds? That's because I'm an otaku myself. I used to have a hard time talking about nerds because they are not very popular and have a negative image. Therefore, I wondered if I had to be ashamed of what I liked, and I wanted to explore where the negative image of the word 'otaku' came from. I thought about how to get rid of that negative image and become confident about what everyone likes.

2. Introduction

A questionnaire was created to investigate the image of otaku. The questionnaire was completed by 50 Nara Kokusai High School students in class and on Instagram. It asked them about their image of otaku. A lot of people thought that otaku were people who were enthusiastic about one thing or considered them to be generally wonderful people. However, according to the questionnaire made, about 10% had a negative image of otaku. It has been difficult to tell people that I am an otaku. Actually, some people have called me negative things before. Some people believed that otaku were "disgusting" and "incomprehensible."

3. Results and Analysis

I thought there might be prejudice against the word “otaku” itself. I was curious about when the word “otaku” started to be used, so I researched the history of otaku. Then, I came across a movie that showed the changing times for otaku. The movie *Densha Otoko* became a big hit in the 2000s and spread otaku culture in Japan. However, the main character is dressed plainly and gloomily. At that time, people with this appearance were called otaku. Checked shirts, glasses, and backpacks have given people the image of otaku.

Next, a movie called *Kuragehime* was released in the 2010s. The main characters of the movie are Reina Nonen, famous for her morning drama, and many other actors, including jellyfish nerds, train nerds, dressing up as woman nerds, and Japanese doll nerds, and they are written in comedy touches, giving otaku funny and cute images. Then, in the 2020s, *Otaku Ni Koi Wa Muzukashii*, also known as *Otakoi*, was released. The main characters are Mitsuki Takahata and Kento Yamazaki. The story is a funny love comedy movie. The movie was released on 304 nationwide screens from February 7, 2020. It was watched by 169,000 people and earned 229 million yen in the movie theater over two days. It can be seen that many people went to the movies even though the word otaku was included in the movie title.



Figure 1. Movies about Otaku

From this research, I thought that the number of otaku has increased now. Otaku have something to recommend. Therefore, when I asked “Do you have a favorite person, character or thing?”, I found that 86 percent of the respondents answered “Yes”. I found that many people are otaku. It can be seen that otaku have become familiar to people today. Our feelings for otaku have changed.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE
PERSON, CHARACTER OR THING?

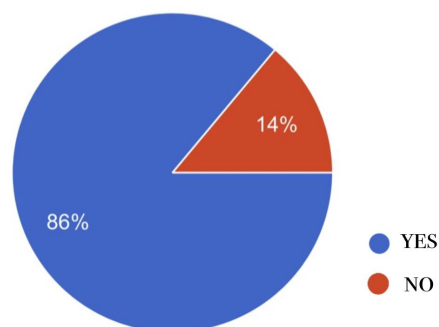


Figure 2. Questionnaire 1

The questionnaire also asked, "Do you tell people around you that you are an otaku?" One in four said they were hiding it.

DO YOU TELL PEOPLE AROUND YOU THAT YOU ARE AN OTAKU?

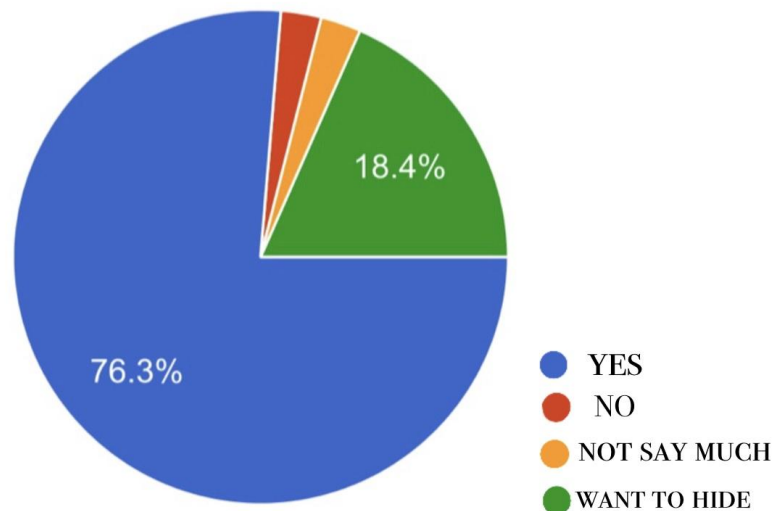


Figure 3. Questionnaire 2

After investigating why otaku are so criticized, it was found that the kidnapping and murder of a four-year-old girl in Iruma City, Saitama Prefecture, in August 1955, was a major factor. As the perpetrators of one case were reported as so-called otaku, lolikons and horror enthusiasts, strong prejudice arose against people with similar interests. It is said that the boundary between reality, fantasy, delusion, and criminal behavior is ambiguous, and the lack of a clear sense of norm led to the crime, which led to misunderstanding that these people were "otaku." There are other things that can be found to be prejudiced. The 6th edition of Kojien, published in 2008, states that an otaku is "a person who is interested in a particular field or thing and who is unusually familiar with it, but lacks social common sense." Ten years later, in 2018, the 7th edition also said, "People who are unusually enthusiastic

about certain fields and things, but who are not interested in others and who are not familiar with the world, and who are too absorbed in certain hobbies."

Now, let's look at the situation abroad. Foreigners said "Otaku are cool," and Japanese Anime songs are sung in Japanese, and it has become a matter of course to dress up in manga and anime characters in foreign countries. Not only Japanese, but also otaku culture is popular all over the world, and foreigners have a positive image of otaku.

4. Conclusion and Future Problems

Otaku culture originated in Japan, and as a result prejudice against otaku occurs mainly in Japan. Why does just being an otaku have a negative image in Japan? In the old days when "otaku" was taken negatively, otaku was not something I personally used to identify myself, but something I was told by others. Young people today who dare to reveal their nerdy nature, which used to be even within themselves, feel confident in their individual worldviews, but also have a desire to recognize themselves. They do not know the image of old otaku and their difficult experiences, so I think they are changing from negative to positive.

5. Reflection

Now that prejudice against otaku has disappeared, the words "Oshishikakatan" meaning "push is the only way to win" and "Otakatsu" meaning "nerdy activity" are popular. That is because I think people just do not notice, they are all otaku, and prejudice is gone. Everyone likes things, people, and to be absorbed in them is what defines an otaku. Sometimes people do not understand the

same thing because they do not like it. However, I think we will be a world where diversity can be recognized if everyone accepts each other's differences, understands otaku culture, and there is more communication.

6. Work Cited

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