

The Way of Living Like a Shonen Manga: A Pattern Language to Envision a Life of Bold Challenges

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This paper presents a pattern language crafted from manga that depict characters challenging themselves, overcoming setbacks through effort and growth as a source material to empower individuals. We constantly face challenges, and growth is often accompanied by considerable struggles and steady accumulation of effort. In some manga, the theme of pushing forward and overcoming setbacks is symbolically portrayed through battles with enemies, sports matches, or other challenging situations. Although these manga depict a different world, we still draw courage and learn from these stories. In this paper, we introduce six patterns derived from manga that depict challenging stories—*Follow What Makes Your Heart Race*; *Even If Others Say Impossible*; *Breakthrough Point*; *Fated Rival*; *A Step from Despair*; and *Who Walks Beside You*. These patterns were selected from the *A Pattern Language of Challenges and Growth in Shonen Manga*, which is organized into three categories—*THE BEGINNING OF ADVENTURE*, *THE PATH OF TRIALS*, and *ACHIEVEMENT & TRANSCENDENCE*—and comprises a total of 27 associated patterns. We demonstrate that these patterns correspond to the universal narrative structure of the Hero's Journey. Furthermore, we define 'living like in shonen manga' as embodying a way of life characterized by courageous challenges, relentless effort, and learning through relationships, while continually building one's strength by overcoming repeated setbacks. This approach, we argue, offers valuable lessons and can serve as a model for facing real-life challenges during youth and beyond.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In our daily lives, we challenge ourselves and pursue what we personally find valuable. For example, some people strive to enter the school of their choice in order to follow their passions, athletes work hard to win competitions, and others seek to discover what truly excites them. While some consistently work toward the same goal, others find new paths after pursuing one objective. Our lives are shaped by this cycle of setting goals, challenging ourselves, and striving toward them.

However, persistently working toward a goal is not always a smooth journey. Particularly during adolescence—a time of self-discovery—young people, as they explore what they want to do and who they truly are, often face various conflicts and undergo trial and error. When attempting something new, curiosity is often accompanied by self-doubt: "Can I really do this?" or, in the midst of pursuing a goal, we might suddenly question, "Will these efforts pay off?" Even those who seem to be on a straight path must overcome anxieties and conflicts from time to time.

It's important to note that such negative thoughts are not inherently bad. Taking a moment to reflect can lead to important realizations, and overcoming difficulties can build confidence and provide valuable learning experiences, leading to personal growth. However, problems arise when these thoughts do more than trigger reflection—they trap us in a cycle of negativity, weighing down our moods and perceptions. We may find ourselves stuck in a negative spiral, unable to escape, and continuously worrying about issues that seem unresolvable. This state can be very painful and distressing, potentially even leading to self-destructive behavior.

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Then, how can we support boldly facing challenges that give life meaning and joy, without being overly afraid of anxiety and inner conflicts, and wholeheartedly pursuing them?

This is where the power of stories comes into play. Although they are fictional, stories deeply penetrate our lives, gently pushing us forward and giving us strength to face difficulties that seem insurmountable. “By providing meaning to current or future endeavors, stories enable ‘affirmation of one’s present self and instill courage’” (Ishi, 2018). It’s also said that some stories offer patterns of situations and schemas for actions, including how we perceive, value, and evaluate things. These stories serve as a way to experience new scenarios - ones that are possible, worth considering, or even beyond our personal reality (Lahire, 2013). In this way, stories have the effect of expanding our real-life experiences.

In fact, the shonen manga genre serves as a medium through which young people learn essential life lessons by portraying characters who rise to any challenge and never give up. By immersing themselves in these stories and empathizing with the characters, readers come to deeply understand and feel the significance of these values.

The focus of this research is on how the mindset of overcoming setbacks and continuously growing, as depicted in manga narratives, can be applied to the real world. In other words, it explores methods to channel energy toward our goals and overcome setbacks in daily life. Furthermore, by articulating these ideas and attitudes as a pattern language, this study aims to provide a tool that individuals can easily incorporate into their lives, encouraging them to reflect on their own ways of living and move forward.

This paper is organized into the following sections. In section 2, we describe the process of creating patterns from manga, followed by section 3, which introduces six of the resulting patterns. Section 4 explores the relationship between this pattern language and the universal narrative structure known as the “Hero’s Journey,” and section 5 presents the conclusion.

2. METHOD

2.1 Target Works for Selection

This study focused on shonen manga that depict stories of boldly challenging one’s dreams and goals, overcoming difficulties through persistent effort and teamwork. Although shonen manga includes a wide range of genres such as comedy, this research primarily addresses works in the battle, sports, and creative genres. In these genres, characters set ambitious dreams and goals, strive diligently toward them, and overcome various obstacles.

Additionally, works that emphasize the protagonist’s growth were prioritized. For instance, while some works feature protagonists who are powerful from the beginning and drive the story with their abilities, or who rely on strategic thinking, the works considered here typically portray protagonists who initially lack strength or are inexperienced.

Moreover, these works were required to depict the mental conflicts and thought processes experienced during the protagonist’s growth. Works with rich portrayals of the inner world not only serve as projections of ideals and aspirations for readers but also provide a realistic inner dimension with which readers can empathize and identify. Consequently, the targeted works include a total of eight manga titles: *Aoashi*, *Blue Exorcist*, *DAYS*, *NARUTO*, *Haikyuu!!*, *Bakuman.*, *Blue Period*, and *My Hero Academia*.

2.2 Crafting Process of the Pattern Language

In this study, we refer to the creation process outlined by Iba and Isaku (2016) in the domain of human behavior pattern languages. It is posited that “certain narrative texts enable all readers to interpret them as providing models of situations and actions—responses (reactions, behaviors, etc.) to situations that may be characterized by happiness, difficulty, or problems” (Lahire, 2013). Within the narrative structure defined as ‘conflict → (presentation of options) → response to the situation → consequence,’ particular focus is given to the mindset and attitude described as responses that lead to positive outcomes (Figure 1).

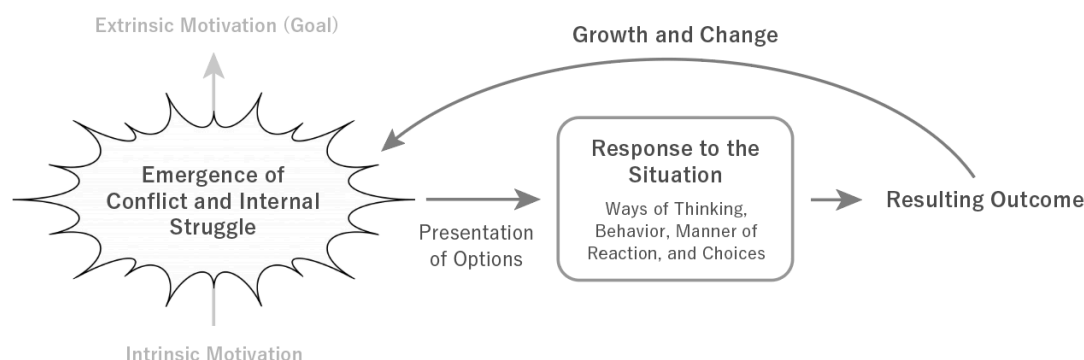


Fig. 1. The Basic Structure of Narrative Development.

It should be considered that the characters do not always offer the correct response. Assuming that they are inexperienced, they may sometimes fail or proceed in directions that do not work out as intended. In such instances, the situation might improve through the intervention of others. In this study, we define desirable outcomes as growing stronger, gaining insight and learning, and situations moving in a positive direction, and we critically examined the associated mindsets, actions, and influences from others.

To find the structures embedded within the metaphors of the manga world, we compared how the conflicts and challenges we face in our daily lives when it comes to achieving goals and personal growth were projected into the practices we considered important. By examining the psychological portrayals, actions, and dialogues, we captured and extracted the structures of what factors made these developments possible. The three members responsible for creating patterns individually extracted elements each thought important.

From there, we compiled and scrutinized materials with similar content, creating the components. We then overviewed the obtained components, grasped what the pattern language as a whole aimed to express, and wove a system to organize the entire set of patterns. We adopted a systematization approach that combines bottom-up pattern grouping with a top-down understanding to build and support the overall system (Iba and Kanai, 2021), and derived the crucial three structural elements (categories) and the finer-grained elements (groups) constituting each category within this pattern language.

Here, we began linking the identified patterns into the system we obtained, establishing their position within the larger framework, and providing descriptions. At this stage, we also examined the descriptive format of the pattern language. In particular, to describe the ways in which narrative characters think and behave, we engaged in extensive discussion to articulate the relationships among the following in a given problematic situation: the key elements of solution in terms of solution-oriented thinking and attitudes, and the resulting positive consequence.

2.3 Pattern Form

In addition to describing the patterns in a way that resolves the reader's internal conflicts, we also aimed to express them in a manner that moves the reader's emotions and empowers them, naturally directing their feelings toward action, similar to how they feel when reading shonen manga. In constructing this pattern language, manga expressions are incorporated, functioning as a means for self-projection through alternative characters (McCloud, 1994), thereby symbolically integrating the passionate expressions inherent in shonen manga. In doing so, we aimed to develop a medium that is not only easily adoptable by individuals but also effective in evoking an awareness of challenges, ultimately proposing a novel pattern format that demonstrates solution-oriented thinking and attitudes. It should be noted that some of the manga expressions were generated using Chat-GPT and have been revised or supplemented as necessary.

Accordingly, each pattern is structured to include the following components: 'Problematic Situation,' 'Pattern Name,' 'Manga Expression Illustrating a Solution-Oriented Mindset,' 'Description for the Solution,' and 'Consequence.' This set forms a cohesive pattern. This paper also provides examples illustrating how the patterns introduced are linked to specific manga episodes.

3. A PATTERN LANGUAGE OF CHALLENGE AND GROWTH IN SHONEN MANGA

The objective of this pattern language is to elucidate the mindsets and attitudes that contribute to the growth of shonen manga characters as they strive to achieve their dreams and goals through challenges. By structurally capturing the actions practiced by characters within these stories, we propose that there are three key elements: *THE BEGINNING OF ADVENTURE*, *THE PATH OF TRIALS*, and *ACHIEVEMENT & TRANSCENDENCE*. Moreover, common patterns observed across characters are organized into three groups under these categories, with each group comprising three patterns, resulting in a total of 27 patterns.

In this paper, six patterns will be presented as examples, focusing on those that are particularly symbolic in shonen manga (Figure 2). The patterns are as follows: *Follow What Makes Your Heart Race* from the ENCOUNTERING A DIFFERENT WORLD group, *Even If Others Say Impossible* from the RESOLVE TO DIVE IN group, *Breakthrough Point* from the STRUGGLE AND GROW STRONGER group, *Fated Rival* from the BEYOND THE IMPOSSIBLE TOGETHER group, *A Step from Despair* from the RISE UP EVEN WHEN CRUSHED group, and *Who Walk Beside You* from the TREASURES GAINED ON THIS JOURNEY group.



Fig. 2. The Overall Structure of A Pattern Language of Challenges and Growth in Shonen Manga and the Six Patterns Introduced in this Paper.

3.1 Follow What Makes Your Heart Race

Even when encountering something that moves your heart—like feeling “I want to try this” or “I want to know more”—if you lack the certainty of what you’ll gain or the confidence in your eventual success, taking that first step toward the challenge is accompanied by overwhelming anxiety and inner conflict.

At times like that...

Follow What Makes Your Heart Race



What's needed to begin is not a clear reason, certainty, or talent. The simple fact that you want to try is enough. It's rare to have strong motivation or resolve at the beginning, so instead, immerse yourself to see what's ahead with your own eyes. Once you encounter it, all that's left is to take a small step with a little courage.

Then...

By diving into a new world, you can broaden your own horizons. The things you encounter and the events that unfold can only be experienced after overcoming that initial moment of fear. And it's only you who can begin that story.

An Actual Manga Episode

- In *Blue Period*, the protagonist, Yatora, had been managing his daily life skillfully, yet he always sensed a certain emptiness. Then, after painting a picture in his art class, his interest in pursuing art began to stir, even as doubts lingered—doubts about choosing a career in art, a field that offered no guarantee of financial stability. Wrestling with these conflicting feelings, Yatora went to speak with his teacher in the art room after school, pouring out his uncertainty. Although his teacher admitted that she couldn't promise he would be accepted into an art university, she reassured him by saying, "Those who work hard at what they love are the strongest!" With that word, Yatora resolved to take a leap toward the path that made his heart race, even if its outcome was uncertain.
- In *Aoashi*, Ashito was invited by a coach to attend a selection for a professional player development team. However, he initially decided not to go, as he lacked the financial means to travel from his hometown to Tokyo and faced opposition from his mother. Despite his inner desire to participate, he felt he couldn't pursue the opportunity. However, his brother encouraged him, saying, "Just attending the trial isn't a big deal; you can think about what comes next afterward." With this push, Ashito went to Tokyo to take part in the selection.

3.2 Even If Others Say Impossible

You have a grand dream. However, if that dream is too magnificent, people around you may laugh it off as foolish or fail to understand it. Even you might sometimes doubt whether you can truly achieve it.

At times like that...

Even If Others Say Impossible



Even if you know that the path ahead is treacherous and unreachable with your current abilities, it's not something you can easily give up. It is, after all, one of the choices you make when you risk yourself. If you can't let go of the passion embodied in that dream, then hold onto it until you're satisfied, and know that those who support you may also become pillars of strength by upholding that vision. Even if you initially come off as overconfident, boldly proclaim your dream and persist with unwavering determination until it takes shape.

Then...

By consistently showing your passion with all your might, your actions should eventually align with your words. Even if those around you don't believe at first, as you keep taking steps and remain steadfast, your genuine determination will eventually shine through. Once results start to follow, not only will you gain understanding, but your dream will grow even larger, drawing others in along the way.

An Actual Manga Episode

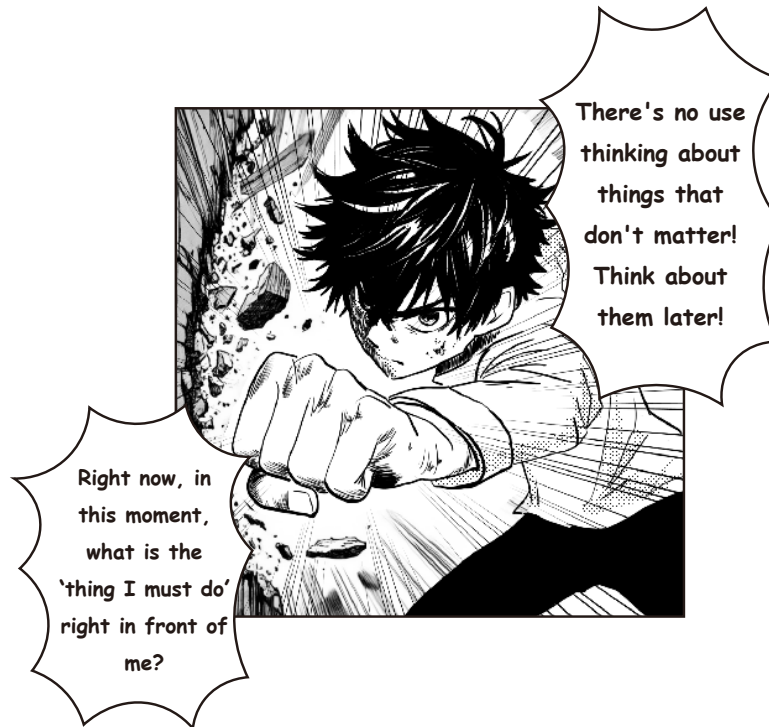
- In *Bakuman*, Takagi, the story writer, and his partner, who both aspire to become manga artists, are told by a female classmate, "If you keep doing that, you'll surely regret it." Takagi, despite his excellent grades and the promise of an elite, secure future, retorted, "I'd rather regret chasing my dream and falling short than regret not chasing it at all." This choice reflected his determination to prioritize living a life he could be proud of over choosing conventional stability. Their aim to become Japan's best was driven by a vision of a lofty goal, and it is precisely because they had that foresight that they never compromised on their actions. They continuously set high standards for themselves, not based on the opinions of others, but because they sincerely believed in what they wanted to do.
- In *NARUTO*, Naruto was initially ridiculed by those around him for his goal of becoming Hokage (leader of the village of ninja), but his unwavering determination and growth gradually won over their understanding and support. Even when no one was watching, he kept running, and as a result, his resolve eventually transformed those around him. Naruto's strength of will can be partly attributed to his inherent character, yet it can also be said that the very dream of becoming Hokage is intertwined with his reason for living. That is why, even when others declared that it was impossible to achieve, he never stopped holding onto it as his 'unwavering dream.'

3.3 Breakthrough Point

Even though there is a wall right before you that you need to overcome, tasks and challenges keep piling up, intensifying your sense of urgency. When you try to tackle everything at once, thinking "I have to do it all," you ultimately become paralyzed, and your distress only grows.

At times like that...

Breakthrough Point



Focus solely on what is most essential to you at this moment, and even if there are things you can't do, thoroughly consider, "So, what now?" There are hardly any tasks that you can approach with everything perfectly in place. If you take a moment to calmly reassess yourself, you'll find that there aren't many things you truly need to confront right now. Even if anxiety or urgency overwhelms you, shake it off and direct your focus toward that one thing you must do.

Then...

By overcoming each individual challenge, you can steadily level up. Even though solving any single challenge isn't easy, the cumulative effect gives you the feeling that you're making progress and is the quickest way to hone your skills. This remains true at any level, and the process of mastering each step is what truly builds the foundation of your own strength.

An Actual Manga Episode

- In *DAYS*, Tsukushi was anxious about the many challenges he faced—being unable to score, pass, run fast, or defend properly—and he was nervous about the upcoming match. However, when he shared his concerns with Kazama, he was told, "Just make sure you run more than anyone else on the pitch." Running, above all, was something that Tsukushi could do, and it was his strength—more so than any advanced technique or strategy. This reminder of his unique style and role helped him regain focus and switch gears.

- In *Aoashi*, the protagonist Ashito, upon being selected as a member of the Premier League, keenly realized that, having just been promoted to the top team, his practical skills were not yet up to par. He recalled a past experience in which, facing opponents with overwhelmingly superior abilities, he had charged in recklessly only to achieve nothing. Instead of turning a blind eye to his acknowledged weaknesses, he shifted his mindset to ask, “So, what should I do about that?” Having grown to avoid falling into a state of mental shutdown, Ashito confronted his shortcomings and prioritized what he could do with his current abilities.

3.4 Fated Rival

There is always someone who flashes across your mind. You might feel a surge of jealousy that leaves you feeling unpleasant, or you might refuse to acknowledge that person's admirable qualities and instead keep your distance, choosing to ignore the emotions that arise.

At times like that...

Fated Rival



You become aware of the other person precisely because they possess qualities that you lack. Honestly acknowledging their strengths is no easy task, as it means confronting your own shortcomings directly. However, by recognizing those qualities, you open up the possibility to grow in areas where you fall short and to learn. Even so, with a stubborn pride rising within you, you should tackle the challenge with the determination to yield not an inch to the other, but rather to establish yourself as a true “rival.”

Then...

Sometimes, the raw, ugly jealousy and obsessive determination swirl into a fierce passion within, serving as the driving force that propels you to even greater heights. Those boiling emotions eventually draw out each other's

stubbornness, intensifying in a competitive way. In that process, as you gradually come to acknowledge each other's strengths, you also begin to see the parts you need to learn and the challenges you must overcome.

An Actual Manga Episode

- In *My Hero Academia*, the protagonist, Midoriya, and his childhood friend Bakugou have long shared a complex, fated relationship. Their bond has always been a mix of admiration and animosity. However, once Midoriya inherited his quirk and began seriously pursuing a dream to be a hero, he started to feel a more equal drive—simply, a desire not to lose. When Midoriya first challenged Bakugou, he passionately shouted, “You’re amazing— so I want to beat you!! Win! I want to surpass you, you idiot!” This outburst revealed that Bakugou was no longer someone to be feared; he had become a figure Midoriya was determined to catch up with and eventually surpass. Later in the story, even as they clash fiercely with one another, they gradually come to acknowledge and respect the qualities in each other that they themselves lack.
- In *Bakuman*, the duo—Mashiro and Takagi—were inspired by the emerging genius, Niizuma Eiji, and resolved to become popular manga artists just like him. They aimed for serialization with the determination to not settle for mediocre results; instead, they kept pushing the accelerator, generating an energy that sustained their momentum. No matter how vast the gap might be, as long as you believe you can overcome your opponent, you can simply set them as your rival. Moreover, having such a high benchmark continuously raised their own standards.

3.5 A Step from Despair

When outcomes fall short and there are things you couldn’t overcome, the mere fact that you “couldn’t do it” can seem like everything, leaving you focused solely on regret and pain.

At times like that...

A Step from Despair



Amid the swirling emotions, gather the seeds of learning and growth that are inevitably hidden within every failure, and discover the meaning that connects to your next step. Failure and setbacks are bitter experiences that everyone wishes to avoid, yet they arise precisely because you face them head-on and struggle. The

emotions you experience then become the fuel for your future efforts, and the insights you gain serve as valuable lessons to prevent repeating the same mistakes. Even the despair you felt in that moment is not wasted—move forward with everything you've learned.

Then...

Past failures and setbacks are not merely fodder for regret; they transform into a wealth of lessons you've internalized. In the process, you may become aware of deficiencies and limitations you cannot overcome on your own, learning the importance of collaborating with others. Moreover, by contemplating how to rise again when you stumble rather than simply avoiding setbacks, you can cultivate true strength.

An Actual Manga Episode

- In *Haikyuu!!*, during Karasuno High's defeat, Hinata and Kageyama—who had given their all in the match—were overwhelmed by a crushing sense of despair. At that moment, their coach approached them and asked, "Is a loss a proof of weakness?" He then added, "If you remain sprawled on the ground like this, that is the true sign of weakness." Inspired by his words, the two clenched their fists and rose again with resolute determination. The coach's message prompted them to reconsider: true weakness isn't determined by losing a match, but by remaining trapped in defeat and being unable to move forward.
- In *Aoashi*, after narrowly missing the state he had been striving for in the match against Funabashi High School, Ashito spent a while off the bench. He declared, "I never want to feel that miserable again. So, I'll restart my defensive mindset from scratch." With this, he chose the path of confronting his shortcomings head-on. The world's standards, as revealed through that setback, made him realize that simply having fun was not enough—it laid the foundation for challenging himself to even greater heights. Even afterward, Ashito never forgets the day he lost to Funabashi; it is precisely because the deep-seated frustration remains etched in his heart that his determination to rise and face the challenge anew grows ever stronger.

3.6 Who Walk Beside You

Throughout this long journey, you've encountered countless obstacles, and every time you overcame one, you grew stronger.

At times like that...

Who Walk Beside You



There must have been times when you, as the protagonist of your own story, made tremendous efforts and persevered. Yet, within that story, the individual tales of your companions have intertwined. At times, someone lent you strength, and at others, you offered your help—fighting and walking side by side. It is precisely because of those connections that the story was woven not alone, but together. Within the collective stories shared with your comrades and all those who have been part of your journey, you will come to realize there exists a true sanctuary that supports you and gives you the strength to move forward.

Then...

You will come to feel that you are never truly alone—that you have been nurtured and connected through countless relationships. The very fact that there are people who walk alongside you, even without exchanging words, makes you deeply aware of their support. With gratitude for those presences, an inner strength rises, allowing you to face forward again. And just as you have been supported, you may soon find yourself wanting to support someone else in return.

An Actual Manga Episode

- In *My Hero Academia*, Midoriya—having inherited power and become a target for enemies—is depicted as fighting alone to avoid dragging others into his struggles. When everyone in his class understood of his situation, they rose up to bring him back, each expressing their feelings to him. However, for Midoriya, who has taken on everything himself, those words no longer reached him. That is why his comrades persisted in conveying their sentiments while fighting alongside him until their messages finally broke through. “We don’t seek protection or wish to reject you—we just want to stand by your side,” and “You’ve always been ahead of me...!! That’s why I will always challenge you!” In that moment, as their hands clasped together, those who ran with the same will and in unison began to share the weight of unresolved conflicts and unforgettable memories.

4. DISCUSSION

In this section, the identified pattern language is structured by referencing the model of the *Hero’s Journey*, which represents a universal narrative structure. This framework, originally proposed by Joseph Campbell(2010) as a theory of mythological structure and later developed by Christopher Vogler as a screenwriting theory, is useful for understanding the structure of narratives. As Vogler (2022) states, “Even if fantastical, unreal events are depicted, they remain psychologically plausible and emotionally resonant. This is possible because such stories possess a universal power.” This observation underpins our analysis, as it reveals that even shonen manga—

despite dealing with different themes and settings—consistently exhibit a similar structure, thereby deepening our understanding of their narrative qualities.

Furthermore, the Hero's Journey is not a one-off occurrence; it holds the potential for a continuous cycle in which, after one journey is completed, a new departure follows. To visually represent this continuity, a circular model was adopted to depict the overall structure of the pattern language (Figure 3).

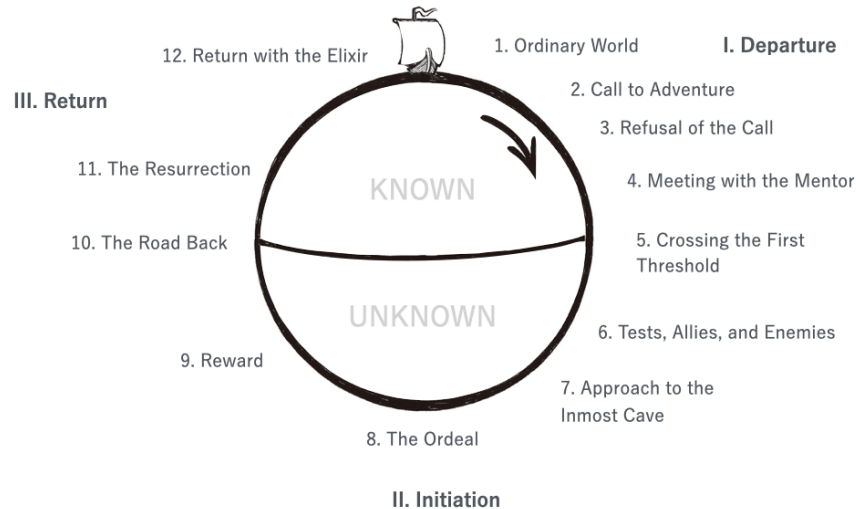


Fig. 3. The Circular Model of the 12 Steps of the Hero's Journey Illustrating the Universal Structure of Narratives Proposed by Christopher Vogler [Created by the author based on Vogler (2022).]

First, the category of *THE BEGINNING OF ADVENTURE* is composed of three groups: *ENCOUNTERING A DIFFERENT WORLD*, *RESOLVE TO DIVE IN*, and *SMALL VICTORIES*. This phase, in which the protagonist discovers and pursues a dream or goal and willingly steps into a new world, corresponds to the 'Departure' stage in the Hero's Journey.

Second, the category of *THE PATH OF TRIALS* comprises three groups: *GO WITH RECKLESS ABANDON*, *STRUGGLE AND GROW STRONGER*, and *BEYOND THE IMPOSSIBLE TOGETHER*. This phase portrays the process in which the character faces real challenges and adversities and struggles to overcome them, corresponding to the 'Trials' stage of the Hero's Journey.

Third, the category of *ACHIEVEMENT & TRANSCENDENCE* consists of three groups: *RISE UP EVEN WHEN CRUSHED*, *HONE YOUR OWN STRENGTH*, and *TREASURES GAINED ON THIS JOURNEY*. In this final category, the character is depicted as paving their own path toward a greater goal or ideal. This phase corresponds to the 'Victory and Return' stage of the Hero's Journey.

At the outset, the shonen manga characters, though initially immature, leave behind their everyday lives. They set out with courage to face challenges by aspiring to dreams or goals and in pursuing these ambitions, they gradually build their narratives of challenge and growth through expanding their abilities via personal effort and the support of others and overcoming setbacks while cultivating self-identity and inner strength.

Based on these insights, this study defines 'living like in shonen manga' as embodying a way of life characterized by daring challenges, relentless effort, learning through relationships with others, and the continual building of one's strength through overcoming repeated adversities. The use of the 'term way of life' here underscores the importance of grasping not only the overt actions but also the underlying manner of being that gives rise to these actions.

In this way, embracing an adventurous experience that pushes one beyond personal limits at certain stages of life contributes to significant personal growth and paves the way for new challenges as a renewed self emerges. By delving deeper than the mere steps of the Hero's Journey, the myriad experiences and insights gained from the challenges depicted in shonen manga both expand one's abilities and foster personal development. This process may be seen as an essential model for constructing one's life during youth.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we presented the *A Pattern Language for Challenge and Growth in Shonen Manga*, derived from the lessons learned from characters who persistently strive to move forward. This pattern language is divided into three major categories—*THE BEGINNING OF ADVENTURE*, *THE PATH OF TRIALS*, and *ACHIEVEMENT & TRANSCENDENCE*—and is composed of a total of 27 patterns, organized into three groups with nine patterns associated with each category. In this paper, we introduced six of these patterns. Through this process, we identified the key mindsets and attitudes regarding challenges as demonstrated by shonen manga characters. Moreover, this system shows a connection to the universal narrative structure of the *Hero's Journey* and can be understood in relation to the growth process inherent in storytelling. Furthermore, by incorporating manga expressions into each pattern, elements of empowerment are integrated, resulting in a novel format for pattern description.

Furthermore, through this development, we have interpreted the essence of 'living like shonen manga' as embodying a way of life in which one "summons the courage to face challenges, learns through tireless effort and relationships with supportive companions, overcomes repeated setbacks, and builds inner strength." We aimed to explore how this model could serve as a guideline for young people in their formative years to step forward and engage in challenges, envisioning a life filled with the energy and passion of being the protagonist in one's own story. Today—where values have diversified and models for living have become less clear—presenting living like shonen manga as one model may help young people reflect on how they wish to live.

Looking ahead, one prospect is to use the 'shonen manga way of living' as a model for supporting youth by affirming their conflicts and setbacks while assisting them in taking that first step toward challenges and sustaining their efforts. This approach can be positioned as an initiative to support self-formation and life construction during adolescence. Moreover, manga is not merely a form of entertainment but also reveals new possibilities for learning about life. By leveraging this medium, which is both familiar to and widely embraced by young people, along with the insights derived from it, further advancements in research and practical applications that empower individuals to lead better lives can be anticipated.

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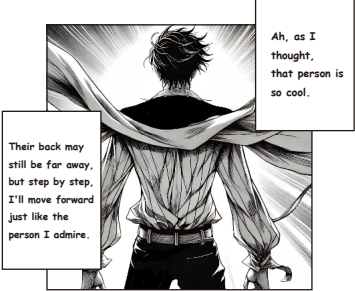


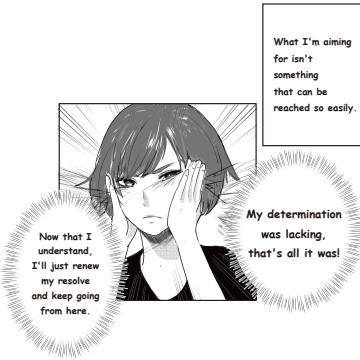

APPENDIX

Table 1: Title and Synopsis of the Target Works of Pattern Mining.




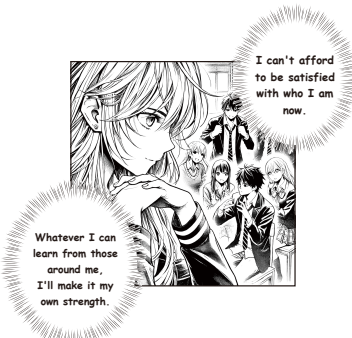
TITLE	SYNOPSIS
<i>Aoashi (2015-)</i>	In a local high school, forward Aoi Ashito is recognized for his talent by Coach Fukuda—a former Japan national team player—and subsequently joins the youth team of a prestigious club. Utilizing his exceptional spatial awareness, he hones his skills in a high-level environment as he embarks on the path to becoming a professional soccer player.
<i>Blue Exorcist (2009-)</i>	Rin Okumura, the son of a demon, decides to become an exorcist after the death of his foster father, the renowned exorcist Shiro. Enrolling in an exorcist training institution, he dedicates himself to defeating Satan—his archenemy—while coming to terms with his own origins.
<i>DAYS (2013–2021)</i>	Tsukushi Tsukamoto, a timid and gentle-natured boy, is invited to play futsal by Kazama, a peer brimming with soccer talent, and he soon discovers the joy of the sport despite his inexperience. As the only beginner on the powerhouse Seiseki High School soccer team, he grows alongside his teammates through extraordinary effort and determination.
<i>NARUTO (1999–2014)</i>	Naruto Uzumaki, once ostracized and labeled a failure as a ninja, is despised by the villagers. However, through relentless effort and battling for his friends, he aspires to become Hokage—the highest title among the ninjas in his village.
<i>Haikyuu!! (2012–2020)</i>	Shoyo Hinata, despite facing a height disadvantage as a volleyball player, forms a formidable duo with the solitary genius setter, Kageyama, after their fateful meeting. Together, they set their sights on reviving and winning a national championship with the once-dominant Karasuno High School volleyball team.
<i>Bakuman. (2008–2012)</i>	High school student Mashiho Moritaka, who had been drifting without clear ambition, is invited by his classmate Takagi—an aspiring manga writer—to form a partnership. United by their dreams, they strive to become successful manga artists, battling fierce competition in pursuit of serialization and an anime adaptation.
<i>Blue Period (2017–)</i>	Yatora Yaguchi, an academically excellent and attractive high school student who nonetheless feels an inner emptiness, becomes captivated by the world of art following a transformative experience. Determined to pursue art, he sets his sights on an art university entrance exam and, through encounters with various talents, embarks on a personal quest to define what art, expression, and his own future truly mean.
<i>My Hero Academia (2014–2024)</i>	In a world where possessing a Quirk is the norm, Izuku Midoriya is born without one. However, his life changes when he meets his idol, the hero All Might. Inheriting strength from his mentor, Midoriya enrolls in the prestigious U.A. High School. Alongside his classmates, he overcomes numerous battles and challenges, aspiring to become the ultimate hero who can save lives.

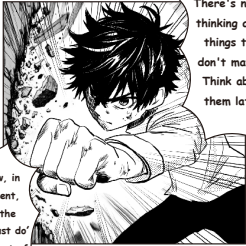
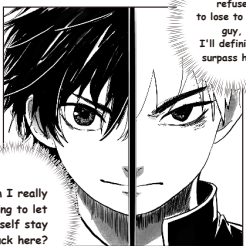

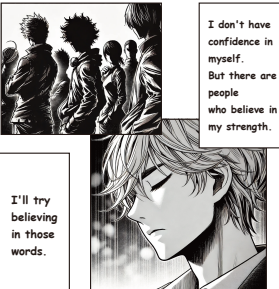

Table 2: Summary of the Pattern Language of Challenges and Growth in Shonen Manga.


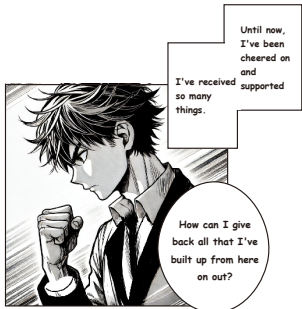

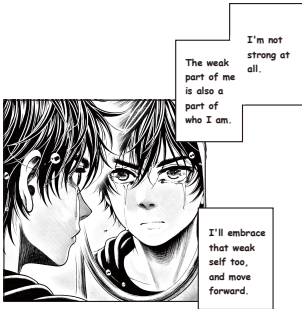

NUMBER	PATTERN NAME	COMIC REPRESENTATION OF SOLUTION-ORIENTED THINKING/ATTITUDE	IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN SOLUTION
No.1	<i>Gateway to a New Realm</i>		<p>The passion and joy that take you to new worlds are independent of whether others deny them or whether you are suited for that path. If you think about it rationally, you might put the brakes on your momentum “to avoid getting hurt.” Nevertheless, simply follow what overflows from within you to the point where you cannot ignore it yourself.</p>

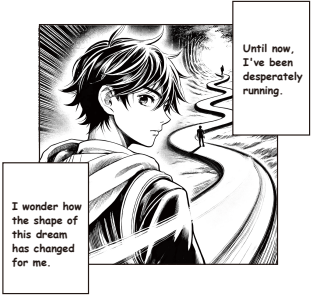
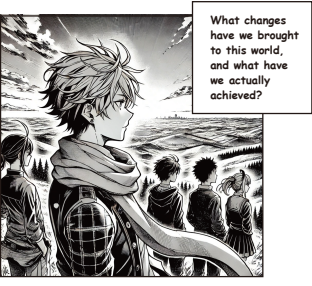

No.2	<i>Guiding Light</i>		The desire to “become like that person” serves as a significant guidepost that directs your actions and choices. If you try to put into words what exactly attracts you to someone you admire, the ideal way of being will emerge from within yourself. Learn from that vivid example they set, and incorporate the values and attitudes you discover there as criteria for your own actions and choices.
No.3	<i>Follow What Makes Your Heart Race</i>		What's needed to begin is not a definite reason, certainty, or talent. Simply the fact that you thought “I want to try this” is enough. Since it's rare to have strong motivation or determination at the initial stage, rather, dive in to see with your own eyes what lies ahead. Once you've encountered it, all you need after that is just a little courage to take a small step forward.
No.4	<i>Decision to Take this Path</i>		Whether you'll succeed in the future or whether a day will come when you regret your choice, nobody knows because it's in the future. However, if you imagine a little, your current self should understand that you'll likely regret it if you give up on the challenge right here and now. At first, you might have been riding momentum or going with the flow, but ultimately, you make the choice by your own will and decide to begin walking that path.
No.5	<i>The Reality of Hardship</i>		You cannot understand all the difficulties of that path from the beginning, and there are challenges and obstacles that only become visible once you actually start working on it. There will likely be opportunities to deeply realize that goals you truly want to achieve cannot be obtained without any effort. Each time, reassess your approach, and continuously update your determination according to the height of the wall before you.
No.6	<i>Even If Others Say Impossible</i>		Even if you know it's a steep path that you can't yet reach with your current abilities, it's not something you can easily give up on. That too is a choice of lifestyle in which you invest yourself. If you can't let go of the passion residing in that dream, you can keep holding onto it until you're satisfied, and perhaps not just yourself but also those who support you will become the foundation that helps you continue to uphold your aspirations. Even if it was just bravado at first, boldly declare your dream and continue to challenge with strong determination until it takes shape.

No.7	<i>Going for the Top</i>		<p>Setting a modest goal like “this level is enough for now” versus deciding from the start “I’m absolutely going to reach the top” creates completely different qualities of feelings and actions. Even if your skills are still lacking, opportunities to produce results won’t wait for you. For each and every opportunity, maintain a consistently higher level of goal awareness, and elevate your actions to that standard.</p>
No.8	<i>The First Wall</i>		<p>No one can perfectly overcome all obstacles without setbacks from the beginning. The greater the goal you challenge yourself with, the greater the barriers that will stand in your way. Looking around, you’ll often find those whose abilities surpass your own. Facing that reality head-on, clearly understanding your current position, and accepting what you lack becomes the first step toward growth.</p>
No.9	<i>The First to Join My Crew</i>		<p>There are always people who will sympathize with what you want to do and challenge it with you. If that person complements what you lack, you can support each other, and if they are comrades who share the same goals as you, you can likely progress while sharing both hardships and joys. It may take time to build trust, but look for someone who gives you the feeling they’ll take you to new places, and consider them your first companion.</p>
No.10	<i>Relentless Pursuit</i>		<p>The difference between you and those around you is merely a matter of the amount of effort and speed, and by viewing it as a place that you too can reach, you continuously accumulate effort with your current position always as the starting point. Even the people you think are amazing must have various backgrounds and accumulated experiences to get where they are, and what you see now is merely the result of that. Since you gain strength in proportion to what you’ve done, either continue to pile on effort until it becomes effective, or search for new methods to grow.</p>

No.11	<i>Rising Self</i>		<p>The catalyst for change might be unexpectedly close, such as the presence or inspiration of companions. By receiving courage from their existence and generating energy that says “I’m going to do this too,” try choosing an option that your previous self would have hesitated to take. If you’ve managed to take action, even a small one, it makes you believe that you can become a new self different from who you were yesterday.</p>
No.12	<i>A Hurdle to Overcome</i>		<p>Each and every opportunity should be viewed as an important checkpoint toward your goals, constantly questioning whether you’re giving your all in that moment. What matters is not simply the fact that you worked on something, but being conscious of how you’ve changed before and after doing it, and how much closer you’ve gotten to your goal. Rather than thinking “I can do it someday,” by tackling challenges with the determination that “I’ll give it my all right now,” you create significant learning experiences that connect to what comes next.</p>
No.13	<i>Ultimate Challenge Absolute Pursuit</i>		<p>Finding your own answers may seem like a steady and persistent task, but there are important breakthrough insights that can only be discovered through continued trial and error. Hints and advice from those around you and from mentors are also important footholds for paving the way for growth. Rather than just receiving them passively, you should digest them in your own way and apply them to your actions. And by thinking for yourself, actually trying things out, and sometimes experiencing failures along the way, you gradually search for your own answers.</p>
No.14	<i>Learn from Fellows</i>		<p>Opportunities for growth and learning are all around us if we look. Seniors we admire, rivals we’ve competed against, peers who are making remarkable progress—regardless of who they are, if there’s something to learn from them, we should observe thoroughly, listen to what they have to say, and absorb their wisdom without being held back by pride or preconceptions. By maintaining this hunger for learning, we can break through the shell of thinking we’ve unconsciously built around ourselves and discover new potential for growth.</p>

No.15	<i>Breakthrough Point</i>	 <p>There's no use thinking about things that don't matter! Think about them later!</p> <p>Right now, in this moment, what is the 'thing I must do' right in front of me?</p>	<p>Focus only on what is most necessary for you right now, and even if there are things you cannot do, thoroughly consider “what will I do now?” There are hardly any situations where you can tackle things with completely perfect preparation. If you calmly reassess yourself, there shouldn't be that many things you truly need to face in this moment. Impatience and anxiety may wash over you, but shake them off and direct your mind toward the one “thing that needs to be done.”</p>
No.16	<i>Fated Rival</i>	 <p>I absolutely refuse to lose to that guy. I'll definitely surpass him.</p> <p>Am I really going to let myself stay stuck here?</p>	<p>The reason we become conscious of others is precisely because they possess something we lack. Honestly acknowledging their strengths means directly accepting our own shortcomings, which is never easy. However, by recognizing this, we open up possibilities to grow and learn in directions we don't currently possess. Even so, with pride welling up in your chest, don't yield an inch to them—rather, make them recognize you as a “rival”—it's good to challenge yourself with such determination.</p>
No.17	<i>Stand with Comrades</i>	 <p>Together, we'll face this head-on.</p> <p>I'm not the only one fighting right now.</p>	<p>Companions are those who sometimes give us the courage to change, sometimes inspire us as rivals with whom we compete and improve, and sometimes make strength well up within us by joining hands. Rather than trying to solve everything on your own, by maintaining the awareness that “I am with companions who fight together,” the power to cooperate and support each other emerges. It is within these relationships with companions that we discover what only we can do and the strengths we can demonstrate.</p>
No.18	<i>The Power of Others Faith</i>	 <p>I don't have confidence in myself. But there are people who believe in my strength.</p> <p>I'll try believing in those words.</p>	<p>Around you are people who have walked this path together with you. They are the ones who have watched how hard you've worked and how you've progressed. You may feel that high walls stand in your way one after another, making it difficult to maintain confidence. Still, the words and mere presence of those who believe in you become the reason to encourage yourself that this is no time to be intimidated.</p>
No.19	<i>Let the Heart Cry Out</i>	 <p>Even when I want to move forward, there are times when my body just won't move no matter what...</p> <p>Just for now, it's okay to cry.</p>	<p>Crying is not a shameful thing. Falling down, feeling the pain, yet standing up and running again. This repetition makes you stronger. Sometimes it's good to reveal your raw vulnerabilities to your companions. First, experience the feelings swirling inside you—sadness, frustration, helplessness—until your tears run dry, and accept yourself who feels that way.</p>

No.20	<i>A Step from Despair</i>		<p>From the swirling emotions, pick up the seeds of learning and growth that are always hidden within failure, and find meaning that leads to what comes next. Failures and setbacks are bitter experiences that everyone wants to avoid, but they occur precisely because you are seriously confronting and struggling with something. Use the emotions gained there as fuel for your next effort, and use the insights gained as valuable lessons to avoid repeating the same mistakes in the future. Even the despair you felt at that time—move forward in such a way that nothing is wasted.</p>
No.21	<i>Embrace Everyone's Hope</i>		<p>It's natural that your starting point is your own dreams and goals. However, what you realize along the journey is that you exist not only because of your own efforts, but because of the presence and expectations of those who have supported you, and the experiences that have saved you. By considering how to respond to their presence and how to give back the strength you've gained, the reason why you fight becomes more deeply engraved in your heart. And with that reason in your heart, you continue to elevate yourself further.</p>
No.22	<i>Awaken Your True Power</i>		<p>If you continue to see the differences between yourself and others as what you lack, you'll only end up constantly chasing to make up for those deficiencies. However, within your experiences so far, you should already have your own unique characteristics and style. Just as you cannot become someone else, others cannot become you. And there is no single correct answer to what strength is. Thoroughly explore and become aware of your thinking, traits, and abilities—what you currently possess—refine that style, and develop it into your own unique way of fighting.</p>
No.23	<i>Bearing the Weakness</i>		<p>Accepting yourself when you cannot be strong is not easy, and in many cases, you may deceive yourself by hiding your weaknesses, pretending not to see them, or putting up a brave front. However, by becoming aware of what you're unconsciously trying to protect and the feelings of wanting to escape, you'll find the courage to face what you've been averting your eyes from. While putting your weaknesses into words, unravel the shell you've built to protect yourself, and gradually come to understand and accept yourself.</p>
No.24	<i>Believe In Yourself Till The End</i>		<p>There is no guarantee that effort will be rewarded. Choosing the path of not giving up might actually be the choice with more suffering. Even so, by remembering the reason you've come this far and returning to those feelings, you take another step forward. In the end, there is no other way but to keep believing and continuing.</p>

No.25	<i>The Evolution of Purpose</i>		<p>What began as a small, trivial motivation might have led you into a whole new world. However, as you take action to realize that dream, its meaning can transform. A dream that was once just for yourself might unexpectedly become a shared vision with others. You might glimpse the true essence of what you've been seeking all along, or perhaps discover an even greater dream, or feelings you wish to convey to someone. Take this moment to reflect once more on what has changed along the path you've traveled.</p>
No.26	<i>The World We Changed</i>		<p>When you take a moment to look back on your journey, you'll likely find that you've arrived at a place you couldn't have imagined when you first began your adventure. The people you've connected with, the challenges you've tackled, and what you've created as a result—no matter how small, they have surely made some impact on this world. The end of an adventure doesn't mean returning to "how things were before." Rather, through the experiences and perspectives gained along the way, the world as you see it should have changed significantly.</p>
No.27	<i>Who Walk Beside You</i>		<p>Throughout a long adventure, you've faced walls countless times, growing stronger with each obstacle overcome. There were moments when you strived and persevered as the protagonist of your story. However, within that narrative, the stories of your companions also intertwine. Sometimes you received help from others, sometimes you offered assistance, moving forward while fighting together. It was because of these connections that the story wasn't woven by just one person, but created together. Within the narrative shared with companions and the many people you've encountered, you should realize there exists a certain place that supports you and gives you the strength to move forward—a place where you truly belong.</p>