BOOST THE WILLPOWER TO FACE YOUR CHALLENGES
USING PATTERNS FOR HARNESSING MANGA CHARACTERS' MINDSET

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In this *Imagination Run Wild* session, we conducted a workshop utilizing the "Patterns of Challenge and Growth in Shonen Manga," derived from Japanese shonen manga, in the title of "Boost the Willpower to Face Your Challenges: Using Patterns for Harnessing Manga Characters' Mindset". These patterns capture the thoughts and attitudes of manga characters as they strive toward their dreams and goals, presented in a manga-inspired format. Participants reflected on their personal aspirations and challenges, imagining themselves as manga protagonists. Through dialogue and the use of manga-style pattern cards, they explored how to face setbacks and move forward with renewed determination. This process allowed them to adopt the mindset of shonen manga heroes, reconnect with their ambitions, and boost their motivation to achieve their goals.

Additional Key Words and Phrases: pattern language, manga, mindset

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1. INTRODUCTION

We often set dreams and goals for ourselves, striving to build a better tomorrow as we go through our daily lives. Driven by our passions and desires, we take action, gradually transforming our reality and creating a larger narrative for our lives. However, this journey is rarely a smooth, well-paved road.

Along the way, we may hit walls and think, "I can't do this anymore," or find ourselves questioning, "Am I really on the right path?" In such moments, the support that helps us move forward is often found in the "power of stories."

In particular, the genre of shonen manga, a proud cornerstone of Japanese manga culture, holds a unique value in overcoming challenges and difficulties. Shonen manga depicts the growth of young characters who strive toward their dreams and goals, tackle hardships, and grow together with their companions. These stories often include essential lessons and mindsets for persevering on a chosen path while embracing struggles and setbacks.

If we could integrate the perspectives and attitudes of these manga characters into the story of our own lives, we might find ourselves fueled with greater determination and energy, cultivating the willpower to pursue our goals.

In this workshop, we used patterns that distill such wisdom into a structured format, enabling participants to overlay the perspectives and attitudes drawn from fictional worlds onto their own lives. We also introduced manga-inspired pattern cards designed to evoke the courage one feels when reading manga, exploring ways to empower oneself and incorporate these lessons into everyday life.

The overall study (Ota et al., 2024) was typically conducted with a focus on adolescence; however, to share the approach of extracting patterns from fictional stories and presenting them in a manga-inspired format with the pattern community, a workshop was held as part of *Imagination Run Wild*. We outline the workshop details and share reflections on its implementation.

2. WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

This workshop, titled "Boost the Willpower to Face Your Challenges: Using Patterns for Harnessing Manga Characters' Mindset," was held on October 15, 2024, during the 31st Conference on Pattern Languages of Programs. Ten participants from the international conference attended the session. They were divided into two groups of five, seated at separate tables to engage in the activities.

The overall flow of the workshop was as follows:

- Introduction to the workshop structure: 5 minutes

- Discussion on the problem situations described on the pattern cards: 15 minutes

- Discussion on the solutions described on the pattern cards: 25 minutes

- Discussion on the format of the pattern cards: 10 minutes

- Sharing reflections: 5 minutes

Through this workshop, we presented a new format of the pattern cards. One side of each card features a manga-style panel with dialogue, symbolically representing the mindset or attitude described as the pattern's solution. Below the panel, the pattern name is displayed. On the other side, written in white text on a black background, is a description of the problem situation: "In this kind of situation, this type of problem arises" (Figure 1).

For the workshop, six patterns were selected: *A Small Step, A Giant Leap*, *A Self to Be Proud of*, *Single-Minded Focus*, *The Pride to Rival*, *Turning Differences into Weapons*, and *What Remains After Defeat*. These patterns were carefully chosen to avoid overlapping categories and to emphasize the essence of shonen manga.

Figure 1: The Format of the Pattern Card with Manga Style

2.1 Discussion on the problem situations

Since the workshop was held internationally, it began with an introduction to what *shonen manga* entails and the typical story arcs it follows. Participants were then asked to read the problem descriptions on the cards placed on their tables, reflect on points they resonated with, and share past experiences related to those problems (Figure 2). This process was designed to highlight how the emotional impact of a story often stems from empathizing with a negative situation and experiencing the dramatic turn toward a positive resolution. By starting with discussions about difficult situations they personally encounter, participants were encouraged to explore the connections between the stories and their own lives.

Figure 2: Scenes of Talking about Problematic Situation of the Pattern

2.2 Discussion on the solutions

Next, participants took turns selecting a card, flipping it over to reveal the solution written on the different side, and sharing their thoughts with their group (Figure 3). They discussed how the solution resonated with their own experiences, ideas they wanted to adopt, and what they found meaningful. This activity aimed to help participants recognize their goals and consider how the mindsets represented in the patterns could be applied within their personal contexts.

Figure 3: Scenes of Sharing the Experience about Solution Part of the Pattern

During the discussion segment, additional prompts were projected as slides to encourage participant introspection and facilitate conversation about the patterns. Questions included, "What do you strive to give your all to every day?" and "How do you usually feel when facing difficulties?" Furthermore, since the workshop was part of an international pattern language conference, participants were also asked to discuss their impressions of the patterns' format and presentation style.

3. SURVEY RESULTS

A survey was conducted immediately after the workshop to gather feedback on participants' experiences following the dialogue activities. A total of seven valid responses were collected, and the following section shares insights drawn from these responses. Regarding the survey results, the question *"After reading the patterns, did you feel motivated toward what you want to work hard on personally?"* received the following responses: four participants answered "Strongly Agree," two answered "Agree," and one answered "Neutral" (Figure 4). The participant who selected "Neutral" explained, *"I've experienced most of these patterns,"* suggesting that their extensive life experience influenced their response.
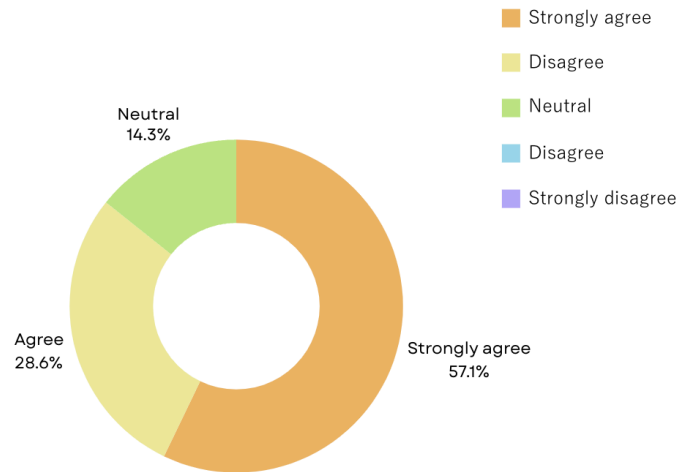
Figure 4: Answer for "After reading the patterns, did you feel motivated
toward what you want to work hard on personally?" [N=7]

For example, since the participants included people from different age groups, there were moments when younger participants listened to many life experience-based stories shared by older participants, seen in the comment "After I shared my experiences, group member encouraged me and I got important awareness." Typically, people rarely have the opportunity to talk about their struggles unless they are close to someone, which can create a psychological barrier. However, the content of the cards provided a starting point, allowing participants to share what they are currently struggling with, feeling uncertain about, or have experienced in the past. Through these exchanges, participants were observed encouraging one another, transcending differences in age and nationality.

Next, for the question *"Do you feel the 'manga-style pattern card' is an effective way to convey patterns on how to think and motivate yourself?"* six participants responded "Strongly Agree," and one responded "Agree" (Figure 5).

Strongly agree
Disagree
Neutral
Disagree
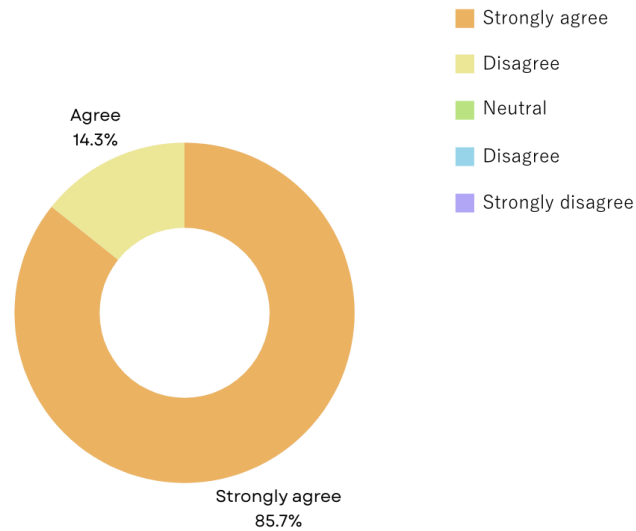Strongly disagree

Agree
14.3%

Strongly agree
85.7%

Figure 5: Answer for "After reading the patterns, did you feel motivated

As comments such as *"They provide a really concise and easy-to-understand way to learn about the patterns!"*, *"Back side illustrations are sooo great!!! I love it and feel so inspired,"* and *"The workshop was really cool! I enjoyed the pattern pictures :)"* suggest, the new patterns using manga expressions were effective in conveying information and resonated even with participants who had never read manga before.

4. CONCLUSION

This report provides an overview of the session *Boost the Willpower to Face Your Challenges: Using Patterns for Harnessing Manga Characters' Mindset*, conducted during the Imagination Run Wild session at PLoP 2024. It details the workshop activities, introduces the innovative manga-inspired pattern format, and shares feedback from participants. The results demonstrate that the patterns mined from manga helped participants uplift their spirits and spend meaningful time enhancing their motivation to take on challenges.

Figure 6: Participants of the Workshop

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