

# Research on Marketing Strategies Used in Japanese Anime Industry Taking the Demon Slayer as an Example

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## ABSTRACT

As one of Japan's cultural and entertainment industries, anime industry is the uniqueness of the culture and the product of social development trends. After decades of development, Japan's animation industry has gradually formed a more mature industry chain and industrialized scale. The development of the Japanese anime industry has a huge market share has a great influence on Japan's domestic cultural industries, and also has a huge impact on the international animation market. This paper uses the "Demon Slayer" as a case study of the Japanese animation industry chain to explore the important factors in the production process of animation products. Moreover, by comparative testing and investigation procedures, this paper summarizes what is worth learning from it for the international anime industry to refer to. The paper found that the craftsman's spirit that has been passed down in Japan for a century, the complete and fine industrial chain of the Japanese animation industry and support are the key factors for the success of the Japanese animation industry. And in this, I found that the Japanese have an instinct to make simple things complex and extreme, which is very worthy of national reference, not only in the animation industry, but also in the production and manufacturing industry.

**Keywords:** marketing strategy, Japanese anime industry, Demon Slayer, business analysis

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the gradual saturation of people's material life in recent years, people are pursuing more spiritual enjoyment, the trend of the Japanese anime industry is growing steadily, and most people stay at home during the 2020 epidemic, making the anime revenue rate reach a new peak. But the emergence of this industry has been tortuous, and in the process, Japan's socio-economic culture has undergone significant changes. Anime and its derivatives have developed rapidly, even outpacing the development of Japan's secondary industry, and are rapidly taking over the domestic and international markets. The original "Demon Slayer" manga, which caused a stir in 2019, surpassed "One Piece", which won 11 consecutive titles, to rank first in cumulative annual manga sales in 2019[1]. In December 2020, the theatrical

version of "Demon Slayer" became the highest-grossing film in Japanese film history with 31.72 billion yen at the box office, surpassing "Spirited Away" at 31.68 billion yen (including re-releases) [2]. At present, many studies on the Japanese anime industry focus on its special industrial chain, in which China has gained inspiration mainly from the single style of national manga and the single audience group. In this thesis, my research focuses on the profound influence of the "craftsman's spirit" on the Japanese anime industry and its inspiration in China.

Through a method of researching, comparing tests and the survey procedure, this paper aims to explore the main success factors that enable Japanese anime to flourish and the inspiration of its special industry chain to the international anime industry, using "Demon Slayer" as a typical case.

## 2. ANALYSIS

### 2.1. Demon Slayer

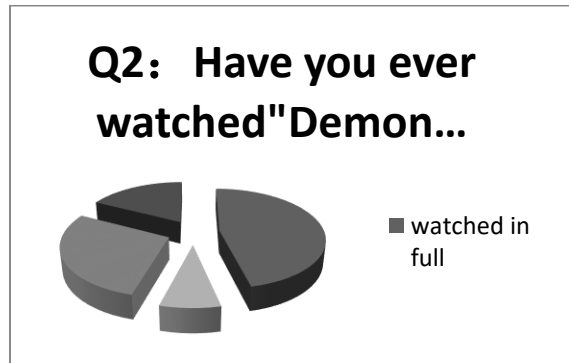


Fig1: This questionnaire is intended for the group of young people aged 18-24 years old.

This is the data the author counted through the questionnaire. Such a figure reflects the high popularity of this animation in China, so it is meaningful to analyze the industry from this animation as a starting point.

The anime "Demon Slayer" was definitely a dark horse in the Japanese anime industry in 2020, and even indirectly saved the Japanese printing industry. The reason for its popularity is twofold. One is that it fills a gap in teenage bloodthirsty comics with its own excellent manga setting and animation production. In today's market environment, a work that is hot and full of family emotions that people can easily relate to is already quite rare, so this is also to meet the great demand of the audience. On the other hand, Japan's own more complete anime industry chain has a lot to do with the momentum of such a good development of the Demon Slayer destruction and its excellent animation production of a strong team can't be separated from the relationship. After the plot is full, the quality of the animation is also ensured by the full production of ufotable Co. The last aspect to emphasize is the dedication of the creators. The author of the anime's self-portrait is a crocodile, its gender cannot even be officially determined, and other information about the author is unknown. A popular work

must have resonated with the majority of people in this era. The most impressive content is the repeated phrase in the manga, "Focus on one point and reach the top", which represents the most respected "craftsman spirit" in Japanese culture [3].

In addition to the author's creative attitude toward the work, what is also very distinctive is the author's equally fine shaping of the setting of this story. The whole story is set in the Taisho period (1912-1926), an era when the old and new cultures in Japan collided most intensely. It was more open and tolerant, more diverse than the previous era. With the influx of Western culture, Japanese literati, artists, and creators opened up new genres and styles one after another. Throughout the story background of the "samurai" and "ninja" characters, can be called the most representative symbol of Japan. Such a phenomenon also stems from the Japanese people's great appreciation and approval of their own culture, which I believe is a derivative of the "craftsman's spirit".

### 2.2. The inspiration of the collision between craftsmanship and Japanese anime culture on China

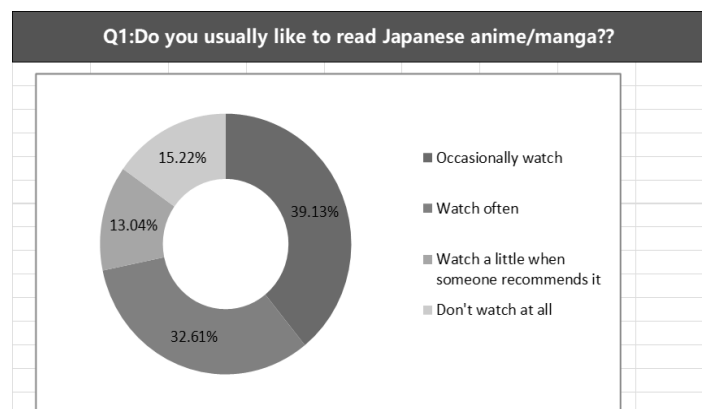


Fig2: This questionnaire is intended for the group of young people aged 18-35 years old.

This section again counted two data by questionnaire form. This chart reflects the great prevalence of Japanese anime among Chinese youth [4]. From the perspective of young people we can find that some people are very keen on Japanese anime, and this, putting aside the new era has just begun to enter the public perspective of *Demon Slayer*, some of the young people are actually from a very early addicted to this, they will even be teenagers have seen the anime is called synonymous with youth, such emotions are national comic hard to beat. From the survey data of the age group that the concept of Japanese anime is actually not the same as China, in Japan anime almost regardless of age, a person can chase an anime from elementary school to their own thirty years, this long twenty years to complete the creation of an anime such perseverance and spirit is worth learning and learning, while in the country, cartoons seem to be only children's belongings [5]. This can reflect the difference between the anime culture in the two countries, such as the following data shows that most people think that Japanese manga is somehow still better than the national manga people are eager to better, more high-quality things, so there is a drive for progress.

On the basis of meeting the needs of survival, people pursue the satisfaction of the spiritual world. However, with the emergence and popularity of high-quality cultural products on the spiritual level, people's demand for quality is only one of the aspects, more attention should be paid to the requirements of the breadth of the product.

A good anime should have high quality and at the same time its own unique cultural symbols that can meet the aesthetics of the public and attract the audience and impress them through its specificity. Gaining attention through the unique characteristics of each anime can lead to a more fixed atmosphere for the audience. If this phenomenon occurred in other regions, it might bring about a single culture form, but since Japan has a very superior anime environment with a wide range of anime genre styles, this leads to a general environment where various kinds of anime serve different types of audiences. A complete industry chain can contribute to such a "blossoming" situation, but an undeveloped anime industry chain cannot support such a large cultural load, which will limit the development of the anime industry. In Japan, the anime industry has a long and extensive history of development, and in addition to its own promotion and serialization, it also has a series of other supporting industries. For example, anime peripherals, handicrafts and tourism industry [6]. China has not yet formed a complete and reasonable anime industry chain [7]. The so-called anime industry chain refers to the marketing process of "exploitation, production, publication, performance and sales" with "creativity" as the core, animation and cartoon as the expression form, and film and TV dissemination as the pulling effect to drive series of products [8].

Japan's national culture focuses on originality and has a very strict punishment mechanism for plagiarism, which has elevated the status of manga artists in Japan. The elevated status of the manga artists has an important role in the development of the anime culture. However, the lack of originality and the existence of plagiarism in Chinese anime will certainly have a negative impact on the development of anime industry. The most representative one is the Chinese anime *Loud Mouth Doodle* copied from the *Crayon Shin-chan* in Japan, which is not only imitated in character dubbing, but even the characters and personalities are similar and totally plagiarized. One reason for this pernicious phenomenon is that the main audience group for Chinese anime is low-collar children, while in Japan anime is for almost all ages, which leads to a different emphasis on anime culture in the two environments. If China's anime industry aims to have a better development, it should improve its independent innovation ability, cultivate high-end talents in the anime industry, and enhance the status of the anime industry [9].

### 3. DISCUSSION

When discussing the development of China's animation industry, we often think about where the gap is between us and Japan. And this gap stems from the creator's attitude towards the work, which is the "craftsman's spirit" that the author has always advocated, which is the "craftsman's spirit" that I advocate throughout. "Craftsman's spirit" is to strive for excellence, is to see what is done as a living organism with an energy [10]. The word most used by Japanese workplace people is "duty", and it is necessary to do thoroughly what is being done at hand, and such artworks have a soul and are truly able to move people's hearts. To give a factual example, there is a company called *Hardlock* in Japan, and their nuts are very famous in the international market because they claim to be "never loose". By common sense, we all know that loose nuts are very common, but for some important projects, whether the nut is loose almost life and death. For example, like high-speed trains, long-term friction with the rail, resulting in a very large vibration, the general nut cannot withstand, it is easy to loosen and fall off, then the train full of passengers may be in danger of disintegration. *Hardlock's* founder spent twenty years to create a unique nut with unique technology and different corresponding offset core amount for different sizes and materials, which are the key to *Hardlock* nut cannot be imitated. Today, *Hardlock* nuts are widely used not only in Japan, but also in railroads around the world.

In such a fast growing economy as China, the fast-paced way is actually a blow to the creative industry, the products are various and colorful, but not many can penetrate into the hearts of people.

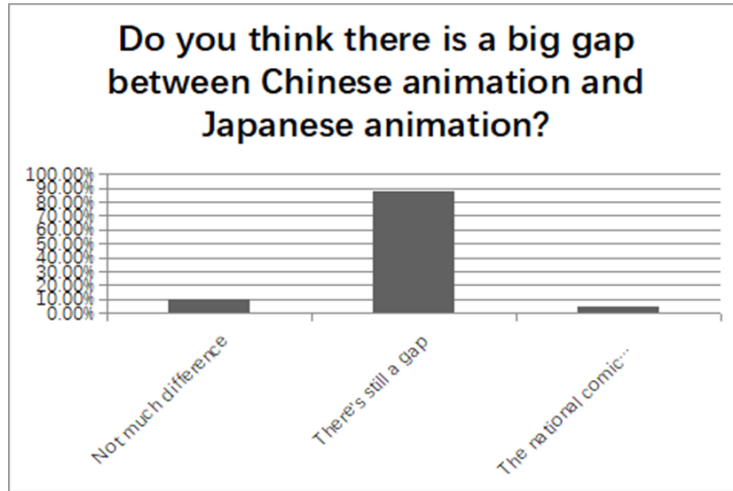


Fig3: This questionnaire is intended for the group of young people aged 18-50 years old.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In order to explore the key factors of the success of the Japanese anime industry, this thesis focuses on the Demon Slayer as the main research material, from “craftsman's spirit” as the starting point. The “craftsman's spirit” is important in anime and this kind of art creation. The process of repeatedly grinding in a certain detail to reach the peak is essential to get a good work. This thesis only explores the importance of “craftsman's spirit” from the perspective of animation, but this concept can be used in many places in the current overly fast developing Chinese society. Research in this area will help the development on Chinese art creation. Starting with the Japanese anime perspective alone may create a reading barrier for some readers who are not familiar with this field, the topic of “craftsman's spirit” involves much more than that, specifically in terms of how it should be practically applied in certain areas, and future research will focus on these directions.

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