



**Japanese Pop Culture's Response to COVID-19:
Embracing Digitalization and Hybridization**

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Abstract

Since early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the Japanese arts, cultural, and creative industries, leading to the closure of cultural institutions and the cancellation of cultural-related events and performances. In response, Japan made rigorous efforts to remotely provide alternate and supplementary services through online platforms, creating innovative digital production, distribution, and consumption patterns.

This paper offers an understanding of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Japanese pop culture sector and the response to the challenges they faced. It presents an empirical analysis to understand how Japanese pop culture's production, distribution, and consumption patterns have withstood the consequences of COVID-19. This study also provides a perspective on success in cultural marketplaces by identifying the roles of digital technology and successful partnerships with production houses in responding to the great global crisis.

COVID-19 has allowed the Japanese pop culture sector to boost its position by routing its segments towards digitalization and partnering with non-Japanese online streaming platforms such as Netflix and HBO Max to enhance their position in the global market. The central idea presented in this paper is that the pandemic did not reform Japanese pop culture, but it certainly boosted the trends that were in progress.

Keywords: COVID-19; Digitalization; Hybridization; Online streaming; Virtual

Introduction

COVID-19 swept through the world in early 2020, causing widespread economic and social disruption that continues even today. To curb the spread of COVID-19 and minimize the loss of life, governments worldwide have imposed their version of mandatory self-isolation by implementing lockdown regulations. In response to the rapid global spread of COVID-19, Japan initially implemented the "Three Cs" strategy as a preventive measure against COVID-19 transmission, which entailed avoiding enclosed locations, large gatherings, and close interactions. In reaction to the sudden increase in urgent cases, the government proclaimed a state of emergency on 7 April 2020 for seven prefectures (Tokyo, Chiba, Saitama, Kanagawa, Osaka, Hyogo, and Fukuoka). The declaration was extended to include the entire country on April 16, 2020 (Anzai et al., 2022). As a precautionary move to prevent the spread of COVID-19, live performance venues, museums, and galleries have been compelled to suspend functioning. The pandemic has dramatically affected the production, distribution, and consumption of Japanese pop cultural commodities.

It is important to note that digital technology profoundly impacted Japan's pop culture industry before the pandemic. Before COVID-19, new digital technologies facilitated the mass production of content and its immediate distribution on various platforms, such as Netflix, YouTube, and other streaming platforms. While the practice of using the internet to promote Japanese pop culture materials persisted, the Japanese pop culture sector became more focused on the Internet and streaming entertainment during the pandemic. As a direct response to the limits imposed by COVID-19, most Japanese content providers have posted their works online to maintain audience interest and satisfy the significantly higher demand for cultural content. During the pandemic, it was clear that Japanese pop culture commodities were being remotely marketed efficiently through various online platforms.

Also, the co-production business model in the Japanese anime industry is currently a prominent subject of discussion that shapes the anticipated trajectory of the anime industry. The rise in global popularity of Japanese animation has led to a notable surge in collaborations between Japanese anime studios and foreign production companies, aimed at expediting international commercial expansion. Amidst the destabilizing effects of the pandemic, the Japanese animation industry has witnessed an expansion in partnerships with non-Japanese production companies and the development of content that resonates with a global audience.

A Comparative Analysis of Social Isolation in the Edo Period and the COVID-19

The historical practice of implementing lockdowns and quarantines has been employed from ancient times to address diverse emergencies. Throughout human history, several instances of lockdowns have been used for diverse purposes, such as mitigating the spread of pandemics, combating acts of terrorism, or addressing technology calamities. In the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, all countries have imposed business closings and movement restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus. A similar type of lockdown also marked the Edo period in Japan, but foreign powers challenged Japan's isolationism (Sakoku) during this period on numerous occasions. Sakoku translates to "a country in chains," where no Japanese could leave the country, and only a few foreign nationals were allowed to enter Japan for trading purposes. During this period, Japan underwent massive urbanization, and its long period of peace and stability contributed to its economic prosperity. Japan's self-imposed isolation allowed original and cultural expressions to flourish without foreign countries or religious interference. During this period, Japan experienced a significant boom in the creative arts, resulting in an accumulation of many indigenous cultural phenomena born of the desire for entertainment on the part of the people, which still exists today. A host of cultural activities such as kabuki, ikebana, woodblock prints, Ukiyo-e, the tea ceremony, and haiku poetry that date from this period of Japanese history continue to be recognized for their profound cultural value today.

Japanese pop culture had a huge international following before COVID-19, which stoked interest in the country's culture. Manga and anime have become mainstays of the Japanese economy and culture due to their widespread appeal. As a result, Japan is among the top exporters of cultural goods worldwide. This pattern persisted even during the pandemic, and Japanese pop culture saw unparalleled popularity in Japan and even internationally. This was facilitated by technological innovation and people's access to digital resources. From a cultural perspective, the isolationist measures implemented during the Edo period and the COVID-19 lockdown in Japan both resulted in a heightened appreciation for indigenous culture and contemporary pop culture, respectively. A significant distinction between both events was that the pop culture phenomena broadened globally, but the indigenous cultural boom occurred solely within Japan.

Digital Strategy: A Path Forward

Many nations had intensified their initiatives for digital transformation before the COVID-19 outbreak. It is evident that even before the pandemic, the technological revolution and innovative technology created new cultural experiences, dissemination, and business models, transforming how cultural goods are produced, consumed, and distributed globally. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a large portion of the world to move online, speeding up a long-term digital change. In the case of Japanese popular culture, the trend of streaming entertainment on the internet persisted. However, there was an evident need and opportunity to accelerate the use of digital methods and explore ways to promote Japanese cultural content utilizing online platforms during the pandemic. COVID-19 has been recognized as a digital activator since the crisis highlighted the potential of digital technologies. This section will focus on the digital transformation of Japanese pop culture in the age of COVID-19.

Online Streaming

COVID-19 has expedited the cultural and creative industries in the digital age. The animation industry, or anime, is one of Japan's most important exports and significantly influences the country's international image. During the pandemic's peak, the digital revolution dramatically changed the creative landscape of the anime industry. The streaming business, which surpassed television in the Japanese domestic market for the first time in 2020, was a remarkable area of growth for the anime industry (Statista, 2023). This development was attributed to online streaming, which thrived under COVID-19. In the summer of 2020, Netflix subscribers reached 5 million in Japan, increasing 2 million over the previous year (Mainichi, 2021). According to a study conducted in 2021, Amazon Prime Video had a subscriber base of 14.6 million, making it Japan's fastest-growing streaming service (Brzeski, 2021a). Due to being stuck at home, new subscribers turned to anime as an alternative to cinemas, thus increasing the popularity of the anime industry.

With the suspension of live-action film and television projects due to safety concerns, animation that requires less interaction between humans became a popular alternative. During the pandemic, internet streaming services like HBO Max, Amazon Prime Video, Hulu, Disney Plus, and Netflix have become increasingly popular, offering a sizable collection of Japanese anime to viewers around the world. In May 2020, HBO Max began airing Japanese animated programs shortly after its launch (NPR, 2020). The collaboration between Studio Ghibli and

HBO Max, enabling the availability of a significant portion of its esteemed collection in the United States, serves as a prominent indication of the increasing significance of anime streaming (Bradley, 2019).

Before the pandemic, anime enthusiasts had the opportunity to avail themselves of an extensive assortment of officially authorized anime series via prominent streaming services, such as Netflix, Crunchyroll, and Funimation. The development of digital technologies has facilitated streamer providers in delivering streaming video services of exceptional quality to their audiences. The current prevailing phenomenon of streaming services, in conjunction with the implementation of stay-at-home mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic, has significantly expedited the surge in demand and expansion of subscribers for streaming video services. Crunchyroll, among the multitude of anime streaming platforms available, has emerged as a highly flourishing business, enjoying a substantial member base of over 5 million individuals across more than 200 nations and territories worldwide. Crunchyroll effectively engages with a dedicated community of anime and manga enthusiasts, providing a comprehensive range of content including films, live-action dramas, and Japanese comic books (manga) in several languages to cater to a global audience. In December 2020, Warner Media made a public declaration regarding the transfer of ownership of Crunchyroll to Sony, a prominent anime distributor in North America that also possesses Funimation. In August 2021, Sony successfully finalized the acquisition of Crunchyroll, an anime streaming service, for \$1.18 billion. This transaction was facilitated through Funimation Global Group LLC. (Sony Pictures Entertainment, 2021). Throughout its existence, Crunchyroll has had significant growth and success within the anime industry, establishing itself as the foremost distributor, publisher, producer, and licensor of anime content on a global scale. The merger of Crunchyroll and Funimation signifies a significant transformation in the size and structure of the anime sector. This agreement, established amidst the rise in the popularity of streaming services during the pandemic, presented an exceptional opportunity for these services to showcase their dedication to enhancing their capacities to generate and disseminate high-quality anime material to global viewership.

Furthermore, the implementation of stay-at-home orders has resulted in a notable proportion of individuals engaging in the consumption of manga, predominantly in its digital format. There was a significant increase in the digital manga market in 2020, with a growth rate of 31.9 per cent, resulting in a total value of 342 billion yen. This is a substantial increase of 82.7

billion yen compared to 2019 (Takizawa, 2021). The surge in the digital manga market can be ascribed to the increasing prevalence of anime on streaming platforms like Amazon Prime, Hulu, and Netflix, which has expedited the sales of manga. The manga market has exhibited significant development amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Virtual Anime Events

The global pandemic has presented varying circumstances, leading to advantageous prospects for certain individuals while posing difficulties for others. The industries that have experienced the most impact are those associated with restaurants, live music venues, and travel, as the suspension of operations in these areas has been particularly pronounced. On the other hand, internet-based services experienced significant growth and success. The proliferation of digitalization and online cultures, exemplified by platforms like YouTube and streaming services, has significantly facilitated the production and dissemination of Japanese pop culture.

While the anime industry faced daunting challenges, the anime community also found groundbreaking ways to adapt and survive during the pandemic. Virtual platforms and remote working have emerged as popular adaptations for arts organizations and artists, however, they have significant limitations. In response to the government's proclamation of a state of emergency in Japan, the anime sector experienced a significant decline, characterized by the postponement of anime conventions, live performances, disruptions in supply chains, and cessation of sales and manufacturing activities within the industry. Nevertheless, the organizers of these events have employed digital technologies to address the repercussions.

In response to the government's directive to suspend all large-scale gatherings as a precautionary measure against the pandemic, the highly anticipated Anime Expo 2020, a prominent anime convention, was subsequently canceled. But the prospect of organizing a virtual convention provided anime enthusiasts with a glimmer of optimism during the global health crisis. The inaugural Anime Expo 2020, organized by the Society for the Promotion of Japanese Animation (SPJA), was conducted virtually. This was achieved by utilizing freely available live-streaming platforms such as YouTube and Twitch. The virtual event garnered participation from more than 500,000 individuals hailing from 71 different nations. Its primary objective was to commemorate Japanese pop culture by showcasing a diverse range of content provided by industry partners (SPJA, 2020).

Similarly, Funimation hosted its first-ever virtual fan convention, FunimationCon 2020, in collaboration with Freeman, which provided strategy, digital, event technology, and logistics services (Sony Pictures Entertainment, 2020). This event received considerable attention and achieved notable success on the Internet, as fans who were drawn to it liked the meticulously designed online experience that facilitated the convergence of diverse content, visual art, and the fan community on the digital platform. It is clear from the success stories of the online anime conventions that the anime industry has immense potential for integrating streaming practices into future live events.

Virtual Kabuki Show

Although COVID-19 has impacted the entire arts sector, nowhere has the effect been more direct, profound, and immediate than on the performing arts. The pandemic has affected Japan's traditional cultural heritage in another profound way. The closure of theatres had a significant influence on performers in the realm of conventional performing arts, as it rendered them unable to engage in their artistic practice. The cancellation of festive events and performances adversely affected the incomes of artisans and craftsmen. This uncertainty prompted Japanese artists to find ways to showcase and preserve the country's rich cultural heritage. As venue-based art forms battled to survive the pandemic, efforts were made to promote traditional performing arts online. In response, the first online Kabuki performance, Zoom Kabuki, was produced, directed, and performed by Matsumoto Koshiro through Zoom's online communication system. On 27 June 2021, the Zoom kabuki story 'Chushingura' based on the traditional drama 'Kanadeho Chushingura' recognized as one of three great masterpieces developed from puppet theatre, was aired online for domestic audiences (Kabuki Web, 2020). Taking advantage of the favourable reception to this initiative, the ability to stream kabuki live on the Internet is anticipated to become more popular in the digital domain in the future.

Virtual YouTubers

The phenomenon of Virtual YouTubers, commonly referred to as VTubers, originated in Japan in the mid-2010s, where unknown Virtual YouTubers create online content utilizing a digitally generated virtual avatar that draws significant inspiration from the anime genre. The digital trend was significantly influenced by Japan's prevalent culture of anime and manga. The

practice of VTubing originated within the realm of Japanese internet culture but has progressively expanded to encompass a global scope. The success of the first VTuber, Kizuna A.I., who debuted in 2016 and received millions of views, sparked a VTuber trend in Japan and prompted other agencies to promote and create other VTubers with large subscription counts.

VTubing was a niche genre primarily confined to Japan's overactive subculture of fanboys and otaku before the coronavirus pandemic pushed the world into internet isolation in 2020. The disruptions that the pandemic has caused in people's regular lives and in the entertainment, industry have increased the attractiveness of VTubing (Kelts, 2023). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the phenomenon of VTubers had a significant surge in popularity, characterized by an increasing number of viewers who subscribed to their preferred streamers to engage in virtual forms of entertainment. VTubers possess the capability to utilize a digital functionality known as Super Chat to generate revenue for their channels when their content is being broadcast in real-time. The functionality enables users to make monetary contributions to prioritize the display of specific remarks during live-streaming sessions. According to a 2020 analysis by Playboard, a prominent ranking site for global YouTube video conversations, it was observed that Japanese virtual YouTubers predominantly held a significant presence in super-chatted channels (Playboard, 2020). The global explosion of the VTuber phenomenon during the pandemic is anticipated to have a transformative impact on the popularity of Japanese pop culture, as advancements in digital technology continue to expand.

Virtual Anime Tourism

Anime tourism refers to the act of visiting locations associated with anime or manga, encompassing venues such as museums, cafes, festivals, and other relevant sites. The Anime Tourist Association has been established in response to the growing popularity of anime culture within the country and its consequential influence on the tourist industry. The Tourist industry in Japan is predominantly influenced by Japanese animation, highlighting the significance of leveraging a nation's popular culture to stimulate inbound tourism. Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, anime and manga enthusiasts would embark on journeys to Japan to visit locations that served as settings in anime or manga. This phenomenon had a direct and positive impact on the tourism industry in Japan. Nevertheless, because of the pandemic circumstances, anime tourism had a significant setback, as enthusiasts were unable to formulate

travel arrangements to Japan and partake in visiting renowned anime and manga destinations. Local governments and tourism organisations undertook the exploration of alternate modalities and strategies for the promotion of virtual tourism. The concept of virtual tourism, once regarded as a futuristic notion within the tourism industry, has demonstrated favorable outcomes for the sector. The rapid advancement of technology has facilitated the tourism sector in effectively and securely promoting its diverse cultural heritage. The Anime Tourism Association has also organized virtual reality tours of actual locations featured in popular anime programs and manga comics to entertain and engage fans during the pandemic.

Remote Voice-Recording

COVID-19 and the associated social distancing rules have impacted nearly every business on the planet. In the anime industry, when markets cannot dub content, distribution access is effectively blocked to those markets, limiting content reach and thereby limiting revenue-generating opportunities. Among other processes related to the creation of anime, the pandemic has adversely affected voice recording sessions. This posed a problem for the Japanese recording studios as they struggled with solutions to respond to the unprecedented change caused by the pandemic. In light of the pandemic, voice actors were instructed to work from home as preventive measures to reduce the risk of contagion. This forced the anime industry to put remote recording solutions into place. The pandemic affected the delivery of several anime shows as the anime industry struggled to find answers to respond to the impact of the pandemic. As it became increasingly clear that in-person recording could not compete, studios began developing remote recording systems. The challenges that remote recording would pose also became increasingly apparent as its need grew. Undoubtedly, developing remote recording procedures poses several challenges, including technical issues, such as installing audio equipment at home and ethical issues, such as concerns over leaking information.

Nevertheless, the rapid acceleration of digital transformation has allowed voice actors to rely on digital equipment and remotely record their parts from the comforts of their homes to keep the business running. Distributors like Funimation have provided actors with dubbing kits to record their voices to ensure timely content distribution on the market. Dubbing anime from a remote location will likely become a trend and help to strengthen the anime industry's future.

Digital in Action: The Success of Kimetsu No Yaiba During COVID-19

The COVID-19 outbreak caused significant challenges and discontent among the Japanese population, who had eagerly awaited the arrival of the highly anticipated Olympic games in 2020. However, in the middle of the prevailing disorder, the manga and anime series 'Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba' emerged as a prominent subject of discourse, surpassing the Olympics and captivating the nation's collective consciousness during this time.

'Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba -The Movie: Mugen Train' is the continuation of a hit anime television series titled 'Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba,' which was created on a hit manga of the same title by the artist Koyoharu Gotouge. The film has garnered substantial success since its premiere in Japan, and although COVID-19 delayed its release in foreign countries, it proved to be a surprise as it was the first non-Hollywood movie to top the worldwide box office. In addition, it also surpassed Hayo Miyazaki's "Spirited Away" to become the highest-grossing anime and Japanese film of all time (McCurry, 2020).

A notable factor in the movie's success was that it opened during the COVID-19 pandemic when the rest of the entertainment industry grappled with its repercussions. The film achieved remarkable success at the box office, which can be attributed to the limited competition it saw during its theatrical run. The considerable level of popularity enjoyed by the content ensured a highly successful digital distribution on various online streaming platforms, resulting in its prominent position at the top of the charts across all streaming platforms. In response to the lockdown regulations set in place by governments around the globe to avoid the spread of COVID-19, people occupied more of their free time at home, tuning into the much-talked-about anime, which eventually became the binge-watch sensation of the pandemic period.

Piracy: An Uphill Battle

According to the Content Overseas Distribution Association, the substantial increase in piracy is due to individuals spending more time indoors watching leisure content during the coronavirus outbreak, as well as increased use of streaming services (Times, 2023). During the pandemic, illegal downloading and accessing manga, anime, and other online content from unauthorized and unlicensed websites increased as people spent extended periods on digital devices looking for ways to be entertained. It has also impacted the revenue potential of anime and manga content creators, resulting in the closure of some productions. The issue of illegal

distribution and consumption of anime and manga has been addressed with various measures to prevent the unauthorized replication of content and prohibit users from illegally obtaining content through the Internet. However, despite all this, digital piracy is still one of the most popular practices in the Japanese content industry.

Considering the rapidly growing digital piracy, the Japanese parliament approved a revised anti-online piracy law to reduce the downloading of pirated content from the Internet. The revised law came into effect on January 1, 2021 (Times, 2020). In addition to disallowing the operation of leech sites, the law criminalizes the offense, and those who violate it are subject to penalties of up to five years in jail, a maximum fine of 5 million yen or both. In the case of downloading manga, magazines, and academic texts that are undistributed, offenders will be penalized with either a maximum prison term of two years or a maximum fine of two million yen (Times, 2020). The new legislation is expected to significantly and positively protect creators, producers, distributors, and the content industry.

Hybridization: Securing the Future of the Japanese Anime Industry

Cultural hybridization in the Japanese anime industry is characterized by increasing co-productions with entertainment companies outside of Japan to co-create and produce high-quality anime content. Anime co-production is a collaborative effort by Japanese animators and non-Japanese production companies to develop original anime content by sharing skills and experiences in designing, delivering, monitoring, and evaluating services and projects. With the growing popularity of Japanese anime, the Japanese anime industry has taken various approaches to partner with the best production houses to deliver the best quality content globally. In recent times, there has been a growing trend of non-Japanese production houses engaging in collaborative efforts with Japanese anime studios, resulting in joint creation and production of anime content, thereby implying significant implications for the future trajectory of Japanese animation. The anime industry in Japan has become Netflix's largest revenue source in Asia, where it has focused primarily on co-producing and licensing Japanese anime content. Netflix is expanding its efforts to provide fans with outstanding Japanese stories, as anime continues to be a significant source of growth for the streaming service.

Netflix has also entered partnerships with Anima, Sublimation, and David Production in 2019 and another partnership deal with Production I.G and Bones in 2018. Furthermore, it

announced in 2020 that it had entered production partnerships with four anime studios, ANIMA & COMPANY, Science SARU, MAPPA, and Studio Mir, based in South Korea, to explore new storylines and formats to entertain anime fans worldwide (Netflix, 2020). Collaborations such as these have proven to be mutually beneficial. Netflix has gained the capability to produce original anime, while Japanese studios have accumulated stable revenue streams. It is no doubt that Netflix partners with the best creators and provides support to create content that globally appeals to the anime community. Netflix has also signed an agreement with Toho Studio, the home of Godzilla and Akira Kurosawa in Tokyo, to use two sound stages to shoot two of its live-action original series: the drama thriller Sanctuary and Yu Yu Hakusho (Ozawa, 2021).

In a recent collaborative effort, Toei Animation Studio in Tokyo and CJ ENM, the distributor of the critically acclaimed film Parasite, entered into a formal partnership in 2021 to produce films and television shows for a worldwide audience (Brzeski, 2021c). The deal between CJ ENM and Toei Animation entails the collaborative development of anime titles based on the esteemed collection of anime classics from CJ ENM's studio. In turn, Toei Animation will be responsible for creating live-action films derived from CJ ENM's repertoire of feature films. A collaborative relationship such as this one is expected to provide opportunities to build global hit content while exploring new technologies and creative expressions on a long-term basis, thereby helping to shape the future of the anime industry.

One of the foremost challenges animators face pertains to the financial sustainability of production houses in Japan despite the widespread global popularity of anime. This predicament often results in animators enduring prolonged work hours while receiving remuneration that fails to meet their needs. In order to foster long-term growth in the anime industry, Netflix has committed to providing financial support to emerging animators, aiming to enhance their capacity to produce high-quality material for the anime community. To achieve this objective, Netflix has developed a six-month comprehensive training program. This program was established through a partnership between Netflix, WIT company, a renowned Japanese animation company, and Sasayuri, an esteemed animation school in Tokyo (Sakurai, 2021). The primary aim of this initiative is to cultivate and nurture a new wave of skilled animators who will contribute to the field of animation.

In the realm of content development, production line agreements serve as an effective means of securing the industry's most skilled craftsmen for each stage of production, thereby playing a vital role in delivering content of the utmost quality to the audience. The anime sector is experiencing a notable surge in growth, with Netflix playing a significant role in fostering this expansion and expressing a desire for further development. Netflix's dedication to enhancing its collection of high-quality anime is exemplified through its collaboration and partnership initiatives with the Japanese anime industry. During the inaugural Netflix Japan Festival 2021, Netflix unveiled a comprehensive lineup of initiatives and partnerships with Japanese producers and talent, augmenting its existing catalogue of 90 Japanese titles. (Netflix, 2021). The growth in co-production has opened new horizons for exploring new skills and displaying the creative side of anime, resulting in even more excellent prospects for the future of anime.

Conclusion

Digital technologies are crucial to rebuilding and upgrading Japanese pop culture after the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the need for global digital capability in the cultural and creative sector. Adopting technology in its distribution strategy has allowed the company to gain an advantage over its competitors and exploit new opportunities. The pop culture business in Japan is increasingly recognizing and embracing the benefits of digital integration, as evidenced by the significant amount of favorable attention it has garnered throughout the pandemic. The pandemic experience has created a landscape that encourages content creators in the pop culture industry to explore innovations and move forward to achieve significant success. Pandemic-induced changes in the marketing and distributing strategies of the culture sector are here to stay and remain substantial for the future of the Japanese pop culture industry. The future of anime events looks like it will combine physical and online events — including hybrid versions. The popularity of Japanese anime will be determined in part by the extent of live-streaming subscriptions and the expansion of co-production.

The COVID-19 epidemic has expedited the Japanese animation industry's shift towards a digital business model, encompassing the adoption of digital teleworking techniques and integrating advanced technologies into its programs and operations. The rapid advancement and expansion of technological transformation have facilitated the pop culture industry in effectively satisfying the worldwide needs for its products by utilising pre-existing technology systems and solutions. The utilization of information and communication technology has

propelled the Japanese pop culture industry into the realm of technology, resulting in increased interest and activity and greater digitization of the industry. In addition, the growing and successful collaborations with international production companies have played a significant role in the increasing global appeal of Japanese pop culture. The future trajectory of the Japanese pop culture industry will be significantly shaped by the emerging practice of collaborating with non-Japanese streaming platforms and production houses to co-create anime content.

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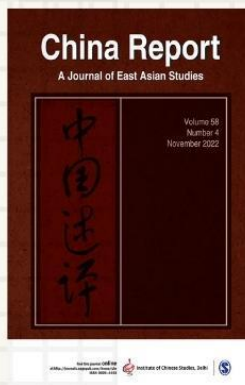


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