

Toy Industry As A Mainstream Business Idea In Animation Industry

Mochamad Faizal Rochman

Shanghai University

Email: m.faizal.rch@gmail.com

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji aspek-aspek yang mempengaruhi munculnya format industri animasi yang ditujukan khusus untuk penjualan mainan. Selain itu, artikel ini juga bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah tujuan bisnis animasi ini masih relevan untuk digunakan saat ini dengan menganalisis karakter animasi dan figur mainannya terkait dengan eksplorasi budaya, ideologi, dan faktor pendukungnya. Dalam perkembangannya yang pertama, animasi digunakan untuk menyampaikan pesan dalam industri periklanan. Kemudian animasi menjadi industri yang menjanjikan dengan munculnya Snow White yang dibuat untuk konsumsi layar lebar. Kemunculan dan popularitas televisi di tahun 60-an memberikan peluang baru bagi industri animasi, mendorong perkembangan serial televisi animasi. Serial televisi animasi memiliki peran penting dalam membantu pemasaran produk turunan di industri animasi. Tahun 80-an menjadi tahun emas bagi industri animasi dan turunannya, yang ditandai dengan munculnya banyak film animasi dengan tujuan bisnis utama menjual mainan. Menurunnya popularitas televisi dan meningkatnya penggunaan internet sebagai media hiburan tentunya akan berdampak pada perkembangan industri animasi dan mainan. Kekuatan figur mainan karakter sebagai satu-satunya hiburan juga mulai mendapat tekanan dari industri video game.

Kata-kata kunci: *industri animasi, industri mainan, karakter animasi, animasi*

ABSTRACT

This article examines the aspects that influenced the emergence of the animation industry format aimed specifically at selling toys. In addition, this article also aims to find out whether the purpose of this animation business is still relevant to be used today by analyzing animated characters and their toy figures related to the exploration of culture, ideology, and supporting factors. In its first development, animation was used to deliver messages in the advertising industry. Then animation became a promising industry with the emergence of Snow White which was made for big-screen consumption. The emergence and popularity of television in the '60s provided new opportunities for the animation industry, stimulating the development of animated television series. Animated television series have a significant role in helping the marketing of derivative products in the animation industry. The 80s became a golden year for the animation industry and its derivatives, which was marked by the emergence of many animated films with the main business objective of selling toys. The declining popularity of television and the increasing use of the internet as a medium of entertainment will undoubtedly impact the development of the animation and toy industry. The power of character toy figures as a sole entertainment has also begun to come under pressure from the video game industry.

Keywords: *animation industry, toys industry, animation character, animation*

Introduction

In its first development, animation was used to deliver messages in the advertising industry (Merritt & Kaufman, 2011). Then the animation industry developed as a significant form of business, pioneered by Disney when it released *Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs* in 1937. Animated films that were only made in the form of short animations were later changed to feature-length films. *Snow White's* huge box office brought the animation industry a promising big industry. Animated films for theatrical consumption and box-office gains set a new standard in the animation industry. The advent of television and its popularity pushed consumers away from cinemas to enjoy entertainment from home. The emergence of television also provides new opportunities in the animation industry as a new form of advertising delivery, showing old animated films as series for children and encouraging the emergence of original animation made for television series. Then new forms of business and new derivative products began to emerge. The animation industry is no longer just an entertainment medium but has become a big business whose derivative products can also generate significant profits. Most of the design of derivative products for children is by making toys or printing images of characters on product packaging or clothing. Some products are produced in the shape of an animated character. For example, a drink bottle changes shape into a *Doraemon*, a bag in the shape of a *Doraemon*. The pouring of serious creativity brings interest and degrees deeper into the minds of consumers. The form of product derivation is also often taken directly from all the properties in an animated film. It can be the design of clothes, jackets, hats, bags, shoes, color patterns, or accessories worn by favourite characters. All visual objects in animated films have the opportunity to be used as derivative products. Horvath divides the types of derivative products from films into five: products and services for entertainment, products made especially for children, sportswear and accessories, gifts and decorations, clothing and fashion (Horvath & Gyenge, 2018, pp. 639–640).

Television has significantly impacted the development of the animation industry in its efforts to market merchandise, especially toys. Since it first became an industry, animation and merchandising were created as an inseparable part to promote the two industries. They work together to achieve their goal, which is to benefit from animation and toy creations. Although in its development, the animation industry's monetization process has various forms and ways. Raugust states that there are at least four categories of business licenses in animation, including toys, publishing, DVDs, and interactive games (Raugust, 2004, p. 171).

Disney is a big animation company that is very successful in maximizing its characters' business. Starting from Mickey Mouse, Disney built its business empire from cable television channels, Disneyland theme parks and Disney cruises to become a top-leading company. Disney controls all entertainment channels and the merchandising industry from upstream to downstream. Even the sales figures for the character toys, t-shirts, and other merchandising from the *Toys Story* films have beaten its box office earnings. Furthermore, the Buzz

Lightyear character has become Disney's best-selling character to date (Treanor, 2019). Disney films that are always everlasting put forward the element of storytelling so that they can "monetize" their characters in the long term (Swensen, 2021). This form of "monetizing" carried out by Disney is known as character merchandising.

A practice of transforming the form of a media or commodity in the form of a character's personality features (name, image, or embodiment) into other forms that vary according to consumer desires. Character merchandising creates a desire for a character's existence and satisfies it through the availability of a character in a material form that can be seen, held, or played (Steinberg, 2012, p. 19). Character merchandising is a form of cultural production and marketing that uses characters to generate consumption from media forms such as television programs (including animation), video games, cinemas, or the brand of a product or service in the form of objects such as dolls, plastic toys, or cars.

Children-oriented product design has always been a top priority in the fierce competition in the animation industry. As direct customers, children are the main target of animated films. In order to win the market share, animated films must be able to gain popularity among children. Although now the main target of several animated films has shifted to families, children are still a deep calculation in determining visual style. An animated film's failure to gain popularity is not always a failure to produce its derivative products. For example, in the 70s, Japan began to boom in the mecha (robot) film genre. This film genre was on the verge of failure until the plastic toy robot character was produced based on the animated series (A, 2020). The robot toy's shape, similar to the one in the film, is liked most by children, so it makes the animated film to be liked. One of the goals of producing derivative products is to provide new experiences for animation fans in their efforts to interact with their favourite characters. A child does not see the world of the hero character as a form of fantasy but as his world that is connected in parallel through the imagination (Davies, 1997). Moreover, a toy (especially a character) is nothing but a simple plastic form if there is no accompanying narrative.

Animation and The Beginning of the Toy Business

The success of *Star Wars* (1977) inspired the toy industry to work with the film industry to increase sales. Kenner, as the licensee company (which was later acquired by Hasbro), all forms of *Star Wars* merchandise successfully sold all forms, including toys that have to do with the film. Children to adults want all the characters and objects in the *Star Wars* films at that time. Starting from action figures, dolls, posters, pistols, light-sabre swords, masks, and space ships, even all the properties in the film can be a form of new marketing innovation. *Star Wars* proved its success with its three sequel films and sold its derivative products successfully. The success of *Star Wars* was followed by other toy industries trying to market their products through the film industry.

Mattel, a big toy company known for its Hotwheels toys, is trying to take the toy industry market as Kenner has done through *Star Wars*. In 1981, the film *Conan The Barbarian*, starring bodybuilder Arnold Schwarzenegger became a box-office and inspired Mattel to make *Conan* a hero character for its toy industry. After in-depth research, at the end of 1983, a television series about a universal hero named *He-man* was born "The Most Powerful Man in The Universe". The success of the *He-Man* series was marked by the increasing sales of character figure toys. At the height of its glory, *He-Man* toy figures have been made of more than 100 types and accessories, and the series has reached 130 episodes. Mattel's success in monetizing and promoting the toy line became an inspiration, and other toy industries imitated its formula. In the 80s, dozens of animated films appeared on television stations with the aim of marketing merchandise in the form of toys. The films include *Silver Hawks*, *Thundercats*, *Transformers*, *G.I. Joe*, *M.A.S.K.*, *Centurion* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, the related success of *He-Man*. The 30-minute animated television series has become an unavoidable promotional medium for children who are very attached and interested in toys. Competition in the toy industry through animated films was very tight then. When Mattel surveyed that a third of *He-Man* viewers were girls, they then made the series *She-Ra: Princess of Power*, intending to target female consumers as a target for Mattel's toy sales. Unfortunately, the rating for the *She-Ra* series is not as good as *He-Man*, and the toy sales are also not as high as *He-Man*. Several films that specifically target female consumers have also caught the attention of other toy industries with the appearance of *Care Bears*, *My Little Pony*, and *Jem (Barbie)*. The 80s were a golden year for animated films that aimed explicitly at selling their toy line to American audiences.

Although lagging in terms of technology, Japan, through its culture, developed its animation differently. It is well known that Japanese animation, known as anime, originally came from a comic series. Reading comics is a daily culture of Japanese society. Moreover, the content of the comic itself is an expression of the daily life of Japanese people. It is no wonder that comics have grown with so many genres that have emerged. Comics are not only made especially for children. Even comics for teenagers and adults still have high fans. The emergence of anime which initially came from comics, is an effective and efficient formula for Japan (Lucken & Simkin, 2016, p. 16). At the beginning of its development in the 50s, Japan had just lost in the second world war. The bitter experience of war inspires comics in their efforts to show the adverse effects of war. Also, future ideas emerge from this situation that utilizes new technologies and robots as a solution.

Osamu Tezuka, the creator of *Astro Boy* and the "God of Anime", revolutionized Japan's anime business. *Astro Boy (Tetsuan-Atom)* was introduced in comic form in 1951 and received a positive response until it appeared in anime form in 1962. In 1963, it was translated and introduced to an American audience and immediately became famous as the first anime to enter and become popular in America (Lenburg, 2009, p. 432). *Astro Boy* is a robot in the form of a child created by Dr Tenma as a substitute for his son, who had died in a car accident. *Astro Boy* is given great power sourced from atomic power, and his whole body is

embedded with high-level technology. Osamu's initial goal in his career was to create commercial and experimental animation using the profits from his previous animated films. Of course, the initial profits came from the manga comics (Schodt, 2007, p. 75). *Astro Boy* set a new standard in revolutionizing the comics, anime, and character merchandising industry as shown on figure 1 to be more modern today.



Figure 1. *Astro Boy* Toys Asakusa Gangu 1960's

Source: <https://order.mandarake.co.jp/order/detailPage/item?itemCode=1136848907&lang=en>

The emergence of *Astro Boy* as a film with the technology theme and robots paved the way for other anime to create similar themes, such as *Gigantor* (1956), *Doraemon* (1969), *Mazinger* (1972), and *Evanglion* (1995). These films also targeted an American audience to gain popularity. This technology and robot theme finally gave rise to a new genre for Japanese anime: science fiction (*Astro Boy*) and giant robot (*Gigantor*), which many call the mecha genre. The popularity of this new genre is the initial guideline for anime creators to develop stories. In the 70s, the theme of the mighty giant robot is still popular, with the robot toy sales barometer as a measure of success. As happened in America in the mid-'80s, the emergence of the animated series *Transformer* aims to sell robot toys. In 1979-1980, the *Mobile Suit Gundam* anime appeared, which, when it was first made, failed due to an error in setting the target audience and the shape of the toys that appeared. After improving the design of its toy line, *Mobile Suit Gundam* is starting to be liked by fans until now. Unlike America, Japan, with its extraordinary Japanese politics, has a unique formula for creating anime. The increasing international awareness of Japanese pop culture in the global market in the 80s caused Japan to be known as a country with a unique culture with its 'cool' politics. Moe culture is a formula that has proven effective in introducing anime to foreign countries (Bowman, 2011, p. 15). In Japanese, "Moe" can be interpreted as cute, funny, and packaged. In other words, "Moe" can also mean the character's beauty through the character's personality, behaviour, and gestures. This term is applied to any object, including humans, animals, or objects capable of evoking consumer/audience appeal. In the visual form, the character is depicted as having big eyes, a round face, ears like a cat ("nekomini"), a tiny nose

and mouth, and exaggerated forms of expression such as crying, laughing, and angry, and others.

Akira (1988) from Japan, showed different standards of quality and were very creative with a more mature theme, experimental genre violence. In the late 80s, Japan's creative industry began to be widely known worldwide. From the *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* television show, *Sailor Moon* anime, digital games (digital pets, Tamagotchi), to *Pokemon*. At that time, anime was still focused on selling DVDs in the domestic and foreign markets. The appearance of the *Dragon Ball* anime in 1986 provided a new formula for making anime. *Dragon Ball*, which combines the ancient folktale of *Journey To The West* from China with a new story and visual form, is something fresh and exciting to follow. In addition, the various forms of imagination of the characters, accompanied by stories from a strong culture, make Japanese animated films acceptable worldwide. By relying on comics as the initial validation of its anime filmmaking, Japan managed to expand its influence worldwide. *Dragon Ball*, *Naruto*, and *One Piece* are examples of Japan's success in developing its animation industry. The large selection of characters in each anime is a formula for success that is difficult for other countries to match. This success is almost the same as *Pokemon's*, where every anime series that appears will bring up new characters. The more characters, the wider the opportunity for product derivation (especially toys) that will appear.

The success of *Pokemon*, which was initially a game on the *Nintendo Game Boy* handheld, brought it into animated films and even in the form of complete product derivations. It was introduced in 1996 and reached its current glory in 2021. *Pokemon* continues to air its anime series (Moore, 2021). *Pokemon* has become a Japanese icon in spreading pop culture because of its cute character shape and can be accepted by everyone, boys or girls, children or adults, and from any country. The breadth of the anime genre in Japan also impacts the development of anime's target audience. In the 80s, anime began targeting high school and college students because their number was also vast. Anime stories also develop more mature.

Character and Characterization

Characterization is a process of making characters to be marketed and sold to audiences through the stages of character design itself, its function, the form of its personality, and its history. Characterization is not only the character's design but also includes the design of the character world where the character inhabits the world. This process gives the character's identity, so the target audience quickly understands it. Without a narrative story, a toy is just a piece of plastic without meaning for children. The success of Conan, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, cannot be separated from the trend of fitness sports in the 80s. Masculinity at that time was measured by a muscular body shape and major muscles resulting from exercising in a fitness centre, such as actors *Arnold Schwarzenegger* and *Sylvester Stallone*

(Austin, 2019; Ghosh, 2018; Petty, 2017). The muscular character figure looks strong and is perfect for playing any character.

Moreover, Mattel is trying to make the Conan figure a hero in children's toys. The figure of *Conan*, who is big, muscular, and robust against monsters, wizards, and dragons, becomes an ideal figure for children's toys (especially boys) who love all things about the strength (McMahon, 2018). Psychologically, young children, their parents and teachers often want something to release these restraints. By giving "power" as *He-Man* did, young children, especially boys, feel they have a close relationship with the hero character. After thorough research, Mattel decided that the leading hero figure should not be a barbarian with barbarian traits like *Conan*, but a strong and compassionate individual capable of defeating his enemies using his wits, not muscle strength. Even the barbarian's black hair was replaced with blonde colour and a handsome face to suit the target audience, namely white Americans. *He-Man* is here to give children a sense of self-confidence that can be felt emotionally at that time. *He-Man* combines a story about swords and magic coupled with a *Star Wars* model with accompanying characters of various shapes and races. The success of *Star Wars* became a real inspiration for *He-Man* (Perlmutter, 2014, p. 190). In every animated episode, *He-Man* gets new challenges and emerges with new character friends with various strengths. This approach also answers the children's desire to get their favourite character choice.

Then in 1985, the series *G.I. Joe* appeared as an extended *Hasbro* toy industry in collaboration with *Marvel*. The toy character figure has been around since 1964 and is the world's first action-figure toy that made *Hasbro* famous (Stamp, 2013). By taking the model of the American army soldiers complete with uniforms, *G.I. Joe* became a suitable figure as a toy for boys. America's involvement with the Vietnam war and the experience of the destructive effects of the war made *G.I. Joe's* fall out of favor with consumers. It was eventually discontinued in the late 60s. After the political landscape of America changed and the influence of the success of *Star Wars*, in the early 80s, the popularity of military-themed toys rose again, and *G.I. Joe* re-emerged with a dramatic form change. The size became smaller (adopted from *Star Wars*), and they were also made less military-like. A new toy is a group of heroes with various abilities who now have the main enemy, an international terrorist organization called *COBRA*.

The emergence of the robot phenomenon by *Astro Boy* was a new thing in the world then, especially in America. In the 50s, America was not very familiar with robots because there had been many heroes who had appeared since *Superman* (1938), whose strength was almost equal to God. So there may be resistance when using a robot as a central character because robots are still considered tools that cannot coexist with humans. Osamu Tezuka makes *Astro Boy* as the central character who juxtaposes robots with humans so that they can coexist (Funk, 2014, p. 115). Japan, with its tradition, has known mechanical dolls known as *Karakuri* since 1500 years ago and became popular 200 years ago. These dolls are used in theater to automatically demonstrate legends or myths with their graceful movements without the help

of electrical energy (Kirsty, 2008). By using mechanical parts and hydraulics systems, the doll can demonstrate human-like movements (Roser, 2017). The Japanese believe that Karakuri is the predecessor of robots. Karakuri shows the close relationship between Japanese people and robots, which gave rise to the idea of making robots until now. In addition, science and technology, which are the basis for making robots, have also become an obsession for Japanese society.

Astro Boy appearance as a kid is very good at giving a message about the state of the postwar period in Japan. Many Japanese children were abandoned by their parents, and sometimes they were forced to engage in war. *Astro Boy* also experienced the same condition. He had been rejected and abandoned by his "father", and was shunned by his friends because he is a robot. Even as a robot, he defends humanity by defeating the evil robots attacking the earth. This emotional closeness made *Astro Boy* quickly accepted by Japanese society (Allison, 2006, pp. 56–60). The core of *Astro Boy's* strength was atomic energy, which America used to destroy Hiroshima and Nagasaki at that time. The message from Osamu is obvious that the atomic technology embedded in *Astro Boy* should be used for the good of humanity.

When first introduced as a comic at the end of 1969, *Doraemon* immediately received a positive response from the Japanese community. This character, in the form of an earless cat robot from the future, has the ability to remove any item from the future through the pouch in his stomach. *Doraemon's* task is to help solve the problems of *Nobita*, an elementary school boy whose problems mostly come from school or friendship. *Nobita* and his friends are reflections of Japanese children with the same problems, ranging from homework (homework) from school, with parents, with teachers, or with playmates. *Doraemon* is here to help solve children's problems with his future technology. This form of child empowerment and optimism about technology makes *Doraemon* likable and "close" to children. *Doraemon's* popularity has made him a part of many families in Japan virtually (Craig, 2000, p. 13).

Toy Story is an example of an animated film that strongly showcases American culture. The main character of Sheriff Woody is a toy in the form of a cowboy who has become an American icon. Other characters that also appear strongly refer to American cultures, such as *Bo Peep*, which reminds us of Cinderella princess. *Slinky Dog* is a cute dog with short legs and a long body, and a dog is one of America's favorite animals. *Rex* is a dinosaur of the Tyrannosaurus rex type. For some children, dinosaur characters are still idols. *Hamm* is a pig, and for most Americans, pigs are adorable animals. *Ken* plays a character in the form of a *Barbie* doll, one of the icons of children's toys in America. *Green Army* is an American soldier and other characters. *Toy Story* movie looks very concerned about the economic factor in the film. All characters other than *Toy Story's* main characters have roles that make them all become a unique unit. The excellent characterization of each character makes him have a strong identity and is easy to remember by the audience, especially children.

Lightning McQueen's character design as the main character in the *Cars Movie* is a race car adapted for the Nascar racing tournament. Nascar is the most prominent auto racing contest in

America. It has become a racing culture by relying on speed and the endurance of the car that needs attention. In the rounded shape, *Lightning McQueen* was adapted from an American car produced by General Motors, the Chevrolet Corvette (C6), and the Ford GT40 as seen on figure 2. This American car has high-performance resistance as a racing car (Fernie, 2017). With a touch of good design, *McQueen* looks more loveable for children. Other characters also have different designs and are adaptations of existing vehicle forms, especially existing and famous vehicles in America. One example is the character of *Mack*, who is *McQueen's* best friend and is in charge of transporting him from race to race. The Mack's shape was adapted from the 1985 Mack Super-Liner truck as seen on figure 3, the exact vehicle long used on Nascar to transport race cars (Perrone, n.d.). From the car's design, it is clear that American culture is very strongly included in the *Cars* film, starting from the car race (Nascar), car reference design, and the movie scenery.



Figure 2. *Lightning McQueen* design is adapted Chevrolet Corvette C6 (Yellow) and Ford GT40
Source: <https://cars.disney.com/>



Figure 3. *Mack* character inspired from 1985 Mack Super-Liner. America's pride truck
Source: <https://www.carstyling.ru/>

The Future of the Toy Industry as a Business Mainstream

The success of the toy industry also depends on the film's success. Animated films such as *Toy Story* (1995, 1999, 2010, 2019) created the series are an effective marketing strategy to

extend the duration of attachment and deepen the audience's (fans) emotional bond with the film (Kline, 1996). In addition, every time a new series appears, new characters will also appear that open up new opportunities in producing licensed products. Hollywood has also managed to captivate millions of fans worldwide through the *Star Wars* series and sequels. Other animated films that apply the serial strategy are *Cars*, *Kung Fu Panda*, and *Despicable Me*. In addition, *Kung Fu Panda* has also been made into a television series to reach deeper emotional relations with audiences. Japan has also implemented a similar strategy with the many characters that appear, and the characterization is robust in some of its anime. Starting from *Dragon Ball*, *Naruto*, *One Piece*, and *Pokemon* are examples of mature character designs, so they have a high chance of producing licenses. The large selection of characters also aims to accommodate the various preferences of consumers. Some consumers choose not the main character as their favorite character, and some even prefer villain characters.

Disney through *Cars* (2006, 2011, 2017) also does the same thing as its predecessor *Toy Story*. As target consumers choose their favorite characters, various character variations provide children's choices. One belief in the success of *Cars* is that the theme concerns cars and vehicles. By relying on research on children's interest in vehicle games, Disney is very good at presenting stories and characterizations in *Cars*. Capanna-Hodge emphasizes that toy cars are inexpensive, highly accessible toys that promote learning, environmental exploration, freedom, motor skills training, problem-solving, and creativity (Gillespie, 2020). Toy cars also fit in children's hands, are usually easy to carry, put in a pocket, and play anytime, anywhere, and with anyone (McPherson, 2021). This form of psychology makes car toys easy to capture children's hearts.

Movies like *Mazinger Z* and *Mobile Suit Gundam* have an extensive fan base to date and are still a favorite for new fans and collectors. The great success in synchronizing products from anime and its derivatives has a positive effect on the animation industry. The success of *Mobile Suit Gundam*, apart from the adopted genre, is robots. Every little kid and even adult loves robots (Crotty, 2012). *Gundam* is not entirely a robot that can move on its own. The role of the human as a pilot makes this mobile suit seem to have human behavior. The concept of a mobile suit has become acceptable to the audience as a believable science (Nakar, 2003, pp. 58–61). The excellent character designs and the convincing story narratives from each animated series are also a strong attraction for the audience. Some of the reasons that *Gundam* is believable include that a mobile suit is a form of industrial machine produced by countries or commercial companies that can be prototyped and mass-produced. The proportions are almost like humans with hands and feet and weapons such as swords. Shields, laser guns that require ammunition, this mobile suit also requires maintenance, and its movement is limited to fuel or power supply. Robot anime is one of the genres favored by anime fans (*Otaku*). The success of this *Gundam* cannot be separated from the role of the *Bandai* plastic model kit manufacturer who produces products with creativity, full of detail with excellent quality. This model kit is not sold directly in the form of a complete robot but in the form of parts that must be assembled first. This method allows fans to assemble and design their own (self-colored,

remodeled, or remodeled) model kits. This method of assembling a model kit makes it seem as if fans are designing or assembling their robot character. This crafting experience creates a solid emotional bond between anime and fans.



Figure 4. Model kit *Mobile Suit Gundam* by Bandai
Source: <https://www.bandaispirits.co.jp>

The failure of animated films brings more failures in their derivative products. Toy companies also should not be hasty in deciding to develop their products in conjunction with animation production. To anticipate the loss of the failure of an animated film, the approach taken by Japan through manga (comics) as a test of initial success is an example that other countries can apply. Because comics are the cheapest medium to produce and the losses due to not receiving a comic story are not too significant. When the comic story received a positive response from consumers, only intellectual property owners began to consider developing various products.

The success of an animated film does not guarantee the success of selling its product derivatives. The form of characters, story plots, and characterization significantly affect the sales success of product derivations. America, which Disney widely represents, still relies on modified folktale narratives from several countries. While maintaining the story's quality and the characters' quality, American animation has become a favorite even outside America itself. By relying on a worldwide fan base and a variety of stories with dozens of genres, Japan makes it superior in its market segmentation. Unlike American and Japanese animation, Chinese animation has won the box office and has experienced many difficulties developing its product licenses. The immense influence of lifting cultural and historical boundaries as the film's main plot makes the characters that appear to lack a touch of modern elements, thus hampering the product's license to develop. *Monkey King: Hero is Back*, *Nezha*, and *White Snake* all take a realistic approach to human form. Although there are many realistic characters in the anime, the exaggeration in the anime suggests that these characters are not human. A substantial cultural influence affects Chinese animation, so it is difficult to replace or change the visuals embedded in the audience's minds about the culture.

Conclusion

It takes in-depth research like *Mattel's* to launch toy products, such as shape, size, consumer psychology, and external influences such as culture, ideology, and others. This research is also influenced by the current trends when toys and animations were launched. The political situation also significantly impacts toy sales, such as *Hasbro* through *G.I. Joe*.

The declining popularity of television and the increasing use of the internet as a medium of entertainment will undoubtedly impact the development of the animation and toy industry. In-depth research is needed on the role of the internet in developing the animation and toy industry. In-depth research on the visuals of the characters is very significant in determining the success of toy sales and the success of animation. A character designer is not only good at making but also has to understand the psychology of the target audience in-depth to create a character he likes. The choice of toy forms with cultural values from the producing country must pay attention to when expanding consumers to countries with different cultures. China, which has almost all its animated films adapted based on local folktales rich in cultural content, faces the same problem when expanding its expansion to other countries. For other Asian countries, the chances of cultural differences are small or insignificant.

Meanwhile, *Disney* has firmly established its capitalism in China with its cute, loveable, and unique products through its Disneyland. Disneyland in Shanghai is trying to leverage an emotional branding strategy for their consumers in China. By adding symbols such as the zodiac, the great wall, exceptional food, and music, they try to attract the attention of local consumers. This form of glocalization is a way that is still considered adequate to attract consumers in countries with different cultures. The form of product derivation through character design that can cross the culture of other countries is usually in the form of characters that are explicitly not strong in reflecting the visuals of other cultures. Anthropomorphism themes such as *Mickey*, *Donald*, *Kung Fu Panda*, *Zootopia*, and *Finding Nemo* can bridge cultural barriers and have the opportunity to be liked by consumers. The themes of machines, robots, and vehicles are also able to cross-cultural boundaries and reach consumers around the world more broadly.

The rapid development of the animation industry with increasingly sophisticated and affordable technology makes animated films easier and cheaper to produce. Some individual creators are now able to create visually quality animated films. However, cooperation from various industries, including media and their derivative products, is required to become a bigger and more profitable industry. The role of television as a medium for consumption of family entertainment has also begun to shift to be replaced by applications on more personal mobile devices. The power of character toy figures as a sole entertainment has also begun to come under pressure from the video game industry. Several video game industries have also begun to cooperate with the toy industry to expand their business expansion. The animation industry, toys, and video games have their interrelationships that need and benefit each other.

References

- A, J. (2020, June 27). Unlucky Clover: The Story of Gundam's Ill-Fated Toy Sponsorship. *ZIMMERIT - Anime | Manga | Garage Kits | Doujin*. <https://www.zimmerit.moe/unlucky-clover-gundam-toys/>
- Allison, A. (2006). *Millennial monsters: Japanese toys and the global imagination*. University of California Press.
- Austin, P. (2019, October 4). *7 Reasons Why Fitness In The 1980's Was Awesome*. Nutrex Research. <https://www.nutrex.com/blog/7-reasons-why-fitness-in-the-1980s-was-awesome/>
- Bowman, M. R. (2011). Beyond Maids and Meganeeko: Examining the Moe Phenomenon. *Cinephile: The University of British Columbia's Film Journal 'Reassessing Anime,'* 7 (1), 15–19.
- Craig, T. J. (2000). *Japan pop!: Inside the world of Japanese popular culture*. M.E. Sharpe. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=63137>
- Crotty, J. M. (2012, February 3). *Why Kids Prefer Robots To Teachers And Parents*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamesmarshallcrotty/2012/02/03/kids-prefer-robots-to-teachers-and-parents/>
- Davies, M. M. (1997). *Fake, fact, and fantasy: Children's interpretations of television reality*. Erlbaum.
- Fernie, M. (2017, July 3). *What kind of car is Lightning McQueen from Cars?* DriveTribe. <https://drivetribe.com/p/what-kind-of-car-is-lightning-mcqueen-CkSV29tTSj-9BUVK7tCzCg>
- Funk, M. (2014). *Robotics in Germany and Japan*. Peter Lang International Academic Publishers. <http://www.oapen.org/download?typ=document&docid=1004842>
- Ghosh, D. (2018, September 23). *'I have the power!'* A documentary takes us back to the world of He-Man and Sketelor [Text]. Scroll.In; <https://scroll.in>. <https://scroll.in/reel/891821/i-have-the-power-a-documentary-takes-us-back-to-the-world-of-he-man-and-sketelor>
- Gillespie, C. (2020, September 4). *Why kids are obsessed with cars, trucks, and other vehicles* [The Week]. <https://theweek.com/articles/931565/why-kids-are-obsessed-cars-trucks-other-vehicles>
- Horvath, Á., & Gyenge, B. (2018). *Movie Merchandising and its Consumer Perception* (pp. 637–644). ToKnowPress. <https://EconPapers.repec.org/RePEc:tkp:mklp18:637-644>
- Kirsty. (2008, January 14). *Karakuri.info*. <http://www.karakuri.info/>
- Kline, S. (1996). *Out of the garden: Toys, TV, and children's culture in the age of marketing*. Verso.
- Lenburg, J. (2009). *The encyclopedia of animated cartoons* (3rd ed). Facts on File/Checkmark Books.
- Lucken, M., & Simkin, F. (2016). *Imitation and creativity in Japanese arts*

- from *Kishida Ryūsei to Miyazaki Hayao*. Columbia University Press.
- McMahon, J. (2018, December 24). *He-Man Taught Me Nothing About Being a Man*. Fandom. <https://www.fandom.com/articles/he-man-at-35>
- McPherson, K. (2021, February 21). *Your Toddler's Love Of Cars, Explained By Experts*. Romper. <https://www.romper.com/parenting/why-toddlers-love-cars-experts>
- Merritt, R., & Kaufman, J. B. (2011). *Walt Disney's Laugh-O-grams, 1921-1923*. <https://silentfilm.org/walt-disneys-laugh-o-grams-1921-1923/>
- Moore. (2021, July 7). *Netflix Picks Up "Pokemon Master Journeys"; Starts in September 2021*. What's on Netflix. <https://www.whats-on-netflix.com/news/netflix-picks-up-pokemon-master-journeys-starts-in-september-2021/>
- Nakar, E. (2003). Memories of Pilots and Planes: World War II in Japanese Manga, 1957-1967. *Social Science Japan Journal*, 6(1), 57-76. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ssjj/6.1.57>
- Perlmutter, D. (2014). *America toons in: A history of television animation*. McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.
- Perrone, A. (n.d.). *Meet The Cars Of Pixar's Cars 3 And Their Real-Life Counterparts! | Endurance*. Endurance Warranty. Retrieved June 25, 2021, from <https://www.endurancewarranty.com/learning-center/autotainment/pixars-cars-real-life-counterparts/>
- Petty, A. (2017, May 10). *How Men's Perfect Body Types Have Changed Throughout History*. TheList.Com. <https://www.thelist.com/56105/mens-perfect-body-types-changed-throughout-history/>
- Raugust, K. (2004). *The animation business handbook* (1st ed). St. Martin's Press.
- Roser, C. (2017, October 10). *Introduction to Karakuri Kaizen*. <https://www.allaboutlean.com/karakuri-introduction/>
- Schodt, F. L. (2007). *The Astro Boy essays: Osamu Tezuka, Mighty Atom, and the manga/anime revolution*. Stone Bridge Press.
- Stamp, J. (2013, March 29). *Now You Know the History of G.I. Joe. And Knowing Is Half The Battle*. Smithsonian Magazine. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/now-you-know-the-history-of-gi-joe-and-knowing-is-half-the-battle-11506463/>
- Steinberg, M. (2012). *Anime's media mix: Franchising toys and characters in Japan*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Swensen, K. (2021, August 12). *Chapek Says Storytelling Will Remain Disney's Top Priority*. Inside the Magic. <https://insidethemagic.net/2021/08/bob-chapek-talks-disney-priorities-ks1/>
- Treanor, J. (2019, June 20). *Toy Story: How Buzz Lightyear keeps making millions*. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-48691854>