



## Research Article

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# Exposure to Anime in Peru and Its Relationship with Demand for Goods and Services Related to Japanese Popular Culture

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## Abstract

*Japanese animation, usually referred as anime, has gained popularity around the world. Anime fans, when exposed to this audio-visual product, generate unique feelings, which could develop into an attraction for other cultural products of Japanese origin. The objective of the study is to determinate significates relationships between exposure to anime and the raising demand for goods and services related to Japanese popular (in the means of desire to consume manga, to eat Japanese cuisine, to wear Japanese fashion, to attend a Japanese rock or pop concert, to study the Japanese language, and to travel to Japan). The research was conducted in Arenales Plaza, a famous otaku congregation place located in Lima, Peru. Data was collected through a questionnaire developed by the authors, applied to a sample of 68 observations. The descriptive results identified high levels in each of the observed variables. As for the inferential results, Spearman's rho statistical test determined that there was a relationship between exposure to anime and the desire to consume manga ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $r = 0.75$ ), desire to consume Japanese cuisine ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $r = 0.65$ ), desire to consume Japanese fashion ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $r = 0.65$ ), desire to consume Japanese pop and rock music ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $r = 0.25$ ), desire to study Japanese ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $r = 0.25$ ), and desire to travel to Japan ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $r = 0.53$ ).*

**Keywords:** anime; Japanese popular culture; manga; Japanese cuisine; Japanese fashion; study Japanese; travel to Japan; otaku; demand

## 1. Introduction

Before learning what started the interest of a young student in Peru in watching computer animations, reading comics, eating traditional food, buying toys, or listening to music from Japan, a country located 9,632 miles away, a new word needs to be discussed: otaku.

The contemporary usage of the word otaku originates in an essay titled "A Study of Otaku" that appeared in 1983. In this essay, anime fans in Japan back then used this word in conversations among themselves (Morikawa, 2012). Otakus are mainly interested in anime, manga, games, the Internet,

computers, books, figurines, celebrities, special effects, and costume playing (M. Ito et al., 2012). Even though the term otaku is mostly associated to men interested in such topics (Gn, 2014; Ortega-Brena, 2009; Tobin, 2001), there are recent studies that show women are interested as much as men in those subjects (Chiang, 2016; Chocontá Piraquive, 2014; Tanaka & Ishida, 2015). The otaku subculture has expanded around the world and it has been a research subject in the last 30 years (Kelts, 2007; Meredith, 2007).

Otakus, as any other subculture, gather together in special places considered safe and comfortable by them, being able to meet people with similar tastes (Austin, 2009; Cotrau, 2008; Kubicek et al., 2013; Vargas-barraza et al., 2012). In Lima, Arenales Plaza (previously named Centro Comercial Arenales), has become the favorite place for otakus in Lima to congregate. Some otakus, thanks to their entrepreneurial vision, have managed to rent spaces in this shopping center in order to meet the demands of goods and services of the rest of otakus. As far of May 2022, Arenales Plaza has 99 stores where goods and services related to Japanese culture are offered: these products range from anime, manga, figurines, video games, tickets for anime conventions, and clothing to food.

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that self-identified subjects such as otaku in Lima began to pay attention to Japanese popular culture thanks to anime, and due to the exposure of contents within it, got interested in consuming products typical of Japanese popular culture, such as manga, cuisine, clothing, music, and services such as Japanese language learning, and tourism.

## 2. Conceptual framework, Review of the Literature, Research Hypotheses and Conceptual Model

### 2.1 Anime

Anime refers to Japanese animation. Surprisingly, anime has gained popularity around the world, its titles have been translated in many different languages including Portuguese, Korean, Mandarin, Hokkien, Cantonese, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Thai among many others to be distributed in new markets (Tongdhamachart, 2015). It is hard to think of any cinematic or literary genre that is not represented in anime (Cho et al., 2018; Price, 2001). This is because anime can explore all genres and many of the themes that are represented are universal (Daliot-Bul, 2013; Mckevitt, 2010; Pope Robbins, 2014).

As in many countries around the world, anime also came to Peru (Takenaka, 2017). According to (Acosta, 2011), it can be reported that the beginning of the growth of this subculture in Peru occurred in 1990, when the anime fan group "Sugoi" was created. This group called monthly meetings where they projected animes in Japanese subtitled in Spanish by themselves. The success of this group was so resounding, that with the passing of the months they saw the need to rent the auditorium of a school to bring anime to its members. Before the year 2000, this group managed to found a magazine, organize conventions and even have a television program where anime was broadcast.

People consider the "golden era" of anime in Peru to be between 1994 and 1998, when anime began to spread through different television channels. The most popular animes aired during this five-year period were Dragon Ball, Sailor Moon, Saint Seiya, Slayers and Samurai X. After this event, anime fans (otakus) grew exponentially (Acosta, 2011).

### 2.2 Manga

Manga is a type of Japanese storytelling that uses stylized black-and-white comic book-like illustrations (Kacsuk, 2018). They are different from American or European comic books in several key ways: first, manga tend to be novel in length, whereas comic books are much shorter in length, and secondly, although comic books focus on the superhero genre, many manga involve more realistic settings and may focus on relationships and friendships (Coyne et al., 2015). The typical manga has very little relationship to comics as understood in Europe or the United States.

A manga that becomes successful in Japan is likely to become anime, the same way a popular anime in Japan is likely to be exported to be seen in TV worldwide. An example of this phenomenon is the anime "Sailormoon", the series began in 1992 as manga, and due to its popularity was reproduced as anime (Grigsby, 1998).

We believe anime fans read manga because they want to see the original work of the author of the series. This phenomenon is very common for books that are then released to a television or film format.

*H1: There is a significant relationship between exposure to anime and the desire to consume manga.*

### 2.3 Japanese cuisine

In Peru, in recent years, the number of Japanese cuisine restaurants is still increasing (Takenaka, 2017). There are mainly two types of Japanese restaurants in Peru: regular ones, and maid cafes.

Regular Japanese restaurants offer traditional and contemporary food from that country, including bento, onigiri, maki, and ramen among others (Coates, 2019; Tikhotskaya, 2021). One common visual in anime is characters settling in to enjoy their box lunches. Characters often make bento to show affection and romantic interest, onigiri (rice balls) is known to be a very common snack food, they are also seen throughout the series and are an easy first step for teens unused to cooking (Brenner, 2013).

Maid Cafes emerged in the 2000s in Tokyo (K. Ito & Crutcher, 2014). They are nominally restaurants, but customers visit for the attention they receive while there; waitresses dressed in costume serve customers food augmented by demonstrable affection, by not being explicitly sexual, these cafés sell care and attention that some people clearly want to buy (Alexy, 2014), the common phrase of greeting towards customers is "welcome home, master", which establishes a relationship of attention and care on the part of the maid (the waitress) towards the master (the client). In anime, it is common to see characters working part time in a maid café, some examples are the animes Blend-S, Steins;Gate and Kaichou wa Maid-sama!, among many others.

In view of these considerations, we propose the hypothesis that:

*H2: There is a significant relationship between exposure to anime and the desire to consume Japanese cuisine.*

### 2.4 Japanese fashion

Japan is well known worldwide for introducing the concept "kawaii", which translated means "cute" (Bano & Sharif, 2017; Cheok & Fernando, 2012; Hinton, 2013; Koma, 2013). The word kawaii can be assigned either to people or products (Ivy, 2006).

Japanese anime is known for creating the culture of cute girls (called bishoujo) and handsome boys (called bishonen), these characters interact with other "regular" ones, and are often considered "idols" (Chen, 2015).

The business that encompasses the consumerism of Japanese kawaii fashion integrates clothing, makeup, personal care products, plush toys, school supplies and stationery, among others (Ando et al., 2021; Rose, 2020; Urakami et al., 2021).

Because the Japanese kawaii fashion is growing, many people related to this trend of fashion find in the "Youtube Influencers" a role model. Examples of these role models are Beckii, Kazumi, and Kacey with over a million fans early in 2022, who in an interview conducted explained concepts of kawaii culture around the world (Yukako, 2017).

Because anime contains a lot of Japanese kawaii fashion content, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H3: There is a significant relationship between exposure to anime and the desire to consume Japanese fashion.*

## 2.5 Japanese pop and rock music

Japanese pop (J-pop) and Japanese rock (J-rock) are other examples of cultural products exported by Japan.

J-pop and J-rock songs are always introduced in anime as opening and ending songs, lasting around one minute and a half each, which is around 13% of a 22-minute long anime. Because of how catchy the songs are, it is known that many anime fans usually seek more information from the musical groups that perform these songs, while becoming fans of them as well (Fukunaga, 2006).

In 2017, two important j-rock groups arrived in Peru to offer concerts: One Ok Rock (known thanks to the anime *Naruto Shippuden*) and Asian Kung-Fu Generation (known for playing openings and ending songs of the anime *Naruto*, *Full Metal Alchemist* and *Bleach*). As expected, tickets for the concerts sold out even months before the date of the show (Mundo-kpop.info, 2017; Trome, 2017).

There is a mutual and active interaction in business between the animation and music industries. The seiyuu (anime voice-actors) who at the same time act as singers are the result of the crossing between both industries, a phenomenon that is very common in Japan, unlike the rest of the world. In many occasions the seiyuu come from the music market, and it is from this that they jump to jobs as seiyuu, it is worth mentioning that it is also common to find an inverse case. Many seiyuu dabble in the music market initially with punctual radio broadcasts and discs, in which the seiyuus continue to perform their respective characters in scenes that never happened in the official anime, which makes them very valuable objects for their followers and necessary for completing their collections. A seiyuu who ventures into the musical world and reaches a high degree of fame is considered an idol.

*H4: There is a significant relationship between exposure to anime and the desire to consume Japanese pop and rock music.*

## 2.6 Japanese language studying

Anime episodes premiere weekly in Japan, with Japanese audio, this would be an impediment for fans who do not speak Japanese if there were no tools and technologies available today, where they can get subtitles in different languages that can be added to the anime recently released, it should be noted that these subtitles are usually provided by amateur translators.

Some studies suggest that learning a second language can be motivated by television, films and music broadcasted in a different language than the receptor (Kissau et al., 2010; Mori & Gobel, 2006), another particular study (Nakamura, 2019) already stated that there is a relationship between anime and the desire to study Japanese as a second language in that country.

Seem like enjoying the media, in this case anime, is a common reason for studying a second language, in this case Japanese. As fact, through watching anime, some of the foreign people have acquired listening and speaking ability for Japanese (Ibnatul Karimah et al., 2019; Junjie et al., 2018). Each year, more and more people learn Japanese as a foreign language, according to the Japanese Foundation, there were about 3.6 millions of people who studied Japanese abroad at Japanese educational organizations in 2015, distributed in 137 countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2021).

With all these facts and studies conducted around the world, we propose the following hypothesis to be valid in Lima as well.

*H5: There is a significant relationship between exposure to anime and the desire to study Japanese.*

## 2.7 Traveling to Japan

According to (Seaton & Yamamura, 2015), there is a growing interest worldwide in the ways that films, novels, comics, games and other forms of popular culture act as tourism drivers, there are cases when fans, for example, take studio tours in Hollywood, visit locations of their favorite series or even

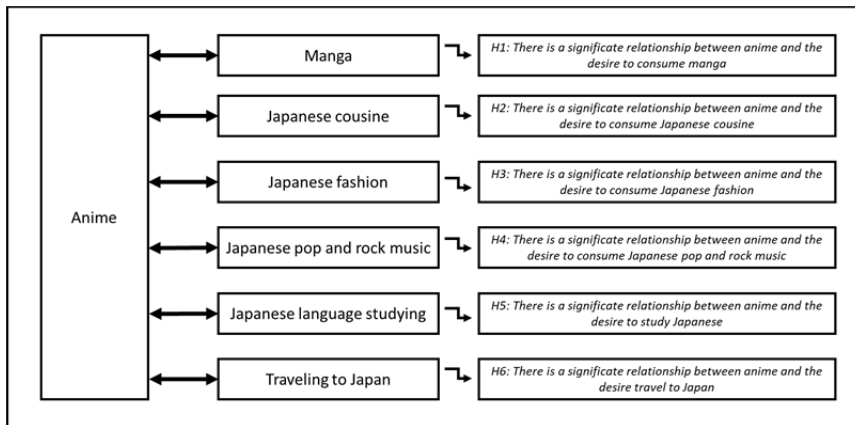
visit museums in the hometowns of famous authors.

As for Japan, anime tourism has been an important phenomenon within Japanese culture since the 2000's (Denison, 2010). Recent studies (Andrews, 2014; Okamoto, 2015; Seaton & Yamamura, 2015; Sugawa-Shimada, 2015), just to mention a few as examples, show certain relationship between the anime tourism and a positive effect on the economy of the locality to which they visited.

After reviewing the given facts, this study intends to find out if anime generates desire to travel to Japan in the otaku population in Lima.

*H6: There is a significant relationship between exposure to anime and the desire travel to Japan.*

**Figure 1:** A conceptual model was developed



### 3. Methodology

The research had a quantitative approach, with correlational and descriptive levels, since it was intended to measure each of the study variables, in addition to identifying correlations. The research design was non-experimental and cross-sectional since no manipulation was performed in the context studied; we simply collected data in its natural state at a single point in time.

The population consisted of all young people who regularly go to Arenales Plaza and who also declared themselves to be otaku who watches anime. Since the exact number is unknown, the population is considered to be infinite. For the sample calculation, a margin of error of 10% and a confidence level of 90% were considered, obtaining 68 observations as a sample.

A simple questionnaire consisting of 8 items was used. Each respondent was asked about his or her level of exposure to anime, as well as whether he or she had a desire to consume manga, eat Japanese cuisine, wear Japanese fashion, attend a Japanese rock or pop concert, study the Japanese language, and travel to Japan. For exposure to anime, the response alternatives were "high exposure" (4 points), "moderate exposure" (3 points), "low exposure" (2 points), or "no exposure" (1 point); for each item measuring desire for goods and services related to Japanese popular culture, the response scale was "high desire" (4 points), "moderate desire" (3 points), "low desire" (2 points), or "no desire" (1 point).

The data obtained were transferred to the SPSS statistical program, version 26, for processing. Descriptive statistics include mean, standard error of the mean, standard deviation and variance. Also, levels were identified for each variable according to its mean (low = 1.00 to 2.00; medium = 2.01 to 3.00; high = 3.01 to 4.00). R studio was used to obtain correlations (Spearman's rho), presented in a heat plot. Spearman's correlation coefficients were interpreted according to the proposal made by (Martinez Rebollar & Campos Francisco, 2015).

#### 4. Results

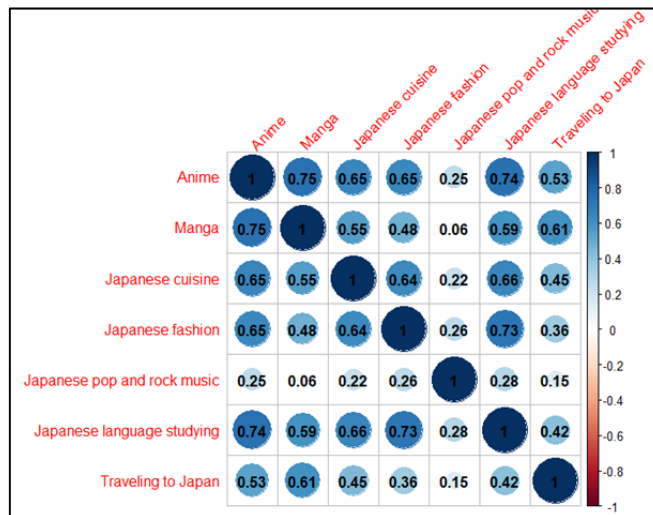
Exposure to anime, desire to consume manga, desire to consume Japanese cuisine, desire to consume Japanese fashion, desire to consume Japanese pop and rock music, desire to study Japanese, and desire to travel to Japan were measured (see Table 1).

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics

	Mean	Standard error of the mean	Standard deviation	Variance
Exposure to anime	3.54	.087	.721	.520
Desire to consume manga	3.13	.142	1.171	1.370
Desire to consume Japanese cuisine	3.34	.104	.857	.735
Desire to consume Japanese fashion	3.50	.088	.723	.522
Desire to consume Japanese pop and rock music	3.35	.075	.617	.381
Desire to study Japanese	3.56	.087	.720	.519
Desire to travel to Japan	3.72	.072	.595	.354

It is important to emphasize that the mean statistic calculated for each variable was well above 3.00 (high level). The response alternative with the lowest mean was desire to consume manga ( $\bar{X} = 3.13$ ), while the one with the highest mean was desire to travel to Japan ( $\bar{X} = 3.72$ ).

The heat plot (see Figure 1) details the correlations of the variables observed in the study. The first file identifies the correlations of the variable "exposure to anime" with each of the other variables, making it possible to contrast the hypotheses put forward ( $p < 0.001$ ).



**Figure 1:** Correlations in heat plot

Positive correlations were identified between exposure to anime and the demand for goods and services related to Japanese popular culture, such as desire to consume manga ( $r = 0.75$ ), desire to consume Japanese cuisine ( $r = 0.65$ ), desire to consume Japanese fashion ( $r = 0.65$ ), desire to consume Japanese pop and rock music ( $r = 0.25$ ), desire to study Japanese ( $r = 0.25$ ), and desire to travel to Japan ( $r = 0.53$ ).

## 5. Discussion

All the hypotheses proposed by the research group were validated; however, it is important to clarify that although it is true that these hypotheses were significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), in one case the intensity of the correlation was not strong.

When it comes to the analysis of the relationship between exposure to anime and the desire to consume Japanese pop and rock music, a low correlation was identified ( $r = 0.25$ ), it is likely that the offer of Japanese pop and rock music is not compatible with the expectations of Peruvian otaku. J-pop and J-rock songs are always introduced in anime as opening and ending songs, but it appears that in Peru not many anime fans would be fans of the singers as well.

Lima is a city characterized by multiculturalism, evidenced by the number of customs acquired from residents coming from abroad. There is no doubt that the Japanese popular culture is well received by the young people of the city.

## 6. Conclusions

There is a significant relationship between exposure to anime and the desire to consume manga. The correlation is strong ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $r = 0.75$ ).

There is a significant relationship between exposure to anime and the desire to consume Japanese cuisine. The correlation is strong ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $r = 0.65$ ).

There is a significant relationship between exposure to anime and the desire to consume Japanese fashion. The correlation is strong ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $r = 0.65$ ).

There is a significant relationship between exposure to anime and the desire to consume Japanese pop and rock music. The correlation is weak ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $r = 0.25$ ).

There is a significant relationship between exposure to anime and the desire to study Japanese. The correlation is strong ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $r = 0.74$ ).

There is a significant relationship between exposure to anime and the desire to travel to Japan. The correlation is medium ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $r = 0.53$ ).

## 7. Acknowledgement

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