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The Pathway to Success in Japan's Animation Industry and Its Implications for China's Animation Sector Development

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Abstract: The success of the Japanese animation industry stems from its profound cultural heritage, the integration of technology and art, and a well-established industrial ecosystem. Although the Chinese animation industry has witnessed rapid development, it faces issues such as content homogenization, fragmentation of the industrial chain, the disconnection between technology and art, and the mismatch between talent cultivation and industry demands. This paper conducts an analysis and proposes that the Chinese animation industry should create characteristic cultural IPs, build an industrial ecosystem, reform the talent cultivation mechanism, implement a "technology - content integration" strategy, and expand international cooperation. These suggestions provide a reference for the Chinese animation industry to break through bottlenecks, achieve high-quality development, and establish a unique position globally.

Keywords: Japanese animation; Chinese animation; culture; technology; talent; international cooperation.

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview of the Japanese Animation Industry

The Japanese anime industry constitutes a highly mature and globally influential cultural-industrial system. Recent data indicates that its total market scale reached a historic high of ¥3.84 trillion (approximately $24.5 billion USD) in 2024, with overseas revenue exceeding domestic income for the second consecutive year, thereby cementing its role as the primary growth driver.

A foundational element of the industry is the "Production Committee" model. This framework involves multiple stakeholders—such as publishers, broadcasters, and merchandise companies—jointly funding projects to distribute risk and share copyrights. Its core function is the systematic monetization of successful Intellectual Property (IP) through extensive derivative development across gaming, merchandise, and music, forming a comprehensive commercial ecosystem.

The industry's current global expansion is significantly propelled by international streaming platforms, notably Netflix. These services have fundamentally transformed animation distribution and consumption, driving globalization through direct investment in original production and the aggregation of worldwide licensing rights.

1.2. Overview of China's Animation Industry

Driven by both policy guidance and market demand, China's animation industry has experienced rapid development in recent years, with significant improvements in both the quantity and quality of its output. The range of themes has expanded considerably, catering to diverse audience demographics and fulfilling varied market needs. The industry has progressively moved beyond earlier imitative practices, shifting toward original content as its dominant creative force. Numerous outstanding works have emerged that successfully integrate local cultural elements with contemporary aesthetics, highlighting the sector's growing potential.

Animation production techniques have continued to advance, with widespread application of 2D, 3D, and stop-motion animation technologies. Companies have increased investment in research and development, enhancing production quality while simultaneously shortening production cycles. Thematic diversity has also become a key trend, as elements from mythology, history, modern life, and science fiction converge to stimulate innovation. Online comics platforms have provided creators with extensive creative space, resulting in a rich volume of works across varied genres. These platforms not only meet reader demand but also inject new resources into the broader industry ecosystem.

The market for animation-related merchandise has expanded rapidly. IP licensing has extended into diverse sectors such as toys, apparel, stationery, and home goods. Through innovative design and creativity, related products have gained considerable popularity among consumers. This expansion not only generates substantial revenue for the industry but also reinforces the value and influence of the original IPs, creating a positive feedback loop that enhances their long-term market presence [1].

1.3. The Content and Purpose of This Article

This article aims to draw lessons from the successful trajectory of the Japanese animation industry by analyzing its content creation, industrial chain operations, and globalization strategies. Building on this analysis and considering the current development status and practical challenges facing China's animation industry, it seeks to distill specific insights regarding content innovation, business models, and international expansion. The goal is to provide references for promoting the quality enhancement and upgrading of China's animation industry.

2. The Core Reasons for The Success of The Japanese Animation Industry

2.1. The Construction of Cultural Connotations in the Creative Process of This Article

The global success of the Japanese animation industry stems not merely from a mature industrial production system, but more fundamentally from a highly efficient and unique mechanism for generating and transforming cultural meaning. This mechanism is deeply rooted in local cultural traditions yet demonstrates exceptional cross-cultural narrative competence, achieving global dissemination through systematic industrial practices.

2.1.1. Aesthetic Roots and Visual Grammar

Japanese animation does not merely imitate Western realism. Instead, it has successfully executed a modern transformation of its own traditional artistic aesthetics. Its visual language inherits core characteristics from art forms like Yamato-e and Ukiyo-e—such as an emphasis on expressive lines, flattened composition, and decorative beauty. This indigenous aesthetic has been creatively translated into the highly distinctive "manga-esque" style prevalent in modern anime. Even with the widespread adoption of 3D technology, many works strive to preserve and intensify this unique two-dimensional aesthetic within moving images, securing its irreplaceable position within global visual culture.

2.1.2. Narrative Core and Spiritual Construction

Japanese animation skillfully transforms local experiences into global themes. It serves as both a mirror and emotional outlet for Japan's societal psyche, reflecting its historical moods, such as economic shifts and social pressure, offering solace to domestic viewers. The anime Demon Slayer emerged during Japan's era of "low-desire society," reflecting the younger generation's yearning for small yet certain happiness. [5] The protagonist, Tanjiro's characterization as the eldest son aligns with young people's desire for a return to family responsibilities and their weariness with a hyper-competitive society. The narrative transforms "slaying demons" into an act of redemption, portraying demons as lost souls, while the "Water Breathing" technique symbolizes inclusivity and purification. Familial bonds serve as a core value, with Nezuko's role as a protective sister concretizing sibling devotion, resonating with global audiences.

Similarly, the animated film Spirited Away was released toward the end of Japan's "Lost Decade." The transformation of Chihiro's parents into pigs metaphorically critiques adult greed during the bubble economy. [5] Chihiro's forced labor in the spirit world reflects concerns over the erosion of work ethics among youth and a call to "rediscover one's original aspiration". The concept of "names" functions as a central motif: Yubaba's act of stealing names symbolizes loss of identity, while Chihiro's effort to remember her own name represents the reconstruction of selfhood. The film's global appeal lies in its exploration of identity crisis—Chihiro's journey allegorizes the quest for self-actualization. By emphasizing dignity through labor, the narrative resonates with societies undergoing transformation. This allows it to transcend cultural boundaries, resonating with global youth through shared emotions and values, thus achieving universal appeal.

2.1.3. Industrial System: Amplification and Solidification

Japan's crafted cultural meaning is solidified and amplified through a precise industrial system, featuring the world's most mature ecosystem for IP transmedia storytelling. This spans trial-and-error serialization in manga, fan cultivation via animation, and development into films and merchandise. The process is not just commercial monetization but also continuous semiotic proliferation, deepening, and ritualization of cultural symbols, elevating audience engagement from viewing to participation and belonging. Since the early 21st century, the Japanese government has incorporated animation into the "Cool Japan" strategy for support, while major capital groups like Sony have built vertically integrated ecosystems covering creation, production, music, gaming, and merchandising, providing unprecedented strategic channels and infrastructure for global cultural export.

2.2. Equal Emphasis on Technology and Art

A key factor behind the sustained global success of the Japanese animation industry is its development of a distinct and effective philosophy and industrial path characterized by "technology serving art." This represents a strategic choice that is not mere technological catch-up or artistic conservatism, but a critical assimilation and creative integration of new technologies based on a steadfast commitment to its own aesthetic ontology.

2.2.1. Technical Path: The Hybrid Technology Model

The industry exhibits a pronounced "Hybrid Technology" approach, systematically combining analog (hand-drawn) and digital (3D Computer Graphics) techniques. Unlike the mainstream Western path toward full digital immersion, Japan has adopted a distinctive middle ground: it utilizes 3DCG for backgrounds and complex visual effects while tenaciously preserving the primacy of 2D hand-drawn animation for character performance and core narrative. This choice stems not from simple nostalgia but from a profound aesthetic conviction. The line quality of hand-drawing, the principles of Limited Animation, and the resulting "animetic" effect are foundational to the emotional expression and stylistic identity of Japanese anime. Technological adoption aims primarily to enhance, not replace, this unique expressiveness rooted in hand-drawn aesthetics. For instance, 3DCG is deployed to realize intricate mechanical motion or grand spectacles difficult to achieve by hand, thereby liberating artistic imagination and achieving a "coupling of aesthetics and technology."

2.2.2. Core Driver: An Artistic Philosophy Prioritizing Expression over Simulation

This technical path is driven by a creative philosophy that places artistic expression above technical simulation. The core pursuit transcends mere "movement" to focus on evoking "emotion" and presenting "mental imagery." Its goal is not to simulate physical reality with photorealism but to externalize internal character emotions and narrative tension through abstraction, exaggeration, and stylization. Consequently, the value of any technology, from the multiplane camera to 3DCG, is judged by its capacity to better serve this "emotionally induced motion." This liberates Japanese animation to fluidly traverse realism and symbolism, detail and impressionism, constructing worlds that are visually rich and psychologically authentic. As scholars note, within this view, "art always transcends technique," and various technical media exist in a highly fluid interrelationship within the

creative process.

2.2.3. Competitive Edge: Synthesizing Craft and Digital Industry

This balanced strategy has created the industry's unique, hard-to-replicate competitive edge by merging "craftsmanship" with "digital industrialization" into a sustainable production system. It preserves and modernizes hand-drawn animation's "craft" heritage, maintaining its aesthetic lineage and cultural identity, while digital adoption boosts efficiency, visual complexity, and industrial scale. This fosters "adaptive engineers" who are open to blending old and new technologies that drive innovation. Through their work, Japanese animation remains a distinct, vibrant art form amid global digital trends, achieving lasting unity between commercial success and artistic value.[4]

2.3. Talent Cultivation Mechanism

The Japanese animation industry's success results from a practice-oriented talent ecosystem that integrates education, training, and policies to bridge academia-industry gaps and ensure intergenerational transfer of creativity and skills.

2.3.1. A Multi-Tiered Formal Education System

Talent development in Japanese animation has established a complete chain ranging from vocational schools to universities. As early as the 1980s, numerous technical colleges and vocational schools began offering highly specialized animation-related programs. These are characterized by a close alignment with industry needs and mandatory corporate internships for students. For instance, the Yoyogi Animeshon Gakuin (founded in 1978) offers comprehensive courses covering the entire technical pipeline, including key animation and background art, and reinforces practical output through collaborative projects with companies like SEGA. In higher education, since Kyoto Seika University pioneered the establishment of a manga department in 2000, numerous universities have followed suit by creating animation and manga majors, integrating the cultivation of high-end creative talent into academia.

2.3.2. The "Industry-Academia Collaboration" Practical Training Model

Faced with the industry's rapid technological iteration and high demand for practical skills, Japanese industry and academia actively explore collaborative education models. The core idea is to establish an educational framework akin to a "salad bowl," allowing students to integrate diverse skills and cultures, and to facilitate the transmission of practical experience through a mentor system. Specialized schools and universities commonly employ industry experts as instructors and incorporate corporate internships and hands-on projects, enabling students to familiarize themselves with industry standards and workflows while still in school. In recent years, to address skill gaps in areas like computer graphics, academia and industry have been co-developing new educational models to systematically enhance students' technical expertise and communication/collaboration skills, laying a foundation for workplace success.

2.3.3. Government and Industry Association Guidance and Support

Confronting long-standing structural issues within the industry—such as low compensation for entry-level animators and high turnover—the Japanese government and industry associations also intervene in talent development through policy. For example, the "Anime Mirai" (Animation Future) project, led by the Japanese Animation Creators Association (JAniCA) and implemented by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, provides funding to production companies for creating original animation. A core objective is precisely to offer a platform for practice and growth for young animators. This initiative has not only reduced attrition among new talents but has also spawned successful works like Little Witch Academia, yielding dual benefits of cultivating talent and generating intellectual property.

3. The Current Situation and Challenges of China's Animation Industry

3.1. Insufficiency of Original Content: Structural Dependency, Narrative Homogenization, and Systemic Innovation Inertia

The Chinese animation industry has achieved significant market growth but remains constrained by weak original content creation, a core bottleneck to sustainable, high-quality development. This issue stems from an over-reliance on pre-existing cultural IP, with successful works like Ne Zha (2019) and White Snake (2019) heavily derived from public-domain mythology and folklore. While this adaptation strategy reduced entry barriers and marketing costs during the industry's revival by leveraging audience familiarity, it has fostered a long-term structural dependency. This has created an "innovation comfort zone," where China's cultural heritage is treated as a static resource rather than a dynamic source of original inspiration.[7]

The market suffers from thematic and narrative homogenization, with content oversaturated in fantasy and myth-based adventures, leading to convergent characters, visuals, and stories. While production quality has improved, many works are conceptually derivative, either rehashing classic tales or superficially combining genre tropes without modern relevance. This lack of engagement with contemporary themes reduces artistic distinctiveness and cultural impact, limiting long-term viability.

At a deeper level, this originality deficit reflects weak "cultural translation" and modern creative subjectivity. Successful adaptation requires innovatively transforming source material to connect with modern sensibilities, as seen in Ne Zha's reinterpretation of myth into a narrative on identity and prejudice. In contrast, most adaptations only appropriate aesthetics superficially, lacking narrative depth and philosophical inquiry. This shortfall stifles diversity and intellectual depth, hindering the development of original IP for global cross-cultural penetration and keeping the industry in the lower segments of the global animation value chain.

3.2. A Fragmented Industrial Chain: Disconnected Sectors, Underdeveloped Derivatives, and the Absence of a Transmedia Ecosystem

When compared to the mature, integrated industrial models of Japan and North America, China's animation sector is highly fragmented, lacking a stable and efficient value chain with weak feedback and collaboration. Upstream, development suffers from insufficient market research and a long-term IP strategy, with projects often driven by trends

rather than strategic value creation.

Midstream production is decentralized, relying on numerous small studios and a director-centric "auteur model," which hinders quality control, scheduling, and efficiency. The key weakness is downstream value exploitation, where China lags in global licensing, derivative products, and transmedia expansion, which drive sustained profitability in mature markets [2].

3.2.1. Derivative Development

The current approach in China often remains rudimentary, focusing on basic merchandise (e.g. figurines, apparel) featuring direct character imprints. There is a notable lack of systematic, high-design integration with broader lifestyle industries such as fashion, consumer electronics, themed entertainment, and tourism, which is essential for building a resilient, multi-stream revenue model and embedding IP into daily life.

3.2.2. Transmedia Storyworld Building

The concept of Transmedia Storytelling, as defined by scholar Henry Jenkins—where a unified narrative universe is systematically expanded across multiple, distinct media platforms (film, television, video games, comic books, novels, immersive experiences)—is largely underutilized. While pioneering exceptions like the Ne Zha franchise have begun exploratory efforts across film, online comics, and planned games, such practice is not yet systemic. For most IPs, development follows a linear, siloed trajectory: a film may spawn a comic or mobile game, but these extensions are often developed in isolation, with minimal narrative interconnection or strategic synergy. This failure to create a cohesive, participatory "storyworld" prevents the formation of a self-reinforcing commercial and narrative ecosystem, resulting in ephemeral IP lifespans, an inability to cultivate deep, persistent audience communities, and the forfeiture of exponential value growth opportunities.

3.3. The Art-Technology Dichotomy: The Primacy of Spectacle, Stylistic Imbalance, and Eroded Authorship

The accessibility of powerful real-time rendering engines, virtual production techniques, and Artificial Intelligence Generated Content (AIGC) has democratized the ability to produce high-fidelity visual spectacles. Yet, a significant portion of creative resources is often channeled into perfecting photorealistic simulation, constructing immense digital landscapes, and engineering sequences of intense sensory overload. This pursuit can lead to what philosopher Jean Baudrillard termed the "hyperreal," where the meticulously crafted simulation risks displacing the symbolic, metaphorical, and consciously stylized essence that has long been animation's unique artistic domain. When technological spectacle becomes an end in itself, it can act as a narrative and emotional prosthesis, inadvertently highlighting weaknesses in core storytelling, character development, and thematic depth rather than alleviating them.

From an aesthetic development perspective, the current integration paradigm has not yet successfully catalyzed the emergence of a confident, contemporary visual language that is authentically rooted in Chinese cultural sensibilities. The application of technologies like AIGC to traditional aesthetic forms, such as ink-wash animation (shuimo donghua), presents a fundamental paradox: while enhancing efficiency, the algorithmic process may inadvertently strip away the essential "artist's hand," the subtle imperfections, rhythmic brushstrokes, and philosophical depth inherent to the form. Preserving this requires not just data training but a curated "cultural corpus" and expert human oversight. Furthermore, a severe market-driven stylistic imbalance is evident : 3D animation, particularly in a hyper-realistic style, dominates investment and output, while traditionally rich forms like 2D hand-drawn and stop-motion animation face critical talent shortages and diminishing commercial space , thereby constraining the overall stylistic diversity and artistic health of the industry.

An even more insidious challenge arises from the internalized "gamification" of aesthetic sensibilities among a generation of creators and audiences reared on AAA video games. This sensibility can unconsciously reshape narrative construction into a series of "quest-log" objectives and reward loops, and reduce complex characters to functional archetypes or narrative vehicles (akin to non-player characters or NPCs). This trend poses a latent threat to authorial voice, psychological nuance, and contemplative storytelling, potentially favoring immediate engagement over lasting resonance. The central challenge, therefore, is to ensure that technology is wielded as a subservient tool to a commanding artistic and humanistic vision, lest the medium lose its soul in a vortex of pure technical display.

3.4. The Structural Disconnect in Talent Cultivation: Antiquated Pedagogy and the Superficiality of Industry-Academia Collaboration

A profound and structurally embedded mismatch defines the relationship between the animation industry's talent demands and the output of the educational system: employers report acute difficulties in finding job-ready professionals, while a significant number of animation graduates face underemployment or require extensive retraining.

This crisis stems from a widening chasm between academic preparation and professional realities:

3.4.1. Obsolete Curricular Frameworks

The core curricula of many animation programs in higher education institutions suffer from a chronic update lag. Coursework frequently emphasizes legacy techniques and software, remaining disconnected from the industry's accelerating technological frontier, which now encompasses real-time virtual production (using engines like Unreal Engine or Unity), procedural asset creation, AIGC-assisted workflows, and the convergent skillsets required for "animation-game fusion" projects.

3.4.2. The Academic-Practice Divide in Faculty

A considerable portion of teaching faculty lacks current, sustained hands-on experience in a commercial animation production environment. This limits their ability to impart relevant, up-to-date knowledge on modern pipeline management, evolving technical standards, and the practical realities of emerging formats like serialized streaming content or interactive narrative.

3.4.3. The Failure of Deep Integration Models

While mechanisms for industry-academia collaboration—such as "industry studios" on campus, corporate-sponsored "custom classes," or internship programs—exist in name, they often fail to achieve meaningful, deeply integrated synergy. This superficiality is typically due to misaligned primary objectives (academia's focus on foundational

education and research versus industry's need for production-ready output and problem-solving), ambiguous intellectual property and benefit-sharing agreements, and a general absence of long-term, strategically aligned partnerships supported by coherent policy frameworks. Collaboration thus often degrades into episodic guest lectures, brief studio tours, or isolated, short-term projects that do not provide students with sustained, immersive experience within a professional ecosystem.

The disconnect between industry needs and education is acute due to technological convergence in animation, VFX, and games. Industry demands hybrid T-shaped professionals with deep specialization and broad literacy. However, universities reinforce disciplinary silos with separate degree tracks. Addressing this requires a paradigmatic pedagogical shift: dismantling silos and creating interdisciplinary clusters for project-based learning. The goal is to cultivate bilingual innovators with humanistic storytelling and technical skills for digital content creation.

4. Enlightenment from Japanese Anime for the Development of the Chinese Animation Industry

4.1. Deeply Explore the Cultural Resources of Chinese Civilization and Create Nationally Distinctive Cultural IPs.

Currently, the development of Chinese animation IP faces issues such as excessive pandering to entertainment, a lack of brand identity, and weak brand systems. Some traditional cultural IPs are struggling with insufficient market momentum and low competitiveness. Meanwhile, successful examples like Ne Zha: The Demon Child Reborn and Chang An demonstrate that "deep cultivation of national culture plus technological innovation" is an effective path to breakthroughs. To this end, improvements can be made in the following aspects:

4.1.1. Refine Core Cultural Archetypes

Chinese culture possesses a wealth of IP story clusters, from classics like The Classic of Mountains and Seas and The Book of Changes to folk legends, all of which can serve as treasure troves of material for animation creation. It is necessary to delve into the unique connotations of Chinese cultural archetypes—unlike the Western emphasis on opposition and conflict, Chinese culture places greater importance on the harmonious unity and mutual transformation of "Heaven, Earth, and Humanity." In the process of IP development, these cultural cores should be accurately grasped, avoiding the simplistic application of Western narrative templates.

4.1.2. Strengthen the Long-Tail Effect of IPs

Transmedia storytelling is an important strategy for empowering traditional cultural IPs. Through the linkage of various media formats, it can effectively enhance the sustainable development capability and market performance of IPs. Future animation creation needs to grasp the trend of "transmedia storytelling," using full media integration to strengthen the long-tail effect of IPs and create "new-quality cultural productivity."

4.1.3. Advance the International Adaptation of Cultural Archetypes

Taking the typical cultural symbol of the "dragon" as an example, in the process of cross-cultural communication, adaptation may either weaken its core elements or expand its reach. Chinese animation should safeguard the fundamental connotations of the culture while making appropriate adaptations, exploring viable paths for Chinese culture to go global.

4.2. Building an Ecosystem to Promote Industrial Development

The Chinese animation industry faces issues such as a lack of overall planning in industrial layout, insufficient synergy among numerous regulatory authorities, and a lack of scientific and rational industrial spatial distribution. Cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen account for the majority share of animation enterprises in the country, characterized by high enterprise concentration, high labor costs, and significant pressure on infrastructure construction. Improvement directions may include:

4.2.1. Coordinate the Planning of Industrial Layout

It is recommended to establish a sound mechanism for collaboration among relevant departments and introduce plans for the development of the animation industry. In terms of regional coordination, further enhance the commercial management and operational capabilities of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen, while transferring labor-intensive and energy-consuming production capacity to the central and western regions. Concurrently, make good use of existing real estate stock to build animation industry infrastructure and performance venues, ensuring that the development of the animation industry advances in tandem with urban renewal.

4.2.2. Build an Industrial Ecosystem Centered on IPs

It is necessary to change the traditional model of exporting individual works and construct a globalized ecosystem centered on domestic animation IPs with cross-media linkage. In the IP development process, a global perspective should be embedded from the outset, forming cross-border creative teams at the conceptual stage and integrating global creative resources to enhance international competitiveness.

4.2.3. Promote the Deep Integration of Animation with Cultural Tourism

The animation derivative industry is a new-quality productivity based on licensing economy, cultural economy, and technological integration, and it serves as an amplifier of animation's value. Efforts should be made to vigorously promote the construction of animation theme parks and their integration with existing traditional scenic spots, create renowned cultural tourism destinations and national animation-culture tourism integrated brands, and build urban agglomeration areas for animation and its derivative industries.

4.3. Supporting Talent Cultivation Mechanisms

The Chinese animation industry faces four major bottlenecks: "lack of concentration in talent, resources, technology, and capital." There is also a structural mismatch in the supply and demand of animation talent, which has made the industry face a shortage of creative and technical talent, while some renowned universities are discontinuing their

animation programs. Improvement paths are as follows:

4.3.1. Promote the Integrated Development of "Universities and Industry

It is recommended that relevant national authorities support key universities in deepening their integration with enterprises, advancing the construction of modern animation industry colleges to ensure a precise match between talent supply and industry demand. University program adjustments should be made with a long-term perspective, avoiding the weakening of foundational talent cultivation due to short-term employment pressures.

4.3.2. Establish a Talent Cultivation System

Educational institutions need to change their educational concepts, breaking away from single-skill training models. They should focus on cultivating students' comprehensive qualities, strengthening imagination, originality, and teamwork abilities, and integrating humanities literacy, art theory, and technical practice. Curriculum design should be oriented towards industry demand, integrating theory and practice around the entire animation production process, and adding interdisciplinary elective courses to broaden students' knowledge structures.

4.3.3. Deepen the Integration of Industry and Education

Leverage university and urban resources to build industrial hubs, promoting industrial transformation and upgrading through "four-wheel drive." Support universities in building infrastructure such as VP virtual studios, motion capture studios, AIGC facilities, and large language models, and establish assessment indicators shared with enterprises. Promote the integrated development of university campuses, industrial parks, and cultural tourism zones, achieving deep integration of talent cultivation, technology research and development, content production, and consumer scene construction.

4.4. "Technology + Content" as Dual Drivers

Digital technology and platform ecosystems have become significant forces driving the development of domestic animation. However, in the application of technology, a balance must be struck between humanistic substance and formal innovation. Improvement directions include:

4.4.1. Embrace the Era of Intelligent Creation

With the maturation of AI large model technology, the animation industry will achieve intelligent creative processes, maximized production efficiency, and extended IP value. AIGC has already been deeply embedded in production chains. For one animation IP, the cost per episode dropped from 50,000 yuan to 3,000 yuan, with team size and time consumption reduced by over 90%. Full use should be made of artificial intelligence technology to optimize creative processes, while remaining vigilant about the risks of technological alienation [6].

4.4.2. Adhere to the Concept of 'Human-Technology Balance'

When AI possesses the ability to think, the imagination, innovation, and aesthetic ability of human artists become the irreplaceable core. While empowering with technology, attention must be paid to infusing humanistic connotations to avoid formal innovation overshadowing content depth.

4.4.3. Promote the Deep Integration of The Animation and Gaming Industries

From the early independent system of "parallel evolution," to the "formal linkage" in the IP era, and now to the "deep integration" supported by AI and engine technologies that animation and games can share assets and teams, with their underlying production logic completely integrated. This trend should be grasped to promote collaborative innovation between the two industries.

4.5. Promoting International Cooperation (Cultural Dissemination and Market Expansion)

The internationalization of Chinese animation is undergoing a transformation from the traditional "channel export" to a new model of "ecosystem export." A "dual circulation" dissemination system needs to be constructed [3]. Improvement paths are as follows:

4.5.1. From "Single-Product Output" To "Ecosystem Construction"

Build an ecosystem for overseas content dissemination, achieving the front-loading globalization of IP development. Form cross-border main creative teams at the conceptual stage, integrating global creative resources to enhance international competitiveness. In creating the White Snake series, Light Chaser Animation collaborated deeply with Warner Bros., effectively expanding its international perspective. White Snake 2: The Tribulation of the Green Snake was released globally on Netflix with dubbing in 10 languages, reaching over 40 million overseas viewers.

4.5.2. Construct a Cross-Media Content Matrix

Tencent Video's international version, WeTV, has surpassed 200 million total downloads, with subscription service revenue increasing by approximately 40% compared to 2022. It has exported over 300 online audiovisual works to more than 200 countries and regions. Full advantage should be taken of this platform advantage to create a closed data feedback loop, informing content creation.

4.5.3. Innovate International Cooperation Models and Expand Dissemination Channels

In 2020, iQIYI co-produced Deer Squad with Viacom's Nickelodeon, pioneering a new international cooperation model for domestic animation: "pre-purchase + supervision." It became the first original Chinese animation to enter the Nickelodeon market in the United States, airing in over 50 countries worldwide. Proactive cooperation should be pursued with internationally renowned streaming platforms like Netflix and Disney+, as well as short-video platforms like TikTok and YouTube, to overcome language barriers and directly reach global young audiences.

4.5.4. Improve Derivative Development and Licensing Cooperation to Achieve Ecosystem Export

On the one hand, proactively develop peripheral products with international characteristics, integrating Chinese cultural elements into product design. On the other hand, actively license animation IPs to game developers, leveraging the global reach of games to pave the way for the international dissemination of animations. Within just two weeks of its release, crowdfunding for derivatives of Big Fish & Begonia reached 50 million yuan. Ne Zha: The Demon Child Rebom achieved a box office approaching 16 billion yuan, topping the global animated film box office chart, significantly expanding the overseas space for Chinese animation.

5. Conclusion

This article explores the successful strategies of the

Japanese animation industry - its success stems from a profound cultural foundation, a balanced integration of technological and artistic concepts, and a mature industrial ecosystem. At the same time, it also compares the current challenges faced by the Chinese animation industry. Although the Chinese animation industry has achieved rapid development, it still has problems such as homogenized content, fragmented industry chain, incoherence between technical presentation and artistic connotation, and disconnection between talent cultivation and industry demands.

Based on this analysis, this article proposes a targeted development path for China: to create distinctive cultural intellectual property, build an industrial ecosystem centered on intellectual property, reform the talent cultivation mechanism, adopt a strategy of combining "technology and content", and expand international cooperation.

Looking to the future, by fully leveraging its rich cultural resources, stimulating original creativity, and deepening industry integration, the Chinese animation industry is expected to overcome the current bottlenecks and establish a unique position globally. With continuous policy support and commitment to innovation, it can achieve high-quality growth and make meaningful contributions to the global animation field.

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