

## Quantitative Research on the Anime Culture Products Presence in the Romanian Market

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### Abstract

The process of globalization brings with it intercultural exchanges with effects both socially and economic. The culture upon which we will focus in this study is a media culture called "anime" that has emerged due to the global impact that Japanese animation had on the entertainment industry, starting with the last decades of the XXth century. Anime fans buy products that are related with the anime culture. These products can be: figurines, ornaments, clothing, toys, etc. Also, those who find their cultural identity in the context of anime, buy comics called "Japanese manga", translated, now, in several languages. Anime culture has taken off in Romania, winning a lot of fans and opening a new market for the products of this culture. This study aims to open the line of research on the consumer behavior, regarding the following aspects, such as: the target audience, economic interests, the types of the products sold and the areas where there is an interest to purchase such products.

**Keywords:** globalization, anime culture, anime products, consumer behavior

**JEL classification:** F690

### 1. Introduction

The term "anime" means all the animation produced in Japan. This particular animation has very distinctive characteristics. These features are both of artistic nature and related to the treated subjects (Winge, 2006). These particularities can be considered its trademark. From its emergence, in the 70s, anime has spread in other countries beside Japan and gained a world-wide audience. The anime first received a positive feedback from the American public in the late 70s and 80s, which determined many American publishing companies to buy licenses from the Japanese producers, who dubbed or subtitled animes in English, and began distributing them, first in America, than world-wide (MacWilliams, 2008). Anime became a major rival for the traditional western animation, but also gathered a strong fan-base. According to the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), "*Japanese animation occupied the first place in the animation world for nearly two decades*". A study conducted in 2005 showed that over 60% of the world animation is produced in Japan (JETRO, May 2005). Animes are often inspired or accompanied by comic books, drawn in the same artistic style, called "mangas". Besides these comic books, a wide array of products are sold to the anime fans, such as: figurines, ornaments, clothing, toys, so on. The Romanian public began discovering the anime culture since 1990, when the Romanian TV stations began to broadcast anime series and movies. Also, the foreign Animax channel broadcasted many anime series subtitled in Romanian. Since 2007, a cultural phenomenon called "Anime conventions" (Lamerichs, 2013) begins to develop in Romania. These anime conventions attract anime fans and also developers and dealers of the anime related products which we have already mentioned.

### 2. Research methodology

In order to explain the anime phenomenon as an effect of other phenomena's evolution, we used the *causal research*, this providing informations of *quantitative nature*, in this case: the emergence of the anime culture has led to an increased market demand for the related products. At the base of the research were the extracted *quantitative data*, which proved the evolution of the anime phenomenon and of the sales of this culture's products.

One method was using the *secondary data*, known informations, statistic data regarding the production and sales of the anime products, the evolution of the international transactions.

We gathered *the primary data* from cultural manifestations and specific events, inside which are

organized sales points and exhibitions, for trading anime culture's products. *The secondary data* have been obtained from external sources( statistic data of the organizers and economic entities, reports) but also internal sources(sales, costs, marketing activities, informations regarding distribution and buyers)

For processing the resulting data (*the systematization of secondary data*) we used specialised informatic systems, like: SPSS, MS Excel, in order to present the informations in the form of tables and graphs.

### 3. The Nijikon convention in Romania. Case study

The event which we will study in this paper, is an anime convention, called Nijikon (Lamerichs, 2013). It takes place, every year, in Bucharest, since 2007.

This event gathers companies dealing with anime related products, consumers of these products, people who dress as anime characters (cosplayers), who buy their costumes from abroad or make them with materials found in Romania.

In the following, we shall present an analysis of data related to this convention in Romania.

a) Nearly 60-65% of the visitors are female, the rest of them are male (**Figure 1. Male/female participants at the Nijikon conventions**)

b) Most of the visitors age range is between 14-25 years old (38% are between 14-20 years old, 28% are between 20-25 years old, 10% are over 25 years old , 3% are under 14 years old, the rest of them didn't state their age, but the figures are similar) (**Figure 2. Age levels at the Nijikon conventions**)

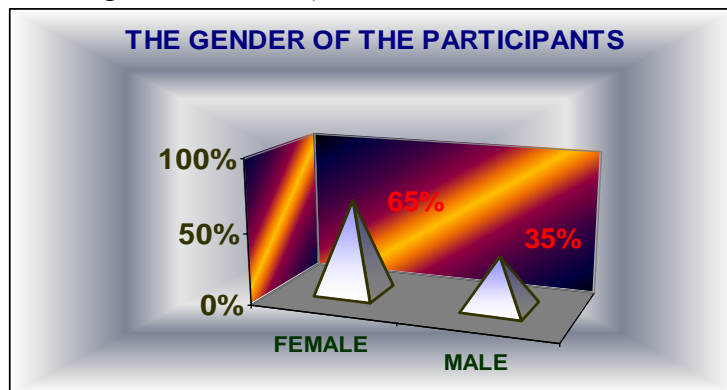


Figure 1. Male/female participants at the Nijikon conventions (Source: author own research)

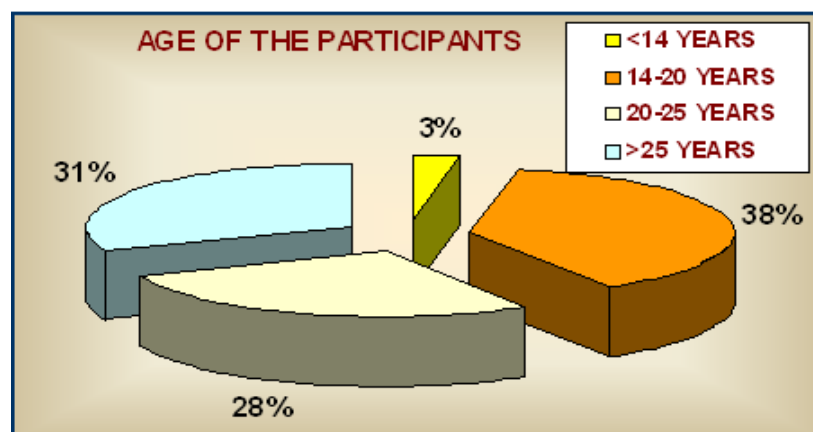


Figure 2. Age levels at the Nijikon conventions (Source: author own research)

c) 20% of the visitors are employed or small business owners, the large majority (over 75%) are students, high students and pupils (Figure 3. Level of employment of the participants at the Nijikon conventions)

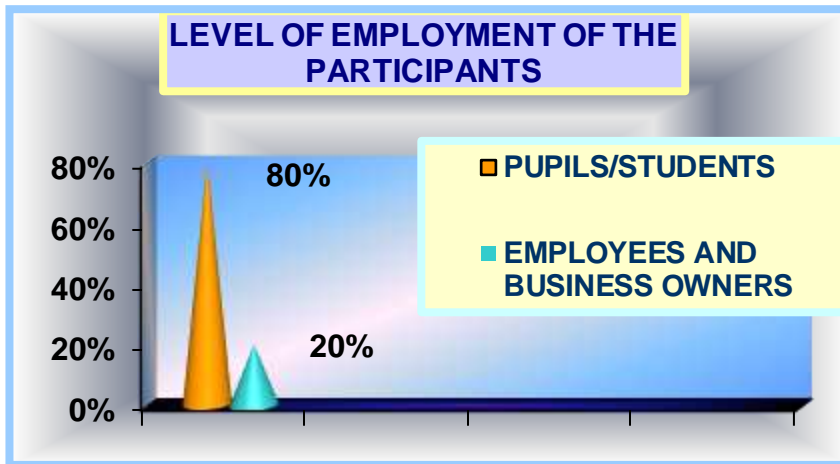


Figure 3. Level of employment of the participants at the Nijikon conventions (Source: author own research)

d) The large majority (71%) of the participants are Bucharest residents, 2,5% live in Ploiesti, and 2,2% are coming from Constantza, the rest are coming from all over the Romania. (Figure 4. Geographical spread of the participants at the Nijikon conventions)

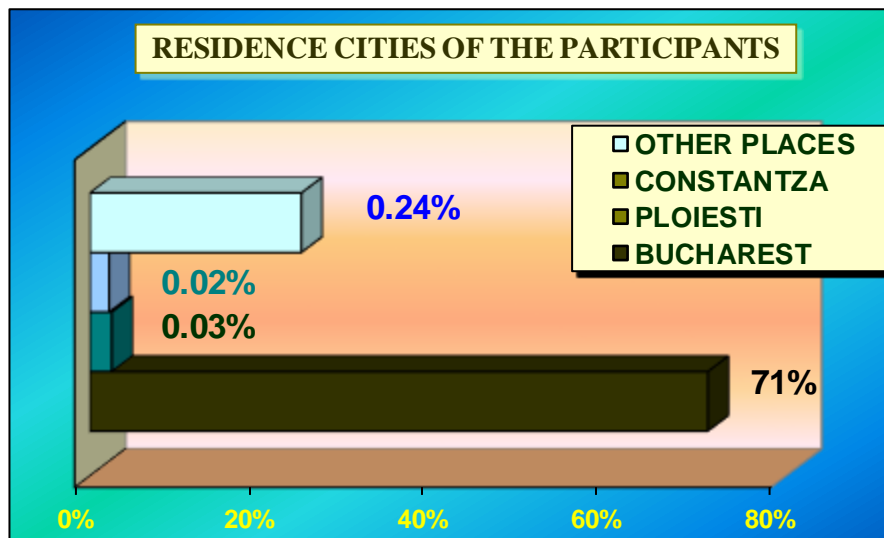


Figure 4. Geographical spread of the participants at the Nijikon conventions (Source: author own research)

e) Specific informations related to each year, starting with the premiere of the Nijikon conventions in Romania, untill the end of 2015, regarding: the total number of participants, the total number of the entrepreneurs for different products presented to be sold, as well as the spaces rented for these events, are resumed in the next table (Table 1. Specific informations between 2007-2015)

|                | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| VISITORS       | 1500 | 2300 | 2700 | 3000 | 3100 | 3000 | 3500 | 3000 | 2700 |
| SELLERS        | 16   | 20   | 22   | 24   | 26   | 24   | 26   | 20   | 24   |
| RENTED SURFACE | 400  | 1200 | 1200 | 1200 | 1200 | 1200 | 3000 | 2700 | 3600 |

Table 1. Specific informations between 2007-2015 (Source: author own research)

The informations are represented in the following figure, showing the changes of the offer, the rising

number of visitors, also the changing of the event's locations rented for the Nijikon conventions (Figure 5. Specific informations about the Nijikon conventions, between 2007-2015)

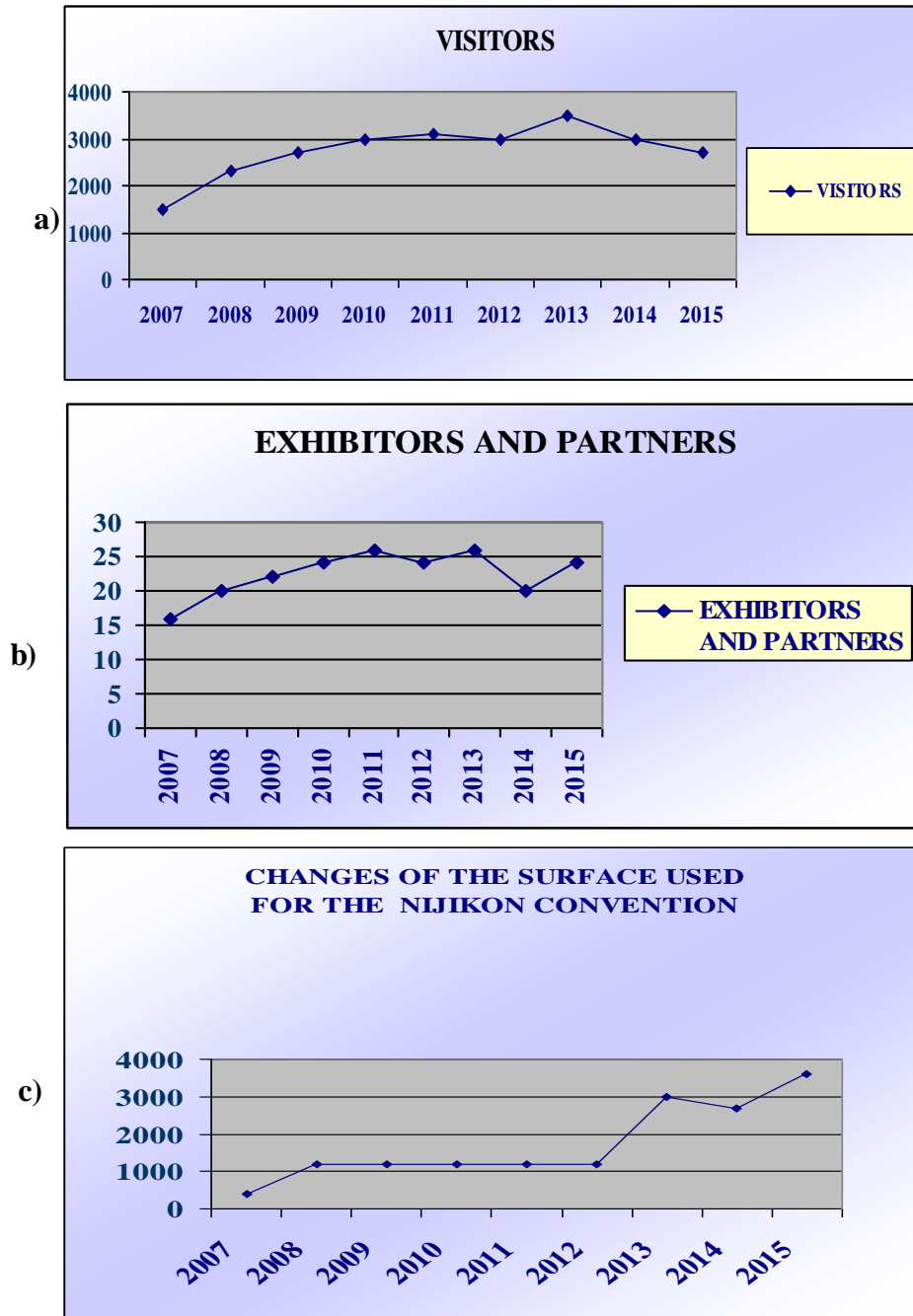


Figure 5. Specific informations about the Nijikon conventions between 2007-2015 visitors(a), offer(b), event's locations(c) (Source: Table 1)

**4. Sales sample from the company OTAKU SHOP. Case study**

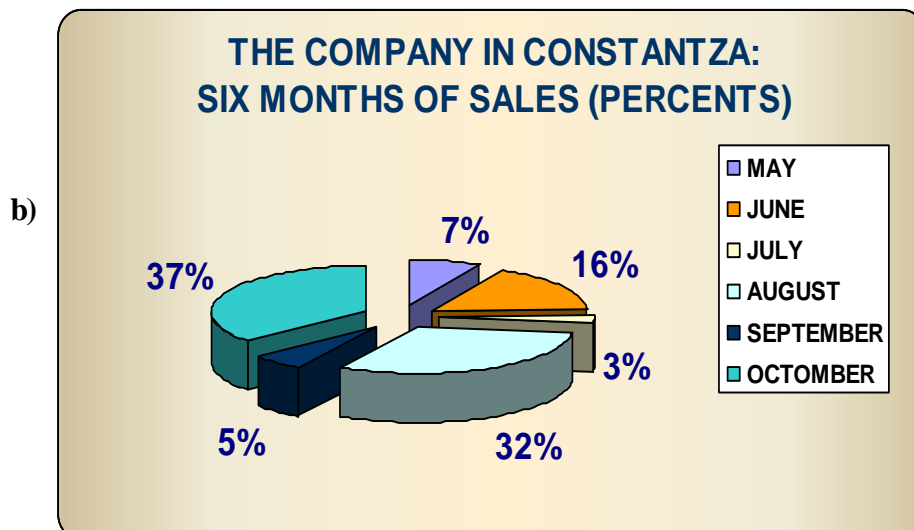
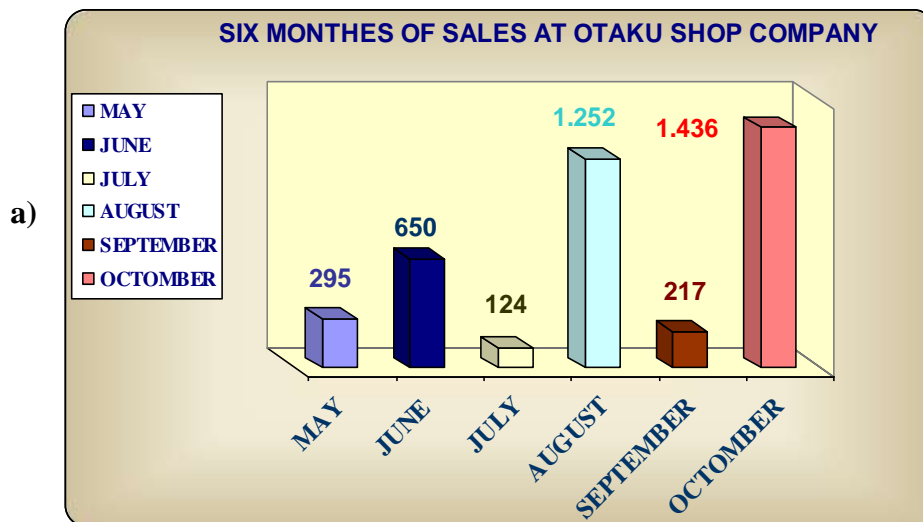
As an example of the interest showed by the Romanian consumer for the products of the anime culture, we studied the sales of a company in Constantza, dealing with these products, over a period of time. The company buys its merchandise from a foreign producer and sales them in Romania (Table 2. The sales

evolutions at Otaku Shop, from may to october 2013)

| 2013(RON) |       |
|-----------|-------|
| MAY       | 295   |
| JUNE      | 650   |
| JULY      | 124   |
| AUGUST    | 1,252 |
| SEPTEMBER | 217   |
| OCTOBER   | 1,436 |

Table 2. The sales evolutions at Otaku Shop, from may to october 2013  
(Source: author own research)

These data indicate that the most profitable months for this company were august and october, the first of them probably because it is in the full summer season, and the other one because the students return in the town from holidays, the schools begin, the pupils are coming home. As the consumers are mostly teenagers, we believe the sales are smaller in May, June and July, when the exams take place, also in september, when there are other exams.(Figure 6. The sales evolution at Otaku Shop, from may to october 2013)



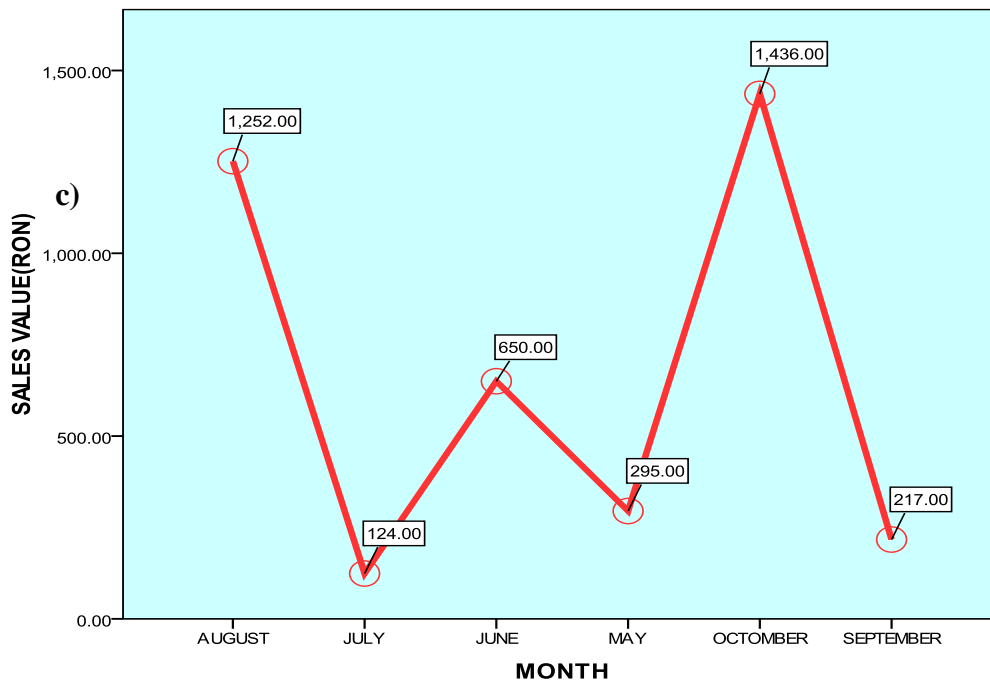


Figure 6. The sales evolution at Otaku Shop, from may to octomber 2013

a) Bar chart

b) Pie chart

c) SPSS line graphic

(Source: Table 2)

## Conclusions

This study shows the existence of a significant interest for the products of the anime culture on the Romanian market. Although many companies in Romania are importing these products, in our country, there are no local producers who have licenses for create anime related products. Consequently, it would be beneficial for the local producers to acquire these licenses and begin creating these products for the Romanian market, and therefore, for the Romanian consumer. On the other hand, as the market demand for the anime related products exists, it would be also beneficial that more companies start to import these products.

Related to the anime events, we think that the organizers should advertise their events with some time before them, through TV channels for teenagers, also during some TV shows for teenagers, even on bussiness TV channels, if possible.

New research directions: the next step could be a a research that clarifies relationship between the external factors, namely: culture, subculture, social class, so on, and the internal mechanisms of the anime behavior consumer, such as: perception, motivation, intention, and others, which, together, are finally leading to the decision to buy related products of this culture. The research methodology that we propose consists in carrying out surveys, polls, followed by the analysis of data, aiming to understand the occurrence of the consumer's need for animes and their related products.

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