

Boboi Boy: Japanese Cultural Influences inside Malaysia's 3D Animated Cinematography

Dahlan Abdul Ghani¹, Muhammad Afiq Bin Abd Rahman²

^{1,2}Universiti Kuala Lumpur, Bandar Wawasan, 50300 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
¹dahlan@unikl.edu.my, ²afiqrahman27@gmail.com.

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Abstract

Animation comes to life in the eye of community when it was first introduced by the westerners through "Gertie the Dinosaur". Since then, the animation world starts to grow rapidly and produces lots of animation. Japan is one of the powerhouse of animation and is arguably the most influential beside western animation. Malaysia's animation industry has only just begin its journey and it is still in its adolescence stage. Which shows that Malaysian's animation quality still have a lot of room of improvement. The influence of Japanese animation can be seen from the design of the characters in Malaysian animation such as, Boboiboy. This research aim on finding the connection between the design or elements of design in characters from Japanese animation or anime and Malaysian animation. This is due the concept art or character design aspect is one the important thing that is needed in animation. Through this research, the result from this research can help in giving inspiration to aspiring animators to find their own style of animation. In doing so, helps to grow the animation industry in Malaysia to an even higher level and producing an even higher quality animation like the animation from Ghibli Studio.

Keywords: animation, design, characters, Malaysian, Japanese, anime

I. INTRODUCTION

Japanese animation or anime has become a thing that really made a solid standings for themselves in the world of animation. It all began in the early 90's when the world are hit with the anime that came from Japan that is Neon Genesis Evangelion. From that point on, people have been awed by how beautiful the characters that has been animated that have a real life features to a real human. This made people want to follow the same steps as what the Japanese animator have taken and apply it on their own animation with a few configurations.

This research aims on finding the connection of the influences that Japanese animation or anime have on Malaysian animation movie from the Animonsta Studio's work Boboiboy from the character design aspects in the animation.

The issues that comes with this research are :

- Does the character design of Boboiboy influenced by Japanese character design.
- Does the character design of Boboiboy have any impact on younger audiences.

Based on Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, "was inspired to create something of his own which have living characteristics and have inner strength, vitality, a separate identity which speaks out his authority loudly in which the creation itself, is as if it was given the illusion of life itself". From this word we can summarize that animation is the action of trying to give life to an in-animated object whether through drawings or computer generated imagery such as 3D models.

Animation also comes in different types, such as the classical one which is cell animation or 2D animation, 3D animation which uses the 3D model made by computer software, and Stop-motion

animation which uses camera that takes series of pictures of an object that becomes the main character or subject in the story.

II. HISTORY OF JAPANESE ANIMATION

Despite the western animation booming into the market with collections of great animation titles from companies such as Walt Disney's and Pixar. Japan too have their own fair share of animation which stands on their own and really differentiate themselves from their western counterparts. Japanese animation began to take root after the world war two incident. During that time the government hired and urged Japanese animator to produce animation that contains Japanese spirit and their national affiliation. After awhile, the animator starts to experiment on their animation to develop their own original animation.

On 1965, the creator of Japanese famous animation Astro Boy, Osamu Tezuka was tasked to create another animation with bite-sized orders so that the story won't have an overreaching story arc. This lead to the development of KimbaThe White Lion, which became one of the most popular anime after Osamu Tezuka's famous anime, Astro Boy. Furthermore, KimbaThe White Lion also became the base for one of Disney's recognized animation, The Lion King.



Figure 1 :Kimba The White Lion



Figure 2 : The Lion King

In Japanese animation there is one more legendary figure that helps in pioneering Anime in the eyes of the world. This person is the founder of the famous animation studio and have created a lot of masterpiece even now. This person is no other than Studio Ghibli's founder himself, Hayao Miyazaki. He have created lots of famous animation and really able to show the beauty of animation through his works. His most famous animation and became the studio's mascot is Totoro from My Neighbour Totoro.

III. HISTORY OF MALAYSIAN ANIMATION

Despite the growing industry for animation among other Asian countries such as Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam, Malaysia also try to get into the game and try to achieve in producing an animation of their own. Other Asian countries provided with the animation studios for other country to use on producing their animations, but Malaysian intends on developing it locally so that the result that came out is totally of their own work not from others. This is supported by (Muthalib, 2007)

“ With this kind of scenario, the Government's objective to create more local content an “especially” content that reflects a national identity appears to be compromised. “

Thus, in the early 1950s the Malaysia's first animated short film were made by Malaysia's own local production, Cathay Organization and Cathay-Keris Film Productions. The short film is called, Hikayat Sang Kancil. This short film animation later become the starting point of the animation industry in Malaysia in the coming years. After

producing Hikayat Sang Kancil, Malayan Film Unit (MFU) produced five more animated short films. Not long after came two big figures that is Filmart which was built in 1984 and Lensamation in 1987 which became the starting point of the training and creation of even more animators in Malaysia

IV. IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER DESIGN IN ANIMATION

In animation, one of the important thing is how we portray our characters. This is because in order for a story to be accepted, the characters that is in the story itself must be presentable and attractive to the eyes of the viewer. Furthermore, the way the character itself are build upon also will give meanings on what that character is trying to portray to viewers. (Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston, 1981) in their book said

” A weak drawing lacks appeal. A drawing that is complicated or hard to read lacks appeal. Poor design, clumsy shapes, awkward moves, all are low on appeal. Spectators enjoy watching something that is appealing to them, whether an expression, a character, a movement, or a whole story situation. While the live actor has charisma, the animated drawing has appeal. “

Thus this confirms the way we create our character is important in how well we want the viewers to appreciate the story that is being told by how our characters look and act. Without a well-designed character, the visual impact will be less for the viewers and will make them not interested in the animation itself

V. INFLUENCE OF JAPANESE ANIMATION IN CHARACTER DESIGN

Western animation's character design always have a distinguishable features that shows that the characters made is the character for western animation. This also proven for Japanese animation's character design. In Japanese animation or anime, the proportion for their character always varies and each type of proportions exhibits certain

criteria for the character itself.

Hikaru Hayashi (2006) stated that in order to distinguish the differences in height, build, and proportioning the skills for head-to-body ratio is necessary.

The character design in anime split between two type, the design that emphasize on realistic proportioning or chibi proportioning. The realistic proportioning focuses on trying to maintain the original feel of the character that can almost be related to real life feature. While chibi proportioning emphasizes on giving the vibe that the character is cute and the size of the character is smaller compared to the realistic proportioning.

In Malaysia's animation series, Boboiboy we can see that most of the characters in the series are made with the chibi proportioning. Furthermore with this proportioning, the younger audience was attracted to Boboiboy's design due to the way Boboiboy looks childlike and cute. The proportional ratio used for Boboiboy's main character, Boboiboy is 1:3 standard proportioning. Not only that, Boboiboy also have small eye design, the head that have bigger than body design which can be observed in Figure 3 below. This shows that there are some influences from Japanese animation or anime, especially from the character design aspects.



Figure 3 :Boboiboy

VI. CONCLUSION

The animation industry in Malaysia is steadily growing and producing an animation that retains the essence of Malaysia. But there is still some fix that can be done here and there to further improve the

quality of our animation. Especially when we focused on improving the character design aspects in our animation industry. Character design is important because it is what makes the character and the way the story will be presented to the audience. Without a good drawings that have appeal in it the character will be weak even the story is already good. A good character design will be able to be distinguished among other characters in a story. This in turn will make the story even more entertaining to watch due to the characters in the story which audiences can see clearly what the character is trying to portray to them in the story. In Malaysia, the animation style is slowly adapting with the styles of animation that we have around the world such as from Disney, Pixar, Studio Ghibli, Toei Animation, Sunrise and many other animation studios. This lead to some influences from foreign animation studios being adapted in the style of Malaysian animation such as, In the Boboiboy series the character design aspect exhibits some influences from the Japanese style of character design. Be it, either from the proportioning of the characters figure, or the details that the character have on them

VII. ARTICLE REVIEW

FarynaMohdKhalis et al did a research on several animation work that has been published in Malaysia in order to find does the animation in Malaysia exhibits the sense of local identity characteristic. With the booming of the Malaysian animation industry from the start of UpinIpin, we can see that the world now sees that Malaysia too is taking the challenge in producing their very own animation. But does the characters in Malaysian animation exhibits Malaysian local identity? Can audiences find any sort of connection regarding Malaysian identity in the animations that have been produced in Malaysia? This in turn led FarynaMohdKhalis, NormahMustaffa and MohdNorShahizan Ali to start the research in finding if the Malaysian local identity exists in Malaysian animation.

In the first part of the article, FarynaMohdKhalis et

al explains the differences of Japanese animation or anime and Western animation. They started off with a brief history of Japanese animation and then tells the kind of influences that Western animation have, for the western animation they focuses on the superhero characteristic that Western animation love to portray. Furthermore, they even presents the semiotics theory in the article to further validate the aim of their research regarding the connection of local identity in Malaysian's local animation.

In the second and last part of the article, FarynaMohdKhalis et al tried to tackle the connection of the influences that the local animation have by stating that both Japanese and Western have influenced the character's identity of Malaysian animation. They were able to depict the influences can be seen from the way the character themselves have been designed. They did a cross-reference between the main characters in Malaysian animation against the features that Japanese animation have in their characters. Observe diagram 1, we can find the influences that Japanese animation have in our character design from Boboiboy's main character, Boboiboy.

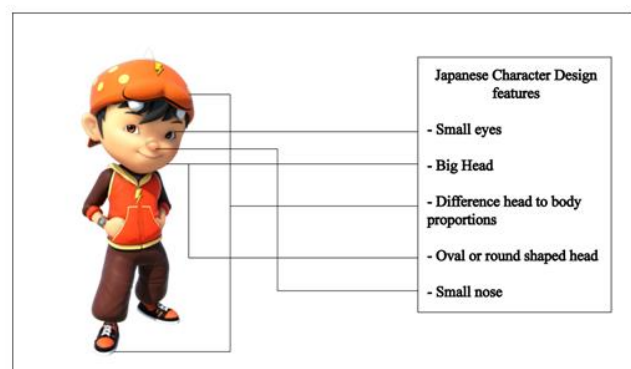


Diagram 1 Boboiboy's similarity to Japanese Character Design Features

Finally, they've concluded their research with stating that there are physical differences with Malaysian characters in portraying the local identity. They also point out that those differences creates the uniqueness that contributes to local identity . The features that Malaysian characters have really does

have been influenced by Japanese and Western animation. Nevertheless, FarynaMohdKhalis et al manage to find that connection of the portraying local identity in Malaysian's animation.

VIII. METHODOLOGY

In order to obtain the key point in this research of finding the proof that the character design in Malaysian animation are influenced by the Japanese character design, a methodology framework has been used and improved to make it usable for this research.

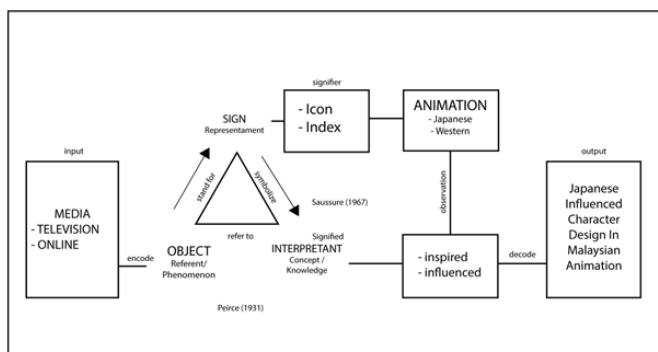


Figure 4 Methodology framework

Based on figure 4, this methodology framework is taken and adapted to fit the purpose of this research. This framework was used by FarynaMohdKhalis et al on their research regarding the identity of Malaysian inside the character design aspect. This framework was adapted from the research made by FarynaMohdKhalis et al which also is a derivative from the model made by Peirce and Saussure. Through the triangle reciprocal by Pierce, the process begins from the Object as a referent or phenomenon in identifying the source of media such as televisions, online or comics. (Khalis et al. 2016). Based on the research done by FarynaMohdKhalis et al. The input for this framework are changed a bit as in the use of comics as one of the input process are taken out since this research focuses only on 3D animation. The arrow pointing towards the Sign is the symbol for the representment of what is remembered by the animators based on their observation towards Japanese animation by focusing on the icon and

index. Then, they begin to interpret the character themselves before they are inspired and influenced to develop their character design based on what they have seen and inspired to do. The output of the work itself reflects the style that they have been influenced by and are comfortable with when designing the character themselves

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