

# Research on the Improvement of Teaching "Japanese Culture" Course in the Context of the Development of Japanese Moe Culture

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## Abstract

With the rapid development of Japan's ACG industry, "Moe", as a redefined new word, has been widely spread through anime, video games and the Internet, and is gradually becoming known to Chinese people. However, in China, the concept of Moe itself is still vague, and people do not dig deeper into the reasons and influences behind the popularity of Moe culture. In this paper, we try to explain the meaning of Moe and analyze the influence of Moe culture on ACG industry and OTAKU, its future development trend, and the issues that need to be paid attention to in teaching Japanese culture.

## Keywords

Moe; Moe Culture; ACG; OTAKU; Japanese Culture Teaching.

## 1. Definition of Moe

### 1.1. Semantic meaning of Moe

The etymology of Moe is generally believed to be derived from the word "fire", which is derived from the Japanese IME input method. "Moe" originally refers to the state of mind of the reader when seeing a beautiful girl character. The word "Moe" is often used to describe this state of mind, and it is typed in Roman Pinyin as 'Mo E'. If you use the Japanese input method, you will only see 'fire' and 'Mo E' when you type Mo E. In order to distinguish the state of being hot because of the beautiful girl from the traditional hot blood, the homophone 'Moe E' was borrowed to describe it, and it became a kind of black language on the Internet in the ACG community.

In 2006, the word was officially included in the third edition of the Dazhonglin published by Sanseido Publishing, and its explanation is: "This is a young person's word to describe a deep feeling of envy towards a person or thing." It is a word that is used to describe a person's imagination. According to Wikipedia, a Japanese website, the term is mainly used by young people born in the 1980s, a new term created by the "post-80s" generation. The semantic interpretation of the term is more emotional, with extreme enthusiasm for the subcultural products represented by anime and online games and all information related to them. It is easy to find that "Moe" in a broad sense is a preference for characters appearing in anime, games, novels and other works.

### 1.2. The difference between Moe and cute

Since the feeling of "Moe" can only be understood but not expressed, when used as an adjective, the easiest thing to get wrong is the difference between 'Moe' and 'cute'. The word "cute" is a very traditional word with a fixed meaning. It is an adjective that can be used to describe people, animals, and even dead things. Children, kittens can be very "cute", cute dolls can also be modified with cute. Of course an ACG character can also be very 'cute'. But 'cute' is different from 'adorable', which is basically an adjective for 'people'. To be clear, the 'human' here also includes any ACG or real-life drama character, whether fictional or not.

"Moe" itself has the connotation of 'lustful and young', and even without the erotic component, it has a 'sexual connotation'. It must be emphasized here that the so-called 'sexual connotation' does not mean 'sexual innuendo'. To think that a character is cute does not mean that it needs to be sexually suggestive, but it has to match the sexual orientation. But it must be related to the 'sexual orientation' of the audience. Moe' is actually not limited to 'male audience to female characters', theoretically a character can be said to be Moe as long as it matches the sexual orientation. It's human nature to know how to be horny and to admire the young, but that doesn't mean it's pornography. So don't feel offended by the sexual connotation of 'Moe', it's just an emotional stirring that is beautiful and positive.

Thus, even if there is no pornographic element, 'Moe' itself is a term with 'sexual connotation', so it is even more impossible to be confused with 'cute' which can be used for dead things. It is not possible to confuse it with 'cute' which can be used for dead things.

## 2. Development of "Moe culture"

### 2.1. ACG ---the first place to foster Moe culture

There are many books on the origins of "Moe culture", but if we are talking about origins, we have to talk about gal games. Gal games have also had a decisive influence on the systematization of "Moe" and the formation of the concept. According to the general understanding, the beginning of romance games is "Tokimeki Memorial" (Tokimeki Memorial: "Tokimeki Memorial" is a love simulation game released by Konami for the PC Engine SUPER CD-ROM2 on May 27, 1994.). In the game, there are a total of thirteen women, completely independent of each other. The manufacturer has to create a unique selling point for each and every beautiful girl character. Otherwise, the game will strongly attract players and they may hunt down all the beautiful girls. "The idea that "bishoujo characters have different characteristics" is the background to the systematization of "Moe".

But how did konami (KONAMI CORPORATION is the pure holding company of the Konami Group, which manufactures arcade games and computer games and operates sports clubs.) create each and every feature for the 13 bishoujo characters? The only way to do so was to systematically classify the popular elements of past bishoujo characters. Then, a formula for creating a certain bishoujo character was born.

Shiori Fujisaki, a childhood friend with a close personality, excellent grades, good looks, and decent behavior, is the ideal girl who is the picture of perfection. Mio Kisaragi is a quiet girl who wears glasses. Nozomi Kiyokawa speaks with a boyish tone and is a good athlete. Yuko Asahina is a free-spirited girl who loves to play and follow the latest trends, and is not very good at studying. She has a shy personality and blushes when she sees men. She is shy and blushes when she sees men. Yumi Saotome calls herself "Yumi" and has a childish personality, but she doesn't like to be seen as a child. There is no denying that "Tokimeki Memorial" is a historical work that systematized "Moe".

Since then, gal games have not been able to move away from the path they already developed from "Tokimeki Memorial", and "Moe" has become even more finely systematized. I must mention "Neon Genesis Evangelion" broadcasted in 1997, where this systematized "Moe" created a huge boom that affected the anime industry as well. There is one thing that makes this anime successful. It created two beautiful girls, Rei Ayanami and Soka Langley. Although the anime is not a "Moe" anime, the two bishoujo characters use different "Moe attributes" to draw in the hearts of the viewers. Even today, fourteen years after the anime's conclusion, there are still a variety of anime related products on the market. Shinseiki Evangelion unconsciously became a lucrative model for the "Moe" anime that came out a few years later.

And because of the success of Sakura Kinomoto, the protagonist of the anime "Cardcaptor Sakura", she became "the most profitable loli in history". Then the ACG industry developed

more "Moe" works. In order to develop new "Moe" elements and seek new challenges, they further detailed and systematized the well-received elements of past bishoujo characters. This is like putting popular bishoujo characters in a centrifuge and trying to separate each of them from the others. We can then summarize the "Moe attributes" that are well-received and avoid certain "Moe attributes. Thus, the systematization of "Moe" becomes even faster and wider. Over time, it formed an official setting. For example, cat ears, maid, mute, natural, etc. From clothing to life and speech, all the "Moe attributes" were organized. Since then, "Moe culture" has become incredibly prevalent in the ACG industry.

Although "Moe culture" was born from ACG, it is now leading to the development of the ACG industry.

## 2.2. OTAKU---Advocates on the Path of Development

In the 1970s, the ACG industry in Japan developed rapidly. The OTAKU (OTAKU: Generally refers to a special group of people who have knowledge, appreciation, and ability to play ACGN beyond the average person, and who are passionate about this culture and have a deep understanding of it.) that emerged at that time were mainly into space warfare. "During 2004, the total media market for "Moe," print, anime, and games, reached 88 billion yen. This accounts for a third of the OTAKU market value. According to the figures, today's OTAKU are predominantly of the "Moe" variety. Unlike ordinary fans, they not only gain pleasure from viewing "Moe culture," but also enter their own lives and spiritual worlds by consuming large amounts of "Moe culture" ACG works. They have unwittingly become boosters of the development of "Moe culture," promoting the commercial development of "Moe culture" and at the same time deepening the influence of "Moe culture" on the spiritual side.

With the development of "Moe culture," a new term has been coined. It is the "two-dimensional complex". The term "two-dimensional complex" refers to the state of having romantic feelings for completely imaginary two-dimensional bishoujo characters (products of imagination such as anime, manga, and games, as well as their derivatives (figures, etc.)) on paper or on screen. It is also called "second-hand manga" for short. The essence of "Moe" has an element of delusion, which inherited the essence of ACG. Since it is hard to find in reality, we have to look for it in two dimensions. For this reason, many OTAKU are also two-dimensional complex people.

Why do these feelings arise? People's "Moe" feelings come from a sense of reality and satisfaction with virtual reality figures. The "weak in love" who are disappointed with reality turn their gaze to the ACG world of the "Moe attribute dissociation union," which is free and indiscriminate from reality. Usually, the female protagonists of ACG works have good looks and "Moe attributes" that can evoke "romantic feelings". The role is formed with a unique charm that cannot be felt in reality. For example, KEY's (Key: Key is a game brand that represents Visual Arts Inc. It is known as the pioneer and synonym of the "Crying Game" genre, which incorporates elements of "tears", "emotion", and "laughter" into romantic adventure games.) three most moving works: Air, Kanon, and Clannad. In the stories, players filled in the synopsis of their favorite plays to portray the personalities of beautiful girl characters. The player can take the place of the protagonist and get involved in the emotions. It is as if you are living in the same world with a beautiful girl character. It is as if the player is living in the same world with a beautiful girl, and can receive "self-respect" and "treatment" that cannot be enjoyed in reality. These stories are not only about erotic acts, but also about "sleeping under a tree with a beautiful girl on your lap" or "a beautiful girl calling the main character "big brother. Through this, one can forget about the unhappiness of one's own modern social and love life, and it becomes a form of "psychotherapy". Imagination is the most beautiful thing, and the unreachable is more attractive than the unreachable.

The "Moe culture" may seem a bit over the top from the outside, but in fact it is a culture for people to satisfy certain human needs. People are often disappointed with reality because of

their complicated social interactions and minds. They want pure and innocent feelings. And so, "Moe culture" entrusts people's emotions instead of things that they cannot find in the real world. Therefore, "Moe culture" has gradually captured the hearts of people.

### 3. A future torn between prosperity and decline

The huge business opportunities contained in the "Moe culture" are now being developed one after another. After attacking the anime and game fields, "Moe culture" has begun to invade other cultural areas. Garage kits ranging from tens to hundreds of yuan and SD dolls costing thousands of yuan are full of "Moe" elements. Light novels depicting "Moe" are becoming more and more common and well-received. For example, the very popular novels "Shakugan no Shana" and "The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya", with their combination of excellent stories and "Moe attributes", have been widely popular. In addition, the TV anime based on these novels was also a huge success, and a variety of peripheral products have appeared on the market, earning a lot of profit. The strangest of all is an English instructional book called "Moedan". When the reader learns English, she transforms into a magical girl and serves everyone's eyeballs. I don't know if the real purpose of buying this book is to learn English, or if I am drawn to its "Moe" factor from the magical girl.

However, when it reaches its peak, it may fall back. The "Moe culture" will surely decline on its way to development. Currently, the situation of "Moe" development is as active as ever, but we cannot ignore the crisis of "Moe culture" development that lies ahead of us.

#### 3.1. Officialized "Moe"

The number of "Moe attributes" summed up by OTAKU and "Moe" researchers is gradually increasing, and the development of "Moe culture" has now matured considerably. Now that these attributes have been identified, "Moe" becomes a formula that can be designed. As long as each "Moe attribute" is gathered together like a stream of work, a popular role is born. The female protagonist of a certain work could be a "Moe" role even though she was not calculated to be "Moe. However, for "Moe" ACG works, the "Moe attributes" of the roles created were precisely designed. One characteristic of a "Moe" work is that after calculating the "Moe attributes," it concentrates on a few roles. The "Moe attributes" of each role are not duplicated. These "Moe attributes" may be common, but it must surely be the result of human design to concentrate so much on one role. It is only through perfect design that a perfect "Moe" role can be created to attract the maximum number of viewers.

But are the various changes in Moe the beginning or the end? As the "Moe attribute" becomes more and more systematized, the vitality of "Moe" is gradually being lost. In fact, when there are fewer and fewer new "Moe attributes" instead of more and more "Moe" type works, it means that the "Moe culture" has already passed its peak. There is no end to the combinations, but the "Moe attributes" themselves will not develop. In other words, today's "Moe attributes" are just using different combinations to create a new fresh feeling. If readers, viewers, and players feel aesthetic fatigue in the face of the flood of "Moe culture," the completion of "Moe culture" is not far off.

#### 3.2. Stories that lose their substance

If the problem described above is the interaction between the producer and the market, the other problem is entirely due to the former. Currently, in "Moe" type works, stories with no substance have become another symbol after "cute roles". Although the "Moe attribute" is neutral, it does not necessarily have anything to do with whether a play is good or bad. For example, if one female protagonist is "Moe", the scenario of this work is not necessarily shallow. CLANNAD, which aired in 2007, is a good example. The combination of a great story and "Moe" was recognized by many viewers.

However, it cannot be denied that the scenarios of works that use "Moe" as a selling point are usually shallow. However, as more and more viewers are only interested in "Moe" type works and "Moe" roles to make money, ACG producers are no longer taking scenarios very seriously. As long as they write a scenario that allows the role to become even more "Moe," they can release their work. As both the market supply and the market demand have become like this, "Moe" type works without any substance have appeared like bamboo shoots after the rain.

A story cannot be composed of "Moe" alone. A work of art must be a combination of characters and stories. "Moe is just a flavoring, but when combined with a good scenario and roles, the audience's response can be even better. However, if you make a work based on "Moe" alone, the viewer will eventually get bored and leave the work due to the situation that slows down the development of the "Moe attribute. Seasonings make food taste better, but they cannot become food.

What worries me is that the scenario of "Moe" type works is weak now. This problem is becoming more serious. Under such market conditions, it is inevitable that a revolutionary "Moe culture" will not emerge.

### 3.3. The "H" in "Moe Culture"

Another thing that should be noted is that "Moe culture" contains a faint "sexual meaning. The essence of "Moe" is to make people feel pleasure, but it is also deeply connected to "H".

Nowadays, the contents of many anime are laced with "service" (Service: "Service" here includes "sexual meaning". In order to satisfy the reader's taste, the author goes out of her way to give a close-up of a beautiful girl's body part.). "Service" is a means often used to express the "Moe" of a character. Moreover, "service" can only have maximum effect if it depends on "Moe. Therefore, ACG producers always use a combination of the two in order to find the maximum chemical reaction. As long as "Moe" exists in the mainstream of ACG, the service will still be a popular material. However, if the "erotic culture" is too inundated, it may cause a backlash from the supporters of social morality. Moreover, people in society are not likely to discriminate between purely erotic works and service works.

On the other hand, the most important means of expression in the "Moe culture" is through loli. And Lolita itself is a culture that strongly includes "sexual suggestion". Its essence is not bad, but it may give negative implication to some people. And it has caused juvenile delinquency, increased the social crime rate, and increased social instability factors.

An extreme example is the case of Tsutomu Miyazaki and the serial kidnapping and murder of young girls. In this case, girls as young as 4 to 7 years old were the victims, and the perpetrators took extremely abnormal actions, such as sending a criminal statement to a newspaper and sending the remains of the victims, which were burned in the open, to their families. This is the first time in postwar Japanese crime history that the introduction of profiling has been considered. When the investigation team raided Miyazaki's home, they found an enormous amount of videotapes (about 6,000 items) and a large number of comic books. The majority of these seized videos were recordings of anime, idols, and special effects for children, but some of them were found to be videos of himself filming the crime. In addition, the culture of Lolita was at the forefront of a heated social debate in the 2004 kidnapping and murder of a Nara girl by Kaoru Kobayashi. Though it is a local law, and one that has been severely criticized by the Japanese ACG industry, Japan has already begun to focus on the negative impact of "lolita culture" on youth and society. The "H" element in the "Moe culture" and the "lolita" in the services are like a double-edged sword, supporting the development of the "Moe culture", but at the same time, it is a potential source of instability.

### 3.4. Phantom Love and Dreams

In addition to the "H" element, another unstable factor lurking in "Moe culture" is the two-dimensional complex mentioned in the above sentence. A normal level of "Moe culture" can be a form of "psychotherapy", but if one becomes too absorbed in it, it can distort one's view of love and the world.

The essence of "Moe" is the search for the ideal girl, which contains a component of delusion. If you can't find it in reality, you have to look for it in two dimensions. However, what we get from "Moe" is only a feeling similar to love, and it is an eternal unrequited love. It is impossible to have a relationship with someone.

As long as you have been influenced by "Moe culture" for a long time, the two-dimensional screen signs that appear from anime can become more real than reality. When a man has a severe case of secondary sexual attraction, he will only feel romantic and sexual attraction to two-dimensional characters, and may lose all interest in the real opposite sex. In addition, severe secondary cons may develop an aversion to all real women. In November 2009, an OTAKU married the female protagonist of the romance game "Love Plus" (Love Plus: "Love Plus" (Loveplus) is a romantic simulation game released by Konami Digital Entertainment for the Nintendo DS on September 3, 2009.) in a church in Guam. It caused a huge stir in society.

ACG has always been an industry where a false world can be created. If nerds become too engrossed in the world of illusory love and dreams, their social skills and values may completely collapse. And when the number of such people increases, it will surely cause the attention of society. At that time, people will always look at "Moe culture" through colored glasses, which will be detrimental to the development of "Moe culture".

### 3.5. The Development of "Moe Culture" in China

Through the Internet, "Moe culture" has spread rapidly among Chinese youth. Now in China, "Anime SaiMoe Tournament" and forums about Moe are gradually appearing. However, the future of "Moe culture" in China is not positive. Chinese culture has always had a strong sense of independence and subject awareness. When it absorbs any one foreign culture, it selects it with a cautious attitude.

Furthermore, domestic manufacturers lack an understanding of the historical background and ideology of "Moe culture. Since they have not studied the business model for this, they simply imitate it. "Moe culture has strong ties with the history, culture, and social economy of Japan, the birthplace of "Moe culture". In addition, "Moe culture" is a cultural trait that was born for a small group of people, making it even more difficult for non-"Moe" people to recognize it. Strictly speaking, there is no environment in China that fosters "Moe" type OTAKU. There are only ACG fans influenced by the "Moe culture". Moreover, the study of "Moe culture" has no depth, only breadth. Therefore, I think that the development of "Moe culture" is not too far away in China.

## 4. The improvement of teaching "Japanese Culture" course

Japan's unique geographical conditions and long history have given birth to a distinctive Japanese culture. Cherry blossoms, kimono and haiku along with samurai, sake and Shintoism constitute two aspects of traditional Japan - the chrysanthemum and the sword. In Japan, there are the famous "three ways", namely the Japanese folkways of tea, flowers and calligraphy. However, when introducing Japanese culture, in addition to the above traditional elements, it is also important to teach the cultural elements that are popular in the current era.

The reason for the popularity of "Moe culture" in Japan is that Japanese people are under a lot of pressure. Japanese people naturally think of many ways to relieve stress, such as going to an izakaya for a drink after work, or going to sports games or watching sports in their spare time,

which is a way for many people to relieve stress. Looking at cute things can largely stretch the mood and relieve stress to a certain extent, so in a high-pressure society like Japan, Moe culture, as a highly accepted way to relieve stress, began to be given great play, and naturally a specific cultural form can be formed.

Another major reason for the emergence of "Moe culture" in Japan is that Japanese anime works do offer the possibility for Japanese "marriage victims" to engage in virtual relationships. In fact, if the cartoon characters in Japanese anime productions did not meet the criteria of being able to complete a relationship with the "marriage victims", the "Moe" culture would not have been created if there was only a demand for virtual relationships among the "marriage victims".

In order to improve the teaching effect of the course "Japanese Culture", let students understand the current situation of Japanese society, and understand the essence of Japanese culture more deeply, we can introduce "Moe Culture" in the classroom, through "Moe Culture" culture, students can understand the stressful situation of young people in Japanese society and the problems of marriage.

## 5. Summary

Since the last 20 years, "Moe culture" has been one of the new phenomena in the ACG industry and has been quite active in the ACG industry. And with the development of its own business model, the "Moe culture" has reached its peak. Japanese "Moe culture" can be roughly divided into seven categories: voice, race, action, accessories, clothing, identity, and personality, and "Moe culture" originated from ACG, but nowadays it guides the development of the whole ACG world, and has an impact on OTAKU. The impact on OTAKU is that OTAKU, unlike fans, do not simply appreciate Moe culture and get pleasure from it, but also become addicted to it to varying degrees, and Moe culture can gradually change these people's outlook on life values. Through the culture of Moe culture, we can understand the stressful life of young people in Japanese society and the problems of marriage, and in the process of teaching Japanese culture, we can introduce the "Moe culture" so that students can understand the current situation of Japanese society and have a deeper understanding of Japanese society. In the process of teaching Japanese culture, we can introduce the "Moe culture" so that students can understand the current situation of Japanese society and have a deeper understanding of the current thinking of the young generation and the new Japanese culture that is popular.

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