

RESEARCH REGARDING THE PRESENCE OF THE ANIME CULTURE'S PRODUCTS ON THE ROMANIAN MARKET AND THEIR IMPACT UPON THE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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Abstract: The anime products are the new trend on the international animation market, including Romania. These products are related with the anime culture, also a new cultural identity, coming from Japan, with a rapid spread all over the world. This study is a research on the Romanian consumer behavior regarding the following aspects of the new market of the anime's cultural products, such as: the target audience, the most watched animes, the importance of the correct subbing, the subbing preferences, the preference for anime related products. The results of this study lead us to some conclusions regarding the new challenges for the Romanian market, in the present time.

Keywords: anime, market, Romania, behavior, consumer

1. Introduction

Since 70s, the Japanese animation began to make its way into the top of the western consumer preferences, starting with the american ones. The Japanese animation is a style of animation, defined by its own artistic style and the richness of themes, being addressed to all age categories. This animation style is called "anime" (Steiff, 2010). The import of animes and the acquiring of licenses by the entertainment companies, from the anime producers in Japan, with the purpose of localization of the anime, by subtitling and dubbing, proved to be a very profitable business. The animes for youths and adults quickly made their way on the mass-media products market meant for the american entertainment, and those aimed for the children began to rival with the Disney productions and other western animations, which were and still are aimed, mostly, only for this age category (Denison, 2010). After 1989, along with the intensification of the intercultural exchanges between the European countries and America, anime also began to make its way into the top of the European consumer. A short while after 1989, the Romanian TV started to broadcast anime films such as: "Windaria", "Pheonix: Space Fire Bird", followed by anime series, such as: "Macron One", "Saber-Rider", "Sailor Moon", "Candy Candy", "Sandy Bell". In the late 90, appear other series, some of them being well known also in the present, like: "Pokemon", "Dragon Ball Z", "Inuyasha",

“SamuraiX”, “Full Metal Alchemist”. All these broadcasted animes were subtitled or dubbed in Romanian. In this period, not only the Romanian television broadcast anime series, but also many other TV channels, like ProTV. After 2000, also appears the TV channel specialized in animes broadcast, namely “A+”, which has resumed many of the anime series broadcasted by the other TV channels, adding some new ones, all of them being subtitled in Romanian. Afterwards, “A+” TV channel becomes “Animax”, enriching its programmes with J-Pop music, often being on the sound tracks of the broadcasted animes, as well as with other elements related to the cultural identity of the anime consumer.

2. The impact of the anime culture’s products upon the consumer behavior

The research method was a survey conducted following the ESOMAR guidelines, upon a lot of 422 persons, and the conclusions on these results. The first question(**Figure 1**) was: “*How familiar is the fact that anime is an animation style?*”

| KNOWLEDGE OF THE ANIME NOTION | RESPONSES |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Extremely familiar | 343 |
| Verry familiar | 53 |
| Moderate familiar | 12 |
| Little familiar | 4 |
| I do not know what anime is! | 4 |

Table 1. Knowledge of the anime notion(416 responses)(Source: author’s own survey)

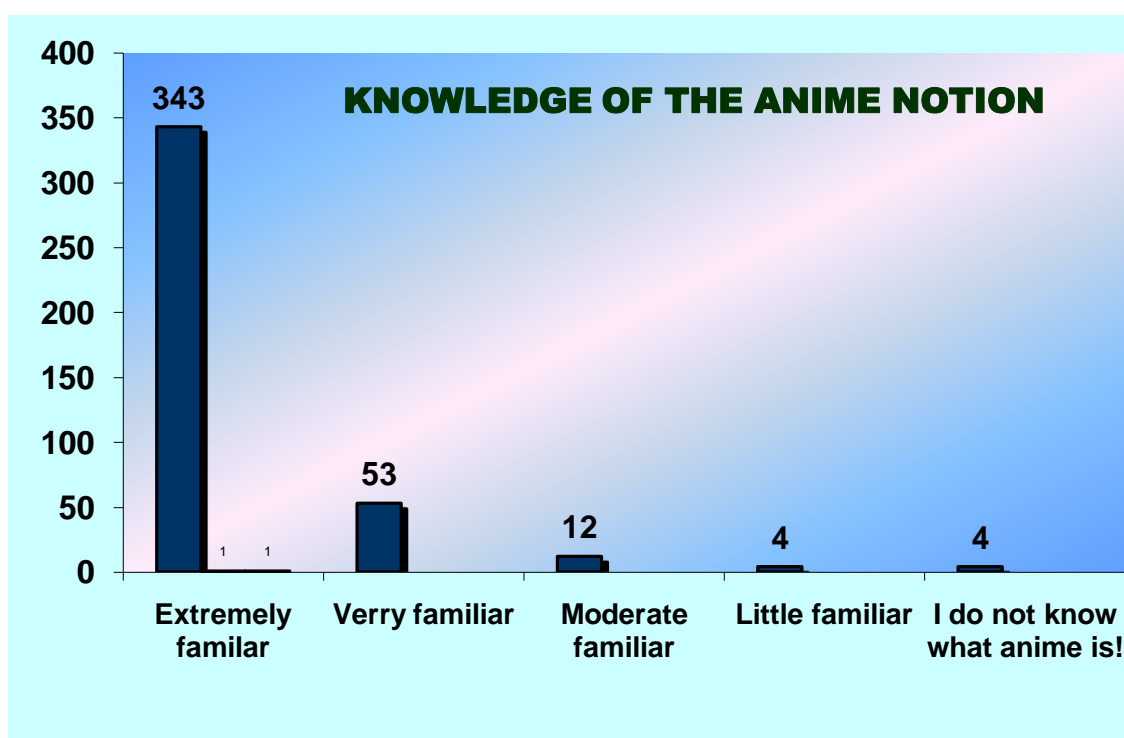


Figure 1. Knowledge of the anime notion (Source: Table 1)

The second question was: “Which are the animes watched as a child or as a teenager?” (**Figure 2**)
From the answers received to this question, we conclude that the most watched films were:
Pokemon, Naruto, Death Note.

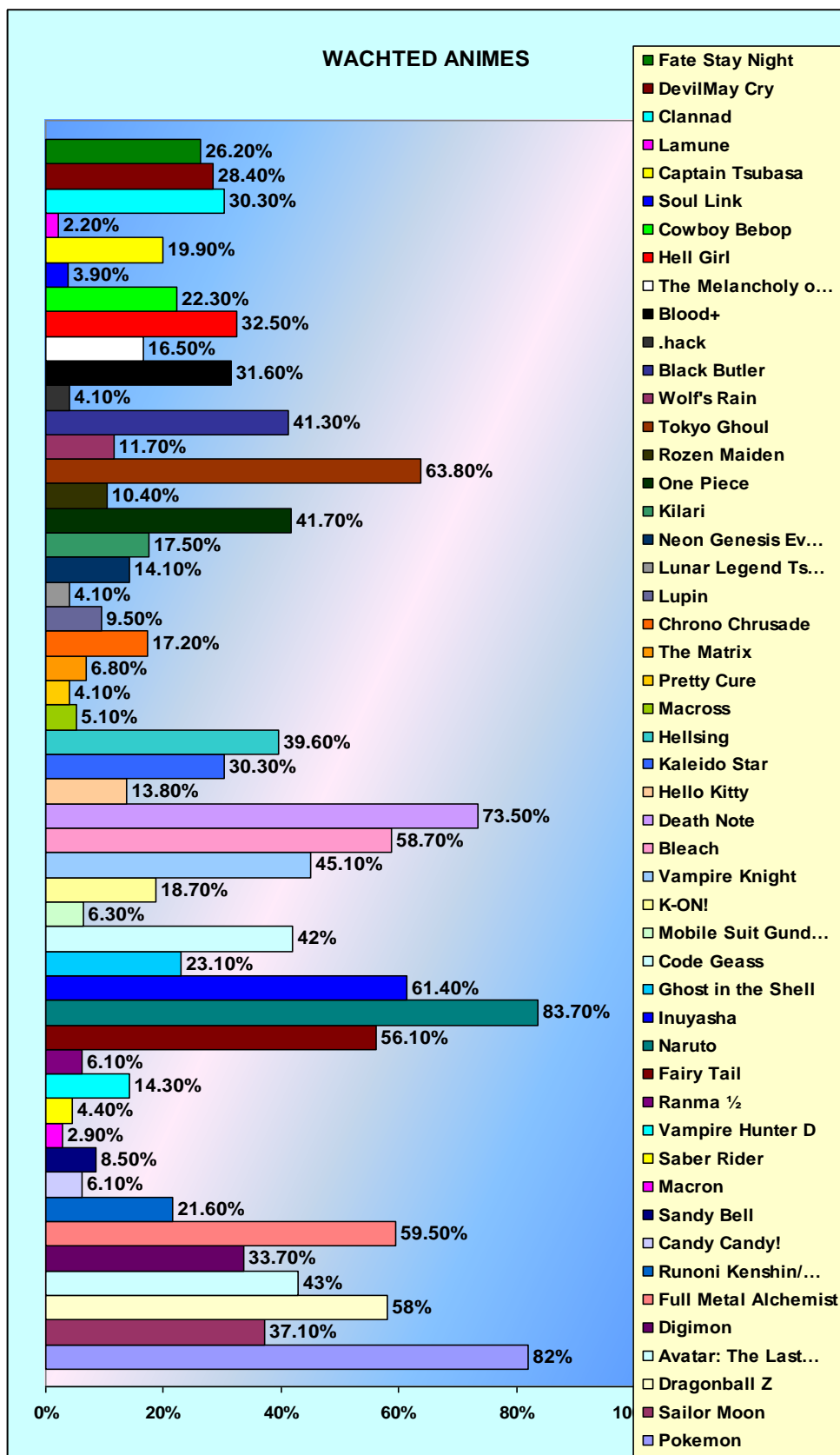


Figure 2. The most watched animes(Source: author's own survey)

Next question, “Which adjective would you associate with anime?” had 413 responses, the most used being: interesting, artistic, surprising, special.(**Figure 3**)

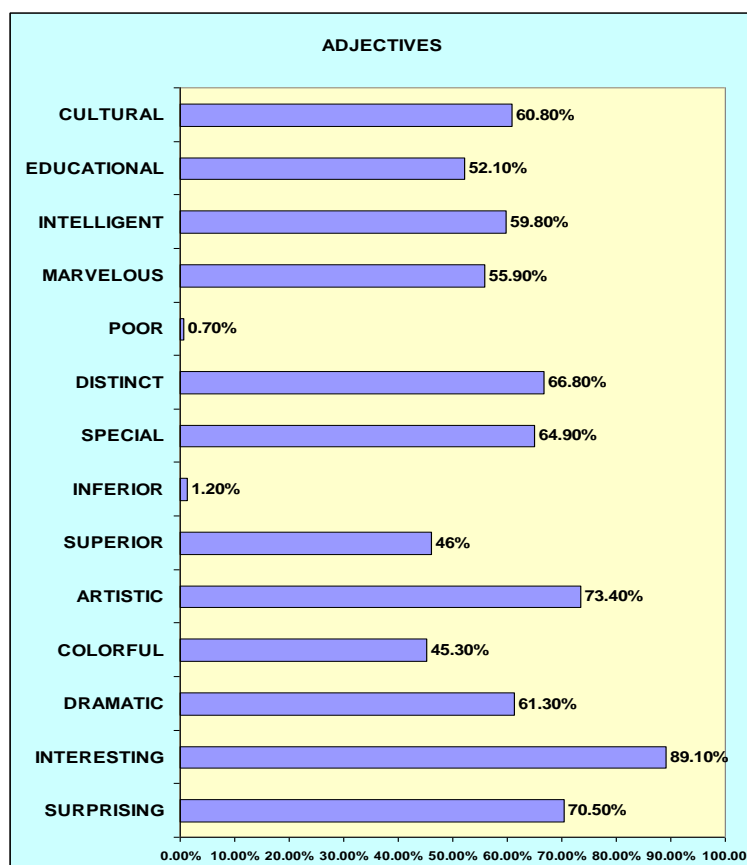


Figure 3. Adjective associated with anime(Source: author's own survey)

When they were asked about the importance of the correct subbing, they responded: from 412 people who answered this question, 277 found it to be very important, other 110 people answered

that it is of some importance, 16 said it is important, the rest of them, that is only 9 people didn't considered it important at all.(Figure 4)

SUBBING PREFERENCES

NUMBER PERCENTAGES

Table 2. The importance of the correct subbing(Source: author's own survey)

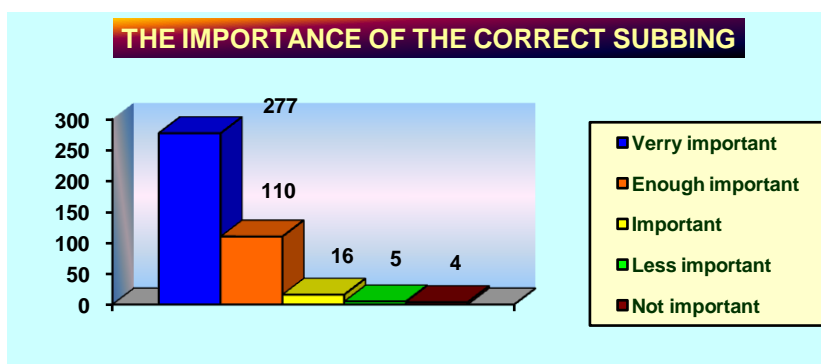


Figure 4. The importance of the correct subbing (Source: Table 2)

“Do you usually watch animes subtitled in Romanian or English”? (414 responses) From the results that although respondents who subtitled in English those who prefer the Romanian subbing, the percentages are close. Consequently, we conclude that about half of the respondents prefer the animes subtitled in Romanian, and because the anime subbing in Romania is done at the present time by fansubbing groups, it results a great interest for the localization of anime in our country.(Figure 5)

| Importance Level | NUMBER |
|------------------|--------|
| Verry important | 277 |
| Enough important | 110 |
| Important | 16 |
| Less important | 5 |
| Not important | 4 |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Table 3. | KNOWLEDGE OF THE FANSUBBING | NUMBER | PERCENTAGES |
| | Romanian | 192 | 46.4% |
| Subbing preference | English | 222 | 53.6% |

s(Source: author's own survey)

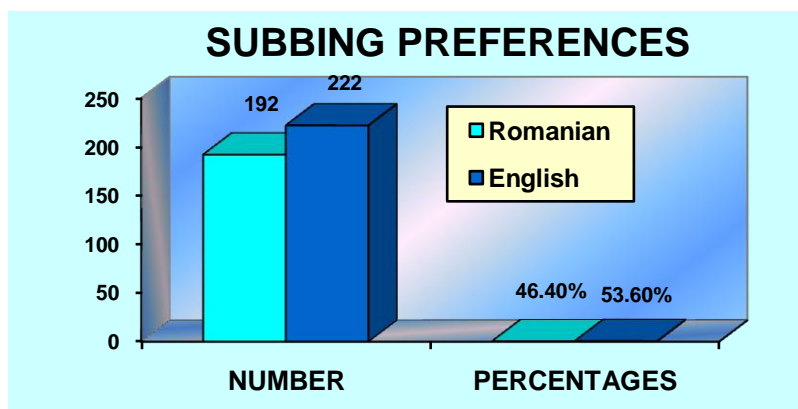


Figure 5. *Subbing preferences*(Source: Table 3)

Concerning the above, at the question "Do you have knowledge of the existence of fansubbing groups in Romania?", the answer given by the majority of the respondents was affirmative.

(Figure 6)

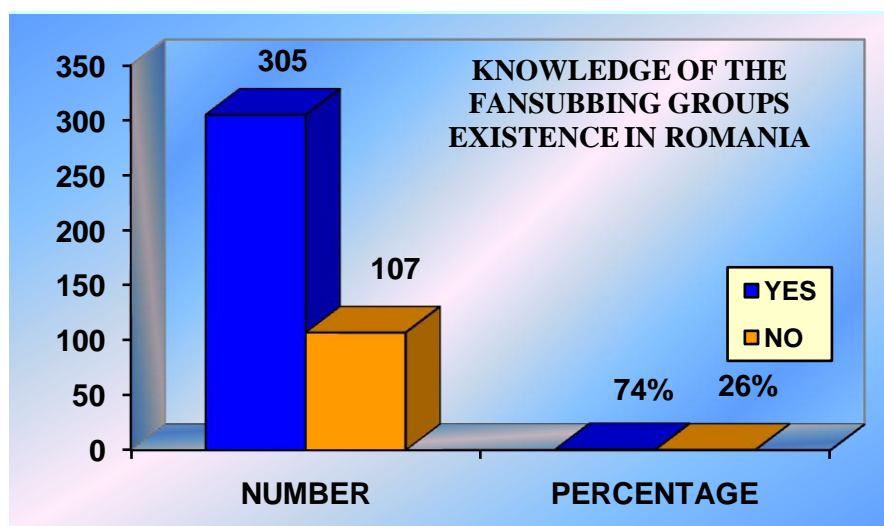


Figure 6. *Fansubbing groups existence in Romania*(Source: Table 4)

Table 4. GROUPS EXISTENCE IN ROMANIA

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Fansubbing groups existence | YES | 305 | 74% |
| | NO | 107 | 26% |

in Romania(Source: author's own survey)

"How often do you watch animes subtitled by the fansubbing groups from Romania?"(413 responses) From the total number of persons who answered this question, about 70% are watching to some degree the animes subtitled by the fansubbing groups from Romania, percent which comes close to those who have knowledge of the fansubbing groups(73%).

The three subcategories of those who prefer the subbing done by the fansubbing groups, have very close percentages, due to the external factors such as: free time, geographical location, age, and so on (**Figure 7**)

THE FREQUENCY OF WATCHING ANIMES SUBTITLED BY THE ROMANIAN FANSUBBING GROUPS

NUMBER PERCENT

| | | |
|--------------|-----|-------|
| All the time | 73 | 17.7% |
| Often enough | 122 | 29.5% |
| Sometimes | 93 | 22.5% |
| Never | 125 | 30.3% |

Table 5. The frequency of watching animes subtitled by the Romanian fansubbing groups(Source: author's own survey)

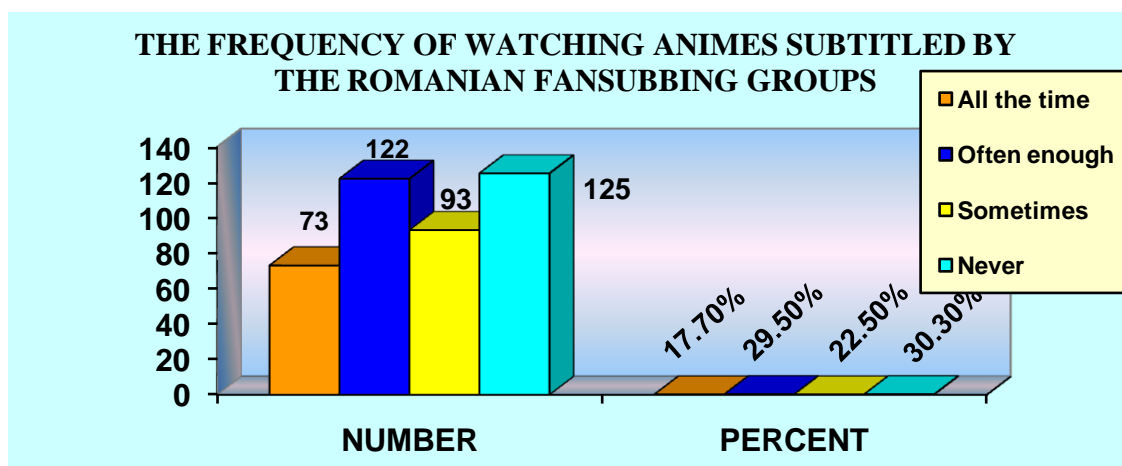


Figure 7. The frequency of watching animes subtitled by the Romanian fansubbing groups(Source: Table 5)

“Would you acquire anime Blu-ray/DVDs, officially subtitled by professionals, from stores?” From the 410 responses to this question, nearly half of them were positive. This fact, corroborated with the significant interest for the Romanian fansubbing groups, also with the existence of a great interest for the correct subbing, leads us to the conclusion that in our country, an anime market has already formed, more specifically, a well defined demand for the anime DVDs and Blue-rays, subtitled in Romanian.(**Figure 8**)

| PREFERENCE FOR ACQUIRING OFFICIALLY SUBTITLED ANIMES | OF | NUMBER | PERCENT |
|--|----|--------|---------|
| YES | | 200 | 48.8% |
| NO | | 210 | 51.2% |

Table 6.*Preference for acquiring the officially subtitled animes* (Source: author’s own survey)

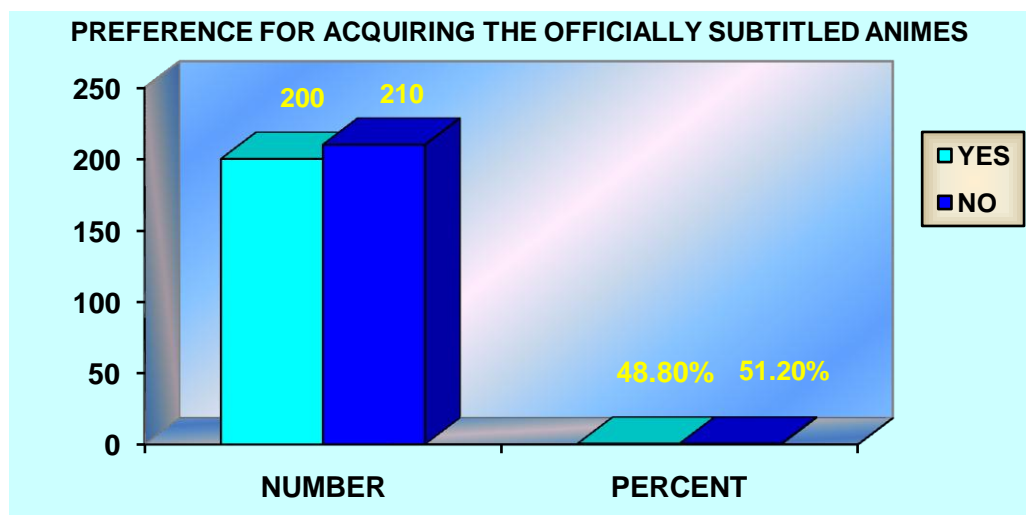


Figure 8. Preference for acquiring the officially subtitled animes (Source: Table 6)

As a consequence of the existence of the mentioned segment of market, there is also a demand for the anime related products. This confirms the assumption that, in most cases, the anime fan gains a cultural identity, fact which determines him to purchase these related products. The large majority of the respondents, namely 76.3% have acquired such products. Regarding the purpose of purchasing these derivatives, the majority stated that they have bought for them (308 of 410), which

reinforces the previous findings. This comes to underline the ramification and development of the anime consumer's needs also for the anime related products, all of these being in the context of the affirmation of the new cultural identity of anime.

“Have you ever purchased a product having a relationship with anime (manga, posters, figurines, cards, dolls, clothes and other products bearing the trademark, logo or other distinguishing feature that puts you in connection with anime)?”(414 responses)

| PREFERENCE FOR ANIME RELATED PRODUCTS | NUMBER | PERCENT |
|---------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| YES | 316 | 76.3% |
| NO | 98 | 23.7% |

Table 7.*Preference for anime related products*(Source: author's own survey)

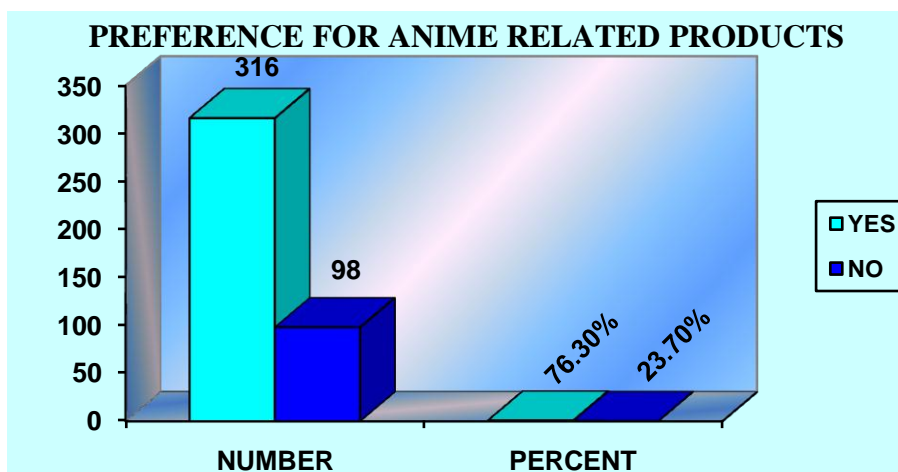


Figure 9.*Preference for anime related products*(Source: Table 7)

b) *“For what purpose have you bought the goods mentioned in the previous?”*(410 responses)

| THE PURPOSE FOR ACQUIRING ANIME RELATED PRODUCTS | NUMBER |
|--|--------|
|--|--------|

| | |
|---|-----|
| For me | 308 |
| To make a gift | 12 |
| Because a friend asked me to buy them for him | 1 |
| I did not buy | 89 |

Table 8.*The purpose for acquiring anime related products*(Source: author's own survey)

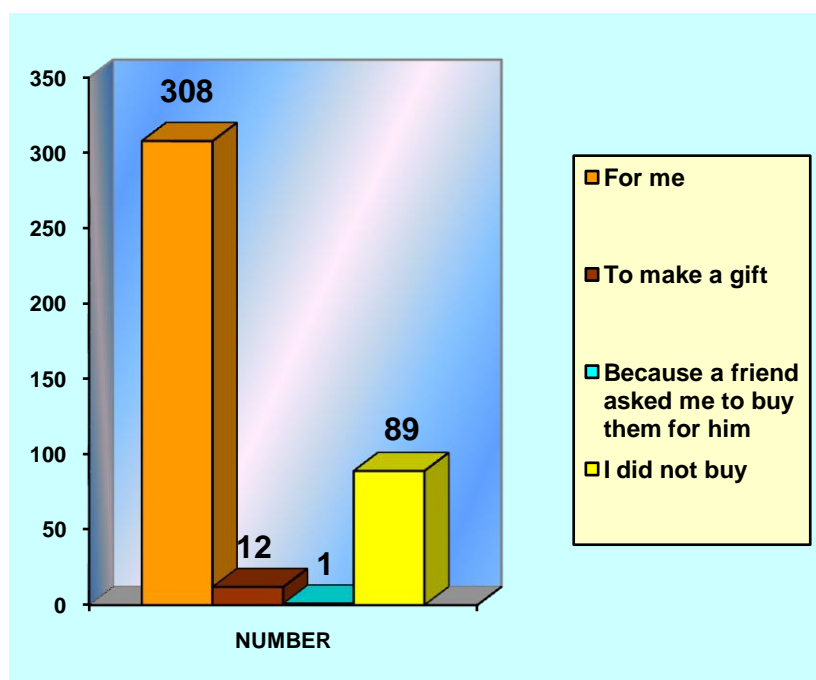


Figure 10. *The purpose for acquiring anime related products*(Source: Table 8)

The need for a more precise determination of the target group of consumers, led us also to the analyse of age and sex for the participants involved in this survey.

To the age related question have responded 409 participants, of which the large majority are young people, with ages between 18 and 25 years.(**Figure 11**) Regarding the sex, this indicator is of no significance, because the men and women percentages are nearly equal.(**Figure 12**)

“In what age group do you belong?”(409 responses)

| AGE GROUPS OF THE RESPONDENTS | NUMBER |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Between 18 and 25 years | 365 |
| Between 25 and 30 years | 35 |
| Over 30 years | 9 |

Table 9. *Age groups of the respondents* (Source: author's own survey)

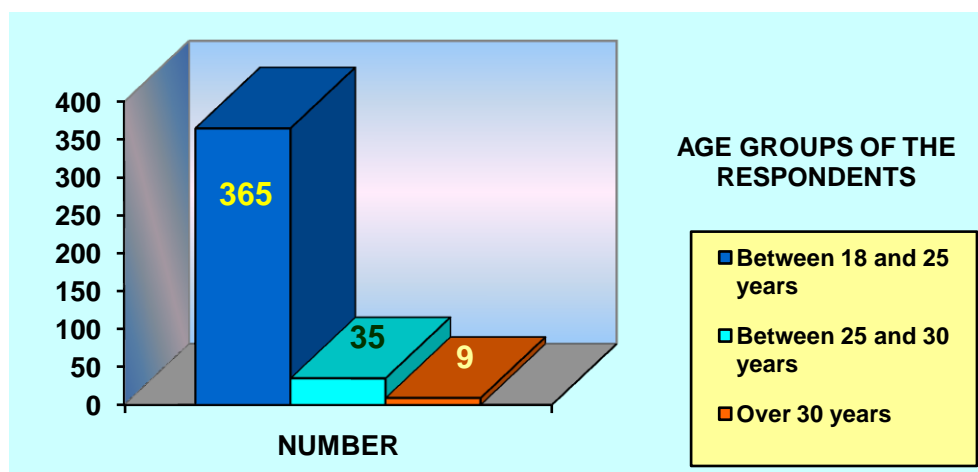


Figure 11. *Age groups of the respondents* (Source: Table 9)

| SEX OF THE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS | NUMBER | PERCENT |
|--------------------------------|--------|---------|
| FEMALE | 204 | 49% |
| MALE | 212 | 51% |

Table 10. *Sex of the survey participants* (Source: author's own survey)

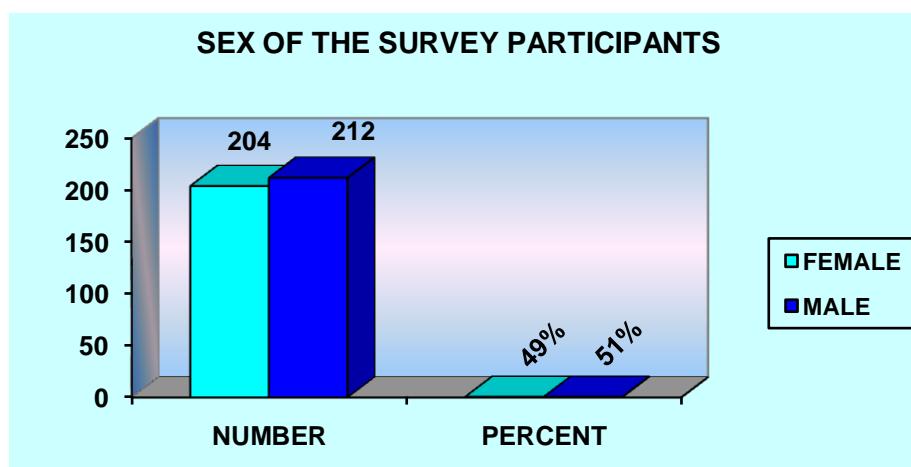


Figure 12. *Sex of the survey participants* (Source: Table 10)

3. Conclusions

This study states the existence of a new market segment, reserved for the products of the anime culture in Romania. More exactly, we have demonstrated the demand for the anime Blu-ray discs and DVDs, subtitled in Romanian, in short, the demand for the localization of animes in Romania, with the purpose to legalize this localization so that these products to be presented on the shelves, in stores, among the other mass-media products, like the films or series subtitled in Romanian.

As a result, it is necessary and beneficial for the Romanian consumer, that the companies in charge of subtitling or doubling the mass-media products, to acquire licenses from the Japanese producers of anime. It is well known that these licenses are not so expensive and the costs of their acquiring will be easily amortized by the sales prices of the Romanian market localized products, a market which already exists, as we have demonstrated.

In this regard, there is the example of other countries, in which this investment was very successful, such as America, where, even before this market segment was established and discovered, Japanese animation products made their own place in the top of the American consumer preferences.

We have to remember that in 2005, over 60% of the world animation products were produced in Japan(JETRO), the anime being already known, since then, in many European countries, including Romania.

New data show that (JETRO) on the anime products market in America, sales figure in 2009 was estimated at 2.741 trillion dollars, which demonstrates the profitability of the investment in such products.

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