

How has the Rise of the Anime Industry Influenced Economic Development Opportunities in China?

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Abstract

Animation has steadily grown and emerged as a significant sector of the cultural business in recent years. By sorting out relevant literature, this article focuses on the impacts of the growth of the animation industry on China's economy, clarifies the concept of it, its growth models, as well as the regional differences in its development, and summarizes the impacts of its growth.

The research findings show that the animation industry can lead to new consumption trends and drive the expansion of related industries, thus having an impact on economic development. In response to the view that "the disadvantages of the growth of the animation industry outweigh the advantages", this article holds that the position of the industry in the international market competition has been continuously enhanced. Seizing the international animation market is of great significance for the progression of the cultural economy. Therefore, this article believes that some blind consumption behaviors in animation consumption are not sufficient to become factors that hinder the development of the animation industry. To promote the development of China's animation industry, this article focuses on analyzing the

existing problems in it, including the insufficient development of original comics, the inadequate support of relevant policies, and the relatively backward animation technology. Three countermeasure recommendations are presented in this article. Firstly, attach great importance to the importance and create a favorable social environment for its development. Secondly, the government should increase the intensity of policy support and provide preferential fiscal and tax policies. Thirdly, promote technological development and innovation and cultivate top talents in the animation industry. The research in this article attempts to draw more attention from all sectors of society and scholars to the animation industry by studying its impact on China's economic development and providing useful references for relevant departments to formulate policies and promote the high-quality development of the animation industry.

Keywords

Animation industry; Economy; Culture

Introduction

The anime industry is a new anime variety that takes 'creativity' as the core, animation, and comics as the form of expression (Fan Zhou & Chu Yuqi, 2012). Compared with developed countries, the Chinese anime industry developed

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relatively late and still had a lot of room for improvement in animation script creation, technical innovation, talent cultivation, and other aspects. The 14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of Cultural Industries clearly states that cultural enterprises institutions and individuals are encouraged and supported to strengthen original content and promote the creation and production of cultural products such as animation, creative design, and arts and crafts. China's animation industry has a huge market. With the support of national policies and the continuous growth of market demand. According to the 2024-2030 China animation industry market research and investment strategy research report statistics, as of 2023, the total scale of the industry market has reached hundreds of billions of yuan, which not only shows the strong attraction of the animation industry in the Chinese market but also indicates its huge growth potential in the future. Therefore, this paper focuses on how the advancement of the animation industry affects China's economy, and the existing problems and provides useful references for future development of the industry.

Literature review

Concept of the animation industry

Some Scholars have explained the concept of the animation industry. Zhao Baochun (2023) believed that animation, as the name implies, is a combination of animation and manga, by using dynamic digital synthesis technology, mental space technology, high-tech optical material technology, etc. It can add static cartoons to dynamic, blend in some life details, and give us a kind of beautiful visual enjoyment.

The animation industry is highly innovative, penetrating, extensive, and inclusive. The form of animation industry is divided into tangible and intangible forms. The tangible entity mainly involves cultural landscape, animation toys, animation tourism, theme parks, etc., while the intangible form of animation mainly refers to film and television animation works and so on. As the industry developed, the industrial chain continued to extend, the industrial form continued to enrich, and the integration with

other industries produced a more profound social impact.

The development of the animation industry

Spatial development differences in the animation industry

Due to the differences in regional economic growth and industrial structure, the foster of the animation industry in different regions of China is very different. Hu Yu and Wang Yifan (2020) quantitatively measured the spatial distribution of China's animation industry while comparing the comprehensive strength and agglomeration level of its development in ten key cities, and deconstruction the regional agglomeration mode of China's animation industry as well as its key influencing factors, and concluded that China's animation industry presents a trend of diffusion of design and creation and concentration of derivative exploitation. Key cities play a crucial role in the development phase of the animation industry. There is a significant agglomeration effect observed, with a notable correlation between the level of industrial concentration and the quality of improvement. Additionally, the concentration of creative talent and the support provided by key element platforms are critical components of this growth. Furthermore, the strength of the industry advantage model substantially influences the regional industry's development dynamics.

He Zhaohui (2021), studied the spatiotemporal pattern of China's provincial animation industry and found that large-scale regions of China's provincial animation industry showed a trend of agglomeration in space. After the animation industry entered the transition stage, the product quality was improved, and the exploitation pattern of "one belt and two pieces" took the first shape. Zhang Xuanyuan (2023) studied the urban distribution pattern of China's animation industry and discovered that China's animation industry is highly concentrated in economically developed cities and regions, that is, there is a positive correlation between the development degree of the animation industry and the city's economy, culture, talent and business environment. In different areas, there were significant differences in the urban agglomeration of the animation

industry growth, and regional/urban agglomeration between differences is obvious.

Some scholars have studied the spatial distribution of the animation industry in other countries. Hu Minghang (2023) made an in-depth study of the exploitation status and characteristics of the Japanese animation industry from three aspects: the spatial aggregation of the Japanese animation industry, the influencing factors of the spatial accumulation of the animation industry, and the innovation mode of the Japanese animation industry. His research results show that the Japanese animation industry agglomeration presents the spatial characteristics of 'One major and three minor' with 'Tokyo and its surrounding areas are the main centers, while Kitakyushu, Hokkaido, Kyoto, and Osaka are the secondary centers'.

The Animation Industry Development Model

The animation industry's development mode is directly related to its development prospects. Scholars pay close attention to it. Through literature review, scholars have conducted in-depth research on this topic from different perspectives, such as the perspective of industrial economic expansion, the perspective of industrial integration and cluster value chain, the perspective of cross-border integration, the perspective of digital economy progress, and so on. The change of research perspective is deeply affected by the background and current situation of the growth of the animation industry.

Liu Wei (2007) studied the development model of the animation industry in Guangdong from the perspective of industrial economic development. The research found that Guangdong should choose the industrial development model "driven by broadcasting and integrating resources". Under this model, the original resources of Guangdong's television media, broadcasting platforms, and the advantages of network marketing can be fully utilized to guide market supply and improve broadcasting efficiency. Meanwhile, this model can also accelerate the shaping of animation images, reflect the value of resource integration, increase the total industrial

revenues shared by all links, and promote the healthy growth of the industry. Cheng Qian and Huang Yan (2013), from the perspectives of industrial convergence and the value chain of industrial clusters, analyzed the development model and policies of the industry in Hangzhou by using the case analysis method. They believed that the animation industry is a comprehensive industry that integrates science and technology, culture, tourism, and other industries. The exploitation of the animation industry must rely on new models such as the integration of animation and network media as well as the integrated growth of animation and the tourism industry.

Qin Jie and Yu Hong (2021) studied the development model of China's animation industry from the perspective of cross-border integration. According to the article, under the background of media convergence in the Internet age, anime dissemination presents characteristics such as freedom, intertextuality, and rapid effectiveness. The full-industry-chain development of animation has been continuously promoted. The animation industry has gradually expanded into traditional industries such as the toy industry, the tourism industry, and the catering industry, and has derived into fields like games, novels, and television, showing a diverse cross-border integration development model. The authors believe that the development model of China's animation industry needs innovation. It is necessary to take animation IP as the core and promote effective interaction and integration between the animation field and other fields.

Qiu Guobin, et al. (2024) studied the development model and strategy of Jiangxi's animation industry from the perspective of digital economy exploitation. The author constructed the evaluation index system from the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and challenges of the growth of the animation industry. Using the SWOT-AHP analysis method, the author found that the Jiangxi animation industry is suitable to choose the WO reversal development mode, that is, to use external opportunities to overcome its disadvantages. The author suggests taking

strategies such as enhancing the well-known IP of the Jiangxi animation industry, exploring the potential market, increasing the investment in technological innovation and actively participating in domestic competition.

The influence of the development of the animation industry

The animation industry has become an indispensable part of people's daily lives in the digital media era, with a huge consumer market and a large number of job opportunities, showing huge industrial value and exerting an increasingly profound influence on cultural evolution, urban renewal, and economic boom.

The cultural influence on the development of the animation industry

From a cultural perspective, the animation industry is not only part of the entertainment industry but also an important carrier of cultural dissemination. It can overcome language and cultural barriers to convey stories, values, and traditional culture to global audiences. The animation industry plays an indispensable role in enhancing the country's cultural soft power. The influence of the animation industry on culture has got the scholars' approval.

The study conducted by Wu Jiachuan in 2018 discovered that Japanese animation had a favorable effect on the artistic literacy of middle school students. The dissemination of animation lowered the entry barrier for middle school students to learn painting and concurrently developed their observation and drawing abilities, enabling them to shift from animation to illustration, sketching, and watercolor painting. Nevertheless, the study also pointed out a distinct drawback of animation, that is, its aesthetic orientation is rather limited, mainly stemming from a fantasy worldview and leading to a relatively superficial aesthetic preference that places more emphasis on visual appearances and is divorced from reality. In 2018, Sun Jiahui investigated the subconscious ideology of Japanese animation and its influence on Chinese youth, affirming that the "subconscious ideology" incorporated in the animation culture has the potential to exert a subtle impact on young people.

In 2020, Yuan Yaoyu carried out research on the impact of the animation cultures of the United States and Japan. He/she generalized the current content and features of the animation cultures of the two countries and probed into the reasons for their extensive popularity within China and the elements therein that merit our learning and emulation. At the same time, the influence of the current animation cultures of the United States and Japan on contemporary Chinese adolescents and the general public was presented, which encompassed both positive and negative aspects. It was proposed in the article that an animation culture system in our country should be constructed.

Heng Jing (2020) analyzed the impacts on the dissemination of red culture in Chongqing city, confirming that the animation industry plays an important role in enhancing the city's image. In the Revolutionary War era, Chongqing, with its unique geographical advantage, formed a rich historical cultural heritage of red culture. How to reasonably utilize its cultural advantages and accelerate the progression of regional culture-based industrial clusters, enrich the cultural market, is an important factor affecting the development of Chongqing. The author believed that utilizing the communication advantages of the animation industry to promote the integration of Chongqing's red culture and the industry has a positive significance for the overall growth of Chongqing in the future.

The influences of the animation industry on urban development

Many cities vigorously develop the animation industry and integrate it with local characteristics, urban culture, and so on to stimulate vitality, which means the development of the animation industry can empower the growth of cities.

Li Yuanrui (2022) took Kaifeng City, a central city in China, as the research object to study the influence of the animation industry on urban development. He held that the industry can reinforce and display the cultural connotations of the city and shape and spread the city's image. By comparatively analyzing the work styles and value connotations of the two animations "Iron-faced Lord Bao" and "Kaifeng Qitan", it was

verified that with the aid of animation, a dynamic dissemination carrier, it helps to highlight the cultural connotations of the city and promote the shaping of the city's image. In addition, it is beneficial to meeting the consumption demands of users and promoting urban economic growth. The animation industry is a new economic growth point in the advancement of Kaifeng City, including the authorized commercial marketing of animation brands and the design and exploitation of a series of original animation products that reflect the cultural characteristics of scenic spots.

Furthermore, given the actual problems existing in urban renewal, the author also put forward suggestions such as building the brand of the animation festival, accelerating the construction of the animation industrial park, innovating the industrial development model, and promoting the integration of animation and tourism projects.

The impacts of the animation industry on the economy

In the 21st century, the animation industry is another new economic growth point after the IT industry. Scholars have also carried out a lot of research on it. Yang (2016) proposed that, globally, the animation industry has long occupied a pillar position in developed countries such as Japan and the United States. According to statistics, in 2004, the total output value of global animation and its derivative peripheral products was over 500 billion US dollars. Japan's animation industry and its derivative products have surpassed many traditional manufacturing industries and become Japan's third-largest industry.

Zhao Jinwen (2010) concluded the research on the development of Hangzhou's animation industry. In this era when the low-carbon economy plays the main theme, based on its characteristics of small production but large industry, the animation industry has significant advantages compared with other high-energy-consuming and high-consumption industries. He put forward the problems and solutions existing in the industry in promoting the upgrading of the industrial structure and advocating the low-carbon economy.

Chen Saihua (2023) studied the development of the Guangxi ethnic animation industry from the perspective of the digital economy. The article believed that the Guangxi ethnic animation industry has achieved remarkable results. Guangxi's ethnic animation industry has developed to varying degrees in terms of enterprise scale, quantity and quality of works, and market dissemination, and its economic effects have become increasingly prominent. In 2020, the total income of Guangxi animation enterprises was 59.0022 million yuan, of which the income from operating animation products was 52.8699 million yuan, accounting for 89.61% (the income from independently developed animation products was 26.4933 million yuan, accounting for 44.90%); in 2020, the R & D expenditure of animation products of Guangxi animation enterprises totaled 18.9645 million yuan, accounting for 32.1% of the total income; there were 208 employees in animation enterprises, among which the proportion of R & D personnel was 58%.

Through a review of the literature, it is found that the animation industry has received relatively little research from domestic scholars. Judging from the search results on academic websites, domestic scholars have only gradually begun to pay attention since 2002. This is directly related to the relatively late start of the Chinese animation industry. This article has sorted out the conceptual connotations of the animation industry, the current development status of the animation industry (including development models and spatial differences), and its impacts. Overall, the animation industry has a positive impact on cultural dissemination, urban renewal, and economic and social progress. The increasing maturity provides a broader research space for related research. However, scholars' attention to the domestic animation industry is still insufficient at present. By studying the impact of the animation industry on China's economic growth, this article attempts to attract more attention and provide useful references for relevant departments to formulate policies and promote the industry.

Theoretical Analysis

With its innovative and creative expression methods, this industry not only promotes economic growth but also has a profound impact on other fields such as commodity sales, theme park construction, and the tourism industry. Diverse animation content attracts audiences of different age groups, thereby stimulating consumption desires and participation enthusiasm.

From the perspective of the total output value, the animation industry has a positive effect on economic growth.

Since 2013, the total output value of the animation industry in China has shown an upward trend, increasing from about 80 billion yuan to nearly 250 billion yuan. The total value of this industry experienced some fluctuations from 2020 to 2021 but recovered to nearly 300 billion yuan in 2023 and has a trend of accelerating growth. It could be said that the animation industry has contributed a significant positive effect to the overall output value of the entertainment industry. With its innovative and creative expression methods, this industry not only promotes economic growth but also has a profound impact on other fields such as commodity sales, theme park construction, and the tourism industry. Diverse animation content attracts audiences of different age groups, thereby stimulating consumption desires and participation enthusiasm.



From the perspective of the consumers, the animation industry leads young people to new consumption.

Since the 21st century, China's economy and society have developed rapidly, with frequent economic trade, and cultural exchanges at home and abroad. Coupled with the extensive application and rapid advancement of the

Internet in China in recent years, the attention of Chinese young people has increased rapidly.

From the perspective of consumer subjects, according to the data of the Prospective Industry Research Institute, from 2016 to 2023, the scale of Chinese animation lovers showed an increasing trend. In 2023, the scale of Chinese pan-animation lovers exceeded 500 million. From the perspective of age distribution, the age distribution of Chinese animation lovers shows obvious characteristics of youthfulness. The proportion of animation lovers under 18 years old is 19.2%. The proportion of users aged 18 - 24 is 43.8%. The proportion of users aged 25 - 34 is 26.1%. The proportion of users over 35 years old is 13.9%. It can be seen that users aged 34 and below account for 86.1% of all animation lovers.

From the perspective of consumption content, currently, young people mainly consume in three areas: purchasing animation-related products, video memberships, and participating in offline activities. Video memberships mainly include most of the imported foreign animation videos. Offline activities include large, medium, and small comic exhibitions, pop-up stores, and themed restaurants.

From the perspective of consumption trends, currently, the consumption of young people in the animation-related industry shows an irreversible growth trend. The reason is that current young consumers have a higher pursuit of the spiritual and cultural level than ever before. Young people's ideas and aspirations for individuality, spiritual independence, self-worth pursuit, and self-satisfaction have become an important reason for the popularity of offline activities such as comic exhibitions and IP pop-up stores.

The controversy about the animation industry: Should it be developed or abandoned?

The controversies regarding the animation industry mainly involve two aspects of negative impacts. Firstly, some malicious organizations attempt to impose their value systems on the consumers of Chinese animation products. As an element of the cultural industry, animation

products often carry certain cultural values. Animation products can offer audiences an opportunity to relieve stress and vent emotions. Some capitalists utilize the form of animation to convey negative emotions such as bullying, hedonism, and extreme pessimism to consumers. In such circumstances, the values and behaviors of the audience are prone to be influenced by animation products. Secondly, the main audience is the youth group. Many studies have found that there is blind herd behavior in the consumption of animation products. Why does the youth group exhibit blind herd behavior in anime consumption?

Initially, the development of the animation industry has led to a significant tendency of symbolization in consumer culture. When teenagers consume animation derivatives, they not only pursue their practical value but also place more emphasis on their cultural values and spiritual enjoyment. This symbolized consumption pattern is likely to trigger blind herd behavior.

Secondly, through the perfect combination of visual and auditory elements, animation works can fulfill teenagers' expectations for perfect and ideal images, thereby developing their non-logical thinking and imagination to a certain extent. This psychological sense of satisfaction makes teenagers more prone to herd behavior.

Last, the exploitation of the animation industry and the cross-border integration with the pan-entertainment industry have enabled the wide dissemination of anime culture among teenagers. When teenagers consume anime products, they are not only purchasing commodities but also participating in a cultural activity. This social and cultural context also prompts them to exhibit herd behavior.

The point of view of this article: the positive effect of the development of the animation industry is greater than the negative effect, should seek advantages and avoid disadvantages

From the perspective of Marxist dialectical materialism, everything has two sides. Therefore, we should dialectically view the positive and

negative impacts of the development of the animation industry.

Firstly, the animation industry's position in the international market competition is constantly rising. According to the data announced at the Cultural Finance Forum, a parallel forum of the 2023 Financial Street Forum Annual Conference, by 2023, the global animation output value will have exceeded 250 billion US dollars; if the output value of the derivative industries is included, it has reached around 500 billion US dollars. In 2023, the total output value of the Chinese animation industry exceeded 300 billion yuan.

At the same time, we should also note that these data also reflect that the international competition in the animation industry is becoming increasingly fierce. Many developed countries are vying for the important "piece of cake" of the animation industry. As a large country with a population of 1.4 billion, China cannot hand over the huge animation industry market to Western countries.

Therefore, although there are some controversies and it is indeed necessary to be vigilant against the risk that some unscrupulous merchants use animation products to convey bad values and harm the youth group, we should still grasp the main contradiction and not completely deny the value of animation industry. In particular, as there is an expansion of the audience groups in the animation industry, the impact of it on the economy is deepening day by day. At the same time, we should strengthen the domestic animation industry system, continuously enrich the cultural connotations of the domestic animation industry, enhance the cultural influence on domestic young consumers, and minimize the encroachment of certain bad cultures of international animation products.

Analysis of the problems existing in the development of the Chinese animation industry

The development of the original animation is insufficient.

From the current situation of the comic market, the starting point of original comics in our country is relatively late, and the progression

process is rather slow. Moreover, its development space has been squeezed to a certain extent. The causes of this phenomenon are complex and diverse, and two main aspects are particularly worthy of attention. On the one hand, original comics have been deeply influenced by the phenomenon of "comic adaptation" of online literature. In recent years, some popular online literary works, with their huge fan bases and mature narrative frameworks, have quickly occupied a place in the anime market through the form of "comic adaptation". These works often have relatively high popularity and influence, thus to a certain extent having a squeezing effect on the living space of original comics. On the other hand, the rapid advancement of the Internet has also provided unprecedented convenient conditions for the introduction of foreign comic works. With the acceleration of the globalization process, domestic consumers' exposure and understanding of foreign comic works are increasing day by day. Many consumers have shown strong interest and preference for the drawing techniques, plot design, and other aspects of foreign comic works. This trend undoubtedly intensifies the competitive pressure between domestic original comics and foreign comic works.

Relevant supporting policies are insufficient.

In the current comic market structure, the development of original comics is facing many difficulties, among which the insufficient relevant supporting policies is a key factor. Compared with some countries with developed animation industries, there is an obvious gap in the supporting policies for the animation industry in China. On the one hand, the government's capital investment in original comics is relatively limited. The creative process of original comics requires a large amount of capital support. Every link from story conception, and character design to picture drawing is inseparable from the guarantee of capital. However, the current investment of the government in this regard fails to fully meet the development needs of the industry, resulting in many original comic creators facing financial constraints in the creative process, which limits the improvement

of the quality and market promotion of their works. On the other hand, the policy orientation is not clear enough. In guiding the development direction of the animation industry, the government has not fully highlighted the important position of original comics, so more market resources have flowed to some popular "comic adaptations" of online literary works or foreign imported comic projects, further squeezing the living space of original comics. In addition, there are also deficiencies in the policies to support the cultivation of original comic talents.

Domestic animation technology is relatively backward.

China's animation technology has long been criticized by the animation market and is considered to be relatively backward. This phenomenon is mainly manifested in the following three aspects:

Firstly, from a technical perspective, the technical level of Chinese animation is relatively low. Specifically, this is shown in multiple aspects such as the level of technological innovation, special effects production technology, and picture quality. Compared with developed countries, there are obvious gaps in these areas for Chinese animation. Such technical deficiencies not only affect the overall presentation effect of animation works but also limit the competitiveness of China's animation industry in the international market.

Secondly, the shortage of outstanding animation industry talents is also an important restricting factor. This is mainly reflected in the scarcity of talents such as excellent story writers, key animators, and animators. These talents are the core forces in the creation process of animation works, and their professional qualities and innovation abilities are directly related to the quality and level of animation works. However, due to the imperfection of the talent cultivation system and the insufficiency of the industry's attractiveness, the animation industry is facing severe challenges in terms of talent.

Thirdly, the lack of themes and creativity is also a prominent problem faced by China's animation industry. Currently, many themes of China's

animation industry are derived from traditional stories and legends, lacking in-depth thinking and construction in aspects such as plotlines, character settings, and worldviews. This excessive dependence on traditional themes not only limits the innovativeness and diversity of animation works but also affects the attractiveness and influence of China's animation industry in the international market.

The countermeasures and suggestions for promoting the animation industry to drive China's economic development

Attach great importance to the animation industry and create a good social environment for the development of the animation industry.

The government and animation enterprises should attach great importance to the in-depth research work on the domestic and foreign animation markets and comprehensively grasp the latest trends in consumer demands and market development. Through scientific data analysis and market research methods, they should accurately capture the changes in the animation market and predict future trends, to ensure continuous and healthy expansion. In this process, the government and animation enterprises can work hand in hand to jointly promote the innovation and upgrading of the industry, enhance its international competitiveness, and make efforts to develop domestic original comics.

The government can increase policy support and provide preferential fiscal and tax policies for the development of the industry.

The government should formulate a series of fiscal and tax preferential policies to support the development of the industry. For example, through various means such as tax reduction and exemption and providing operation subsidies, it can effectively reduce the economic burden of animation enterprises and thereby enhance their market competitiveness. In addition, the government can establish a special progression fund for the animation industry to finance outstanding animation projects with innovation and market potential. For instance, it can finance some domestic original comics to be adapted into films or to go international. Such measures can

not only promote the prosperity of the animation industry but also stimulate the emergence of more excellent animation works and inject new vitality into the continuous and healthy development of the industry.

Promote technological development and innovation in the animation industry, and cultivate top talents in the animation industry.

The government can strengthen the technological research, expansion, and innovation of the animation industry, and promote the upgrading and iteration of animation production technologies. At the same time, it can increase the efforts in cultivating animation talents. By establishing animation-related schools, carrying out professional training, and other means, a group of animation talents with innovative thinking and professional skills can be cultivated, and the number of original comics can be increased. In addition, an incentive mechanism for animation talents can also be established. For example, national-level competitions for commendation or financial subsidies can be held to attract and retain outstanding talents.

Conclusion

This article focuses on the impact of the animation industry on China's economic development. Based on the existing research results, this article analyses the positive role of the animation industry in economic growth from the perspectives of the total output value of the industry and the animation consumer groups. At the same time, this article analyses some controversial issues, the advantages and disadvantages of the animation industry, and the future development direction in combination with real-world observations.

This article draws the following research conclusions through the above analysis: As an important part of the cultural industry, the animation industry has an important and positive impact on China's economic development. However, due to reasons such as the late start of the animation industry's advancement, backward animation technology, insufficient government policy support, and a lack of top talents, there is

still a large gap between China's animation industry and Western developed countries at present, and there is still much room for improvement in the future. Therefore, this article proposes the following countermeasures and suggestions: First, attach great importance and create a favorable social environment for the development of the animation industry. Second, the government should increase policy support and provide fiscal and tax preferential policies for the development of the animation industry. Third, promote the technological progress and innovation of the animation industry and cultivate top talents in the animation industry.

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