Evolving Trends of Hot Spots in Chinese Animation Subculture Research: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract：With the development of Chinese society, animation subculture has increasingly garnered attention from scholars. Methodologically, this article employs Citespace to conduct a bibliometric analysis of 321 documents sourced from the CNKI database, systematically identifying research hotspots, developmental history, and frontier fields within the realm of Chinese animation subculture from 2005 to 2024. Three key findings emerge from this analysis: (1) The number of published works exhibited significant fluctuations over time, forming the initial period, the first peak period, the second peak period, and the decline period; (2) The scholarly attitudes towards animation subculture have evolved over time, transitioning from negativity and uncertainty to positivity and affirmation; (3) Animation subculture and fan communities have progressively shifted from niche topics in earlier years to mainstream subjects of interest. Furthermore, this article discusses the advantages and limitations of bibliometric analysis within this field and offers predictions for future research hotspots and ideas.

Keywords: animation fandoms, animation subculture, Citespace, bibliometrics

1.Background

Fan groups of film and television animation are extensively studied within the fields of culture and media. These groups are often characterized as active viewers who possess a deeper understanding of the works than the work creators themselves. In contrast to ordinary viewers, many fan groups exhibit a profound dedication to their cherished works Barretta 2016). This dedication is manifested in various ways, including in-depth discussions, interpretations, and the creation of related literature and art. (Hills 2002). he cherished works for these fan groups is diverse, encompassing cartoons, movies, operas, and even sports programs (Smith 2023). The cherished works for these fan groups is diverse, encompassing cartoons, movies, operas, and even sports programs. The people that have same beloved works collectively form distinct fan communities and active audiences for these works spontaneously gather to establish communities known as "fandoms." While the number of fandoms is vast, they often share a common trait: a particular devotion to specific works or hobbies (Gray 2007). furtherly, these fan groups form subcultures within their communities that are distinct from mainstream culture. Cultural differences and the rich tapestry of artistic works from around the globe have given rise to various subcultural groups in different countries. For instance, in the United States, such as fandoms of *Star Trek* and *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic* have spontaneous gathered and form some huge subculture groups (Michael 1994; Patrick 2019).

These fans are often eager to spontaneously generate fan works within their subcultural communities. Generally, their methods of creation and interaction encompass the production of fan art (visual artworks inspired by existing characters in they cherished works), the writing of fan fiction (creative narratives based on they cherished works, typically featuring story elements that diverge from the original works), and role-playing (the act of embodying, dressing up as, and performing a specific role) (Kilian 2023).

In China, the subculture surrounding film and television animation emerged relatively late. Following the Chinese government's implementation of reform and opening up policy, East Asian animation, particularly from Japan, gained popularity in the country. As the fan base expanded, enthusiasts of these anime gradually congregated, forming corresponding subcultural groups (Zhou 2021). Among these, the larger anime subculture groups include works such as "Naruto" and "One Piece," which have garnered a wide audience and are colloquially referred to as "labourer's comics." The term "labourer's comics" is defined as works that attract non-animation enthusiasts, either due to the herd effect or other factors, ultimately resulting in a substantial viewing demographic. Generally, works exhibiting such characteristics can be categorized as "labourer's comics" (Lang 2015). This extensive fan base has naturally led to the formation of corresponding subcultural communities. Additionally, with the increasingly close exchanges among global netizens, many influential film and television animation works have gradually developed significant subculture groups in China, such as the adaptation of the *Harry Potter* series by Warner Bros. Entertainment in the United States and Japan's *Nintendo's Pokémon* series (Shen 2020).

The active participants within these subcultures exhibit remarkable enthusiasm and dedication to the works they cherish. For instance, during the early days, proactive civil society subtitle groups translated foreign language works at no cost, thereby reducing the barriers to accessing foreign works due to language challenges for people. This initiative facilitated the rapid growth of related subculture communities (Zhang 2010). In recent years, as the quality of local digital art production in China has improved, new subcultural communities centered around local animation have emerged, including groups derived from Qinshi Mingyue (Yang 2015). Moreover, with the swift advancement of digitalization and technological innovation, fan groups within China's ACGN and animation subcultures have begun to produce a substantial volume of fan works, which have gained popularity in the country. Such as some members of subculture have produced lots online novels based on established works (Wu 2023).

In the early years, the mainstream public in China exhibited fluctuating views on animation subculture and fan subculture groups. At times, the public praised these groups for their prosocial behaviors, while at other times, they expressed disgust for certain negative incidents (Dan 2023). During the initial stages of China's film, television, and animation industry development, some scholars suggested that entertainment-focused subculture groups could have detrimental effects on young people (Zhong 2017). However, with the industry's recent growth, an increasing number of Chinese scholars have begun to approach this issue more objectively, contemplating the underlying causes and potential positive implications. Furthermore, many scholars have recognized that examining subculture can provide insights into the psychological states, living conditions, and communication methods of certain segments of the Chinese population (Fang 2011). The studies can facilitate a deeper analysis of the causes of these phenomena, ultimately aiding in the improvement of social policies and enhancing overall societal happiness. Nevertheless, due to the relatively late emergence of animation subculture in China's mainstream consciousness, there

remains a lack of systematic bibliometric analysis in this field. Additionally, this topic is closely tied to the evolving social policy in China. Investigating the dynamic shifts in this area will contribute to a better understanding of mainstream attitudes toward animation subculture, thereby offering valuable insights into the transformations occurring within Chinese society.

2.Methods

2.1 Methods of analysis

The primary research method employed in this article is word frequency analysis within the context of bibliometrics. This method identifies significant keywords according keywords's frequency of occurrence, centrality and burst keywords. High-frequency keywords are indicative of key issues within the research field, while high centrality suggests that a keyword holds an important position in relation to other keywords or nodes. A greater centrality signifies a stronger association between the keyword and its related terms. Ultimately, this process yields a set of keywords characterized by both high frequency and high centrality for a specific research domain. Burst keywords are defined as those whose usage frequency experiences a rapid increase over a defined time interval. This trend reflects, to some extent, the prevailing topics, research frontiers, and developmental directions within the field during a particular period (Xue 2012). This study uses Citespace 6.3.R1 to analysis, which is a commonly used software for bibliometric analyses.

2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

This study exclusively analyses articles of published Chinese academic journal pertaining to the anime subculture. Excluded from this analysis are essays of published newspapers, non-academic essays, conference papers, and research articles of other non-journal publications, as well as any articles that do not align with the theme of anime subculture or are not written in Chinese.

2.3 Search Strategy

The data source for this study is the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), which serves as China's authoritative paper retrieval platform. The search timeframe extends from the establishment of the database until July 20, 2024. The search strategy was constructed using keywords pertinent to the research. Search strategy: (主题：ACGN 亚文化＋动漫亚文化＋ACG 亚文化）OR（主题：动画迷＋动漫迷＋动漫粉丝＋御宅族）. Ultimately, a total of 1,218 documents were retrieved. Following the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 548 dissertations, 14 conference papers, and 19 newspapers were excluded during the initial screening phase.In the subsequent re-screening phase, 158 articles, news reports, and non-academic essays irrelevant to the research topic were excluded based on an assessment of the titles and abstracts, resulting in a final inclusion of 321 documents in the study.
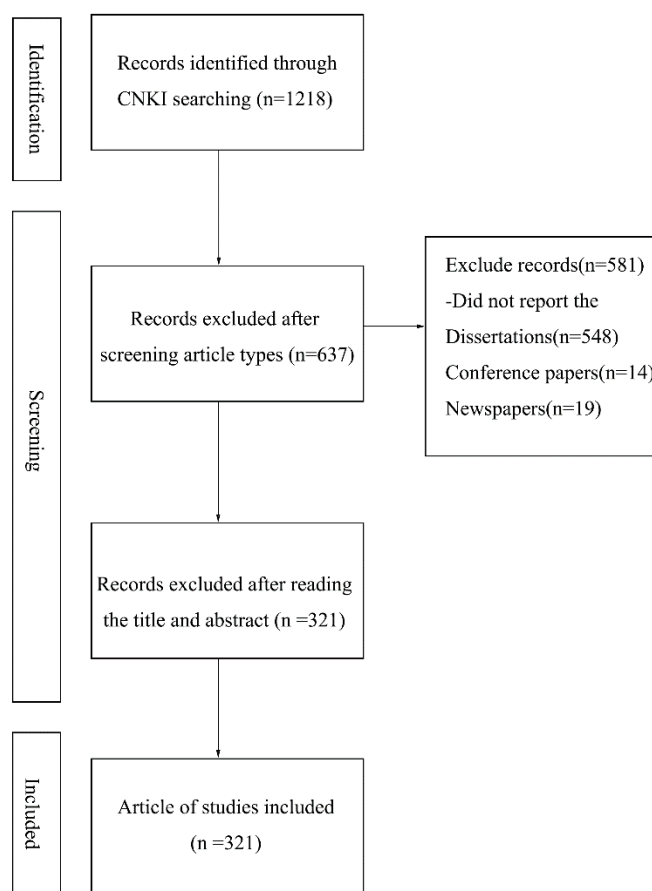
Figure 1. Flow diagram of the study process.

3. Results

3.1 Publishing trends

Through data analysis and the line graph of trends in the number of articles published (Figure 2), it can be concluded that the first article was published in 2005 and between 2005 and July 20, 2024, a total of 321 journal articles were published, averaging approximately 17 articles annually on related topics. Overall, the number of articles published in this field is relatively small, with fewer than ten articles published in some years. Consequently, the field animation subculture can be considered as a relatively underexplored research field. The publishing trend in this field can be categorized into four distinct stages: the initial period, the first peak period, the second peak period, and the decline period. The first stage spans from 2005 to 2010, marking the initial phase of research during which the topic officially entered the attention of scholars, with an average of about 6 papers published each year. The second stage, identified as the first peak period, occurs from 2010 to 2012, during which the annual publication rate increased to approximately 24 articles before declining to 15 in 2013. The third phase, extending from 2013 to 2022, is characterized as the second peak period, with an average of about 22 papers published annually. The fourth stage, the decline period, lasts from 2023 to 2024, during which the number of published papers returns to single digits. An analysis of all published articles indicates that from the publication of the first paper to the present, the volume of publications in this field has experienced significant fluctuations, and the research focus has shifted accordingly. However, considering the overall number of publications, this field is
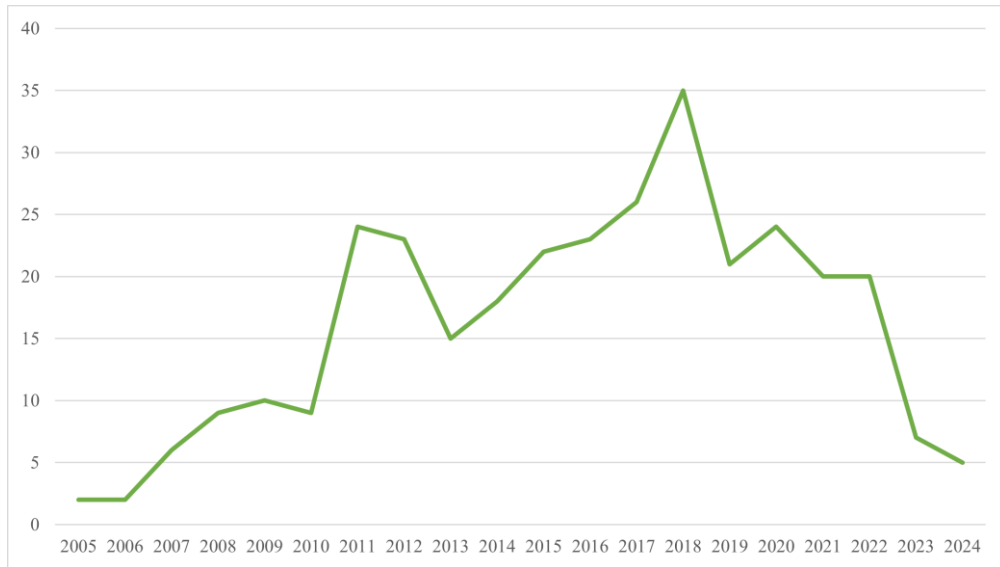
unnoticed in China.

Figure 2. Line graph of trends in the number of articles published.

3.2 Keyword analysis

Keyword analysis not only reveals the research focus within this field but also indicates the level of research enthusiasm and the prevailing research directions. Keyword co-occurrence analysis effectively reflects the distribution of hotspots in the field of Chinese animation subculture, thereby facilitating the summarization of research hotspot information. This study will import standardized sample data into the software Citespace, covering the time range from 2005 to 2024. For each time period, a default retention of TopN=50 will be applied, with 'keywords' selected as the analysis project. A co-occurrence map of keywords related to the field of Chinese animation subculture from 2005 to 2024 will be generated. The size of the nodes in the graph corresponds to the frequency of keyword occurrence (the more frequently a keyword appears, the larger the node), while the connections between nodes illustrate the frequency of co-occurrence among different keywords. The resulting graph comprises a total of N=216 nodes and E=233 connections, Density=0.01.
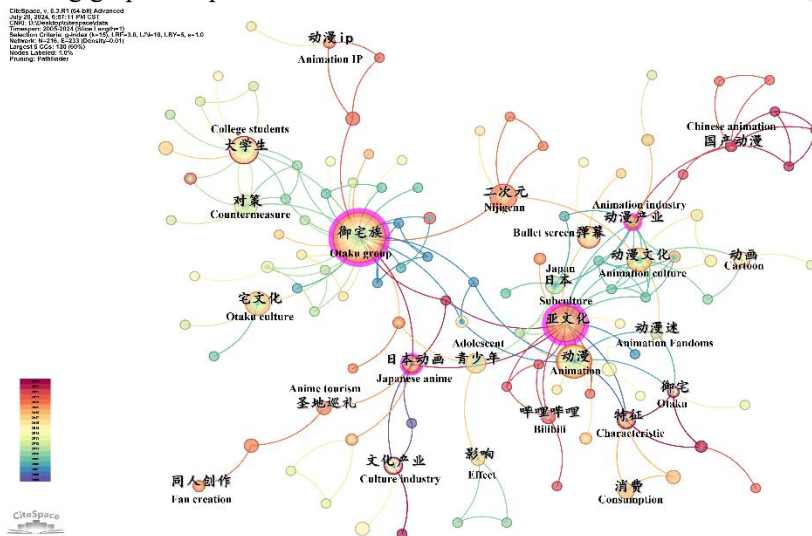

Figure 3. Image of keyword common line diagram.

In this study, a total of 216 keywords were extracted, resulting in a cumulative frequency of 421 occurrences. The keywords with a frequency of three or more are summarized in Table 1. The

centrality of these keywords not only indicates their popularity but also highlights the significance of each keyword within the broader keyword co-occurrence network. Furthermore, these keywords reveal the research hotspots and topics in this field over a specific period.

Serial Number	Frequency	Centrality	Chinese Keywords	Translated Keywords
1	46	0.33	御宅族	Otaku group
2	32	0.22	亚文化	Subculture
3	17	0.06	动漫	Animation
4	13	0.05	大学生	College students
5	9	0.07	二次元	Nijigenn
6	8	0.01	对策	Countermeasure
7	8	0.02	弹幕	Bullet screen
8	7	0.1	动漫产业	Animation industry
9	6	0.02	宅文化	Otaku culture
10	6	0.09	动漫文化	Animation culture
11	4	0.04	青少年	Adolescent
12	4	0.04	特征	Characteristic
13	4	0.03	日本	Japan
14	4	0	日本动漫	Japanese animation
15	4	0.14	日本动画	Japanese anime
16	4	0.01	动画	Cartoon
17	4	0.02	文化产业	Culture industry
18	3	0.01	动漫迷	Animation Fandoms
19	3	0	消费	Consumption
20	3	0.05	国产动漫	Chinese animation
21	3	0.01	动漫 ip	Animation IP
22	3	0	同人创作	Fan creation
23	3	0.01	御宅	Otaku
24	3	0.01	哔哩哔哩	BiliBili
25	3	0.02	圣地巡礼	Anime tourism
26	3	0.02	影响	Effect

Table 1. Keyword Frequency Table of Chinese Anime Subculture.

After excluding interference items from the analysis, it can be concluded from Table 1 and Figure 3 that the most frequently appearing keywords in this field of research include "Otaku group"、 "Subculture"、"College students"、"Nijigenn"、"Countermeasure"、"Bullet screen"、 "Animation industry"、"Otaku culture"、"Animation culture " among others. Word frequency analysis indicates that the age characteristics of the studied population are primarily concentrated among college students and teenagers. In the collinear graph generated by Citespace software, a purple border around a node signifies that the keyword exhibits a mutation phenomenon. Joint analysis of Figure 3 and Table 1 reveals that scholars in China are particularly interested in studying the subculture that has emerged from Japanese animation. As a burgeoning topic, animation subculture has exerted a multifaceted influence across various fields in China. Consequently, at different points in time, various scholars have presented differing opinions and proposed countermeasures in response to the societal impacts of subculture, and a number of contemporary responses have been proposed at that time.

In exploring the impact of animation subculture on society, Fang, T.（2011） highly cited paper published in *China Youth Study* in 2011 raised concerns regarding the subversion, resistance, and alienation of youth subculture from mainstream culture (Fang 2011). Similarly, Sun, J. (2013）

influential paper published in the journal *Today's Mass Media* in 2013 discussed the significant branch of the field known as "cute culture," which originated in Japan and is closely associated with many Japanese animations. Sun, J.（2013） adopted a positive perspective, asserting that "cute culture" has begun to proliferate in China as a representation of youth subculture and has been embraced by mainstream culture. Concurrently, in the economic domain, the animation industry has emerged as a focal point for research due to its expanding group size and increasing social influence. With the advancement of China's animation industry, various new related industries have also emerged. For instance, in recent years, BiliBili video platform, a platform catering to "otakus," has developed alongside the growth of the subculture community, additionally, these emerging platforms and communities have fostered a range of interactive methods. For example, bullet screen, a public interactive technique, has noticed with the platform's development and has gradually become a new research hotspot.

3.3 Cluster Analysis of Keywords

Keyword clustering is an extension of the keyword co-occurrence map which being served to summarize and extract research topics, thereby providing an intuitive display of clustering blocks within a given research field. Through these blocks, we can observe the distribution of research topic hotspots. In this study, standardized data from sample research was imported into the software CiteSpace, with the time period selected spanning from 2005 to 2024. The top 50 keywords (TopN=50) were retained for each time period. The analysis project focused on "Keywords." The software generated a clustered graph, resulting in a keyword clustering map related to Chinese animation subculture research from 2005 to 2024 (Figure 4). The data indicates that the clustering module value of the keyword clustering map exceeds 0.3, signifying a significant clustering structure; furthermore, the average silhouette value (S) meets the requisite criteria (S > 0.7), confirming the credibility of the clustering results.
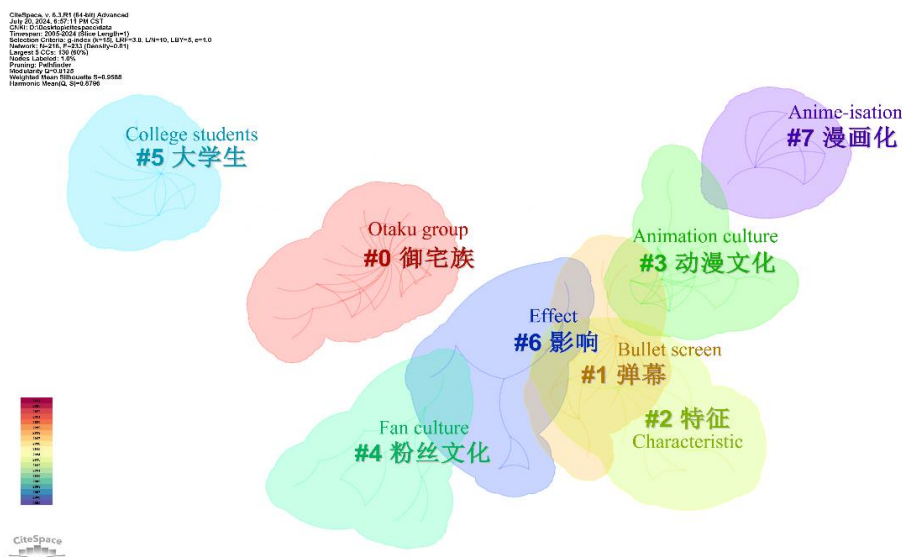
Figure 4. Cluster analysis chart.

The clustering map reveals a total of eight clusters, with specific results illustrated in Figure 4 and Table 2. The analysis indicates that the largest cluster (#0) comprises 25 nodes, exhibiting a silhouette value of S=0.984. The second largest cluster (#1) contains 14 nodes, with a silhouette value of S=1. The third largest cluster (#2) consists of 13 nodes (silhouette value S=0.914), while the fourth cluster (#3) also contains 13 nodes (silhouette value S=0.911). The fifth cluster (#4)

includes 12 nodes (silhouette value S=0.912), and the sixth cluster (#5) contains 11 nodes (silhouette value S=0.977). The seventh cluster (#6) comprises 10 nodes (silhouette value S=0.882), and the eighth cluster (#7) includes 7 nodes (silhouette value S=0.987). Analysis of the cluster diagram and the primary members of each cluster reveals that the key research directions in the field of animation subculture in China encompass: population characteristics and cultural phenomena (#0 Otaku group, #4 Fan culture, #5 College students), community communication forms (#1 Bullet sereen), animation works, animation culture, and related industry development (#3 Animation culture, #7 Animc-isation), as well as subculture groups and their social influence (#2 Characteristics, #5 College students, #6 Effect).

Cluster	Nodes	Silhouette value	Average year	Main clustering members (LLM)
0	25	0.984	2011	御宅族 (Otaku group) (17.79, 1.0E-4); 共性 (Commonality) (6.33, 0.05); 亚文化(Subculture) (5.28, 0.05); 交流传播模式(Communication and dissemination mode) (3.15, 0.1); 百度动漫吧(Baidu BBS of Animation) (3.15, 0.1)
1	14	1	2016	弹幕(Bullet screen) (21.1, 1.0E-4); 亚文化(Subculture) (16.61, 1.0E-4); 哔哩哔哩 (BiliBili) (6.87, 0.01); 狂欢 (revelry) (6.87, 0.01); 《吐槽大会》(*Complain talk show*) (3.41, 0.1)
2	13	0.914	2012	特征(Characteristic) (13.72, 0.001); 动漫粉丝(Animation Fandoms) (9.11, 0.005); 消费 (consume) (9.11, 0.005); 后亚文化 (Post-subculture) (9.11, 0.005); 动漫 (Animation) (7.45, 0.01)
3	13	0.911	2010	动漫文化 (Animation culture) (14.31, 0.001); 动漫产业 (Animation industry) (9.46, 0.005); 创意产业 (Creative industry) (9.46, 0.005); 审美 (Aesthetics) (4.69, 0.05); 文化防线 (cultural defence-line) (4.69, 0.05)
4	12	0.912	2014	粉丝文化 (Fun culture) (7.3, 0.01); 媒介隐喻 (Media metaphor) (5.43, 0.05); 同人创作 (Fan creation) (5.43, 0.05); 符号消费 (semiotic consumption) (5.43, 0.05); 圣地巡礼 (Anime tourism) (5.43, 0.05)
5	11	0.977	2011	大学生 (College students) (23.83, 1.0E-4); 对策 (Countermeasure) (9.73, 0.005); "御宅族" (Otaku group) (4.6, 0.05); 宅生活 (Otaku lifestyle) (4.6, 0.05); 原因 (Reason) (4.6, 0.05)
6	10	0.882	2011	影响 (Effect) (6.87, 0.01); 青少年 (Adolescent) (6.03, 0.05); 价值观教育 (6.03, 0.05); 商业化 (6.03, 0.05); 网络 (6.03, 0.05)
7	7	0.987	2022	漫画化(Anime-isation) (8.41, 0.005); 网络文学 (Network Literature) (8.41, 0.005); 衍生开发 (8.41, 0.005); 国产动漫 (Chinese animation) (8.41, 0.005); 御宅族 (Otaku group) (0.68, 0.5)

Table 2. Detailed data for cluster analyses.

3.4 Analysis of Burst Keywords

The emergence of burst keywords refers to the phenomenon in which a specific topic gains prominence and captures the attention of a significant number of scholars during a defined time

period. By analyzing the trends of burst keywords and time nodes, researchers can identify shifts in research hotspots within this field. The figure 5 illustrates the top 25 keywords identified through burst keyword analysis conducted using Citespace software.

Top 25 Keywords with the Strongest Citation Bursts

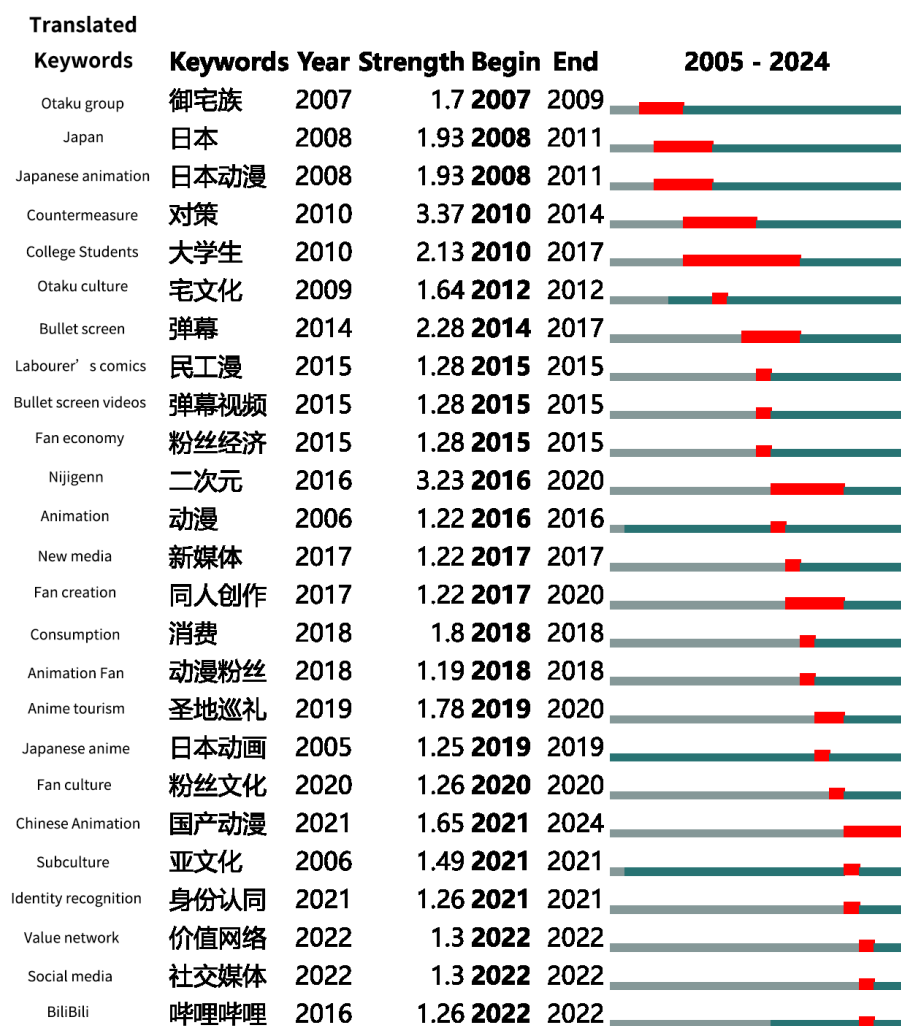| Translated Keywords	Keywords	Year	Strength	Begin	End	2005 - 2024
Otaku group	御宅族	2007	1.7	2007	2009	
Japan	日本	2008	1.93	2008	2011	
Japanese animation	日本动漫	2008	1.93	2008	2011	
Countermeasure	对策	2010	3.37	2010	2014	
College Students	大学生	2010	2.13	2010	2017	
Otaku culture	宅文化	2009	1.64	2012	2012	
Bullet screen	弹幕	2014	2.28	2014	2017	
Labourer's comics	民工漫	2015	1.28	2015	2015	
Bullet screen videos	弹幕视频	2015	1.28	2015	2015	
Fan economy	粉丝经济	2015	1.28	2015	2015	
Nijigenn	二次元	2016	3.23	2016	2020	
Animation	动漫	2006	1.22	2016	2016	
New media	新媒体	2017	1.22	2017	2017	
Fan creation	同人创作	2017	1.22	2017	2020	
Consumption	消费	2018	1.8	2018	2018	
Animation Fan	动漫粉丝	2018	1.19	2018	2018	
Anime tourism	圣地巡礼	2019	1.78	2019	2020	
Japanese anime	日本动画	2005	1.25	2019	2019	
Fan culture	粉丝文化	2020	1.26	2020	2020	
Chinese Animation	国产动漫	2021	1.65	2021	2024	
Subculture	亚文化	2006	1.49	2021	2021	
Identity recognition	身份认同	2021	1.26	2021	2021	
Value network	价值网络	2022	1.3	2022	2022	
Social media	社交媒体	2022	1.3	2022	2022	
BiliBili	哔哩哔哩	2016	1.26	2022	2022	

Figure 5. Bursts keywords of top 25.

As illustrated in Figure 5, between 2005 and 2012, when the topic animation subculture first gained prominence among scholars, the majority of Chinese research concentrated on the impact of the Japanese anime subculture on Chinese society. During this period, scholars primarily regarded anime fans as a niche subcultural group worthy of academic inquiry. In this stage, Much of the research conducted during focused on Japanese animation subcultures, particularly otakus and otaku culture, highlighting the characteristics of this group and themselves influence on Chinese society. From 2014 to 2016, with advancements in Chinese society and the widespread adoption of personal network devices, animation bullet screen video websites—adolescents and young adults—gradually

gained public recognition. As this novel method of information dissemination was embraced by Chinese youth, the volume of studies related to barrage videos surged significantly in a short timeframe. Concurrently, the concepts of anime fans and animation subculture began to be more widely understood by mainstream society. Furthermore, from 2017 to the present, most scholars have shifted their perspective, no longer viewing the animation fan group as niche and marginalized but rather as a substantial cultural phenomenon. At this stage, many researchers have directed their focus toward topics such as subculture, identity, social networks, and fan creation, exploring the connections between anime subculture, society, and mainstream culture. Additionally, with the evolution of the animation subculture, Chinese scholars are investigating the economic benefits associated with Chinese animation and its fans, including aspects of consumption and domestic animation production.

4. Discussion

This study employs bibliometric analysis methods and utilizes Citespace software to systematically analysis the current research landscape in this field. The findings reveal the research hotspots related to animation subculture, shifts in research topics, and the perspectives of mainstream scholars toward animation subculture. Given the extensive volume of samples, traditional manual reading and analysing methods be posed challenges. Consequently, only relying on bibliometric analysis of computer software can higher effectively facilitate a comprehensive evaluation of references. This study, providing an in-depth analysis of the publishing trends and evolving hotspots within the domain of Chinese animation subculture, thereby summarizing the current research status. These insights will aid other researchers in understanding the development of China's animation subculture, enabling them to identify key hotspots for more detailed investigation. Additionally, this study offers bibliometric data support for future researchers.

4.1 Prediction of research hotspots

Through this bibliometric analysis, we can confidently infer that future research hotspots may encompass social phenomena, cultural industries, media and information dissemination, social psychology, and mental health.

4.1.1 Social phenomena

Notably, the development of anime fans and the social impacct of anime subculture permeate the entire timeline. The evolution of research topics indicates a shift from the relatively niche focus on otakus, otaku culture, subcultures, and countermeasures in earlier years to a broader examination of macro values and niche in recent years. With the increasing acceptance of animation subculture by mainstream society, most scholars no longer perceive it merely as a niche group for case analysis; instead, they have begun to investigate the impact of animation subculture on society.

4.1.2 Cultural industries

The rise of anime subculture and its societal implications may emerge as a research hotspot in the future. As anime fans and the anime subculture gain greater acceptance within the mainstream, the cultural industry has also become a significant topic of interest in recent years. Research themes related to cultural industries, such as, consumer behavior of anime-related and domestic animation works, may also attract scholars attention in future.

4.1.3 Media and information dissemination

Furthermore, as the animation subculture group rapidly expands in China, new media platforms, including barrage videos, have developed swiftly. This growth has also make some unique methods of information dissemination within the subculture communities. Therefore, media and information

dissemination may become an important research hotspot in the field of animation subculture.

4.1.4 Social psychology and mental health

In China, the animation subculture was imported, and members of animation subculture exhibited significant differences from the general public during its early days. For instance, a named "otaku" group which emerged in 2007, revealed several unique characteristics. In the initial phases of the animation subculture's introduction to China, scholars exhibited varying attitudes towards it. Some argued that certain animations could foster the aesthetic development of teenagers while also providing gentle educational opportunities. However, they also expressed concerns that specific anime might negatively impact the mental health and psychological development of adolescents (Li 2007). In recent years, as animated works have gained wider acceptance, the animation subculture has increasingly integrated into mainstream culture (Huang 2014). Consequently, many scholars have shifted their focus to examining the effects of animated works and the animation subculture on social interaction, identity formation, and the mental health challenges faced by some members of this subculture. Therefore, it is likely that future research will delve deeper into the psychological development and mental health issues within animation subculture groups, as well as analyze this distinct social phenomenon.

4.2 Discussion of results

This study clarifies that animation subculture represents a relatively niche area of research in China. However, with the ongoing development of Chinese society, the gradual integration of animation subculture into mainstream culture. Meanwhile, group of animation fandoms have been increasing significant, people interest in this niche field is also on the rise. Additionally, the growing acceptance of animation subculture by mainstream society has prompted many scholars to reassess their previously negative perceptions and to investigate the impact of animation subculture on mainstream society and the development of animation-related industries. Furthermore, as the number of subculture groups increases and research deepens, many scholars are beginning to view these groups not merely as niche communities but are also exploring the social characteristics of animation subculture groups and the social and psychological factors that contribute to their formation.

4.3 Limitations

However, this study also has certain limitations. For instance, it exclusively included articles published in more authoritative domestic journals, while excluding conference articles and dissertations that may be considered less authoritative. Although this approach may better represent the perspectives of Chinese scholars and policymakers on animation subculture, the omission of some less authoritative conference papers and dissertations could result in the loss of advanced views and opinions from younger scholars. Consequently, this research methodology may introduce bias into the research conclusions. Although this study utilized the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), the most comprehensive and authoritative Chinese journal database, it is important to note that other databases exist in China. Consequently, some articles that may have less impact or authority might not be included in CNKI, leading to potential omissions. This factor may introduce bias in the research results. Additionally, the reliance on keywords analysis may have resulted in the oversight of specific details from published studies. Lastly, due to the absence of standard terms for animation subculture in CNKI, this study was limited to using the most relevant terms available for search queries, which may have resulted in the exclusion of certain articles and, thereby, affected the overall conclusions.

4.4 Expectations

While this study acknowledges certain limitations, it has effectively summarized the research development trends and prominent topics within the field of Chinese animation subculture at this time, while also forecasting future hot topics. Meanwhile, this study offers valuable references and data support for future inquiries into trending topics through bibliometric analysis. Moving forward, other scholars could be expanded by incorporating a broader range of literature for analysis or by engaging in a more in-depth discussion of specific hot topics, drawing on the conclusions presented in this article.

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