

INNOVATING TO IMPACT

dentsu

ENTERTAINMENT SPOTLIGHT

ANIME: A GROWING OPPORTUNITY FOR BRANDS

2025 GLOBAL RESEARCH REPORT

PART OF THE DENTSU CONSUMER NAVIGATOR SERIES

ABOUT THIS STUDY

The findings presented in this global report reflect the data we collected over the course of three research efforts in the US, in the EMEA region, and in the APAC region between October 2024 and March 2025. In all three efforts, we submitted surveys to nationally representative panels of consumers (according to the latest available census numbers for each country) using Toluna, an online research panel.

This report features data from a global panel of 8,600 consumers across 10 countries::

2,000 consumers in the UK; 1,000 consumers in the US; and 700 consumers, respectively, in China, France, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Poland, Spain, and Thailand.

These studies were conducted as part of our ongoing Consumer Navigator research, a global thought leadership platform we established back in 2020 to provide marketers with a view into evolving consumer sentiment around a number of topics, including the economic environment, culture, media, emerging technologies, shopping habits, and their expectations of brands.

This report inaugurates our *Entertainment Spotlight* series where we combine and analyze the findings from the Consumer Navigator studies carried out across all regions to provide marketers with global trends and nuances on how fandoms for different sports & entertainment IPs are evolving, as well as to equip them with recommendations on how to best partner with IPs to connect with consumers through culture.



CONTENTS

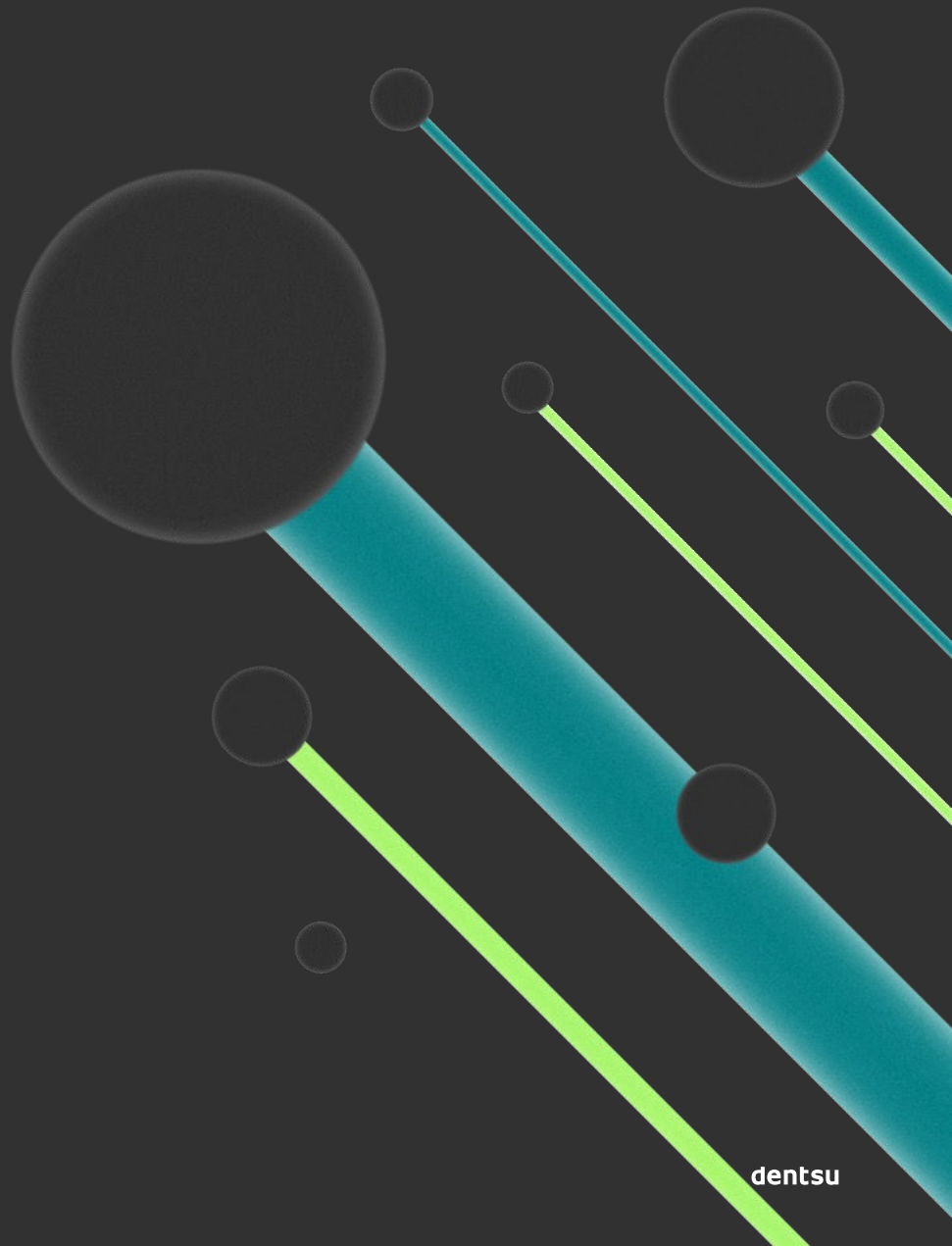
01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

02 HOW ANIME AUDIENCES ARE EVOLVING

03 REACHING ANIME FANS

04 THE OPPORTUNITY FOR BRANDS

05 HOW DENTSU CAN HELP



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ANIME IS NO LONGER A NICHE. IT'S MAINSTREAM

3 in 10 global consumers watch anime at least once a week. This is also the case in markets traditionally dominated by Hollywood studio entertainment, like the US. Younger generations are even more likely to engage with anime content on a regular basis.

ANIME IS NOT A MONOLITH. IT'S A KALEIDOSCOPE

Audiences are attracted to anime for a variety of reasons. It features unique, immediately recognizable worlds, complex emptions, and a variety of genres. As such, it presents a variety of opportunities for brands that are looking to connect with very targeted audiences through culture. Likewise, not all audiences have the same attitude towards anime extension into other media: authenticity is key.

ANIME VIEWERS CRAVE INFLUENCER CONTENT AND OPPORTUNITIES TO SOCIALIZE WITH THE FAN COMMUNITY

A third of global anime viewers read reviews of anime movies and shows, while 1 in 3 tune into livestreams and podcasts hosted by content creators to learn more. A significant share of anime viewers use digital and physical spaces to interact with the fan community. Younger viewers are more likely to invest time and resources to attend conventions and interact with the community (and the vendors and brands surrounding it) in person.

ANIME VIEWERS ARE OFTEN MEGA-FANS AND CREATORS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT

As many as 11% of consumers who report watching anime in the last year are creating their own anime-inspired designs to be sold on marketplaces like Etsy and Redbubble. 9% global anime viewers report hosting their own livestreams or podcasts on the topic. US anime viewers are particularly active throughout these creative outputs. Thus, there's an expectation that events and activations surrounding anime IP and anime fandom will have built-in opportunities for them to lean in with their creative voices.

ANIME VIEWERS ARE LIKELY TO PURCHASE MERCHADISE FEATURING THEIR FAVORITE IP.

As many as 28% of all global consumers who watch anime at least a couple times x year, have spent more than $200 on merchandise featuring anime IP. 1 in 10 anime viewers have spent more than $500. Younger consumers, such as Millennials and Gen Z, are even more likely to splurge. A significant share of viewers say that their opinion of a brand improves when anime IP is incorporated in products and promotions.

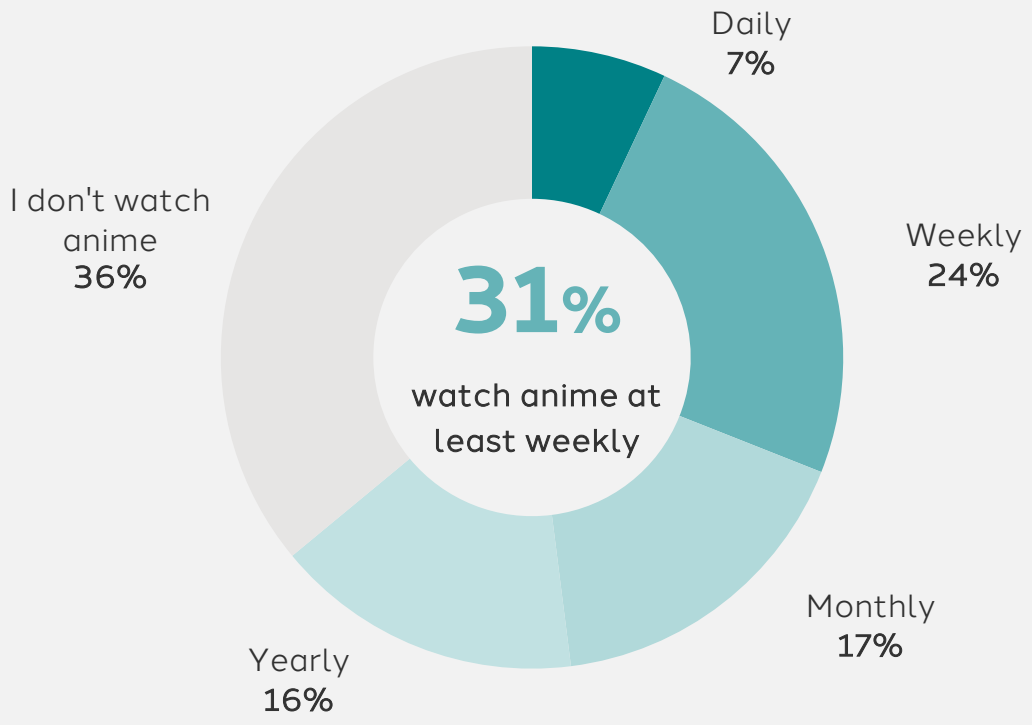


HOW ANIME AUDIENCES ARE EVOLVING

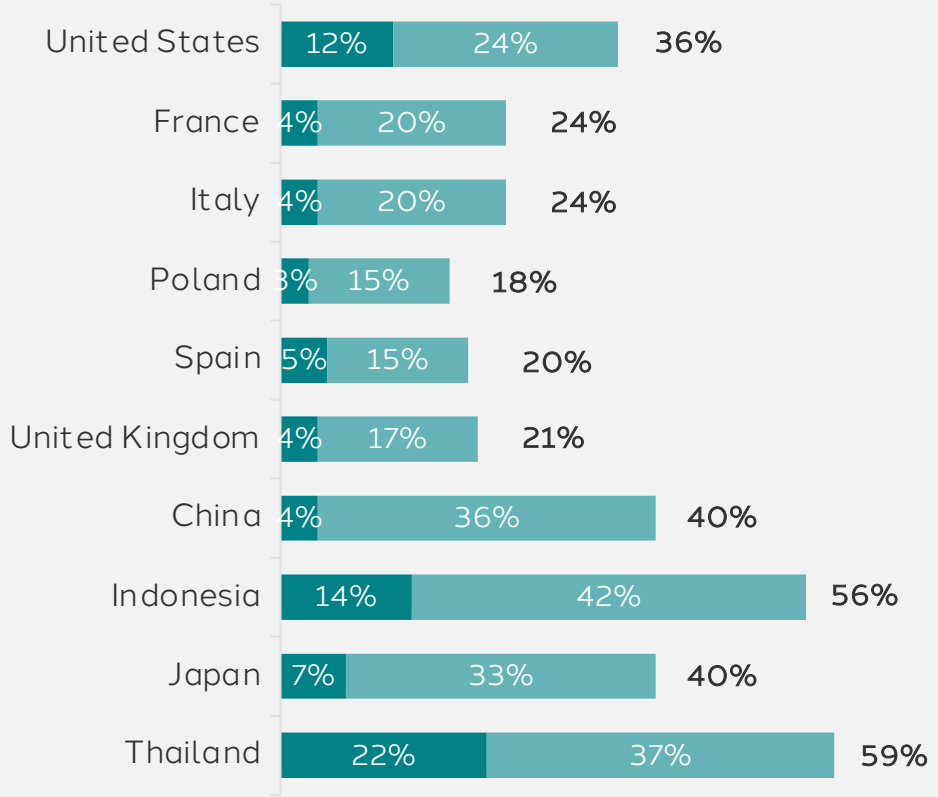
ANIME IS NO LONGER A NICHE. IT'S A GLOBAL PHENOMENON.

3 in 10 global consumers watch anime at least once a week. APAC is the region where anime is viewed the most, but even in the US 1 in 3 consumers watch anime weekly.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU WATCH ANIME?

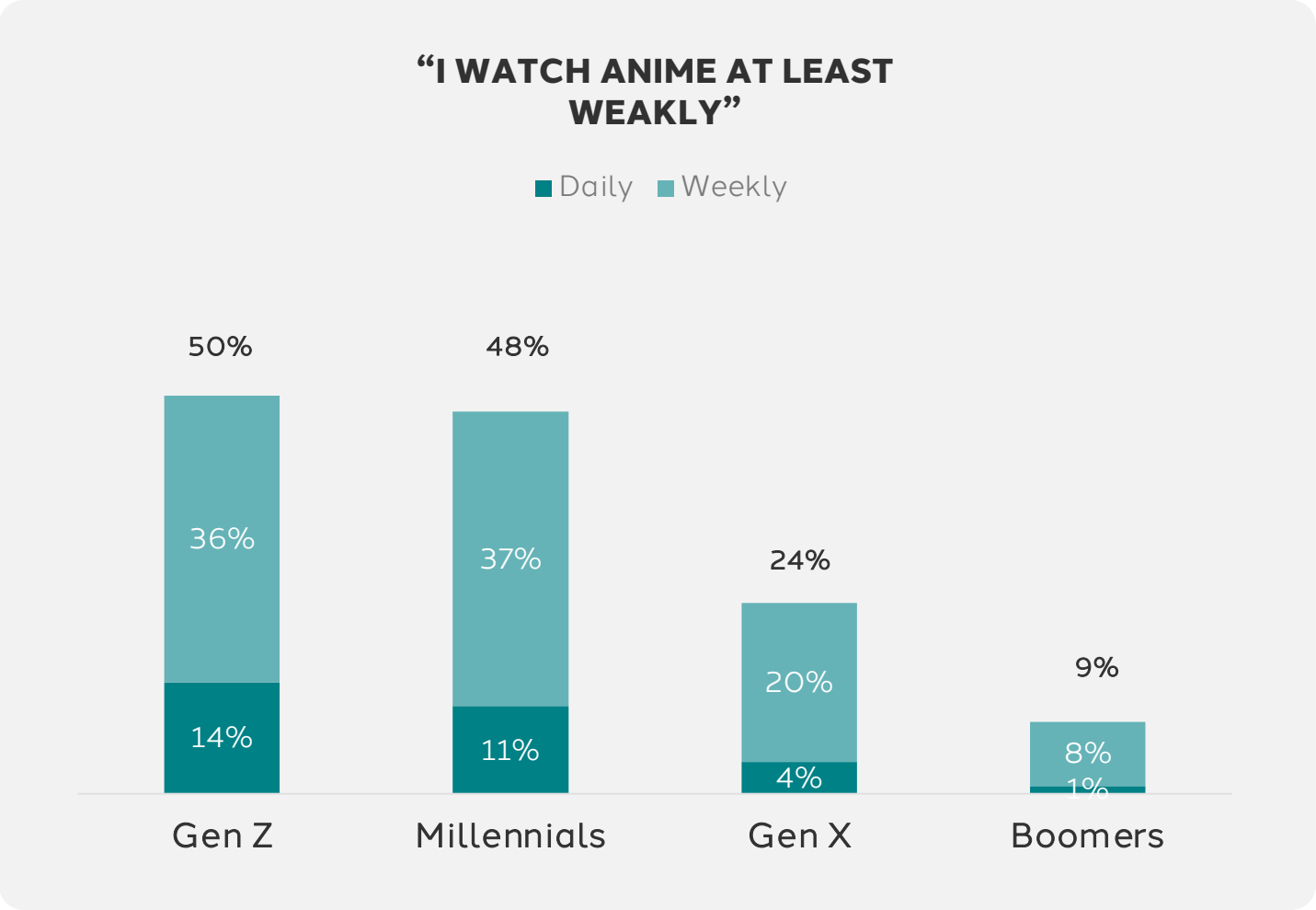


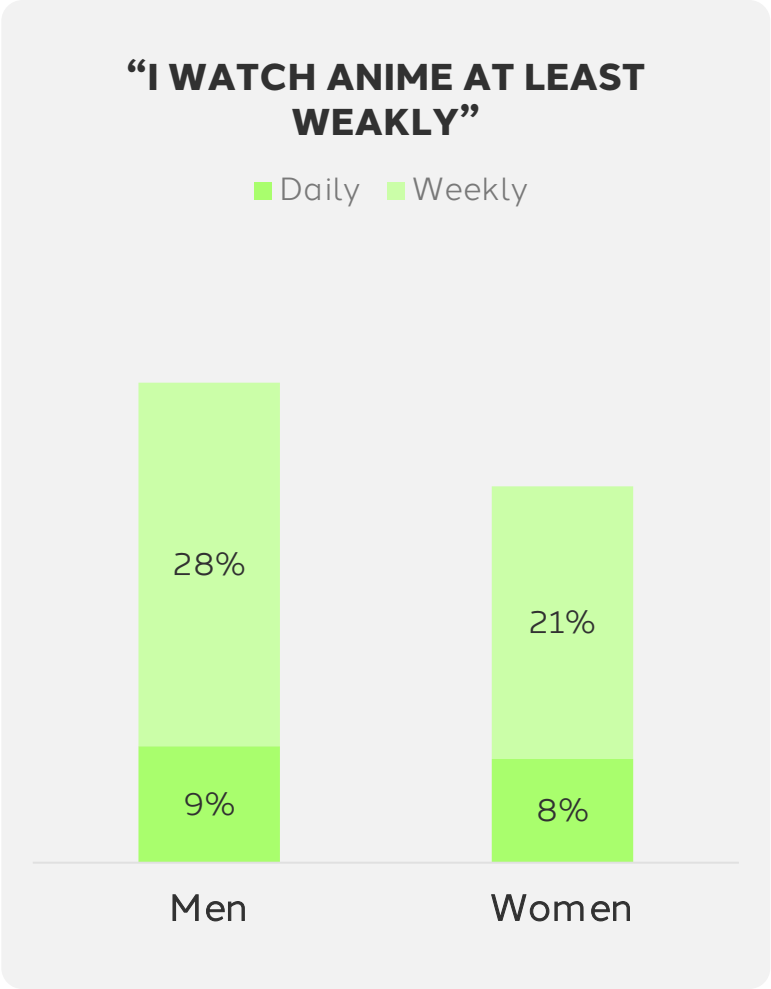
"I WATCH ANIME AT LEAST WEEKLY"



ANIME'S POPULARITY RISES SIGNIFICANTLY AMONG YOUNGER GENERATIONS.

Half of Gen Z and Millennials watch anime on a weekly basis. Anime is more popular among Men but is still watched weekly by 3 in 10 Women.

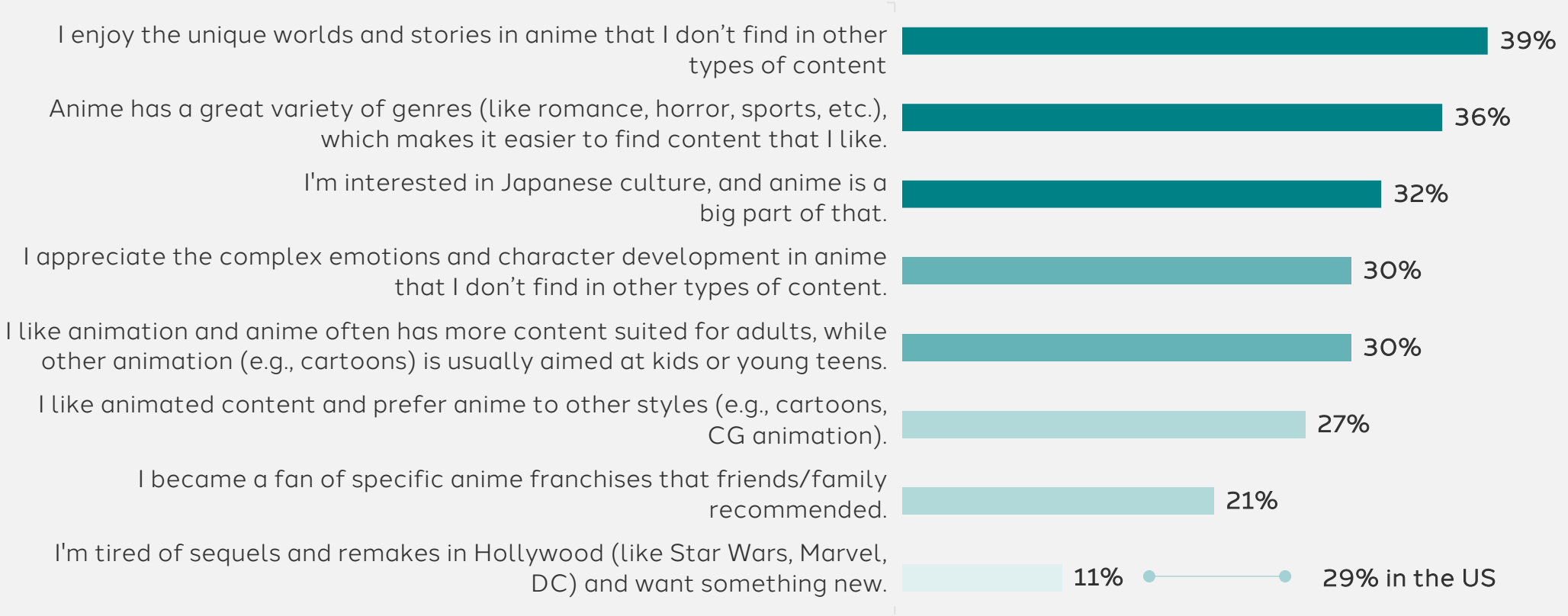




VIEWERS ARE ATTRACTED BY ANIME'S UNIQUE STORIES, ITS VARIETY OF GENRES, AND IN APPRECIATION OF AND CURIOSITY ABOUT JAPANESE CULTURE

Only 1 in 10 watch it because of fatigue towards Hollywood IP, but that share grows to 3 in 10 among US anime viewers.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS WHY YOU WATCH ANIME INSTEAD OF OTHER CONTENT?



ANIME HAS UNIQUE DIFFERENTIATORS TO OFFER TO ALL AUDIENCES

Men and Millennials are more likely to watch it because they are interested in Japanese culture, while Gen Z over-index on being attracted by its variety of genres.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS WHY YOU WATCH ANIME INSTEAD OF OTHER CONTENT?

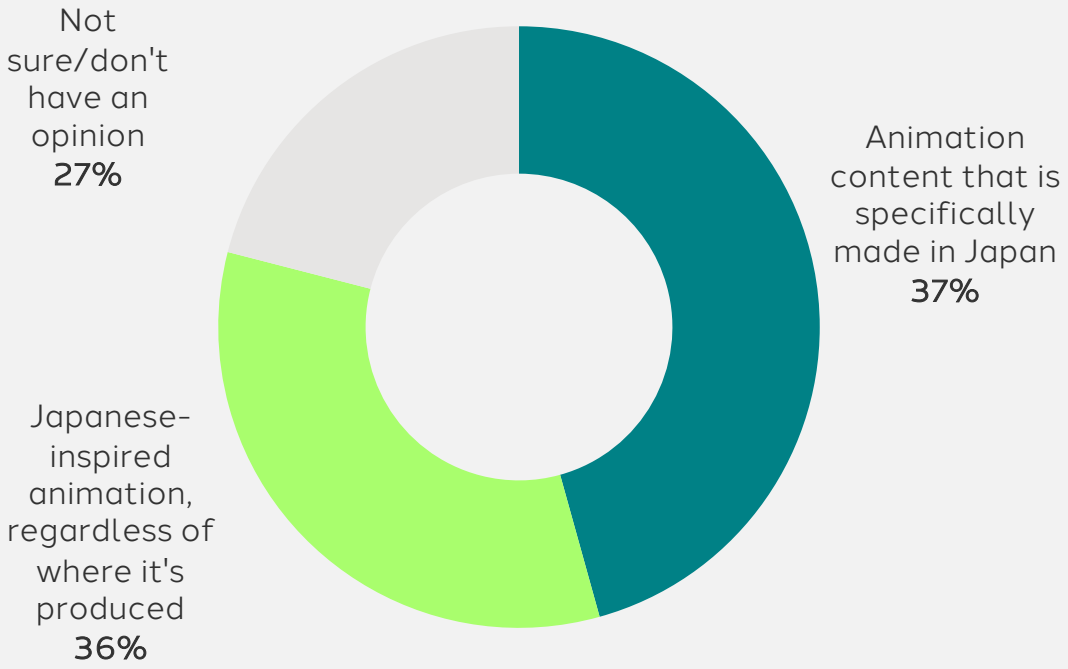
MEN	WOMEN	GEN Z	MILLENNIALS
Hollywood IP fatigue (182i)	Hollywood IP fatigue (154i)	Variety of genres (119i)	Interest in Japanese culture (116i)
Interest in Japanese culture (106i)	Prefer the animation style (89i)	Unique worlds (110i)	Unique worlds (113i)

US	EMEA	APAC	JAPAN
Hollywood IP fatigue (263i)	No significant over-indexation	Unique worlds (118i)	Unique worlds (110i)
Friend/family recommendation (162i)	More adult than Western animation content (86i)	Complex emotions (113i)	More adult than Western animation content (36i)

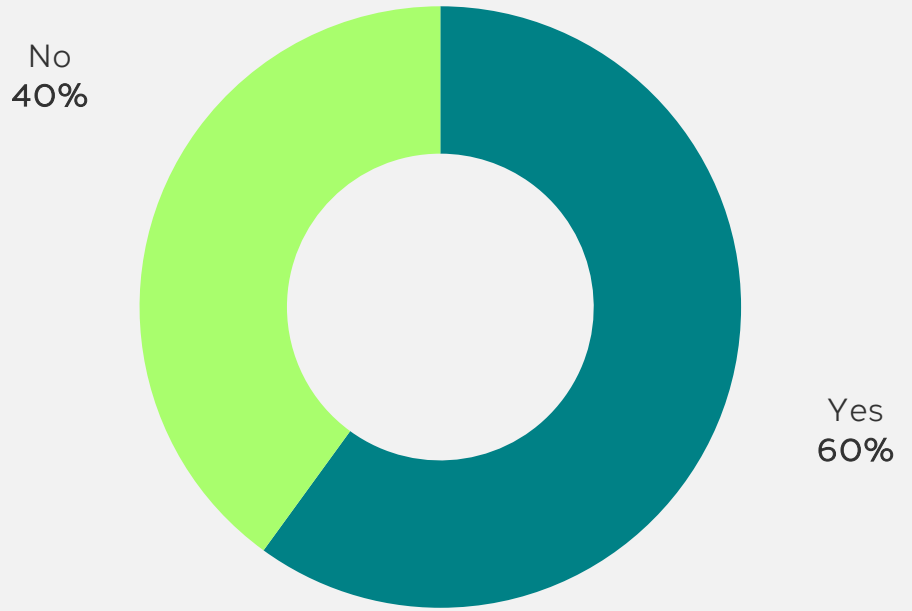
THE DEFINITION OF ANIME IS BROADENING. BUT AUTHENTICITY IS VALUED.

The share of viewers who only think of animation content made in Japan as ‘anime’ is matched by the share of those who consider any Japanese-inspired animation content made anywhere to fit the bill. However, 6 in 10 viewers report also reading the manga their favorite anime is based on, showing a leniency for authentic, traditional anime IP.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE ANIME?



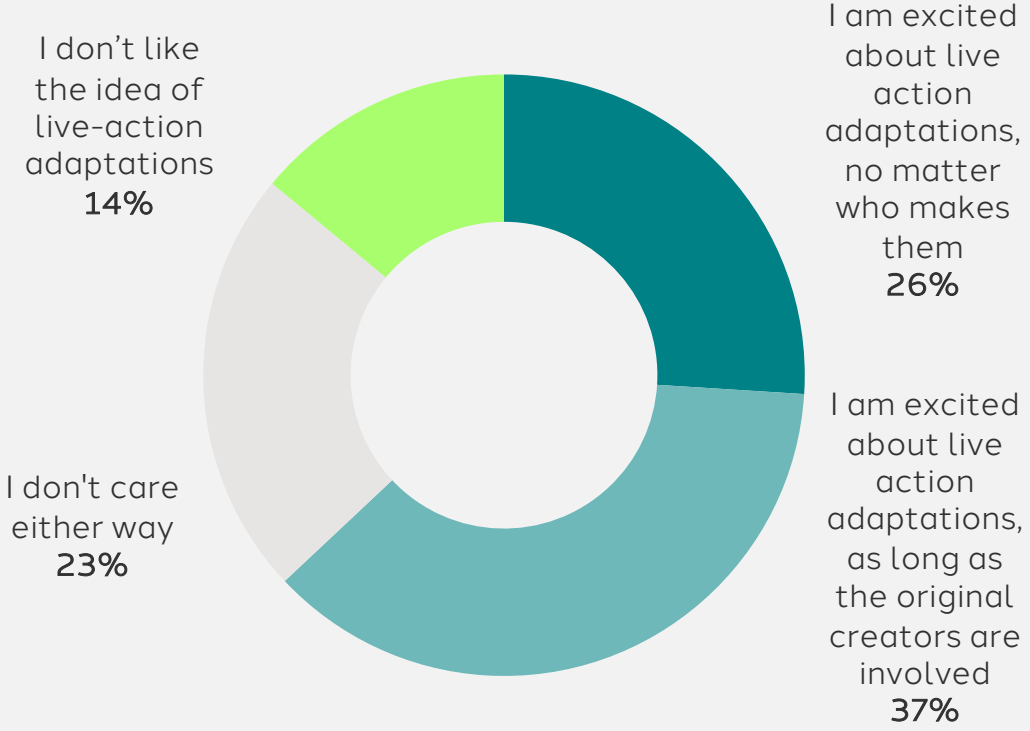
DO YOU ALSO READ THE MANGA ANIME ARE BASED ON?



THE DESIRE FOR AUTHENTIC APPROACHES TO ANIME IP IS REFLECTED IN VIEWERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS LIVE ACTION ADAPTATIONS.

6 in 10 viewers are excited about live-action adaptations of anime IP. However, more than half of these enthusiasts make the involvement of the original creators a 'must have' to garner their support for the project. This is particularly true among younger viewers.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT LIVE ACTION ADAPTATIONS OF ANIME?



"I AM EXCITED ABOUT LIVE ACTION ADAPTATIONS, NO MATTER WHO MAKES THEM"

US anime viewers (169i)

"I AM EXCITED ABOUT LIVE ACTION ADAPTATIONS, AS LONG AS THE ORIGINAL CREATORS ARE INVOLVED"

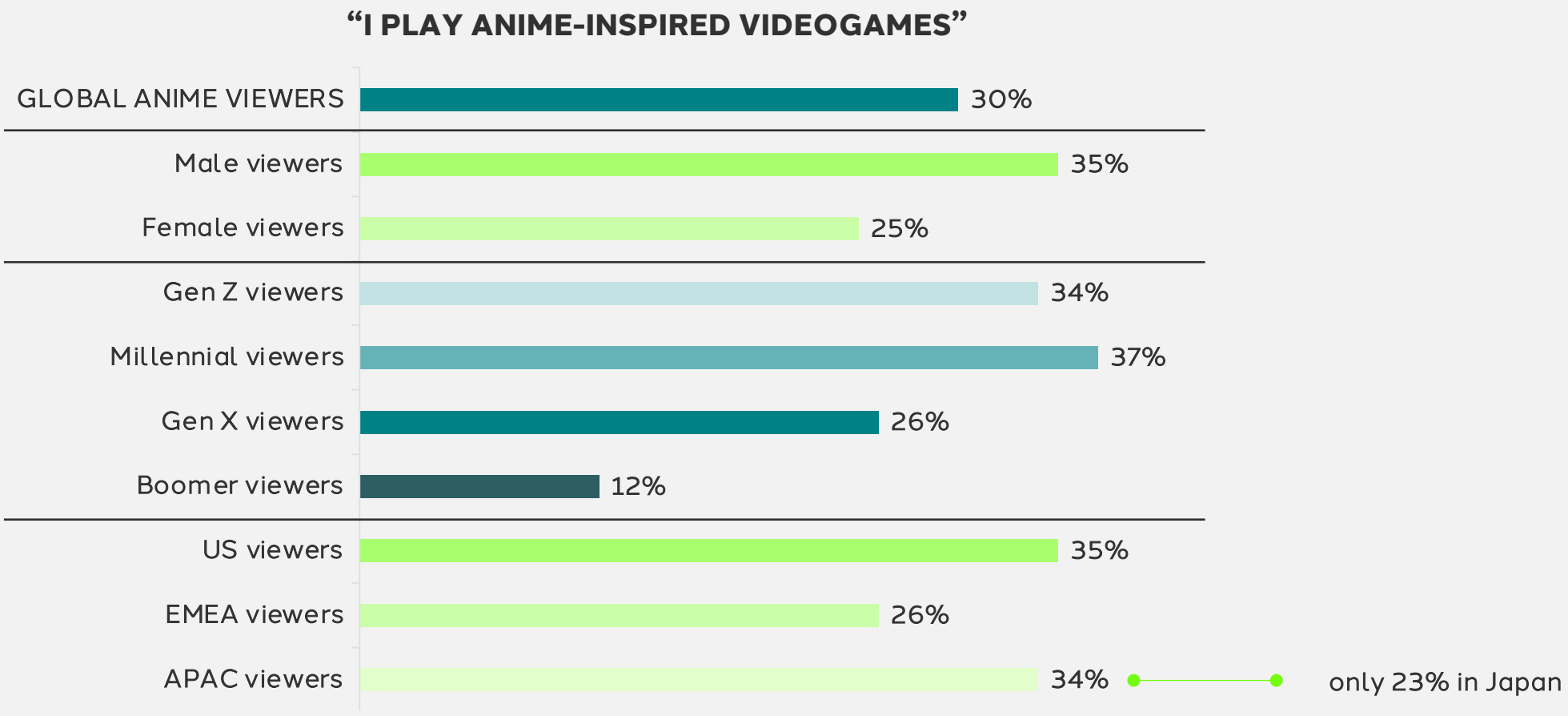
Gen Z anime viewers (111i); Millennial anime viewers (111i)

"I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF LIVE ACTION ADAPTATIONS"

Japan anime viewers (176i)

A LARGE SHARE OF ANIME VIEWERS TAKE THEIR FANDOM TO GAMING WORLDS.

Anime-inspired videogames are particularly popular among Male and Millennial viewers. As it was the case for live action adaptations (see previous page), Japanese viewers are less inclined to engage with anime IP being adapted into other media.



IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETERS

ANIME IP HAS THE MAINSTREAM APPEAL BRANDS SEEK BUT IS NOT YET OVEREXPOSED

Partnering with anime IP allows brands to connect with a a broad base of consumers through culture. It is no longer a niche and, especially among Millennials and Gen Z, it has the same level of mass culture penetration that Western franchises like the Marvel cinematic universe, *Star Wars*, or the Disney princesses have. Unlike these franchises, the market for anime IP-inspired brand partnerships is considerably less saturated.

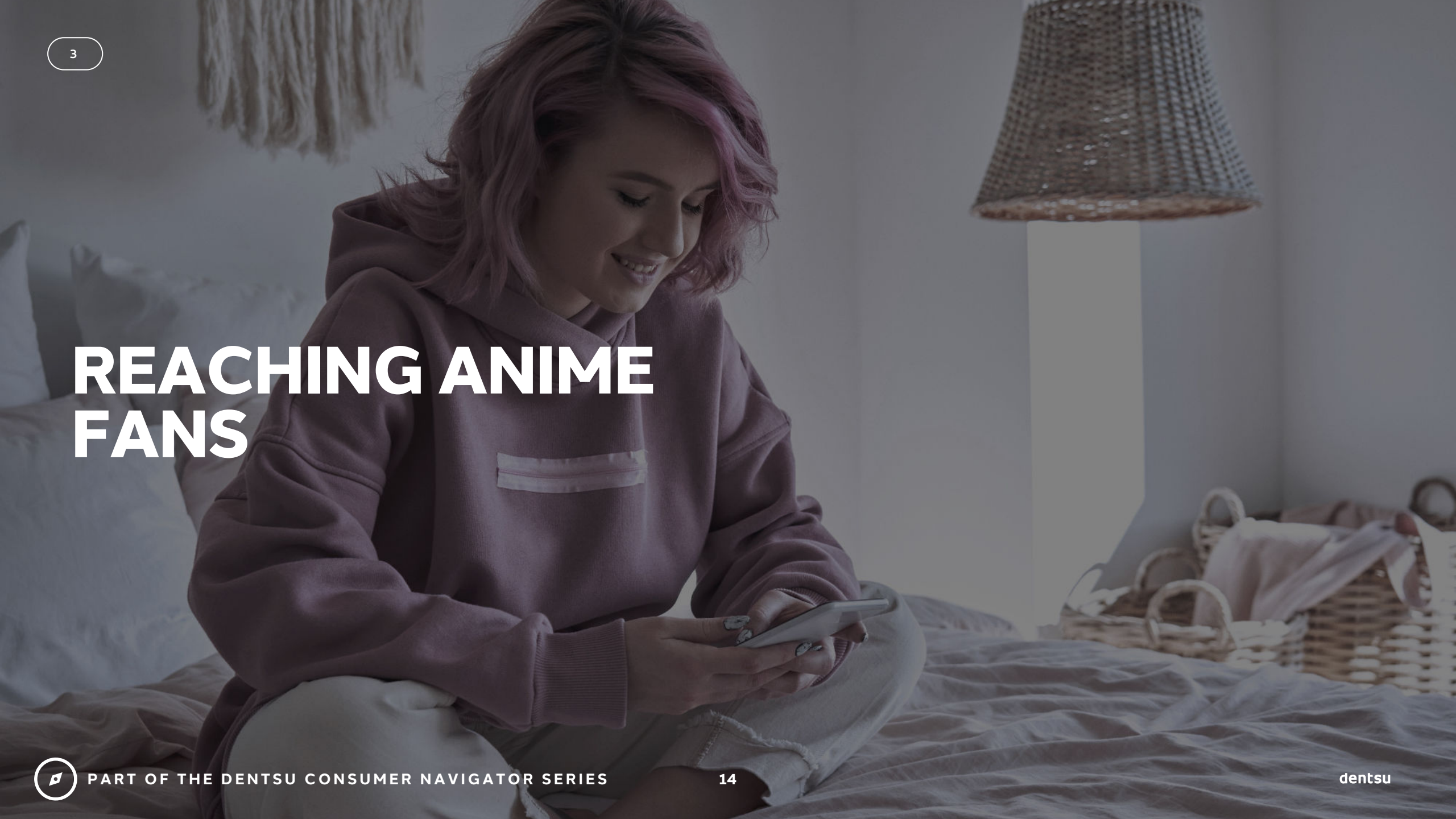
EXPAND BEYOND ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL IP STRATEGIES

Anime is not monolithic. Viewer motivations differ by region, gender, and generation—ranging from cultural interest to fatigue with Western franchises. Marketers should segment their approach and explore a broader slate of anime IPs beyond the most globally recognizable titles. Partnering with niche or genre-specific anime can unlock more targeted and loyal communities.

THERE IS DEMAND FOR MORE ANIME-INSPIRED CONTENT BUT IT'S IMPORTANT IT COMES FROM A PLACE OF AUTHENTICITY

In order to appeal to both the audiences who 'just can't get enough' as well as those who are more critical of extensions of the IP that are disconnected from the vision of the original creators, brands should seek the guidance of business partners who are embedded into this space and have experience co-producing anime franchises and crafting brand activations that fans welcome.



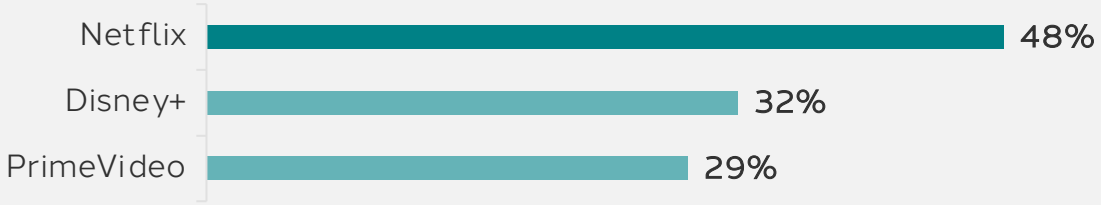


REACHING ANIME FANS

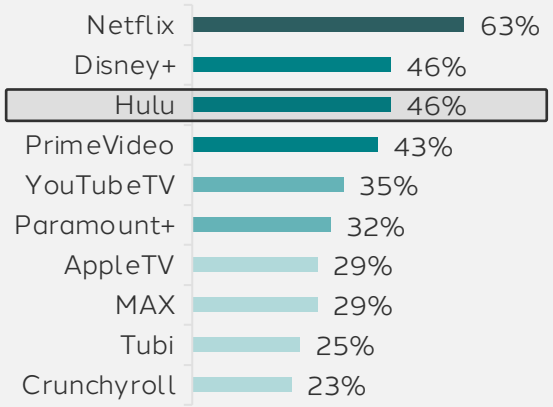
GLOBAL PLATFORMS LIKE NETFLIX, PRIMEVIDEO, AND DISNEY+ ARE PRIMARY DESTINATIONS FOR ANIME VIEWERS WORLDWIDE.

Hulu is in the top 3 in the US, while YouTube TV and Iqiyi are ahead of PrimeVideo and Disney+ in APAC.

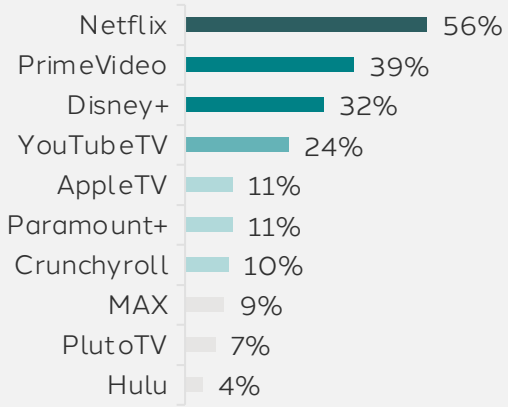
WHICH PLATFORMS DO YOU SUBSCRIBE TO FOR THEIR ANIME CONTENT? (GLOBAL)



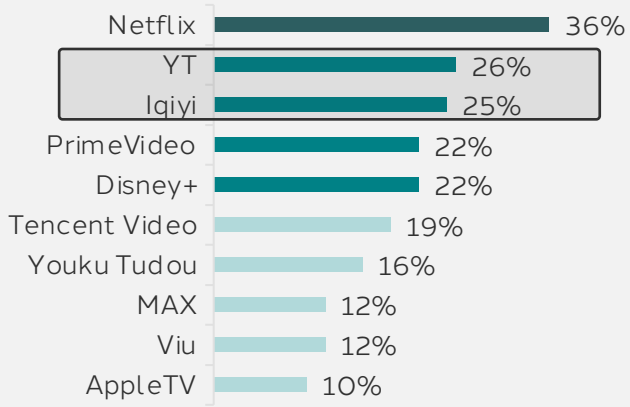
US



EMEA



APAC



ANIME VIEWERS TURN TO TRUSTED SOURCES FOR DEEP DIVES ON THEIR FAVORITE FRANCHISES AND IP.

A third of global anime viewers read reviews of anime movies and shows, while 1 in 3 tune into livestream and podcasts hosted by content creators to learn more. On the other hand, Reddit subs where more casual fans post their opinions are less popular. Younger viewers are more likely to engage with anime-related creator content.

"I READ REVIEWS OF ANIME MOVIES AND TV SHOWS"

34%

Millennial viewers (112i)

"I WATCH LIVESTREAMS/LISTEN TO PODCAST THAT DISCUSS ANIME"

30%

Gen Z viewers (116i)

Millennial viewers (123i)

"I FOLLOW ANIME RELATED SUBS ON REDDIT"

14%

Gen Z viewers (181i)

A SIGNIFICANT SHARE OF ANIME VIEWERS USE BOTH DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL SPACES TO INTERACT WITH THE FAN COMMUNITY.

1 in 5 viewers post about anime on social media. More than 1 in 10 attend anime conventions to interact with like-minded fan communities, and a similar share does the same remote via anime-related Discord servers. Gen Z are particularly active across all these spaces and are more likely to invest time and money to attend anime conventions in person.

"I POST ABOUT ANIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA"

20%

Gen Z viewers (120i)

Millennial viewers (125i)

"I JOIN ANIME-RELATED DISCORD CHANNELS"

15%

Gen Z viewers (133i)

"I ATTEND ANIME CONVENTIONS"

12%

Gen Z viewers (150i)

1 IN 10 ANIME VIEWERS ARE MEGA-FANS WHO PURSUE CREATIVE ENDEAVOURS TO SHOWCASE AND MONETIZE THEIR PASSION FOR IT.

As many as 11% of consumers who report watching anime in the last year are creating their own anime-inspired designs to be sold on marketplaces like Etsy and Redbubble. 9% global anime viewers report hosting their own livestreams or podcasts on the topic. US anime viewers are particularly active throughout these creative outputs.

"I FEATURE ANIME ON MY PINTEREST BOARDS"

12%

US viewers (183i)

"I CREATE AND SELL ANIME-RELATED DESIGNS ON MARKETPLACES (E.G., ETSY)"

11%

US viewers (182i)

APAC viewers (190i)

"I HOST MY OWN ANIME-RELATED LIVESTREAMS OR PODCASTS"

9%

US viewers (222i)

IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETERS

AS STREAMING PLATFORMS ARE ACCELERATING ANIME'S RISE INTO THE MAINSTREAM, IDENTIFY STREAMING TRENDS TO ANTICIPATE IP BREAKOUTS EARLY.

Anime is becoming a key consideration for consumers as they evaluate their roster of streaming subscriptions. Netflix, PrimeVideo, Disney+ and YouTube TV are leveraged by anime viewers worldwide and their footprint allows the franchises that are featured on them to garner mainstream appeal much faster than in the past. Brands should seek the guidance of business partners that have a pulse on the trends that exist within the landscape and are involved in distribution conversations from the get-go so they can anticipate which IP will break through culture before the competition.

INFLUENCER INVOLVEMENT CAN HELP BRAND PARTNERSHIPS WITH ANIME IP FEEL MORE AUTHENTIC AND BECOME PART OF THE CONVERSATION IN THE FANDOM

Anime fans dedicate a large portion of their spare time and resources to follow creators that provide them with an insider view into how franchises are evolving and into socializing with the broader fan community. When considering brand partnerships with anime IP, consult with business partners who understand both the IP and the influencer marketing space to ensure the impact of your activation extends beyond owned channels.

LET FANS BECOME A PART OF THE STORYTELLING IN BOTH PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL SPACES

Anime communities thrive in participatory spaces: Discord channels, conventions, and social media. Marketers should design campaigns that are experiential—with elements like fan art contests, community challenges, or on-site activations at conventions—creating opportunities for fans to engage, contribute, and share.



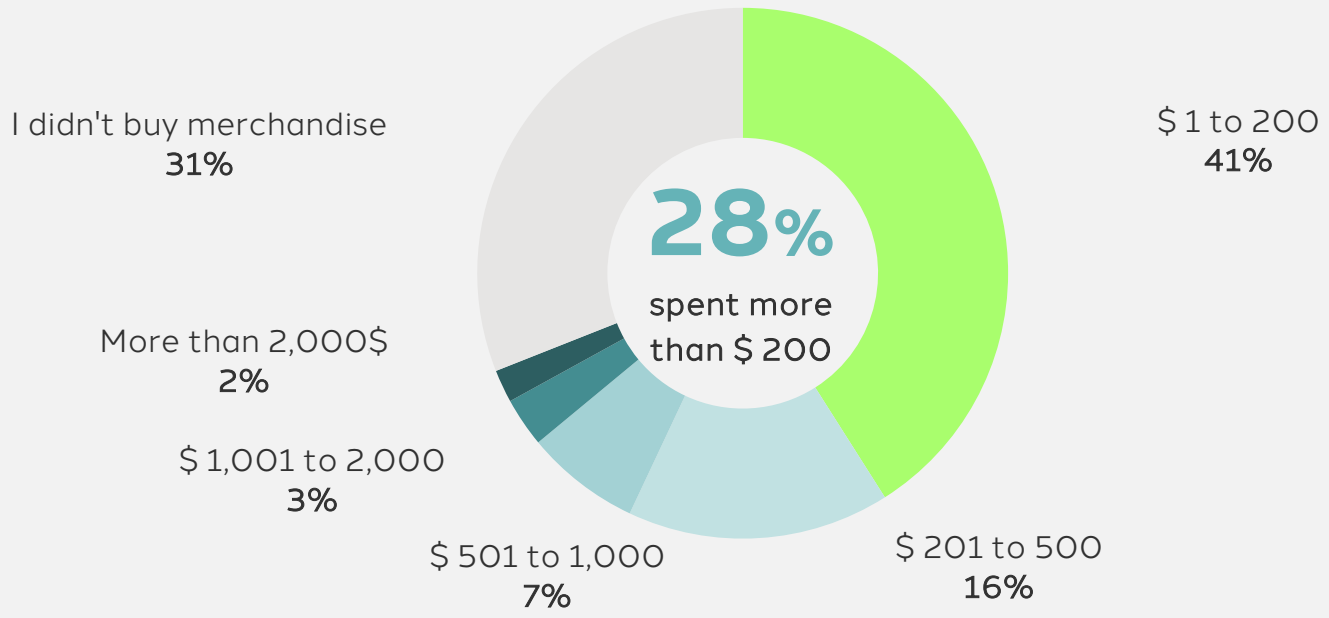


THE OPPORTUNITY FOR BRANDS

ANIME VIEWERS ARE LIKELY TO PURCHASE MERCHANDISE FEATURING THEIR FAVORITE IP.

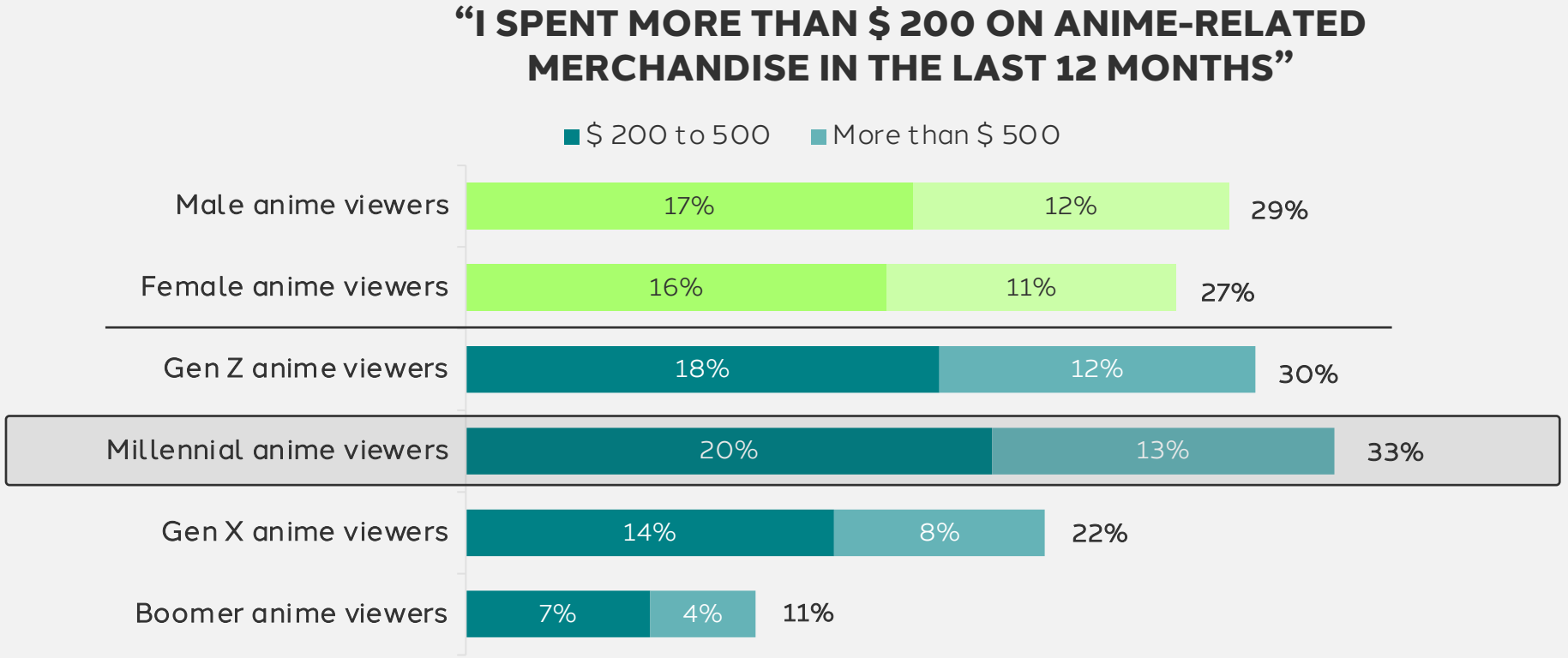
As many as 28% of all global consumers who watch anime at least a couple times x year, have spent more than $200 on merchandise featuring anime IP. 1 in 10 anime viewers have spent more than $500.

HOW MUCH DID YOU SPEND ON ANIME-RELATED MERCHANDISE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?



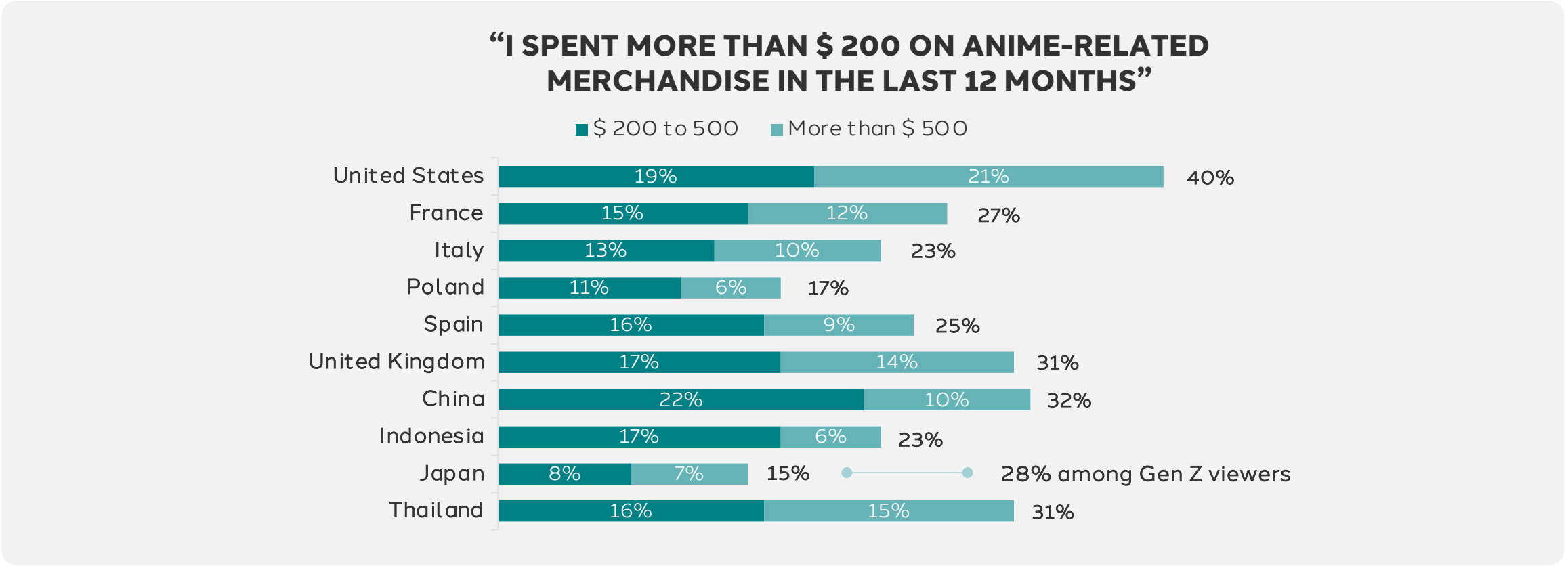
MILLENNIAL VIEWERS ARE MOST LIKELY TO SPLURGE ON ANIME-INSPIRED PRODUCTS.

1 in 3 have spent more than $ 200 in the last 12 months. Gen Z are also frequent buyers of anime-inspired merchandise..



THE UNITED STATES IS THE MOST PROMISING MARKET FOR BRANDS LOOKING TO SELL ANIME-INSPIRED PRODUCTS.

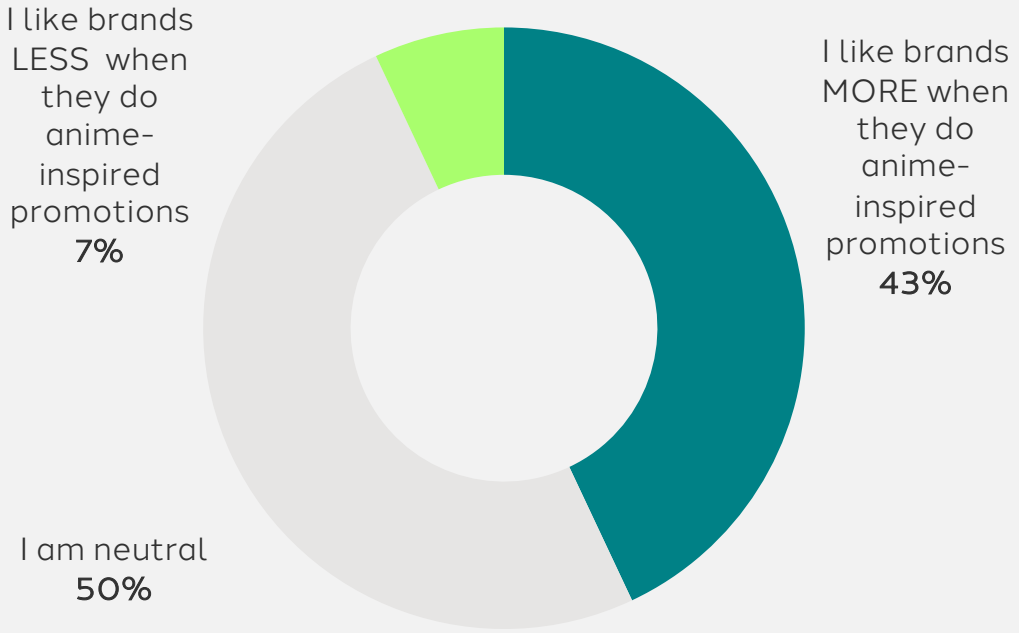
4 in 10 US viewers report having spent more than $ 200. In fact, 2 out of 10 say they have spent more than $500. The UK, China, and Thailand are other markets were viewers splurge on merchandise. Viewers in Japan spend more conservatively, but Japanese Gen Z viewers splurge.



A SIGNIFICANT SHARE OF VIEWERS SAY THAT THEIR OPINION OF A BRAND IMPROVES WHEN ANIME IP IS INCORPORATED IN PRODUCTS AND PROMOTIONS.

This is particularly true among Gen Z and Millennial viewers, while older generations are more likely to say it doesn't impact their perception.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BRANDS CREATING PRODUCTS OR PROMOTIONS INSPIRED BY ANIME?



"I LIKE BRANDS MORE WHEN THEY CREATE ANIME-INSPIRED PRODUCTS OR PROMOTIONS"

Gen Z anime viewers (116i); Millennial viewers (121i)

"I AM NEUTRAL"

Gen X anime viewers (116i); Boomer anime viewers (136i)

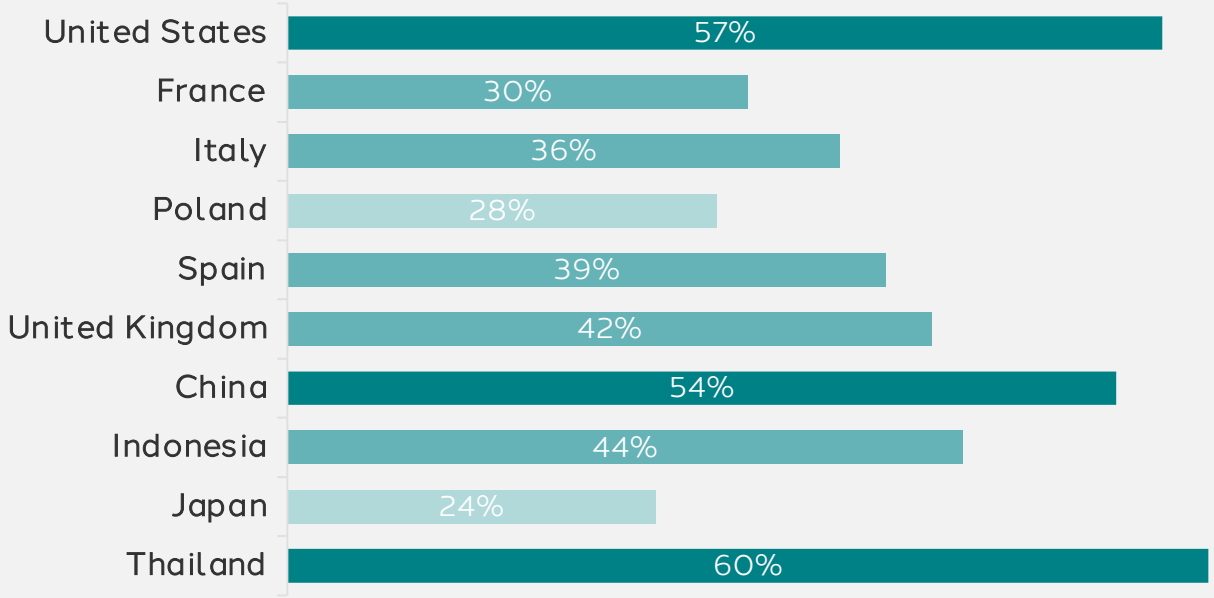
"I LIKE BRANDS LESS WHEN THEY CREATE ANIME-INSPIRED PRODUCT OR PROMOTIONS"

Boomer anime viewers (142i)

VIEWERS IN THE US, CHINA AND THAILAND ARE MOST LIKELY TO SAY ANIME-INSPIRED PROMOTIONS IMPROVE THEIR BRAND PERCEPTION.

However, there is consensus across the board: even in the countries where viewers are less likely to say this will be a factor, like Poland and Japan, 1 in 4 respondents say their opinion of a brand would improve.

"I LIKE BRANDS MORE WHEN THEY CREATE ANIME-INSPIRED PRODUCTS OR PROMOTIONS"



IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETERS

PARTNERSHIPS WITH ANIME IP FUEL PRESENT AND FUTURE GROWTH

Anime fans are avid consumers of products featuring their favorite IP. They often have a collector mindset that drives them to engage with brands featuring their favorite characters and franchises repeatedly, as opposed to restrain themselves to 1 or 2 occasional purchases in a year. Furthermore, the fans that are most receptive to brands partnering with anime IP are Millennials and Gen Z. Brands that are able to break through culture by leveraging IP they love have an opportunity to differentiate and engender loyal customers.

PARTNERING WITH ANIME IP REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITY WORLDWIDE - ESPECIALLY IN THE US, APAC AND THE UK

United States consumers are most likely to spend more on merchandise featuring anime franchises and characters and they signal being the most receptive to improving their perception of brands that embark in IP partnerships. Brands that are looking for a big cultural moment to break through in the US market should consider whether there are franchises that are a natural fit based on the company's value proposition or heritage.

BRAND EFFORTS SHOULD PRIORITIZE CULTURAL FIT AND CO-CREATION, SO TURN TO EXPERTS WHO UNDERSTAND CULTURAL NUANCES AND TRENDS IN THE FANDOM

Attitudes towards brand activations featuring anime IP vary across markets and across cohorts within these markets. Brands must lean into culturally-aligned storytelling, collaborate with rights holders, and invite fans to co-create to build resonance and trust. It's important not to look at anime IP as a one-size-fits all, but rather lean on the expertise of business partners that have a heritage in co-producing and tools to understand what different audiences will and won't be receptive too.



HOW DENTSU CAN HELP

Legacy and expertise

As a global agency network founded in Japan, dentsu has been a strategic business partner to creators and production companies involved in the development of anime franchises since this media first emerged. Dentsu's standing legacy as a consulting firm guiding anime developers across commercial opportunities is unmatched.

Active investments

Dentsu is actively involved in co-producing some of the most vibrant anime franchises capturing the imagination of fans worldwide and it's a rights holder that can broker partnerships for brands looking to leverage some of the most popular anime IP out therein their products and activations.

Audience insights

At dentsu, we know people better than anyone else. Our robust audience insights toolset allows us to understand the nuances in different segments' media and entertainment consumption habits, as well as their purchasing behaviors. The research presented here is just a snapshot of the proprietary data set we have in place to understand how audiences across the world are engaging with anime content in unique ways.

Full funnel brand support

From IP co-production, to creative and campaign strategy, to media buying, influencer marketing and customer experience transformation, dentsu can support brands with the full spectrum of capabilities needed to engage fans from inspiration all the way to purchase.



Dentsu is an integrated growth and transformation partner to the world's leading organizations. Founded in 1901 in Tokyo, Japan, and now present in over 145 countries and regions, it has a proven track record of nurturing and developing innovations, combining the talents of its global network of leadership brands to develop impactful and integrated growth solutions for clients. Dentsu delivers end-to-end experience transformation (EX) by integrating its services across Media, CXM and Creative, while its business transformation (BX) mindset pushes the boundaries of transformation and sustainable growth for brands, people and society.

Dentsu, innovating to impact.

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