

The Study to Clarify the Type of “Otome-Game” User

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Abstract. The authors use the Marketing Science. And the one of the authors study to clarify the type of “Otome-game” user. “Otome-game” users have many kinds of liking or desire. So it is difficult for makers to create products that match with the demands of users. By this research, users and makers will be able to trade at the suitable type of demands. So the author will research the market of the “Otome-game”. The data that is collected by marketing research is analyzed by SPSS.

Keywords: Marketing Science, Otome-game, Japanese culture, User Analysis, SPSS.

1 Introduction

I research to clarify the types of “Otome game” users, using marketing science.

1.1 What Is Otome Game?

“Otome game” means love simulation game for women in Japanese. The word “Otome ” means a young girl, and this word also suggests a virgin indirectly.

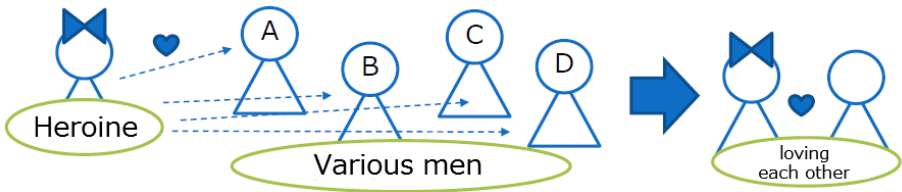


Fig. 1. Explanation of Otome game

Otome game is a game genre like novel. Each one has own story. The player of the game handles a girl who is the heroine of the story. The player can change heroine's name. Of course, the player can change it into her name. And the heroine meets handsome men of various characters in the game. She fall in love with one of them. As a result, the player who handles the heroine can enjoy virtual love with the man in the game. This story of the game branches when the heroine chooses one of the men. The

number of the branches in a game is same as the number of the men in the game, so the player can fall in love with each man. This is like a romance novel which can choose heroine's partner.



Fig. 2. Play screen of Otome game (This game was made from TECMO KOEI HOLDINGS CO.,LTD. Haruka naru Toki no Naka de5)

The game screen usually displays the background image and the character images. This shows the player the heroine's field of vision. The girl who is in the lower left is a heroine of the game. In the text box on her right side, her or the others words are displayed. The name of the speaker is displayed on the text box. Their conversation basically advances by pushing the button. The player plays the game by reading this conversation like reading a novel. At that time, the characters' dialogs recorded by voice actors are played. Sound effect and background music are also played. As a result, the player will experience the story with sense of presence.

1.2 Situation in Today's Japanese Market

Otome game is one of the game genres that is growing significantly in today's Japan. Otome game market is forecasted to become about 15.6 billion yen in 2012. The market in 2011 is 14.6 billion yen. This is 30 percent extra compared with 2010. [1]

The history of Otome game goes back until 1994. But at that time, the game genre was not well known, that state continued for a while. However, a product had an explosive sales in 2002. Hereafter, Otome game has become to be known at once. After that, the products which became a big hit continued in 2006 and 2008. In 2010 Otome game came to be known more because famous product had been animated. More over, in 2011, an animated product did smash hit. To promote CD products related to the animation work, a lot of flags and the posters were located at JR Ikebukuro station. In 2013, promoting posters were posted at 13 JR stations nationwide. At first, Otome game was known by only a part of the game industry. However today, it is known by many people and was grown to very popular genre in Japan. In addition, if a product becomes big hit, a lot of related products are sold, such as CDs, Goods, or events.

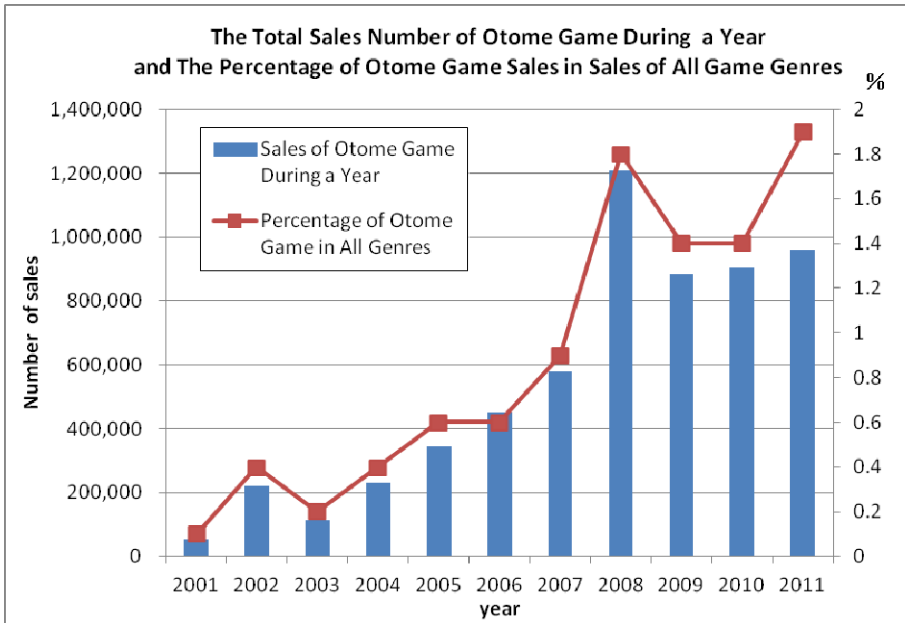


Fig. 3. The Total Sales Number of Otome Game During a Year and The Percentage of Otome Game Sales in Sales of All Game Genres

These graphs show two kinds of numbers about sales of Otome game industry between 2001 and 2011. Blue bar graph and left vertical line show the total sales number of Otome game during a year. Red line graph and right vertical line show the percentage of Otome game in all genres of game. These graphs also shows Otome game market is growing in Japan. Especially, because the percentage has been increase, it is clear that Otome game is known by people who did not play these games gradually.

Recently, Otome game is also released in foreign countries. In 2012, Voltage Inc. began the service "A Prince's Proposal" for North America. The company already had purveyed the service "Pirates in Love", Otome game for North America. This took 21st place by the App store entertainment category of North America in August 2012. And in Asia, this took 1st place by the App store entertainment category of Singapore in same month. Moreover, another product of Voltage Inc. "My Forged Wedding" took 2nd place in same record. From above, it can be said that the acknowledgment level of Otome game in foreign countries is rising.

1.3 Purpose of Research

As can be seen from above, the market of Otome game has expanded every year. However, today in Japan, Otome game industry do not enough analyze the user. Then, to search for "Needs requested from the otome game now", I decided to analyze the otome game user.

So, to search for the needs that are required for Otome game, the author decided to analyze the users.

2 Marketing Research of Otome Game

2.1 User Survey of Game Industry in Present Japan

Today, the game industry in Japan surveys a lot of points of various users for marketing. Those contents are as follows.[2]

- Sex
- Age
- Job
- Annual Income
- Terminal Environment
- Genres
- Why did you started playing video game?
- How long do you play the game in a day?
- How many titles do you play?

And the following items are investigated in the social network game industry.

- The number of having smartphones
- The number of having feature phones
- The number of users who use two platforms (Mobage and GREE)
- Utilization of other platforms
- Rate of users paying
- Rate of users paying
- Average of rate of paying
- Genres which users pay
- payment method
- Influence on expense for other leisure by paying to social network game

A large amount of item is surveyed, although only small points are surveyed about Otome game. The author thinks that to survey the users of Otome game, different points of view are necessary. The points are various liking or desire of each user, because they are the most important points in Otome game.

"The evolution and trends of Otome game" was researched by Aya Higuchi and Yukiko Takahashi, who belong to School of Network and Information, Senshu University in Japan. The following survey results came out from their research. They analyzed the comments of the "Otome Game of the Year" user questionnaire Freem Ltd. has made on the Internet. They used the aggregate of 2009. They analyzed the number of each word in whole comments that was constituted by 43339 words rather than contents of each comment. They choose 11 words related to the game, and compared the comments including these words. As a result, the number of comments including 11 items was 644. The number of the comments about the story of the game

was 179. The next place was the comments about the characters of the game, the number was 105. These two numbers are quite different. And, the percentage of the comments about the story is 27.8% in comments about 11 items. This survey results shows lively interest of the users to the story.

However, Otome game industry has not investigated users’ needs for story of the game. Moreover, relationship of the story and the users also has not been investigated. From the above it is clear that, Otome game industry needs the user surveys which are distinctive and thoroughly.

2.2 User Survey of Otome Game

Then, how investigate the users? One is survey of the attitudes types of the user to the story because the story is especially interested by the users. The author insists that there are two types of attitude of the user to the story of Otome game. So most important question is this:

“When you play the Otome game, which is your attitude type, ‘empathize’ or ‘overlook’? If your attitude is not in these two types, please tell me your attitude.”

“empathize” and “overlook” are the grouping of the users which the author insists.

There are 3 features of the “empathize” type.

- She empathize the heroine in the game.
- She change heroine’s name.
- She is permissive with the character of the heroine.

“Overlook” type has 4 features.

- She regards that the player and the heroine are different separate person.
- he plays the game as if she reads a novel.
- She do not change heroine’s name.
- She is severe to the character of the heroine.

The most important point in these two types of attitude is that “is she permissive with or severe to the heroine?” But in Japanese Otome game industry, sometimes this distinction is mistaken. Why the distinction of the two types is important? The author thinks that, when a company which remembers incorrect user type promotes a product, they will choose incorrect users to promote.

There is a product which clearly shows relation between heroine and story. It is “Haruka naru Toki no Naka de 5” an Otome game produced by TECMO KOEI HOLDINGS CO.,LTD. in 2011. This work has history for 15 years as a popular Otome game series. However, in Amazon.com, this work was evaluated 2.5 points in five point full marks. 340 reviews were written to regular version of this work. 31 people evaluated 5 points, 83 people did 4 points, 53 people did 3 points, 72 people did 2 points, and 101 people did 1 point.

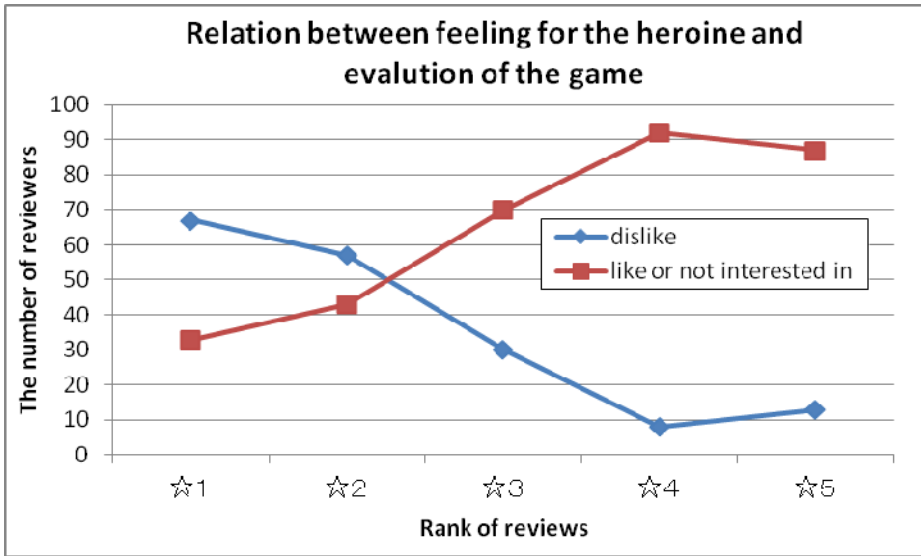


Fig. 4. Relation between feeling for the heroine and evaluation of the game

This graph shows that if the player hate the heroine of the game, she do not admit the value of the story of the game. On the other hand, if the player like the heroine, she also prize the story. The blue line shows the number of the people who said dislike the heroine. And the red line shows the number of the people who like the heroine, or who is not interested in her.

The author also researched a lot of element that compose “Otome-game” such as character, the voice actor, graphic art, back ground music, game system, bonus for purchaser, media mix or mobile products.

3 Development in the Future

As mentioned 1-2, Otome game market is expanding overseas. Especially, Voltage, Inc. has already released a service in North America. So this area is one of the large markets of the game industry.[3]

“Famitsu white book of Game 2012” published by Enterbrain Inc. announced as follows. The game market in 2011 are 1 trillion 910 billion yen in North America, Europe 1 trillion 5400 billion yen, 760.4 billion yen in Japan, China, 533 billion yen, 315 billion yen in Korea, India is 20.5 billion yen. This is to say that, the market in North America is as twice and a half large as Japan, and the market in Europe is as twice large as Japan.

Because the game released by Voltage Inc. took high rank in App store ranking, the author thinks there are demands of the Otome game overseas, and expects Otome game can spread from Japan to the world.

To create Otome games which can play overseas, the author thinks the user survey which is adapted to each region is important. Hereafter I would like to do it.

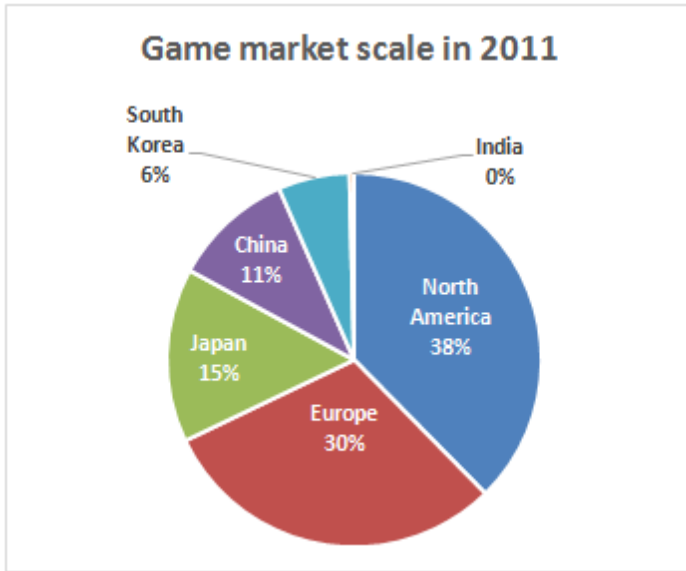


Fig. 5. Game market scale in 2011

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