

# **Preliminary research on the creation process of Japanese *manga***

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## **Abstract (150words)**

Japanese *manga* (comics) have been popular as the original source of motion pictures and *anime* (Japanese animation) because of their reputation of possessing strong story creation. The purpose of this article is to explore the creation system of Japanese *manga* with an emphasis on the dyadic relationship between *mangaka* and editors in ideation and the subsequent *manga* development process with employing the geneplore model of creative cognition. Although this paper is preliminary in nature, it is suggested that the creation necessitates trust in the dyadic relationship, which, in turn, facilitates the cycle of the geneplore process.

## **Keywords (5 words)**

product development, content, Japanese manga, comics, geneplore model

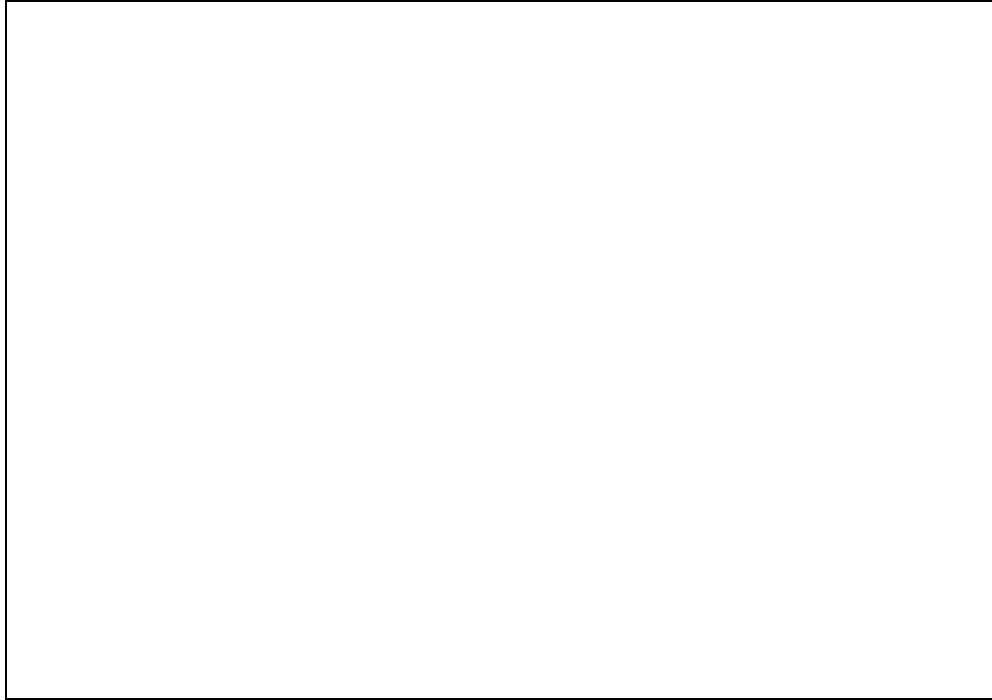
## **Introduction**

According to the *Dejitaru Kontentsu Hakusho* (2008; Digital Content White Paper), the market size of the Japanese content industry in 2007 was estimated to be 13.8 trillion yen (141 billion U.S. dollars (USD)/110 billion Euros (EUR)<sup>1</sup>. (Figure 1) Further, in terms of size, it was deemed to be second only to the U.S. industry. In fact, over the past few years, the Japanese content industry has been attracting considerable attention as the next leading industry.

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<sup>1</sup> Foreign exchange rates used in this article are USD/JPY = 98 and EUR/JPY = 126.

**Figure 1: Japanese content industry, 2007**



Source: *Dejitaru Kontentsu Hakusho* (2008; Digital Content White Paper)<sup>2</sup>.

However, in contrast to the optimistic forecast, most of the segments in the content industry have displayed a downward trend since 1996–1998, and the industry has remained constant at approximately 13 trillion yen in terms of market size. On the consumer front, the declining youth population, recession, and rising mobile phone tariffs have frequently been cited as the reasons for this downward trend. Thus, it appears that the future of the Japanese content industry is not necessarily bright; nevertheless, it does have tremendous potential and scope.

It has often been pointed out that the two most critical issues regarding the content industry are the global market development strategy and the “One Source, Multi Use<sup>3</sup>” strategy. Among the many content categories, Japanese *manga* (comics) have been popular as the original source of motion pictures and *anime* (Japanese animation) because of their reputation of possessing strong story creation. According to some estimates, the second and third reproduction uses of *manga* exceed 3 trillion yen (USD 31 billion/EUR 24 billion) (Nakano, 2008).

Table 1 presents the adaptation of *manga* originals in 2008, and Table 2 lists the live-action film titles released in the U.S. that were based on *manga*.

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<sup>2</sup> “Prints (*Tosho, Shimbun, Gazo, Tekisuto*)” includes all publications, newspapers, other texts, advertising, etc. “Films (*Eizo*)” refers to DVDs, videos, advertising, etc. “Music (*Ongaku, Onsei*)” refers to CDs, DVDs, other audio tapes, advertising, etc. “Games (*Gemu*)” include PC games and those on PSP or Nintendo DS.

<sup>3</sup> The “One Source, Multi Use” strategy is to adapt one source (e.g. a *manga* story) for multiple uses (e.g. *anime*, dramas, and films.).

**Table 1: Number of *anime*, dramas, and films based on *manga* in 2008**

Release	TV <i>anime</i>	TV dramas	Films
January	3	5	8
April	13	8	4
July	13	8	6
Oct	20	6	5

Source: *Shuppan Shihyo Nempo* (2008; The Publication Annual).

**Table 2: Live-action film titles in the U.S.**

Year	Live-action film titles	<i>Mangaka</i>
2008	<i>Mahha GoGoGo</i> (Speed Racer)	Tatsuo Yoshida
2009	<i>Akira</i> (Akira)	Tatsuhiro Otomo
2009	<i>Gunnm</i> (Battle Angel Alita)	Yukito Kishiro
2010	<i>Dragon Ball</i> (Dragon Ball)	Akira Toriyama
Unknown	<i>Kiseiju</i> (Parasyte)	Hitoshi Iwaaki
Unknown	<i>MONSTER</i> (Monster)	Naoki Urasawa

Source: Martin (2008).

Douglas E. Glen, CEO, IMAGI International, who will deliver *Astro Boy*'s<sup>4</sup> first CGI feature film to the world in 2009, commented the following in his interview with a Japanese magazine. He stated that his job is to look for stories that feature heroes whom the people around the world can iconize. Further, he observed that Japan is a reservoir of such stories (*Shukan Daiyamondo* (2008; Weekly Diamond Magazine)). Moreover, John A. Lasseter, Executive Vice President, Creative, PIXAR, proposed that in animation, story creation is the most important aspect (Harada, 2004). It is assumed that one of the most important factors of success in the content industry lies in the power of story creation. This is particularly true with respect to Japanese *manga* as it is considered to be an important source with multiple uses, which is in keeping with the “One Source, Multi Use” strategy.

Typically, story creation begins with ideation, which is critical to the development of new products. In addition, in new product development, for example, ideation becomes the key component of the front-end process, often called the “fuzzy front end,” and is recognized as one of the most crucial aspects for a firm. It is believed that the early stage of new product development determines more than 70% of the product success (Dahl and Moreau, 2002). However, despite the above, relatively little research has been conducted in this regard.

The author of this paper has conducted several researches focusing on the cognitive strategy used by Japanese *mangaka*, or *manga* author(s), during the process of ideation. These researches were conducted using the geneple model of creative cognition (Finke, Ward and Smith, 1992) that focuses on the cognitive processes and structures underlying creative thinking. Moreover, the model distinguishes

<sup>4</sup> *Astro Boy*, slated for release later in 2009, originated in Japan and is one of the best-known and most-loved action heroes in the world. Originally created by Osamu Tezuka, popularly known as “god of *manga*,” in the early 1950s, *Astro Boy* has played the protagonist in more than 300 television episodes and several 2D features. (Retrieved March 18, 2009 from <http://www.pnewswire.co.uk/cgi/news/release?id=204598>.)

between generative and exploratory processes in the development of creative ideas. The creative processes involve indefinitely moving between generation and exploration until a satisfactory product is achieved.

In this research, the author explores the driver of this mental process: a dyadic relationship between the *mangaka* and editor. Although this paper is preliminary in nature, it aims to suggest the drivers or constraints of the mental process of the *mangaka* that facilitate ideation and subsequent content development.

## ***Manga, Japanese comics***<sup>5</sup>

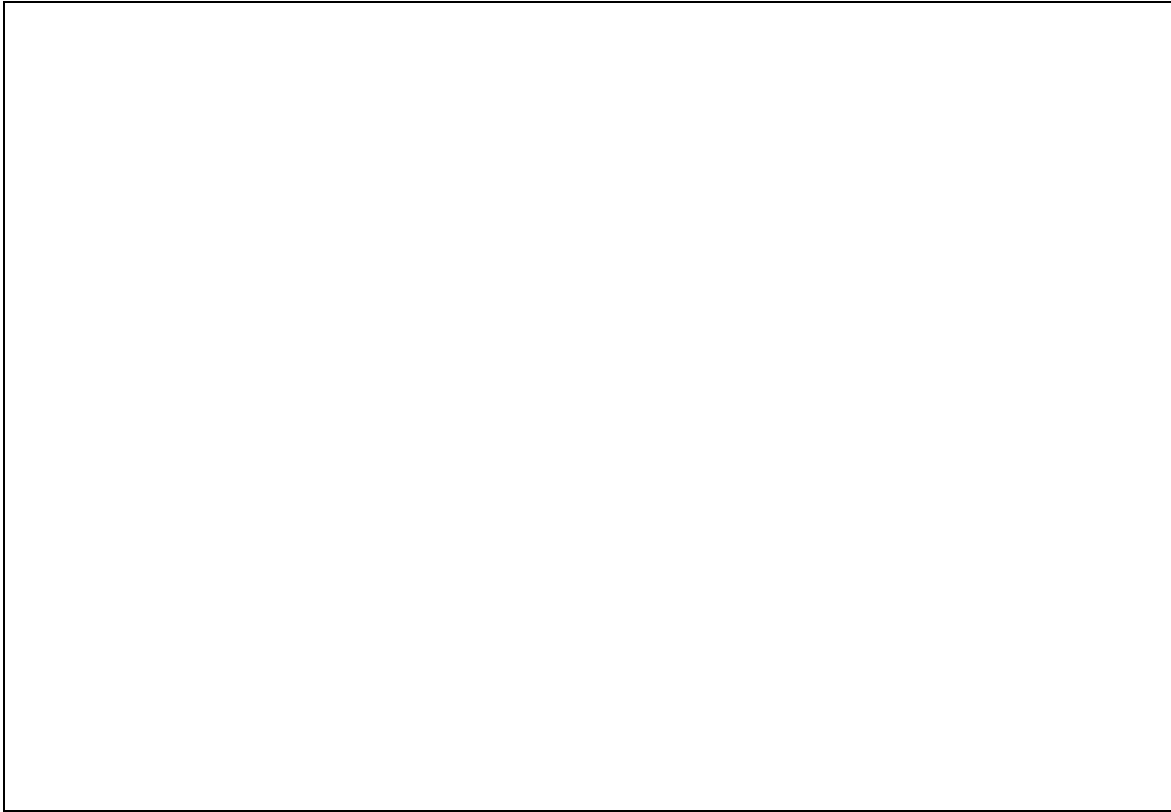
### 1. *Manga* Market

*Manga* are considered to be one of the most competitive pop-cultural products such as games and anime in Japan. According to the *Shuppan Shihyo Nempo* (2008; The Publication Annual), the total sales of all publications in 2007 was 2.1 trillion yen (USD 21 billion/EUR 17 billion), down 3.1% year-on-year (y-o-y). The unit sales of 3.4 billion consisted of 755 million units of books and 2.6 billion units of magazines. The *manga* market (including periodical magazines and paperbacks), garnering nearly a quarter (22.5%) of the total market share, was estimated to be 470 billion yen (USD 5 billion/ EUR 4 billion), down 2.3% y-o-y. This represents unit sales of 1.2 billion (down 2.7% y-o-y) that included 518 million units of paperbacks (down 1.0% y-o-y) and 717 million units of magazines (down 3.8% y-o-y). This accounts for 36.7% of the total units of all publications sold in Japan. Although *manga* has been losing its share in the print market, the “digital *manga*” market has been steadily growing, reaching 10.6 billion yen (USD 108 million/EUR 84 million) in 2006, which accounted for 60% of the electronic books market (Nakano, 2008).

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<sup>5</sup> For further details on Japanese *manga*, please refer to Matt Thorn’s website: <http://www.matt-thorn.com>.

**Figure 2: Japanese *manga* market (1991–2007)**



Source: *Shuppan Shihyo Nempo* (2007, 2008; The Publication Annual).

Given that the Japanese population was an estimated 127 million in 2008, it would not be difficult to imagine the magnitude of the *manga* market in Japan. Akira Toriyama's *Doragon Boru* (Dragon Ball), which has a total of 42 volumes, recorded sales of more than 150 million units. In comparison to the large size of the *manga* market in Japan, its overseas equivalents are small. In 2006, the U.S. *manga* market was USD 175–200 million/EUR 136–156 million (Cha, 2007). In France, the wholesale share of the *manga* market was USD 49 million/EUR 38 million in 2004 (JETRO, 2005); further, 12 million units were sold in 2005 (Beuve-Méry, 2006).

## 2. Characteristics of the demand side: How *manga* are read in Japan

Unlike the Western reading style, in the Japanese context, people read *manga* from right to left. For example, in Figure 3, reading would begin at (1) (upper right-hand frame) and continue through (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), and (7). Moreover, the characters' lines are written vertically and are read from right to left. Over the years, Western editions of *manga* are increasingly being published in the authentic right-to-left format (Ashby, 2003).

Figure 3: Reading *manga*



Source: Aoike (2005, p.117).

The Japanese language is considerably unique in that it consists of both ideograms and phonograms. Further, the two writing systems of the Japanese orthography are processed differently: *kana* (syllabic symbols) are processed similar to other phonetic languages such as English, while *kanji* (a logographic writing system) is processed similar to other logographic languages such as Chinese. As a result of this duality, native speakers of Japanese use different parts of the brain when reading. Yoro stated that *manga* was created and developed in Japan because it was suited to the manner in which the Japanese brain functions when reading (Yoro and Makino, 2005).

Thus, it is not unimaginable that, on average, a Japanese person reads 16 pages of a *manga* per minute (Berndt, 1991). Typically, one episode of a weekly *manga* serial has 19–20 pages; thus, a Japanese individual can finish it less than a minute and a half. The most popular *manga* magazine for boys, the *Shōnen Jump*, or Weekly Jump, (Figure 4) has about 468 pages (19 pages per episode) and sells for only 240 yen (USD 2.45/EUR 1.90). Thus, a voluminous amount of *manga* production along with the innate and well-experienced *manga* readers (consumers) result in the existence of a vast reservoir of *manga* stories in Japan.

Figure 4: Cover page of the *Shōnen Jump*



Source: *Shōnen Jump* (March 16, 2009).

### 3. Characteristics of the supply side: Osamu Tezuka, the “god of *manga*”

Another characteristic of Japanese *manga* is that almost 90% of it can be categorized as *Tezuka-kei* (or Tezuka style). The late Osamu Tezuka, popularly known as the “god of *manga*” in Japan, exerted a great influence on his successors. His works were essentially story-oriented and were labeled “story *manga*.” Many *mangaka* follow the *Tezuka-kei* style of story creation, which is considered to be one of their strengths. Naoki Urasawa, the author of *Pluto*, which is the adult adaptation of *Astro Boy*, is no exception and is greatly influenced by Tezuka. Further, two television documentaries on *shōjo manga* (girls’ comics) presented by NHK (*Nihon Hoso Kyokai*, Japan Broadcasting Corporation) featured popular Japanese female *mangaka* who were representatives of the golden age of *manga* during the 1970s and 1980s (NHK BS2 2004, 2005, 2006). It is no surprise that 11 out of 12 *mangaka* admitted to Tezuka’s influence on their career and creation style. Given the abovementioned influence of Tezuka on *mangaka*, it can be stated that story creation is considered to be a critical factor in the making of Japanese *manga*.

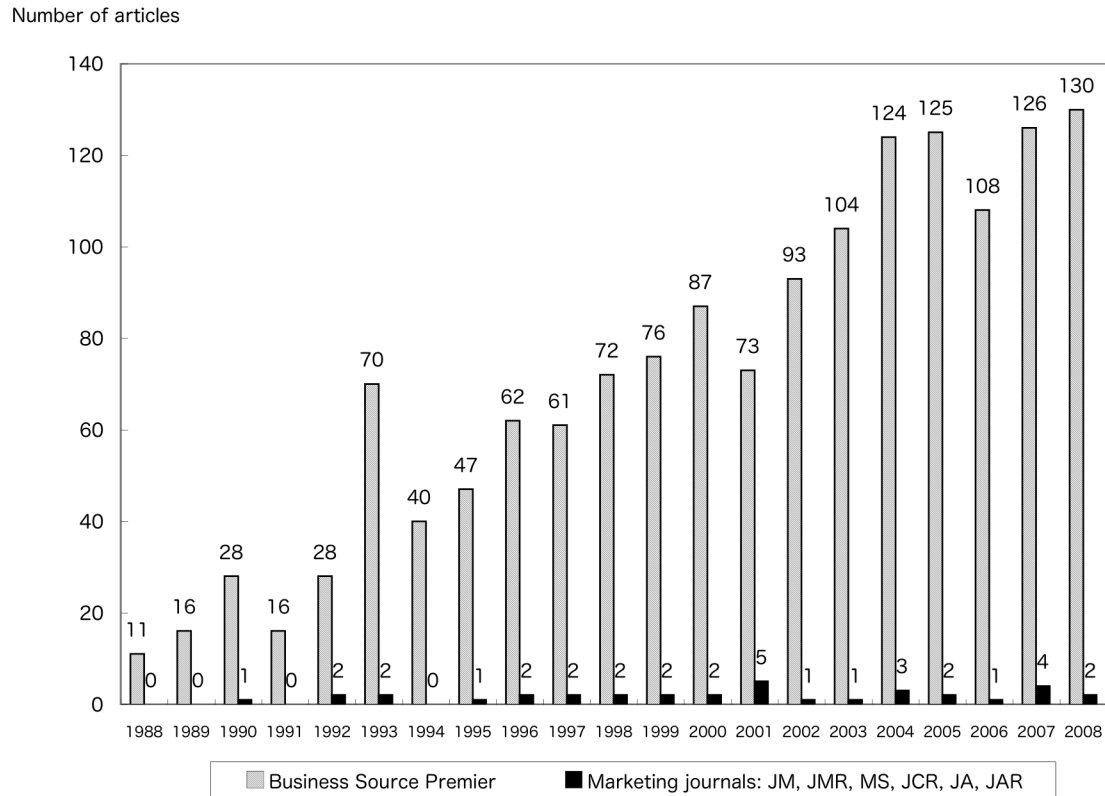
In the next section, some difficulties with regards to researching creativity will be briefly described before introducing the analytical framework of this article.

### Are the concepts of “Creative” or “Creativity” popular subjects of research?

Figure 5 and Table 3 present the number of articles that have incorporated the terms “creative” or “creativity” into their titles; these articles have appeared in the following distinguished marketing journals: Journal of Marketing (JM), Journal of Marketing Research (JMR), Marketing Science (MS), Journal of Consumer Research (JCR), Journal of Advertising (JA), and Journal of Advertising Research

(JAR). Based on the Business Source Premier<sup>6</sup>, it can be stated that the increasing number of articles with the terms “creative” or “creativity” in their titles is outstanding, with the exception of marketing journals.

**Figure 5: Articles with the terms “Creative” or “Creativity” in their titles (1988–2008)**



Source: *Business Source Premier*<sup>7</sup>

**Table 3: Number of article titles with the words “Creative” or “Creativity,” appearing in marketing journals**

	JM	JMR	MS	JCR	JA	JAR	total
<b>Creative</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Creativity</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>35</b>

Source: *Business Source Premier*

<sup>6</sup> *Business Source Premier* of EBSCOhost provides indexing and abstracting for 350 of the most important scholarly business journals. Business subjects covered include marketing, management, MIS, POM, accounting, finance, econometrics and economics.

<sup>7</sup> Data were retrieved from the EBSCOhost on January 5, 2009 by using the following fields: academic journal, article, “creativity” or “creative,” and title.



However, this does not necessarily imply that marketing scholars are uninterested in the concepts of “creative” and “creativity.” People tend to regard creativity as something that is mysterious and considerably awesome and gifted only to a limited few. In fact, creativity has been primarily studied by trait psychologists, who have concentrated their efforts on investigating creativity in its most extreme form, such as an outstanding artistic or scientific achievement (Hirschman, 1980). Smith, Ward, and Finke (1995a) stated in their preface that written work on creativity often lacked scientific rigor, and as a result, many cognitive scientists have perhaps viewed creative cognition as being unrealistic or unresearchable.

The author, in one of the textbooks on product development, stated that the creativity required in business is different from the one required in arts. At times, the notion of an “aloof artist” hinders scholarly research. One scholar asserted with conviction that Hayao Miyazaki, a prominent filmmaker of *Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi* (Spirited Away) never took into consideration his film’s consumers, albeit the scholar had never interviewed or spoken with Miyazaki. As shown in Hirschman (1983) and Voss and Voss (2000), a customer orientation is not necessarily applicable to the artistic context; however, idealization deters fruitful researches to a great extent.

This article does not focus on the anecdote or personal traits of a genius. The author tries to analyze the creative process of *manga* in a scientific method. Moto Hagio, a famous *Tezuka-kei* Japanese female *mangaka*, made an interesting comment on story creation. When asked to provide helpful information on story creation, she referred to academic writing. In Hagio (1998), she stated that the logic used in academic writing is helpful and applicable to *manga* creation. This suggests that *manga* creation is not limited to merely drawing pictures; on the contrary, it requires logical thinking and reasoning.

The subsequent sections discuss the analytical framework adopted in this article: the geneplore model of creative cognition that focuses on the cognitive processes and structures underlying creative thinking. First, the subject of creative cognition has been introduced, followed by a brief outline of the geneplore model.

### **Creative cognition**

In the field of marketing and consumer behavior, Moreau and Dahl (2005) have claimed that the creative cognition approach is appealing because it allows well-developed traditional concepts in cognitive psychology, such as encoding/retrieval and analogical thinking, to provide the basis for understanding creative thought. It rejects the idea that “extraordinary forms of creativity are the products of minds that operate according to principles that are fundamentally different than those associated with normative cognition” (Ward, Smith and Finke 1999, p. 191).

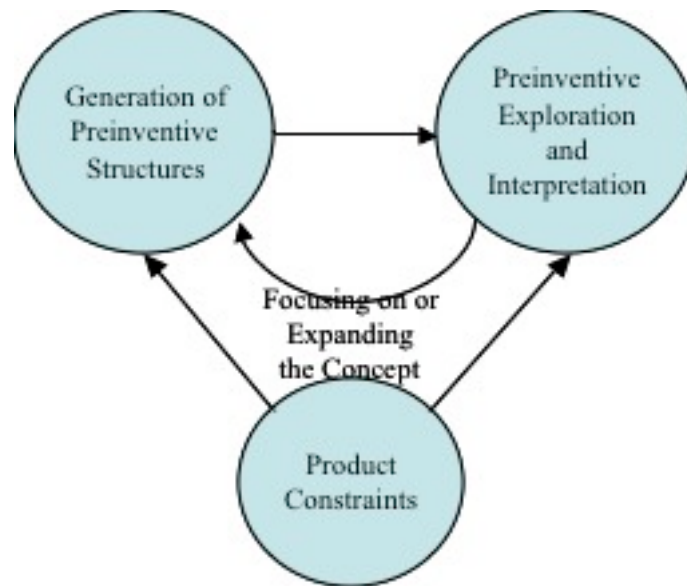
However, in this field, there are only a few articles that deal with the cognitive aspects of a creator in product development. Dahl, Chattopadhyay and Gorn (1999) examined the manner in which visual imagery influences the production of more creative products. Goldenberg, Mazursky and Solomon (1999) derived a framework, termed “templates,” that is a facilitator for new product ideation using a replicable pattern. In Dahl and Moreau (2002), analogical thinking was introduced in the context of new product development. Moreover, in Moreau and Dahl (2005), the geneplore model, which has been discussed in the next section, was employed to detect the effects of input and time constraints on consumer creativity.

These experiments have contributed to the uncultivated field of product development in marketing. In actuality, however, in order to better understand the creative process, an integrated model that describes the entire process should be examined.

### **Geneplore model**

The creative cognition approach (Finke, Ward and Smith, 1992) intends to improve and optimize creativity. It distinguishes between generative and exploratory processes in the development of creative ideas (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Geneplore model**



Source: Finke, Ward, and Smith (1992).

In the initial stage of a creative task, generative processes are thought to be used for creating preliminary mental representations of a solution, termed “preinventive structures,” that serve as the precursor to the final product. Generative processes, such as retrieval, association, mental synthesis, mental transformation, and analogical transfer, yield preinventive structures. They may comprise mental images, verbal combinations, category exemplars, or mental models.

Preinventive exploration begins once a preinventive structure has been generated. Subsequently, people search for different meanings to attach to and/or interpret the rudimentary solution. These exploratory processes include attribute finding, conceptual interpretation, functional inference, hypothesis testing, and limitation searching. Once these exploratory processes are completed, the preinventive structure can be refined or regenerated, depending on what was discovered in the exploratory phase.

As illustrated in Figure 6, creative processes involve moving between generation and exploration as the preinventive structure is altered and updated after each cycle, until a satisfactory product is achieved. This cycle, referred to as the “geneplore cycle,” is then repeated until the structure is developed into a finalized product. At any point in the geneplore cycle, constraints can be imposed onto the generative and exploratory phases to restrict the nature of the final product. These include constraints related to time, the type of product, the general category to which it belongs, and the features and functions it can possess (Finke 1995, p. 322–323).

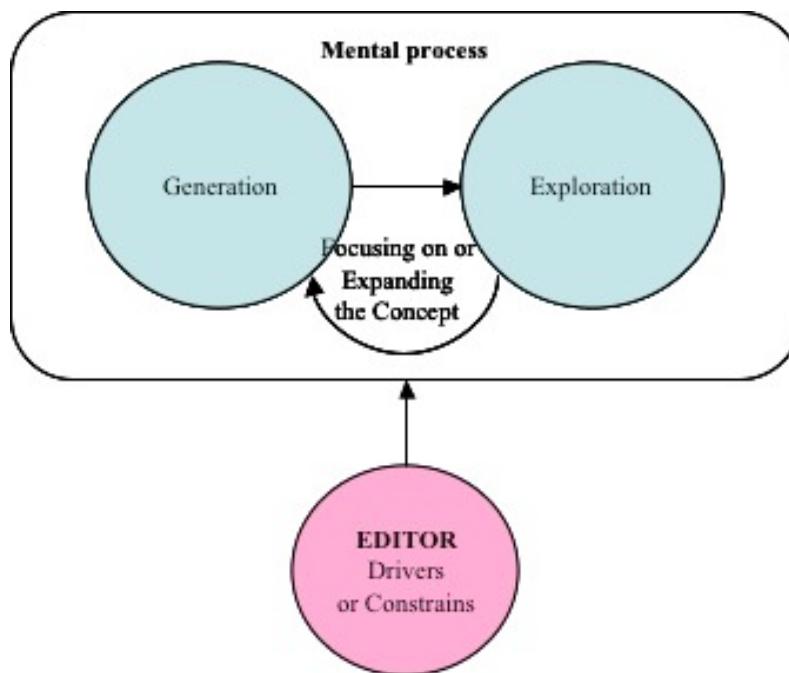
In the actual business scenario, however, generating creative ideas is necessary, albeit not sufficient. Creative ideas and thoughts must be developed into commercially viable products. In the following section, creative realism (Finke, 1995) as the next step in the creative cognition approach is considered.

## Creative realism

Creative realism refers to the study of creative ideas that deal with realistic issues or elements, possessing creative potential. Finke asserted that creativity should consist of more than just new ideas or wild imaginations; it should also have realistic and enduring consequences. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between unproductive and productive creativity for creative cognition. In creative realism, one attempts to develop ideas that are not only original and inspiring but also likely to have a genuine impact on actual problems, needs, and values. In other words, creative realism necessitates evaluation on the outcome by someone; in *manga*, the “someone” comprises fans (consumers) and editors.

Although the present research largely depends on the secondary data available from publications and is preliminary in nature, the author has attempted to explore the outer driver of the mental process of creative cognition: a dyadic relationship between the *mangaka* and editor. Thus, this research aims to determine the factors that drive or constrain this mental process and thereby influence productivity. Further, it aims to identify the key factors that facilitate ideation and subsequent content development (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Conceptual framework**



### Case study: Naoki Urasawa, “The man who sold 100 million *manga*”<sup>8</sup>

Naoki Urasawa was born on January 2, 1960, in Tokyo. He made his professional *manga* debut with *Return* in 1981. He has received numerous awards in his career, as listed in Table 4. Moreover, he is one of the most popular *mangaka*, often referred to as “*I oku satsu wo utta otoko*” (The man who sold 100 million *manga*) (NHK Publishing, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> This part of the paper is primarily based on Kawamata (2008).

**Table 4: Naoki Urasawa's award-winning *manga* titles**

Year	Awards	<i>Manga</i> titles
1982	New Manga Artist Award of Shogakukan	<i>Return</i>
1990	Shogakukan Manga Award	<i>Yawara!</i>
1997	Japan Media Arts Festival, Excellence Prize	<i>Monster</i>
1999	Tezuka Osamu Cultural Prize, Grand Prize	<i>Monster</i>
2001	Shogakukan Manga Award	<i>Monster</i>
2001	Kodansha Manga Award	<i>20<sup>th</sup> Century Boys</i>
2002	Japan Media Arts Festival, Excellence Prize	<i>20<sup>th</sup> Century Boys</i>
2003	Shogakukan Manga Award	<i>20<sup>th</sup> Century Boys</i>
2004	Angoulême International Comics Festival Prize for a Series	<i>20<sup>th</sup> Century Boys</i>
2005	Tezuka Osamu Cultural Prize, Grand Prize	<i>Pluto</i>
2005	Japan Media Arts Festival, Excellence Prize	<i>Pluto</i>

Source: Kawamata (2008).

**Table 5: 2008's top-selling *manga* in Japan based on series (posted on 1/2/2009, 22:15 EST)**

Rank	Title	<i>Mangaka</i>	Total Copies	Publisher
1	<i>One Piece</i>	Eiichiro Oda	5,956,540	Shueisha
2	<i>Naruto</i>	Masashi Kishimoto	4,261,054	Shueisha
<b>3</b>	<b><i>20<sup>th</sup> Century Boys</i></b>	<b>Naoki Urasawa</b>	<b>3,710,054</b>	<b>Shogakukan</b>
4	<i>Katekyo Hitman Reborn!</i>	Akira Amano	3,371,618	Shueisha
5	<i>Bleach</i>	Kubotite	3,161,825	Shueisha
6	<i>NANA</i>	Ai Yazawa	3,122,146	Shueisha
7	<i>Soul Eater</i>	Atsushi Ookubo	3,076,351	Square Enix
8	<i>Nodame Cantabile</i>	Tomoko Ninomiya	2,799,299	Kodansha
9	<i>Rookies</i>	Masanori Morita	2,765,163	Shueisha
10	<i>Gintama #26</i>	Hideaki Sorachi	2,390,196	Shueisha

Source: Anime News Network (Retrieved March 21, 2009 from <http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2009-01-02/2008-top-selling-manga-in-japan-by-series>).

### Initial process of creating *manga*

The typical creation process of an episode of a weekly *manga* begins with ideation, and is followed by storyboarding and the finished product<sup>9</sup>. For instance, taking Urasawa as an example, the process begins with a meeting between Urasawa and Takashi Nagasaki, an independent editor and storywriter who has been working with Urasawa since his debut. After the meeting, the creation of *nemu* (storyboard) begins; storyboarding is perhaps the most time-consuming and difficult part of the *manga* development process.

<sup>9</sup> For details regarding the *manga* creation process, please refer to Kawamata (2007).

Once Urasawa has completed the storyboarding, which takes about two days, Urasawa's assistants join him in completing the work, after Nagasaki's approval.

It is widely known that drawing a weekly serial *manga* is an extremely painstaking and difficult task. In fact, many *mangaka* have been hospitalized due to excessive workloads. Moreover, Urasawa also had to stop his serial *manga* in April 2006 as a result of a dislocated shoulder. Urasawa had been producing four weekly serials and two biweekly serials for more than 20 years. While drawing he would invariably lean on his left side, resulting in the dislocation of his shoulder. Urasawa still maintains production of five serials a month, while undergoing continuous treatment.

### **Characteristics of Urasawa's creative process**

#### 1. Ideation is synonymous with discovery: "Preview of motion pictures"

Young (1986) stated that an idea is in fact nothing more or less than a new combination of old elements. In Nijstad, Stroebe, and Lodewijkx (2006), idea generation is conceptualized as a repeated search for ideas in the associative memory. Urasawa agreed to this concept and claimed that there are no original ideas in his age. Further, in this regard, he expressed the following: it is not the pleasure of an inventor but that of a discoverer.

Urasawa relates his ideation style to "the preview of motion pictures," wherein some images and scenes as well as some catch phrases flash, drift, and float through his mind. Thereafter, he seeks to determine why they have appeared in his mind and attempts to find the solution, finally acquiring it. In other words, it is similar to the process of understanding the scenery of a dream, which requires interpretation. Urasawa states that when idea generation begins, he changes gear as he drives a car and the story unfolds naturally. Aoike (2005) described her ideation process by stating that the devices of idea generation and exploration are always ready to work at a subconscious level.

"The best way to get an idea is to get an idea (Foster 1996, p.158)." Not only Urasawa and Aoike but also other *mangaka* continuously think and search for ideas. This probably applies to various professionals from artists to scholars. In creative cognition, the continuous movement between generation and exploration in the mental process is necessary. However, in order to make it possible, one must have a vast knowledge base to search for the idea.

Another amazing *shōjo mangaka*, Yoko Shoji, who used to produce 250 pages of *manga* per month, claimed that she read one book a day for 10 years in her twenties and watched two video movies and dramas a day for 10 years in her thirties. She believes that as a result, she has never been lost for an idea (Kawamata, 2005).

#### 2. Visualization

Based on his professional experience, Foster (1996) stated that the advertising creative people he worked with thought with pictures instead of with words. "Once you get a visual idea," one of them said to Foster, "the words are easy."

Urasawa proposed in his interview with a popular novelist, Miyuki Miyabe that ideas shrink when they are verbalized. Consequently, he would never take notes when generating ideas. In fact, he would even visualize novels when reading them. Kashiwa Sato, a noted art director, commented in his interview that he never expresses his ideas in words until they are finalized (NHK Publishing, 2006). In addition, Mogi (2007) stated that some verbal-oriented idea generation support software maybe be useful in sharing ideas

with others; however, he questioned the effectiveness of generating ideas in this manner as it may inhibit ideation.

Thus, it can be stated that the influence of language on creativity is varied; at times, it may constrain creativity, and at other times, it may promote it. Some researchers have suggested that visualizations help in exploring new approaches toward solutions in the problem-solving context (Finke, Smith and Ward, 1992). Kawamata (2005) suggested that a story-oriented female *mangaka* visualized her characters and directed them in her mind before placing them on the storyboard.

### **Product constraints: Facilitators and/or constraints**

#### 1. Time: Deadlines

The product constraints of the geneplore model (Figure 6) are ambivalent in nature. With regard to constraints, Foster (1996) stated the following: “The most stimulating limitation I’ve ever found is time. Deadlines spur you to get something accomplished. Give yourself one.” Further, Moreau and Dahl (2005) suggested that some constraints in fact facilitate consumer creativity. Thus, while time is sometimes a constraint for creativity, it can also serve as a facilitator. In the case of a weekly *manga* serial, the time constraint, primarily deadlines, enables the *mangaka* to complete his/her work. Urasawa commented that while it seems impossible at first, the work is always completed on time. Nevertheless, with regard to the quality of *manga*, if there is more time, the artwork could be more creative and complete.

Other product constraints such as expert knowledge may or may not enhance creativity (Smith, Ward and Finke, 1995b). The category of the *manga* (such as *shōjo manga* or *shōnen manga* (boys’ comics)) or its style is regarded as a constraint in terms of creativity. However, at the same time, they also serve as a structure, thereby facilitating creativity.

#### 2. Editor: Takashi Nagasaki

The geneplore model of creative cognition describes the mental process of a creator (Figure 6). In terms of creative realism, the editor as well as the fans should be considered as factors that drive forward the geneplore cycle (Figure 7). Criticism from the editor as well as feedback from the fans restricts creation; however, it also greatly motivates the *mangaka* to continue writing. Thus, similar to other product constraints, the editor and the fans also play a dual role. While creating a *manga* is an individual effort, the entire creative process is considerably interactive in nature. In addition, not all *manga* are produced by an individual; in fact, editor-*mangaka* (sometimes with writer) teams are quite common. These lead to the following question: How does the dyadic relationship between the *mangaka* and editor (writer) enhance the entire creative process?

Takashi Nagasaki was born in 1956 in Miyagi prefecture. He worked as an editor in Shogakukan, one of the three largest *manga* publishers<sup>10</sup> in Japan, and as an editor with Urasawa since his debut. In 2001, Nagasaki left Shogakukan and became an independent editor<sup>11</sup> and writer of *manga*. In the early stages of Urasawa’s career, Nagasaki worked for Shogakukan and helped Urasawa with his *manga* creation. While Nagasaki believed in Urasawa’s potential, he much later commented that he had never thought Urasawa would become such a popular *mangaka*. After Nagasaki left Shogakukan, he became a kind of co-producer, sharing all responsibilities with Urasawa. In fact, at times, Nagasaki played the role of a writer,

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<sup>10</sup> The top three manga publishers are Kodansha, Shogakukan, and Shueisha.

<sup>11</sup> There are not many independent editors in Japan. Most of the editors are office workers who belong to publishing companies. Like many other Japanese companies, personnel transfer, including that of editors, occurs among publication companies as well.

providing Urasawa with stories. Nagasaki noted, with reservations, that while the *manga* belongs to the *mangaka* who draws the pictures, editors are equivalent to “*E wo egakanai mangaka*” (a *mangaka* who does not draw pictures).

When referring to the role played by Nagasaki, Urasawa described it as a compass. He stated that he would sometimes wander in the maze of creation; at times like these, discussions, and sometimes arguments, with Nagasaki would help him in finding solutions. Unlike the typical Japanese editor/*mangaka* relationship, which is personal, their relationship is professional; they have never gone out for dinner or drink. Further, Urasawa asserted that given the pressure of deadlines when creating a serial *manga*, he required someone like Nagasaki to share the burden in order to maintain the quality of his *manga*. In a brief interview with the author, Nagasaki said that his relationship with Urasawa is not how it appears to be in the publications. Nagasaki currently thinks himself as an original writer rather than an editor; he provides the stories and Urasawa develops it into a *manga* as Nagasaki has imaged. Unless the *mangaka* is competent and trusted, this may not be taken as a matter of course. Thus, it can be stated that considerable trust is required in order to ensure that the entire creative process continues to move forward.

Urasawa commented that when he is the process of *manga* development, he plays the role of two people, a *mangaka* and a producer. He continues to inform that in the preliminary meetings, he works as the producer and discusses the plot, regardless of the *mangaka* within him. Urasawa describes it as if the producer in him orders the *mangaka* in him, thereby motivating him to ensure the quality of the product. Another popular novelist, Ira Ishida, in an experimental TV program on story development process, described that he has another persona within him and that person sees and comments on the process objectively (NHK Sogo (NHK General), 2007).

In the literatures regarding brainstorming, some findings suggest that idea generation should be carried out by individuals and not groups. With regard to dyads, the productivity loss is relatively small. Idea generation can be conceptualized as a repeated search for ideas in the associative memory. However, this search for ideas is not always successful. While group members generate fewer ideas than individuals working in isolation, they are generally more satisfied with their performance. In some cases, the easier a task, the more likely it is to lead to satisfaction. (Nijstad, Stroebe, and Lodewijkx, 2006)

In the professional creative context, however, a task is not always easy and satisfaction without result means nothing. In the case of Urasawa and Nagasaki, Urasawa the producer and Nagasaki may provide Urasawa the *mangaka* something that he can trust and count on. Ishida’s case may also imply that that persona in him is something that he can trust. Since creation is a work in isolation, it could be suggested that creation necessitates trust, and trust helps in facilitating the cycle in the geneplore process.

### **Limitations and further research**

The purpose of this article was to explore the creation system of Japanese *manga* with an emphasis on the dyadic relationship between *mangaka* and editors in ideation and subsequent *manga* development process. Although this paper is preliminary in nature, in the professional creative context, it is suggested that the creation necessitates trust in the dyadic relationship between a *mangaka* and an editor, or between the inner personas of a *mangaka*, which, in turn, facilitates the cycle of the geneplore process.

However, since this paper is a single case study, generalizations of the findings are restricted. Hence, it is necessary to conduct empirical validation in the future. Another limitation of the study is that it uses secondary data for analysis. Needless to say, there are many other useful methods to approach and analyze creativity. Thus, in order to better understand creativity in the content development context, various perspectives should be examined.

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