

Sushi and Omakase Culture in Music Videos as a Reflection of Japanese Identity

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the correlation between omakase culture in Japanese cuisine and its representation in the Omakase music video by Atarashii Gakkou as a reflection of Japanese cultural identity. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this research explores how elements of omakase—such as trust in the chef, aesthetic simplicity, and presentation skill—are embodied in popular media to depict Japanese cultural values to a wider audience. Data was obtained through observing visual content in videos, literature studies, and limited interviews. The results show that the music video effectively represents the core values of omakase and culinary craftsmanship as symbols of strong Japanese identity, while also highlighting changing gender perspectives in the traditional culinary industry. These findings show that media such as music videos can be an effective tool in introducing and reinforcing Japanese cultural values to the younger generation and international audiences, expanding global understanding of Japanese culinary culture. This research underlines the importance of media in maintaining and communicating culture and opens up opportunities for further study regarding the role of media in cross-cultural appreciation.

INTRODUCTION

Omakase culture has long played an important role in Japanese culinary traditions, not only as a method of serving but also as a philosophy underlying the relationship of trust between customer and chef. In this culture, customers trust the chef to select and serve the best dishes based on available ingredients, a concept that reflects Japanese values such as simplicity, precision and a high dedication to quality. Over time, this concept has developed and been accepted in various countries outside of Japan, but has retained its core values, making it a globally recognized symbol of Japanese identity.

In recent years, Japanese culture has been increasingly introduced through popular media, including music videos which have a wide reach. One example is the music video "Omakase" from the Japanese group Atarashii Gakkou, which combines the omakase concept with a modern style and visual elements that reflect Japanese cultural values. This music video medium has become a new tool in representing traditional culture such as omakase to the younger generation and global audiences, providing a new perspective on how culture can be preserved.

This research aims to understand how omakase culture as a reflection of Japanese values is adapted in music videos. Focusing on the way cultural elements are integrated in popular media, this research explores the role of media in introducing, preserving, and broadening understanding of Japanese culture.

METHOD

According to Creswell, researchers are the key instrument of qualitative research so they must be able to formulate questions in such a way as, analyze and construct research objects more clearly. This research applies descriptive qualitative methods to gain an in-depth understanding of Japanese cultural elements reflected in the music video "Omakase" by Atarashii Gakkou. This method was chosen because it allows for an in-depth and detailed analysis of the traditional and modern cultural elements that appear in the video, as well as the role of these elements in shaping the narrative and promoting Japanese culture, especially in a culinary context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of observations and data analysis, researchers found several data that could be summarized according to observations via YouTube videos. As follows :

Integration of Japanese cultural elements in the "Omakase" music video

The music video for "Omakase" by Atarashii Gakkou displays the incorporation of Japanese culture through various elements taken from tradition and presented in a modern style that suits the tastes of the younger generation. In this video, the omakase concept, which is generally applied in the culinary world, is combined with dance movements and music. "Omakase" itself means "up to the chef," reflecting the customer's complete trust in the chef to choose the best dishes. In the context of music videos, this concept is adapted as a philosophy that prioritizes freedom of expression and innovation, where the audience seems to "entrust" the storyline to the artist, who is free to experiment.

Various elements of Japanese culture are presented in distinctive visuals, such as the use of traditional Japanese backgrounds, cutlery, and omakase-inspired interactions, which demonstrate skill and precision, similar to how a chef serves food. Meanwhile, the fast and energetic rhythm of the music reflects the spirit of modern Japan, combining tradition with contemporary elements in Japanese pop culture.

Cultural Representation in Video



Figure 1 Atarashii Gakko - Omakase (0:05)

Analysis shows that the music video "Omakase" by Atarashii Gakkou effectively displays elements of Japanese culture through culinary visualization. The presentation of sushi and the omakase experience in this video provides a deep impression of the traditions and craftsmanship of Japanese culinary culture. The aesthetic elements highlighted, such as fresh ingredients, detailed serving techniques, and interaction between chefs and customers, illustrate the Japanese philosophy of harmony and beauty in simplicity.

In this video, traditional and modern elements combine to form a unique harmony. Traditional elements are seen in costumes, such as kimono-inspired clothing, as well as symbols such as fish, which are an important part of sushi and have spiritual meaning in Japanese culture. Additionally, the space's design resembles a classic omakase restaurant, with wooden tables and traditional tableware, reinforcing the authentic Japanese feel.



Figure 2 *Atarashii Gakko - Omakase (2:35)*

On the other hand, modern elements emerge through bright and expressive clothing styles, typical of Japanese pop culture known as "Harajuku style." It reflects a combination of Japanese heritage and modern influences, tailored to the tastes of today's young generation. This video also presents music with fast beats and energetic dance movements, creating the impression of Japanese culture being dynamic and continuing to develop. The use of pop art visuals and striking lighting emphasizes that although Japanese culture is rooted in rich traditions, it is also constantly adapting to the times.

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Emerging Cultural Values

The video also illustrates core cultural values in the omakase experience, including respect for ingredients and a chef's dedication. This is in line with literature that calls omakase a form of culinary art, where the customer's trust in the chef is the essence of the experience. This video shows omakase not just as a cooking process, but as a holistic eating experience, allowing viewers to understand and appreciate Japanese cultural values through cuisine.

Cultural Challenges and Development

The research also notes that although sushi and omakase are deeply rooted in tradition, this video reflects new developments in Japanese culinary culture. The presence of female chefs who specialize in the world of sushi, as shown in videos and related sources, indicates a shift in gender perspective and acceptance in the culinary industry. This indicates that despite maintaining traditional values, Japanese culture continues to develop, creating an inclusive space for innovation and diversity in the culinary world.

Correlation between Sushi Culture and Omakase in Media

These findings support the statement in the problem formulation that there is a significant relationship between the cultural representation of sushi and the concept of omakase in popular media such as music

videos. Culinary presentation, seen in music videos such as "Omakase" by Atarashii Gakkou, not only focuses on visual beauty, but also conveys Japanese cultural values that are closely related to the philosophy of eating, such as harmony, trust, and respect for ingredients and craftsmanship. chef. This music video succeeds in making culinary culture a medium that communicates the typical Japanese dining experience, where the omakase concept emphasizes the values of belief and the art of serving food.

The Influence of Media in Introducing Culture

As contemporary media, music videos have great power to introduce traditional culture to a wide global audience. Through "Omakase," Atarashii Gakkou has succeeded in reaching the younger generation, both in Japan and internationally, in a relevant and engaging way. This approach not only displays Japanese culinary aspects but also introduces related cultural values, so that the younger generation is more open to Japanese culinary traditions. This video shows how cultural elements can be conveyed in a modern way without losing their traditional essence, making media an effective tool for cultural diplomacy in the era of globalization.

CONCLUSION

In closing, the music video "Omakase" by Atarashii Gakkou successfully combines traditional and modern elements of Japanese culture, especially through the culinary concept of omakase which is visualized with a philosophical approach. The combination of elements such as kimono-style costumes, cultural symbols, and the influence of contemporary Harajuku style creates harmony between the authenticity of Japanese culture and today's pop expressions. By highlighting various cultural aspects, from the art of presentation to the value of trust and dedication of the chef, this video not only presents interesting visuals of Japanese cuisine but also conveys the deep values that are at the heart of the omakase concept.

Additionally, the video also depicts developments in Japanese culinary culture, including the acceptance of diversity, such as the representation of female chefs in the art of sushi, reflecting changes in gender perspectives in the industry. Through a format that attracts the younger generation in Japan, "Omakase" proves that popular media, such as music videos, can be an effective means of introducing and preserving traditional cultural values in a modern context, as well as functioning as a tool of cultural diplomacy in the era of globalization.

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