

Decoding Visual Designs: Mapping Isolated Visual Aesthetics and Producing a Dynamic Style Animation

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ABSTRACT

This project focuses on the analysis of selected visual characteristics from Shounen-inspired and Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life-inspired animation in the development of a Dynamic Style 2D Animation Showcase. The study aims to identify and document visual elements such as character design, shape language, line, color, lighting, composition, and movement, and to apply these elements consistently in two contrasting visual treatments based on a similar narrative scenario. A Research and Development (R&D) design was employed, supported by a quantitative, criteria-based evaluation. The project followed a three-stage animation production pipeline consisting of pre-production, production, and post-production. Krita was used primarily for digital illustration, character design, storyboarding, frame timing, and linework, while Blender was used for compositing, background depth, visual effects, and scene assembly. The completed animation showcase will be evaluated in terms of art direction consistency, visual differentiation, animation and technical execution, and atmospheric effectiveness using a structured five-point Likert scale. The project is intended to provide a practical reference for student animators, digital artists, animation educators, and future researchers in understanding how systematic visual design decisions can create distinct animation presentations. The resulting showcase demonstrates how selected visual characteristics can be organized and applied consistently to produce contrasting dynamic and calm visual treatments within a 2D animation project.

Keywords: *visual characteristic, shounen style inspired animation, iyashikei, character design, animation production pipeline, visual differentiation, dynamic style.*

SECTION I — INTRODUCTION (THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING)

1.1 Introduction

The growth of digital entertainment has significantly changed the way animated content is produced, distributed, and consumed. Online platforms have provided creators and animation studios with more opportunities to develop and distribute original content to audiences across different countries. Along with this development, animation has become an important form of digital media that combines storytelling, visual design, movement, sound, and technology. Japanese animation, commonly referred to as anime, has also gained a strong international presence and continues to influence visual practices in animation, illustration, character design, and other digital media.

As audiences are exposed to different forms of animated content, visual style has become an important element in establishing the identity and atmosphere of an animation. Decisions involving character design, line treatment, color, composition, lighting, background elements, and movement contribute to how a scene is presented. Swale (2015) explains that anime can be examined not only as entertainment but also as a form of visual and digital art with its own aesthetic characteristics. The continuing growth of the global anime market further demonstrates the relevance of Japanese animation within contemporary digital entertainment (Grand View Research, 2026).

As students in Entertainment and Multimedia Computing, the researchers are interested in understanding how different visual approaches can be applied to the same general narrative situation. Instead of focusing mainly on differences in storyline, this project examines how selected visual elements can be deliberately organized to produce distinct aesthetic presentations.

The project focuses on two contrasting Japanese animation-inspired visual approaches: a dynamic approach inspired by action-oriented Shounen works and a calm, atmospheric approach inspired by Iyashikei and Slice-of-Life works. Shounen should not be treated as one fixed visual style because it is a broad category with different narrative and artistic variations (Shamoon, 2024; Choi, 2026). Therefore, this project uses the term “Shounen-inspired” to refer specifically to selected characteristics commonly observed in action-oriented Shounen animation.

In comparison, the Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life-inspired approach emphasizes everyday experiences, calm environments, atmospheric presentation, and restrained movement. Roquet (2016) discusses the role of ambient media and “healing” styles in creating particular atmospheric experiences in contemporary Japanese media.

The main purpose of this project is to identify and document selected visual characteristics of these two approaches and apply them in the production of a dynamic style 2D animation showcase. Through this comparison, the researchers intend to demonstrate how changes in visual design, composition, color, line treatment, lighting, character forms, and movement can produce noticeably different visual presentations of a similar narrative situation.

1.2 Background of the Study

Animation has developed from a traditional form of entertainment into a widely used digital medium for storytelling, communication, education, advertising, and entertainment. The continued development of digital platforms has increased the accessibility of animated content to audiences around the world. Japanese animation has become particularly influential in global popular culture and continues to contribute to contemporary discussions of visual aesthetics and digital media (Swale, 2015).

The global anime market also demonstrates the continuing expansion of the medium. Grand View Research (2026) reports that the global anime market was valued at approximately USD 37.7 billion in 2025 and estimates a value of approximately USD 41.7 billion in 2026. The report identifies online distribution, international licensing, and continued global interest in anime as factors contributing to market development.

Within this expanding environment, different anime categories and visual approaches demonstrate different methods of presenting characters, environments, movement, and emotion. Two approaches that provide a useful contrast for the present project are the dynamic visual treatment associated with action-oriented Shounen works and the calm presentation commonly found in Slice-of-Life and Iyashikei works.

A. Shounen-Inspired Visual Approach

The term Shounen (少年) is commonly associated with Japanese manga and anime intended primarily for boys and younger male audiences. Contemporary scholarship emphasizes that Shounen should not be understood as

a single fixed formula. Rather, it includes recurring conventions while also allowing significant variations among individual works (Shamoon, 2024; Choi, 2026).

For this project, the term “Shounen-inspired visual approach” refers to selected visual characteristics frequently observed in action-oriented Shounen animation. These may include dynamic character poses, stronger visual contrast, expressive silhouettes, directional compositions, dramatic framing, and noticeable movement.

The visual approach is intended to communicate a greater sense of activity and energy. Angular or emphasized shapes, stronger line variations, dramatic lighting, and active compositions will be considered during character and environment development. These characteristics will not be treated as universal rules for all Shounen works but as selected references for the high-activity treatment developed for this project.

B. Iyashikei and Slice-of-Life-Inspired Visual Approach

Slice-of-Life animation generally focuses on ordinary experiences, daily activities, relationships, and familiar environments. Instead of relying primarily on large-scale conflict, these works may give greater attention to small interactions, everyday situations, environmental details, and character relationships.

Iyashikei (癒し系), commonly translated as “healing,” is associated with Japanese media that emphasizes calmness, everyday experiences, atmosphere, and forms of relaxation. Roquet (2009, 2016) discusses Japanese media and aesthetics associated with atmosphere, mood regulation, healing styles, and calm. His work provides a useful theoretical basis for considering atmosphere as an important part of media presentation.

For the present project, the Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life-inspired approach will emphasize calm visual presentation through softer shapes, balanced compositions, less aggressive contrast, environmental lighting, harmonious color palettes, and restrained movement. Negative space and environmental details will also be considered in scene composition.

The project does not claim that these visual characteristics automatically produce psychological or biological effects. Instead, they are treated as design characteristics that may contribute to differences in the perceived atmosphere and aesthetic presentation of the animation.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- **General Objective:** The general objective of this project is to identify and apply selected visual characteristics of Shounen-inspired and Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life-inspired art directions in the production of a dynamic style 2D animation showcase.

- **Specific Objectives:**

1. Identify and document selected visual characteristics of Shounen-inspired and Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life-inspired animation in terms of character design, shape language, line treatment, color, lighting, composition, and movement.
2. Develop visual design guidelines that can be applied consistently to the characters, environments, layouts, and animation elements of the project.
3. Produce two visual treatments of a similar narrative scenario using the identified Shounen-inspired and Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life-inspired design characteristics.
4. Create a finalized dynamic style 2D animated showcase that demonstrates the differences between the two visual approaches in terms of aesthetic presentation, atmosphere, and dynamic animation treatment.
5. Evaluate the completed dynamic style 2D animation showcase according to the identified visual design criteria and the consistency of their application throughout the final output.

1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

- **Scope:** This project focuses on the design and production of a dynamic style 2D animation showcase featuring two contrasting anime-inspired visual approaches: Shounen-inspired and Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life-inspired art directions.

The project covers selected aspects of the dynamic animation production process, including concept development, visual research, character design, environment design, color selection, line treatment, composition, lighting, animation movement, and final rendering. The researchers will identify visual characteristics associated with the two approaches and use them as references in developing the assets and scenes for the dynamic animation.

The project will use a relatively simple and similar narrative situation for the two visual treatments. This approach allows the researchers to focus on the contribution of visual design and animation treatment rather than on differences in story complexity.

The final output will consist of a dynamic style 2D animated showcase presenting the two visual approaches. The project will primarily examine visual execution, consistency, and aesthetic presentation rather than establish universal psychological effects of the genres.

- **Limitation:** The project is limited to selected visual characteristics of Shounen-inspired and Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life-inspired animation. It does not attempt to represent all Shounen, Slice-of-Life, or Iyashikei works because these categories contain a wide range of artistic styles and narrative forms.

The project will also use a simple narrative scenario. Complex storylines, mature themes, extensive character development, and large-scale world-building are outside the primary focus of the project. These elements are limited to allow greater attention to visual design and animation production.

The project does not include clinical, neurological, or physiological testing. Therefore, conclusions regarding stress reduction, serotonin activity, neurological responses, or other biological effects will not be established. Any discussion of audience perception will be limited to the evaluation methods included in the project.

The final output may also be affected by the available production time, technical resources, software, skills, and manpower of the researchers. Consequently, the dynamic animation may not represent the production quality, complexity, or resources of professionally produced commercial anime.

1.5 Significance of the Study

. The project is expected to provide practical and academic value by demonstrating how selected visual design elements can be systematically applied to create contrasting animation styles. The output may be useful to the following:

Digital Animators and Character Designers: The project may serve as a practical reference for student animators and character designers who want to understand how shape language, line treatment, color, lighting, composition, and movement contribute to the identity of an animated scene. The documented design process may also help beginning artists organize their visual decisions during pre-production.

Animation Directors and Production Teams: The project may provide a simplified example of how visual guidelines can be established before animation production begins. By documenting selected visual characteristics and applying them consistently, production teams may better understand the importance of visual planning in maintaining a coherent art direction.

Entertainment and Multimedia Computing Students: The project may provide students with an example of how concepts in digital art, dynamic animation, multimedia design, and visual storytelling can be combined into a single creative project. The production process may also serve as a reference for students developing similar animation or multimedia projects.

Art and Animation Educators: The output may be used as supplementary material in lessons involving character design, visual development, animation principles, composition, color, and art direction. The comparison between two visual approaches may help students recognize how changes in design decisions can affect the appearance and atmosphere of an animated scene.

Future Researchers and Student Developers: The project may provide a foundation for future studies involving animation aesthetics, visual style comparison, audience perception, or dynamic animation production. Future researchers may expand the project by examining additional genres, animation techniques, audience responses, or measurable perceptual factors.

1.6 Definition of Terms

For clarity and consistency, the following terms are operationally defined as they are used in this project:

Animation Pipeline: The organized sequence of processes involved in developing an animation project, including pre-production, production, and post-production.

Anime: A term commonly used to refer to Japanese animation and, in broader contexts, animation associated with Japanese visual and storytelling traditions.

Asset Rules: The visual guidelines established for characters, environments, colors, lines, and other elements to maintain consistency throughout the animation.

Atmospheric Expression: The overall visual mood or feeling created through the combination of color, lighting, composition, environment, and movement within an animated scene.

Character Geometry: The use of basic shapes, proportions, silhouettes, and structural forms in developing the appearance of an animated character.

Color Palette: A selected group of colors used within a scene or animation to establish visual identity, mood, contrast, and harmony.

Color Scripting: The planning and organization of colors and lighting throughout an animation to support changes in mood, setting, or visual emphasis.

Dual-Genre Showcase: The final animation presentation in which similar narrative material is presented using two different visual approaches for comparison.

Iyashikei (癒し系): A term commonly translated as “healing” and associated with Japanese media that emphasizes calm, everyday experiences, atmosphere, and relaxation. In this project, it refers to an animation-inspired visual approach characterized by calm presentation, softer visual treatment, and restrained movement.

Line Weight Distribution: The deliberate variation of line thickness used in character and environmental artwork to influence emphasis, depth, and visual appearance.

Negative Space: The intentionally unoccupied area surrounding or between visual elements in a composition.

Pre-Production: The planning stage of animation production that includes concept development, visual research, scripting, character design, environment design, storyboarding, and layout preparation.

Shounen (少年): A category associated with Japanese manga and anime traditionally intended for boys or younger male audiences. In this project, the term “Shounen-inspired” refers specifically to selected visual characteristics associated with action-oriented Shounen works.

Slice-of-Life (SOL): An animation or storytelling approach that focuses on ordinary experiences, daily activities, relationships, and familiar situations.

Visual Aesthetics: The observable qualities of an artwork or animation, including its use of color, shape, line, composition, lighting, movement, and overall visual style.

Visual Art Direction: The planned approach used to determine the appearance and presentation of visual elements throughout an animation project.

SECTION II — LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to the Review

This chapter presents the literature and studies related to the development of the proposed animation project. The review focuses on concepts that support the creation of the project's two contrasting visual approaches. These include the development of animation as a digital medium, anime aesthetics, Shounen and Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life, visual composition, character shape language, color, animation movement, and dynamic style 2D animation production workflows.

The reviewed literature provides a basis for identifying the visual elements that will be used in the project. These elements include shape language, line treatment, color palette, lighting, composition, negative space, and animation movement. The review also considers animation production practices that can help maintain consistency among the visual assets used in the final output.

By examining these concepts, the researchers can establish appropriate visual criteria for the development of the two animation treatments. The literature therefore serves as a reference in planning, designing, producing, and evaluating the final Dynamic Style 2D Animation Showcase

2.2 Review of Related Literature and Studies

Anime as a Contemporary Visual Medium

Japanese animation has developed into an internationally recognized form of digital entertainment and visual culture. Its influence extends beyond animated television programs and films to illustration, character design,

games, merchandising, digital art, and online media. Swale (2015) examines anime as a form of craft, representation, amusement, and digital cinema, providing a broader understanding of anime as an aesthetic form rather than simply a category of entertainment.

The continued expansion of anime in international markets also demonstrates the relevance of studying its visual characteristics. Grand View Research (2026) reports that the global anime market was valued at approximately USD 37.7 billion in 2025 and estimates that it will reach approximately USD 41.7 billion in 2026. The report identifies online distribution, international licensing, and growing global interest as factors contributing to the expansion of the market.

The growth of anime provides a relevant context for an animation project that examines selected Japanese-inspired visual approaches. However, commercial growth alone does not determine artistic quality. For the present project, industry development is used mainly to establish the relevance of understanding visual design and production practices within contemporary animation.

Manga and Anime Genre Conventions

Genre classification is an important part of understanding manga and anime. Shamoan (2024) explains that major manga categories such as Shounen and Shoujo are traditionally connected to demographic audiences, while thematic genres such as sports and isekai may occur across different demographic categories. This demonstrates that Japanese manga and anime genres are flexible and may contain different narrative and aesthetic characteristics.

Choi (2026) similarly explains that Shounen manga has developed recurring genre conventions but that contemporary works may modify or challenge these conventions. This is important to the present project because it prevents Shounen from being treated as one fixed visual formula.

For this project, the term Shounen-inspired visual approach is therefore used rather than simply calling Shounen an art style. The researchers focus on selected visual characteristics observed in action-oriented works, such as dynamic poses, expressive compositions, stronger visual contrast, and active movement. These characteristics will be used as design references rather than universal rules for the entire Shounen category.

Shape Language in Character Design

Shape language is an important consideration in character development because basic shapes can contribute to the visual identity and personality of a character. Nasution and Rahmi (2024) examined shape language in character design and analyzed the use of basic shapes such as circles, squares, and triangles. Their study demonstrates the practical use of shape language as a tool for communicating character traits and creating distinct visual impressions.

Gingrich et al. (2024) also discuss shape theory in animation, pedagogy, and character design. Their work explains that recognizable geometric forms have long been associated with character-design practices and have become part of animation education and professional practice.

These studies are relevant to the present project because shape language will be one of the visual criteria used to differentiate the two animation treatments. Angular or emphasized forms may be used in the Shounen-inspired treatment, while softer and more rounded forms may be used in the Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life-inspired treatment.

The researchers will not assume that a particular shape automatically produces a specific emotion. Instead, shape language will be treated as a design tool that contributes to the overall visual identity of the characters.

Composition and Visual Organization

Composition determines how visual elements are arranged within a scene. The placement of characters, objects, backgrounds, empty spaces, and directional elements can affect the visual emphasis and organization of an image.

In animation, composition is particularly important because a scene must communicate information while also supporting movement and storytelling. Visual organization can guide the viewer's attention toward a character, action, or environmental detail.

For the present project, composition will be considered together with shape, line, color, and movement. The Shounen-inspired treatment may use more directional and active compositions, while the Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life-inspired treatment may use more balanced arrangements and greater use of open space. These differences are intended to create distinct visual identities while maintaining a similar narrative foundation.

Color and Color Language in Animation

Color is an important component of animation because it can contribute to visual identity, emphasis, atmosphere, and the communication of information. A recent study published in Entertainment Computing examined color language in film and television animation using semantic segmentation techniques. The study emphasizes that color can carry meaning distinct from other image elements and that differences in brightness and color relationships can contribute to different visual interpretations (Deep Analysis on the Color Language in Film and Television Animation Works via Semantic Segmentation Technique, 2025).

This supports the use of planned color systems in the present project. Instead of choosing colors independently for every scene, the researchers will establish palettes that are consistent with the intended visual direction.

For the Shounen-inspired treatment, stronger contrast and more visually active color relationships may be considered. For the Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life-inspired treatment, softer and more harmonious combinations may be used. These choices are production decisions for the project and are not presented as universal rules for either category.

Atmosphere, Ambient Media, and Iyashikei

Atmosphere is particularly relevant to the low-activity visual treatment of the project. Roquet (2009) examines the relationship between ambient literature and the aesthetics of calm in contemporary Japanese fiction. His discussion considers media as a means of shaping mood and creating atmospheric experiences.

Roquet (2016) further examines ambient media in Japan and discusses how music, video, film, and literature may function as forms of atmospheric design. The book includes discussion of healing styles, ambient cinema, compositing, and calm visual and media experiences.

These concepts provide a useful theoretical foundation for the Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life-inspired component of the project. Rather than defining the approach only through story content, the researchers will consider how composition, pacing, environmental detail, lighting, color, and negative space can contribute to a calm visual atmosphere.

The project does not attempt to establish that Iyashikei animation produces a specific physiological or neurological response. Instead, the literature is used to support the examination of atmosphere and visual presentation as elements of media design.

Animation Movement and Pacing

Movement and pacing are important components of animation because they determine how actions and events unfold over time. Animation does not require every scene to use rapid or continuous movement. Slower actions, pauses, environmental movement, and carefully timed shots can also contribute to the presentation of a scene.

This concept is relevant to the two visual approaches in the present project. The Shounen-inspired treatment will emphasize more noticeable movement, expressive poses, and active visual transitions. In contrast, the Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life-inspired treatment will use comparatively restrained movement, environmental details, and longer visual moments where appropriate.

The difference in movement is intended to complement the differences in character design, composition, color, and lighting. In this way, the project's visual distinction will not depend on one element alone but on the combined application of several design decisions.

Dynamic Animation Production Pipeline

A structured production workflow is important in animation because multiple visual and technical processes must be completed before the final output can be rendered. Zaliluddin et al. (2025) proposed an integrated animation production pipeline consisting of pre-production, production, and post-production. Their study incorporated storytelling, visual asset development, animation principles, and compositing into a structured workflow.

The present project follows a similar three-stage organization.

During pre-production, the researchers will develop the concept, narrative situation, character designs, environment designs, storyboard, visual references, and style guidelines.

During production, the researchers will create the digital assets and animation, including character linework, coloring, backgrounds, key animation, and scene assembly.

During post-production, the completed scenes will undergo compositing, color adjustments, timing checks, audio integration when applicable, quality checking, and final rendering.

The use of a defined pipeline is intended to reduce inconsistencies and provide a clear sequence for the development of the final dynamic style 2D animation showcase.

Philippine Animation Industry

The Philippine animation industry provides a relevant local context for the project. The Animation Council of the Philippines, Inc. (ACPI, n.d.) reports that the country has more than 40 years of experience providing animation services to international studios. The industry began with traditional animation services and has expanded into more complex production activities with the support of emerging technologies.

The local industry's continued involvement in international animation production demonstrates the relevance of digital animation skills within the Philippine creative sector. It also provides a practical context for students who are developing competencies in animation, digital illustration, visual design, and multimedia production.

For Entertainment and Multimedia Computing students, an animation project can therefore function as both an academic requirement and an opportunity to apply technical and creative skills that are relevant to the digital content industry.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this project follows an Input-Process-Output (IPO) model. The framework organizes the visual references, production activities, and final output of the project into three major stages, with feedback and revision incorporated throughout the process.

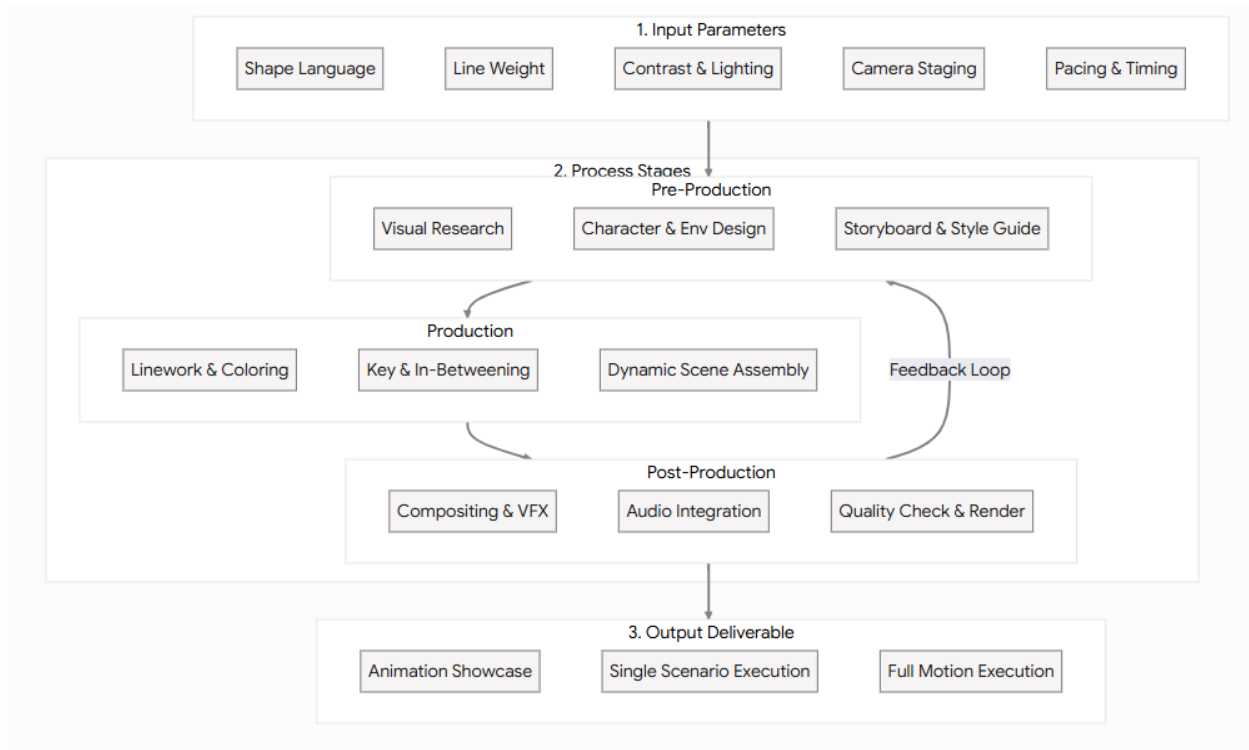


Figure 1: Dynamic Style Animation Showcase

1. Input Parameters (Dynamic Animation Design Criteria): Focuses on core visual and dynamic parameters, including angular & expressive shape language, varied line weight distribution, high visual contrast, dynamic camera staging & depth, and active movement pacing.

2. Process Stages (Dynamic Animation Pipeline):

- **Pre-Production:** Visual research & design, character & environment modeling, storyboarding, and style guide preparation.
- **Production:** Linework & digital coloring, keyframe animation, in-betweening, and 3D/dynamic scene assembly.
- **Post-Production:** Compositing & lighting adjustments, audio integration, timing synchronization, quality checks, and final rendering.
- **Feedback Loop:** Continuous review and revision cycle from post-production back to pre-production to ensure style consistency.

3. Output (The Creative Showcase Deliverable), The Output phase is the final physical deliverable of the computing capstone: a compiled, high-definition **Dual-Genre 2D Animation Showcase**. This video provides a direct, side-by-side visual comparison demonstrating how an identical character narrative is expressed under completely different atmospheric tones entirely through the systematic application of isolated design rules.

4. Feedback and Revision

A feedback and revision process is incorporated throughout production. The researchers will compare the developed assets and scenes with the established visual criteria.

2.4 Synthesis

The reviewed literature provides the theoretical and practical foundation for the proposed dynamic 2D animation project. Studies on anime aesthetics establish Japanese animation as a significant form of visual and digital media, while current market information demonstrates its continuing relevance within global entertainment (Swale, 2015; Grand View Research, 2026).

The literature on genre provides an important clarification for the project's use of Shounen. Shounen is not a single fixed visual style but a category with recurring conventions and considerable variation. Therefore, the project uses selected characteristics from action-oriented Shounen works as references for its high-activity visual treatment (Shamoon, 2024; Choi, 2026).

Research on shape language supports the use of geometric forms and silhouettes in character design. Nasution and Rahmi (2024) demonstrate the practical application of basic shapes in character development, while Gingrich et al. (2024) discuss shape theory as an established area of animation and character-design practice. These studies support the project's use of shape language as one of its primary visual criteria.

The literature on atmosphere and ambient media provides a foundation for the project's *Iyashikei*/Slice-of-Life-inspired treatment. Roquet (2009, 2016) discusses calm, atmosphere, healing styles, and the role of media in shaping atmospheric experiences. These concepts support the project's focus on environmental details, composition, pacing, lighting, color, and negative space when developing the low-activity visual treatment. Recent research on color language in animation further supports the use of planned color systems in the project. Color will be considered as a visual element that contributes to the presentation and organization of the scenes rather than as a guaranteed psychological stimulus.

The literature on animation production also supports the project's use of a structured workflow. Zaliluddin et al. (2025) describe a three-stage animation pipeline consisting of pre-production, production, and post-production. This structure is consistent with the workflow adopted for the present project.

Finally, the Philippine animation industry provides a relevant local context. The Animation Council of the Philippines reports that the country has more than four decades of involvement in international animation services and has expanded into more complex production activities. This demonstrates the relevance of developing animation and digital production skills within the Philippine creative industry (Animation Council of the Philippines, Inc., n.d.).

SECTION III — METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This project adopted a Research and Development (R&D) design combined with an empirical, criteria-based evaluation approach. The primary objective was to design, produce, and evaluate a software-based multimedia deliverable—specifically, a dynamic style 2D animation showcase demonstrating two contrasting art directions derived from a single, unified narrative scene.

The qualitative aspect focused on the systematic implementation of visual design theory (shape language, line weight, color scripting, atmospheric lighting, composition, and movement) during pre-production and production. The quantitative aspect involved assessing the completed dynamic style 2D animation showcase through a structured

evaluation instrument to determine the technical execution, art direction consistency, and perceptual effectiveness of the two contrasting visual approaches.

Project Phases and Development Pipeline

The development followed an integrated three-stage animation production pipeline: Pre-Production, Production, and Post-Production.

Pre-Production

Narrative Scenario Standardization: A neutral, standardized narrative scenario was scripted to serve as the control variable for both visual treatments. The scenario involves a character sitting at a desk near a window, noticing an external event, and reacting to it.

Visual Style Guide & Asset Rules Preparation: Specific visual guidelines were codified based on the Input parameters.

Shounen-Inspired Guidelines: Emphasized angular shapes (triangles, sharp polygons), varied and dynamic line weights, high visual contrast, dynamic camera angles, and action-oriented framing.

Iyashikei/Slice-of-Life-Inspired Guidelines: Emphasized soft/rounded shapes (circles, organic curves), uniform and thin line weights, soft pastels/harmonious tones, low contrast, eye-level balanced framing, and substantial negative space.

Character and Environment Design: Model sheets and color turnarounds were created using Krita to enforce visual consistency across both versions.

Storyboarding and Layout Planning: Comparative storyboards were created to map shot-for-shot equivalents between the two art directions, ensuring structural parity while allowing composition and camera dynamics to vary.

Production

Asset Creation and Linework: Characters and environmental assets were drawn digitally. Line treatment was strictly monitored according to style guides (tapered, expressive lines for Shounen; constant, delicate lines for Iyashikei).

Coloring and Lighting Integration: Color palettes were applied in accordance with the pre-approved color scripts. Cell-shading with high-contrast cast shadows was used for the Shounen sequence, whereas soft-gradient shading and ambient lighting were applied to the Iyashikei sequence.

Animation and Movement Execution: Digital animation techniques were executed. The Shounen treatment implemented snappy timing, exaggerated arcs, and dynamic line movement. The Iyashikei treatment utilized slow-in/slow-out easing, subtle environmental movement (e.g., drifting dust motes, gentle wind blowing curtains), and longer shot holds.

Post-Production

Compositing and Scene Assembly: Assets and animation layers were assembled. Blender's workspace and compositing nodes were used to add visual effects, bloom, depth-of-field, and motion blur where applicable.

Color Adjustments and Final Rendering: Master color grading was executed to unify scene tones. Output sequences were rendered in 1080p Full HD at 24 frames per second (fps).

Hardware and Software Specifications

The production and testing of the project were executed using the following hardware and software tools:

Hardware Specifications:

Processing Unit: Intel Core i7 / AMD Ryzen 7 series processor

Graphics Processing Unit: NVIDIA GeForce RTX 3060 or equivalent

Memory: 16 GB to 32 GB DDR4 RAM

Input Devices: Graphics Drawing Tablets (Wacom / Huion) for digital illustration and animation asset work

Software Specifications:

Krita: Primary software for digital illustration, character design model sheets, storyboard creation, frame timing, and digital asset linework.

Blender: Used for multi-plane camera compositing, background depth layering, post-processing visual effects, and scene assembly.

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