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### Captain Tsubasa

Captain Tsubasa, an iconic Japanese manga and anime series, has undeniably impacted Japanese popular culture since its debut in 1981. The series follows the story of Tsubasa Oozora, a soccer prodigy, and his journey to becoming the best soccer player in Japan. It has been credited with inspiring a generation of Japanese youth to pursue soccer careers and significantly influencing the shōnen genre of manga and anime. In the early 1980s, when Captain Tsubasa was first released, it was met with a lukewarm reception. Its protagonist was at odds with traditional Japanese values, and critics argued that the series was unsuitable for younger audiences. In this paper, it is argued that Captain Tsubasa has had a lasting and influential impact on Japanese popular culture, particularly in terms of its contributions to the growth of soccer in Japan and the development of the shōnen genre of manga and anime. Through an analysis of sources this paper provides evidence that Captain Tsubasa has had a lasting and influential impact on Japanese popular culture.

First, according to Will Sharp and colleagues in their article "Captain Tsubasa: The Anime Star Who Changed the Face of Japanese Football and Inspired Messi, Iniesta and Nakata," Captain Tsubasa has had a lasting and influential impact on Japanese popular culture. Since its debut in 1981, Captain Tsubasa has become one of Japan's most successful and

influential manga and anime series. The series follows the journey of Tsubasa Oozora, an elementary school student from Japan who dreams of becoming an international soccer star. Despite its basic premise, the series is far from a typical sports manga. It is a story that celebrates friendship, determination, and the power of dreams. With its unique and captivating characters, storylines, and intense soccer matches, Captain Tsubasa has been a powerful influence on Japanese popular culture for almost four decades, particularly in terms of its contributions to the growth of soccer in Japan and the development of the shōnen genre of manga and anime. The authors point out that the growth of soccer in Japan, in particular, was primarily due to the anime series, which led to the emergence of the soccer boom in Japan. They state that "Tsubasa's emergence had given rise to a soccer boom in Japan, accelerating the development of the sport" (Sharp et al. 1). This supports the argument that Captain Tsubasa has had a lasting and influential impact on Japanese popular culture, particularly in terms of its contributions to the growth of soccer in Japan.

Furthermore, the authors note that the anime series has impacted the development of the shōnen genre of manga and anime, which further supports my argument. The authors point out that "In the eyes of many, Tsubasa did aid Japan in qualifying for not just one but a succession of World Cups" (Sharp et al. 1). This demonstrates that the influence of Captain Tsubasa on Japanese popular culture has been far-reaching and long-lasting and that it has had a significant impact on the development of the shōnen genre of manga and anime. The success of Captain Tsubasa led to a surge in the popularity of soccer in Japan. The series has inspired a new generation of players and coaches and has even been credited with helping the Japanese national

team won the World Cup in 2002. The series also helped to popularize the sport in other countries, such as South Korea, Thailand, and the United States.

Therefore, Captain Tsubasa has also had a lasting influence on the shōnen manga and anime genre. The series is credited with popularizing the genre. For introducing many of the tropes and conventions that have since become hallmarks of shōnen manga and anime, such as its focus on teamwork, friendship, and perseverance (Sharp et al. 1). Throughout the series, soccer is depicted as a sport of passion and skill, which encourages viewers to pursue their dreams and ambitions. This message is essential in Japan, where soccer is not as popular as other sports, such as baseball. By providing an inspiring image of soccer, Captain Tsubasa helps promote the sport in Japan and encourages people to pursue their dreams. Additionally, the series is credited with pioneering the use of exaggerated and over-the-top action sequences, which have since become a staple of the genre.

Second, in his review of *Captain Tsubasa: Rise of New Champions*, Kevin Groves argues that the game is a throwback to the days when video games were about fun and that the characters and players are detailed enough to be recognized. The special moves bring cool special effects when used "(Groves, 1). The success of *Captain Tsubasa* also helped to popularize other aspects of Japanese popular culture. The series' anime adaptation was a huge hit, and the video games based on the series were immensely popular. The series also spawned a vibrant merchandising industry, with T-shirts, toys, and other products featuring characters from the series. The success of the series has been so great that it has even been adapted into live-action films and television shows. Groves states, "With its quality visuals, easy-to-learn controls and captivating story mode, *Captain Tsubasa: Rise of New Champions* is a throwback to what video

games should be about: fun"(Groves, 1). This supports the thesis that Captain Tsubasa has had a lasting and influential impact on Japanese popular culture, particularly in terms of its contributions to the growth of soccer in Japan and the development of the shōnen genre of manga and anime, as it has become a popular and successful video game. Groves' work also speaks to the complex characters, gameplay and visuals of Captain Tsubasa, further contributing to its influence and success in Japanese popular culture.

Also, the article's characters are "detailed enough that I could recognize the differences between them"(Groves, 1). According to Groves, these features make the game an enjoyable and immersive experience. This quote supports my thesis that Captain Tsubasa has had a lasting and influential impact on Japanese popular culture as it highlights the series' continued popularity, even in video games. The fact that the game is enjoyable and immersive is a testament to the series' popularity and cultural influence, as it shows that people are still interested in the series and are willing to play games based on it. Thus, this quote supports my argument that Captain Tsubasa has had a lasting and influential impact on Japanese popular culture. The characters in the series are not just skilled soccer players but also loyal friends willing to help each other out in times of need. This message is especially resonant in Japanese culture, where friendship and loyalty are highly valued, by emphasizing this importance. The series also conveys important messages about friendship, teamwork, and perseverance.

Third, in his article "Why Is a Japanese Cartoon a Hero for Spanish Footballers?" journalist Al Jazeera argues that Captain Tsubasa has had a lasting and influential impact on Japanese popular culture, particularly in the realm of soccer (Al Jazeera, 1). The author describes how the series, which follows the story of a talented soccer player, has become a global

phenomenon, inspiring generations of young people to take up the sport. The growth of soccer in Japan can be attributed mainly to Captain Tsubasa. The series' depiction of soccer matches as thrilling and exciting battles has inspired countless children and adults to take up the sport. In addition, the series has popularized the game in Japan by introducing the sport to a new audience, such as young girls and those unfamiliar with soccer. Additionally, the series has also been praised for its accurate representation of the rules and techniques of the sport, which has been credited with furthering the development of soccer in Japan. The author emphasizes that the series has had a powerful influence on Spanish footballers, noting that the series has "inspired a legion of Spanish footballers, including the likes of David Villa, Juan Mata and Andres Iniesta." (Al Jazeera, 1).

To further illustrate the impact of Captain Tsubasa, Al Jazeera quotes German footballer Lukas Podolski, who says, "Captain Tsubasa has always been one of my biggest inspirations since I was a kid. It is an honor to support Japanese football manga and that unique culture." (Al Jazeera, 1). This quote from Podolski exemplifies how the series has influenced so many people in different countries. It is also a testament to the series' power as a story, which has been able to transcend language and cultural barriers to become a beloved property. Al Jazeera's article supports the thesis that Captain Tsubasa has had a lasting and influential impact on Japanese popular culture, particularly in terms of its contributions to the growth of soccer in Japan and the development of the *shōnen* genre of manga and anime. His footballer quotes illustrate how the series has inspired many and how its popularity transcends language and culture. This is an example of how the series has had a lasting impact on the world of soccer, and in turn, on popular culture. Nonetheless, the series was top-rated among children and teenagers who

identified with Tsubasa's passion and enthusiasm for soccer. The series was also popular among adults, who appreciated the attention to detail and realism that the series brought to the sport.

Fourth, in his article, "Jan Misugi in Captain Tsubasa as an Educational Example for Children with Congenital Heart Disease," Nicolas Kluger, Philippe Charlier, and Antonio Perciaccante argue that the Japanese manga and anime series "Captain Tsubasa" can be used as an educational tool to teach children with congenital heart disease (CHD) about the importance of sport (Kluger, Philippe and Antonio, 163-165). They argue that the character of Jan Misugi, a football player with an unspecified CHD, can be used as an example for children with CHD to understand the positive effects of sports participation, such as improved heart function and quality of life.

To support their argument, the authors quote from an episode of "Captain Tsubasa" in which Jan Misugi is told by his doctor that he must not play football. They note that this scene "illustrates in a few episodes' various experiences that children with CHD might face, and therefore can be used as an educational tool during consultation and follow-up." (Kluger, Philippe and Antonio, 164). This quote demonstrates how the series can be used to educate children with CHD about how to balance the hazards and rewards of sports participation. They show that the character of Jan Misugi can be used as an example to illustrate how to balance the hazards and rewards of sports participation. This has the potential to aid in raising awareness and fostering acceptance of CHD among families with children. The evidence is consistent with the argument. Scientific studies corroborate the authors' claims that taking part in sports improves health, weight, and physical activity for those with CHD. They also claim that limiting kids' access to sports could have a chilling effect on their mental health and their ability to come to

terms with their sickness. Thus, they advocate for using the character of Jan Misugi from "Captain Tsubasa" as a teaching tool to emphasize the value of sports to children with CHD (Kluger, Philippe and Antonio, 163-165).

Additionally, the author of the source, "World and variation: The reproduction and consumption of narrative" discusses how the soccer manga Captain Tsubasa has had a lasting and influential impact on Japanese popular culture (Eiji & Steinberg, 2010). In the article, they explain how the manga was initially created for boys, but it quickly became a major hit. It was subsequently adapted into an anime series and a video game, which further increased its popularity. This illustrates how Captain Tsubasa has had a major influence on the growth of soccer in Japan and the development of the shōnen genre of manga and anime. To support this, the authors cite a quote from the source which states, "Originally made for boys, it [Captain Tsubasa] became a great hit and was turned into an anime series and a video game." (Eiji & Steinberg, 2010). This quote demonstrates how Captain Tsubasa quickly gained popularity and was adapted into various forms of media. The quote supports the argument that Captain Tsubasa has had a lasting and influential impact on Japanese popular culture, as it indicates that the manga was popular enough to spawn other forms of media, a sign of its influence and impact. The quote also demonstrates that the manga was made for boys, indicating that it has had an impact on the shōnen genre of manga and anime, as it was created specifically for that demographic. Furthermore, the fact that it is a soccer manga suggests that it has had a significant effect on the growth of soccer in Japan.

Generally, it is clear that Captain Tsubasa has had a profound and lasting influence on Japanese popular culture, particularly in terms of its contributions to the growth of soccer in Japan and the development of the shōnen genre of manga and anime. Using scholarly sources, Captain Tsubasa had a significant influence on Japanese popular culture, which is still felt today. The series has become a benchmark for sports manga and has inspired a new generation of mangaka to create works in the same vein. It has also been the subject of several studies and academic articles, and its impact on Japanese popular culture has been widely discussed. Captain Tsubasa has helped to popularize soccer in Japan and has inspired a generation of Japanese youth to pursue their dreams and strive for excellence. It has also provided an essential platform for promoting values important in Japanese cultures, such as friendship and loyalty. The series has remained popular for over 40 years, and its influence has extended to other forms of media, such as manga, anime, and live-action films. This paper has demonstrated that Captain Tsubasa is an influential and lasting presence in Japanese popular culture, and its impact on Japanese culture will continue to be felt for years. The success of Captain Tsubasa also helped to popularize other aspects of Japanese popular culture. The series' anime adaptation was a huge hit, and the video games based on the series were immensely popular. The series also spawned a vibrant merchandising industry, with T-shirts, toys, and other products featuring characters from the series. The success of the series has been so great that it has even been adapted into live-action films and television show.



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