

INFLUENCES OF JAPANESE IDOL AGENCY'S PRESENTATION OF IDOL'S
IDENTITY ON JAPANESE FANS' SELF-IDENTITY AND VISUAL
SELF-PRESENTATION: A CASE STUDY OF JOHNNY'S



Lin Chi Hsun

BANGKOK
UNIVERSITY
THE CREATIVE UNIVERSITY

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Author: Lin Chi Hsun

Independent Study Committee:



**BANGKOK
UNIVERSITY**

Advisor

THE CREATIVE UNIVERSITY

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ratanasuda Punnahitanond

Field Specialist

Dr. Pitipon Kitirattarkarn

Chi Hsun, L. Master of Arts in Communication Arts, March 2023, Graduate School,
Bangkok University.

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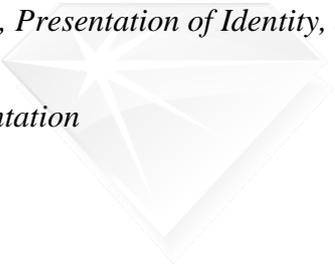


This research aims to examine the influence of Japanese idol agency's presentation of idols' identities on Japanese fans. The agency to be examined is Johnny's. Using an online survey with the self-administered questionnaire, 200 middle-class samples of both genders, aged 15-30 years old who are fans of Johnny's idols were recruited as research participants. The study hypothesized that Japanese idol agency's presentation of idols' identity has an impact on Japanese fans' self-identity, and on their visual self-presentation. Mean scores of the examined variables reveal that samples have a high level of social media exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identities. Findings also indicate that samples view their self-identity as sophistication, sincerity, excitement, and competence, and that they

visually present themselves as a good-looking, funny, cute, talented, smart, and energetic person. Based on the results of Linear Regression Analysis, both research hypotheses and sub-hypotheses were supported. Managerial implications are provided for idols, idol agencies, and fans.

Keywords: *Idol, Idol Agency, Presentation of Identity, Japanese Fans, Self-identity,*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

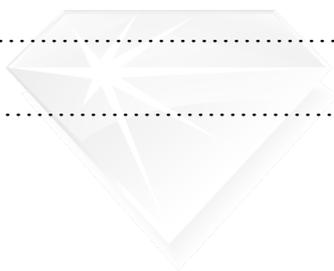
	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Rationale and Problem Statement.....	1
1.2 Objectives of Study.....	9
1.3 Scope of Study.....	10
1.4 Research Questions.....	10
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	10
1.6 Definitions of Terms.....	11
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	14
2.1 Review of Related Literature and Previous Studies.....	14
2.1.1 Japanese Idol Agency.....	14
2.1.2 Idol and Idol's Identity.....	15
2.1.3 Presentation of Idol's Identity.....	16
2.1.4 Exposure of Idols on Social Media.....	18
2.1.5 Fans and Relationship with Idols.....	20
2.1.6 Fans' Self-Identity.....	20
2.1.7 Fan's Visual Self-Presentation.....	22
2.2 Review of Related Theories.....	25
2.2.1 The Halo Effect Theory.....	25

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	Page
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW (Continued)	
2.2.2 Social Learning Theory.....	28
2.2.3 Social Cognitive Theory.....	30
2.3 Research Hypotheses.....	33
2.4 Conceptual Framework.....	34
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY.....	36
3.1 Research Design.....	36
3.2 Population and Sample Selection.....	37
3.3 Data Collection Procedure.....	37
3.4 Research Instrument.....	38
3.5 Instrument Pretest.....	41
3.6 Data Analysis.....	41
3.7 Reliability and Validity.....	42
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS.....	43
4.1 Results of Descriptive Statistics on Samples' Characteristics.....	43
4.2 Results of Descriptive Statistics on Respondents and Johnny's Idols....	47
4.3 Results of Descriptive Statistics on Examined Variables.....	51
4.4 Results of Hypothesis Testing.....	53
4.5 Conclusions.....	56
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION.....	57
5.1 Summary of Findings.....	57
5.2 Discussion of Findings.....	59

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	Page
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION (Continued)	
5.3 Limitations of the Study.....	65
5.4 Recommendations for Further Application.....	66
5.5 Recommendations for Future Research.....	68
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	69
APPENDIX.....	77
BIODATA.....	86



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LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 4.1: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Gender.....	44
Table 4.2: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Age.....	44
Table 4.3: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Level of Education.....	45
Table 4.4: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Occupation.....	46
Table 4.5: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Income per Month.....	47
Table 4.6: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Duration of Fondness for Johnny's Idols.....	48
Table 4.7: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Media Source for Knowing Johnny's Idol.....	49
Table 4.8: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Paid Fan Club Membership of Johnny's Idols.....	50
Table 4.9: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Social Media Exposure to Johnny's Idol information.....	51
Table 4.10: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis of Variables.....	52
Table 4.11: Results of Linear Regression Analysis on Self-Identity.....	55
Table 4.12: Results of Linear Regression Analysis on Visual Self-presentation.....	56

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 2.1: Illustration of Social Learning Theory.....	30
Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework.....	35
Figure 5.1: Johnny’s Idol with Self-Identity as Sophistication-Sakuraishou.....	60
Figure 5.2: Johnny’s Idol with Self-Identity as Sincerity-Johnny’s WEST.....	61
Figure 5.3: Johnny’s Idol with Self-Identity as Competence-Takahashi Kaito.....	61
Figure 5.4: Johnny’s Idol with Self-Identity as Excitement-Sakuma Daisuke.....	62
Figure 5.5: Fans’ Visual Self-Presentation.....	63

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This research aims to examine the influence of Japanese Idol agency's presentation of idols' identity on Japanese fans' self-identity and visual self-presentation. The introduction of this study consists of six topics -- rationale and problem statement, objectives of study, scope of study, research questions, significance of the study, and definitions of terms.

1.1 Rationale and Problem Statement

1.1.1 Background of the Study

Idols refer to people to be worshipped, or people with enthusiastic fans (Yuki, 2019). Idols in the Japanese entertainment area are defined as a person who shares the growth process with fans and plays an active part in the charm of existence itself (Yuki, 2019). In Japanese pop culture, an idol is a sort of entertainer advertised for their image, attractiveness, and personality. Idols are primarily singers with acting, dancing, and modeling skills. Idols are commercialized through merchandise and talent agency endorsements, while maintaining a parasocial relationship with a

financially devoted consumer fan base (Steve, 2020).

Johnny's & Associates (known as Johnny's) was founded in 1963 by John Hirofumi Kitagawa, now known as Kitagawa Johnny which only produces male idol groups. He leads the company through the decades and during the 70s they also established the Johnny's jr (Johnny's junior) which are the trainee's of Johnny's which will later become the artists themselves. Different from the communication strategy of Korean idol groups, the music and music videos of Johnny's idol will not be broadcast on the public platform. Only members who pay to join the official fan club can get the information and the latest trends of the idols. But despite this, the Johnny's idol still has a large number of fans, and has a place in the market. Nowadays, we can see many of idol groups like ARASHI, Hey! Say! JUMP, Sexy Zone, King & Prince and so on from Johnny's in Japan.

The five-member group, Arashi (meaning "storm" in Japanese) consisting of Satoshi Ohno, Sho Sakurai, Masaki Aiba, Kazunari Ninomiya and Jun Matsumoto, released their first single in 1999 as a theme song for the Men's Volleyball World Cup. They endured moderate success alongside fellow Johnny's groups throughout the early 2000s before rising to beloved household name status. As they reached their 10th anniversary, popular acting credits, prime time TV spots and commercial deals

piled up on top of record-breaking sales and they became famous across Asia.

Another decade of success conquered the hearts of everyone from kindergarteners to grandparents followed as their playful entertainment style and friendly personality (“Public Relations Packaging”, 2019).

Idols are influential, and they influence people in weird ways but they also affect us very positively. The amount of fans say that an idol saved them, pulled them out of difficult times and brought them so much joy seeing how idols being themselves, and being there for their fans has influenced them to be happier and live a better life (Sunflower, 2018). The appeal of idols is that idols have to work very hard to become idols and they practice a lot in many different things, like singing, dancing, or learning languages Everybody loves a person who works hard and gets to accomplish their dreams (Pione, 2018).

An economist in Japan once said, "In fact, idols make money from recession." (Ka, 2019). Due to the economic crisis, people have become cautious in spending money. And to like an idol, we only need to spend a small amount of money. For example, as for KinKi Kids from Johnny's, debuted in 1997, and "The Boy of Glass" (garasuno syounenn), the selling price is 500 yen (Japanese dollar), only a coin is needed, so it created a sales legends at that period. Idols

support half of the Japanese record industry. Even when the record industry is declining, in 2016, Johnny's accounted for 17.47% of the total amount. Together with other idol groups, they accounted for more than half of the record market in Japan. The success of Johnny's leads to the great impact of idol culture all over the world. SM, the top entertainment agency in Korea, followed the rules of Johnny's marketing strategy and became as successful as Johnny's and even higher in nowadays (Liu, 2019).

Japanese idols used to be the mainstream of the world. Every year, fans from all over the world come to Japan for the idols they support just to meet the idols. Japan has also driven Japan's tourism and economy because of its idol culture. Today, with the rise of Hallyu, Hallyu means Korean wave in Korean, like with the rise of K-pop (Korean pop), the Japanese idol market is not as strong as it used to be, but it still has a certain degree of popularity in Japan. This research hopes to see how Japanese idols can still occupy a unique place in the era of the rise of Hallyu by studying the business model of Johnny's Idol Company and understanding Japanese culture.

The success of K-pop (Korean pop) has affected the idol market in Japan. That is why in recent years, Johnny's has been changing their marketing strategy to

follow the latest trends and keep their position on Japanese idol market.

Due to the economic crisis, Japan began to develop domestic cultural industries, thereby injecting vitality into the economy. This is the same as the "lipstick effect" (Lauder, 2008). The "lipstick effect" is an economic phenomenon. When the economy is in recession, people still have a strong desire to consume, but they don't have a lot of money to buy expensive goods such as houses and cars. Therefore, they will switch to buying cheaper products, such as buying lipstick, which can satisfy consumers' desire to consume and at the same time play a comforting role.

After the financial crisis in Japan, the economy is sluggish, the consumption is insufficient, and the income is declining and the employment is difficult, which has affected the outlook on life and consumption of a generation in Japan. Because of the economic downturn, people pay more attention to cultural consumption. Japan vigorously develops the entertainment industry, promotes economic growth, promotes the competition of cultural soft power, and at the same time comforts the hearts of the Japanese people during the economic depression (Mao, 2019).

Due to the economic crisis, people have become cautious and dare not invest and waste at will. So, to like and follow an idol requires them to spend very little money. For example, KinKi Kids under Johnny's, which debuted in 1997, "Glass

Boy" (硝子の少年), sold for 500 yen and only needed one coin, thus creating multiple sales. Idols support the Japanese record industry. Even now that the record industry is declining, Johnny & Associates accounted for 17.47% of the total amount in 2016. Together with other company idol groups, they accounted for more than half of the Japanese record market. Judging from economic indicators alone, Johnny's fan club membership fees, CD/VCD sales, and the number of concert mobilizations, the annual economic benefit is as high as 1.6 billion US dollars. Johnny's idol group Arashi (嵐) held a 15th anniversary concert in the United States, bringing Hawaii \$18 million in revenue and \$100 million in marketing value. The miracle of SMAP has also continued, serving as the commercial endorsement of Universal Studios Osaka, large retail groups, etc. It can be seen that idols promote economic development and bring direct economic benefits. The idol market is based on the music industry, including film and television, variety shows, advertising and other fields, and is a cross-industry economic industry built on the entertainment industry.

In the Heisei era (平成時代), it was a nightmare in the hearts of the Japanese, the economy declined, and the entire Japanese society began to lose hope. In 2003, "The Only and Only Flower in the World" (世界に一つだけの花) made SMAP a household name, and the song is also known as "Japan's second national anthem".

It is precisely because of this inspiring song that it resonates with the people. Every time there is a major disaster such as an earthquake or tsunami in Japan, Johnny's idol group, AKB48 and other idol groups will hold disaster relief concerts. While raising funds for the disaster area, the appearance of idols also stabilizes people's hearts and makes people feel warmth and love. Bring hope to disaster areas. At this time, idols are the spiritual support of the people.

Beijing Times Fengjun Entertainment (TF Family) (北京时代峰峻文化公司 /TF 家族), the entertainment company where the Chinese minor idol group TFBOYS is located, draws on the experience of Johnny & Associates and selects 10 to 14-year-old artists for training in singing and acting. Since 2009, young people who met the requirements and had idol temperament were selected for training. After several years of training, Wang Yuan (王源), who is good at singing, Yi Yang Qianxi (易烱千玺), who is good at dancing, and Wang Junkai (王俊凯), the captain with strong comprehensive strength, were selected. When they debuted in 2014, the average age of the three teenagers was only 13 years old. The company followed Johnny's trainee system and official website membership system. The company also established the TF family official website, and fans can pay membership fees to join members. Through the study of Johnny's operation method, the TF family has occupied a

favorable position in the Chinese idol industry by relying on TFBOYS. It can be seen that Johnny's operation method is successful, and it also has a profound impact on the Chinese idol cultural industry.

1.1.2 Rationale and Problem Statement

Now the rise of Hallyu has even surpassed the original star-making ancestor Johnny's. In an interview with American media, Matsumoto Jun, a member of Johnny's popular group Arashi, said: "Mr. Kitagawa established many boy groups in the 1960s and raised them to the world level, not only in Japanese entertainment circle, and has left its mark in popular culture throughout Asia." (Xing, 2020).

Now Hallyu is popular all over the world, such as the popular BTS, and even made a speech at the United Nations General Assembly. This is what South Korean President Moon Jae-in introduced before BTS's appearance as "a group of outstanding young people who connect with young people from all over the world." Against the famous dark green marble background of the United Nations General Assembly Hall, BTS delivered speeches to help promote the United Nations' 2030 goals, including ending extreme poverty, protecting the planet's environment and achieving gender equality, and they promoted the administration of vaccines, saying it was ushering in an era of change the "ticket" (Caiyuyan, 2021).

South Korea makes good use of online media for publicity, such as putting music videos of its idols on YouTube, or opening official accounts of their idols on Twitter or Instagram. However, in Johnny's marketing strategy, they did not open an official account for their idols or publish music videos on the Internet. Only fans who joined the official fan group or fans who bought albums could see the idol's works or the latest news. At present, the Japanese idol market is developing well, but it still has some shortcomings compared with South Korea, where the idol market is booming all over the world. For example, the way of publicity and so on. This study will explore better ways of publicity by surveying fans' thoughts with questionnaire.

1.2 Objectives of Study

This study aims to achieve the following two objectives:

1.2.1 To examine the influence of Japanese Idol agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media on Japanese fans' self-identity.

1.2.2 To examine the influence of Japanese Idol agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media on Japanese fans' visual self-presentation.

1.3 Scope of Study

Applying the quantitative research approach, this study will use survey research to collect data with self-administered questionnaire. This study focuses on Japanese fans to study influences of Japanese idol agency's presentation of idols' identity on Japanese fans' self-identity and visual self-presentation. The agency to be examined is Johnny's.



1.4 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following two research questions:

RQ#1: Does Japanese fans' exposure to agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influence their self-identity?

RQ#2: Does Japanese fans' exposure to agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influence their visual self-presentation?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this research will help to improve fan culture communicate via social media and will improve the audience's understanding of idol identity, self-identity and visual self-presentation, so as to better improve the fan culture and

jointly create a harmonious fan culture environment. The study results will also be providing beneficial information on improving economic development on idol market in Asia.

1.6 Definitions of Terms

This section provides operational definition of the important terms as follows:

1.6.1 Idol Agency

An idol agency refers to the agency that provides management services for its artists who have signed a contract by arranging basic work schedules for them, as well as various tasks other than work. The relationship between the agency and the idols is relatively close, like a kinship relationship, and the contract is usually valid for a longer period of time. This study focuses only the Japanese idol agency.

1.6.2 Johnny & Associates (Johnny's)

Johnny & Associates (Johnny's/ジャニーズ事務所) is a Japanese performing arts agency (idol agency) which mainly operates male idols and stage art performances. It is the largest male idol group company in Japan. The founder of the company is Johnny Kitagawa.

1.6.3 Idols

Idols (アイドル) are one of the types of Japanese entertainers. In Japanese, the word originally refers to "people or things that are admired", "admired," "people who have fanatical suitors," but in the Japanese entertainment industry, it mainly refers to "sharing the growth process with fans" which is characterized by comprehensively building his own image and carrying out activities in many fields such as singing, dancing, drama, and comedy. Compared with the models who attach the most importance to appearance, the appearance of idols does not necessarily have to be very good looking, but a relatively easy-to-get along.

1.6.4 Idol's Identity

Idol's identity refers to the self-characteristics that idols show in front of fans and audiences, which are usually friendly, sunny and energetic.

1.6.5 Fans

Fans refer to people who are obsessed with and worship a celebrity, a fanatical fan of something, a group of people who worship a star, artist or thing.

1.6.6 Self-Identity

Self-identity, a concept in psychology and sociology, refers to a person's expression of self-identity and the expression of shared ideas (nationality or culture)

with a group. Types of identity can be broadly classified into 4 dimensions, including sophistication, sincerity, competence, and excitement (Lunardo, Geraud & Livat, 2015).

1.6.7 Visual Self-Presentation

Visual self-presentation refers to the process by which people try to manage and control the impressions others have about themselves. Usually, people always tend to present themselves in an image that fits the current social situation or interpersonal background to ensure that others make a pleasant evaluation of themselves.

1.6.8 Fans' Self-Identity

Fan self-identification refers to the expression of fans' self-identity and shared ideas with idols and other fans. Based on Lunardo, Geraud and Livat (2015), this variable includes four dimensions: 1) sophistication, 2) sincerity, 3) competence, and 4) excitement.

1.6.9 Fans' Visual Self-Presentation

Fans' visual self-presentation refers to the process by which fans try to manage and control the impressions others have of themselves. Usually influenced by idols, they form images similar to idols to show themselves.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews related literature and previous studies on presentation of idols' identity, fans' self-identity and visual self-presentation. Related theories will also be reviewed. It also proposes research hypotheses and a conceptual framework.

2.1 Review of Related Literature and Previous Studies

2.1.1 Japanese Idol Agency

The Japanese idol agency also called “jimusho” in Japanese (Nagaike, 2012). The biggest “jimusho” for male idols in Japan is called Johnny & Associates (Johnny's). SMAP and Arashi are the most famous and iconic groups of the company (Fabienne, 2004). Every year on 31 December, idols from Johnny's will attend the biggest national broadcast music program for new year called “Kohaku Uta Gassen” (The red and white Song Battle) singers are divided into two teams to compete against each other on this program, which is the extremely popular program that drawing 40.8 percent of the national viewing audience in 2009. Who can attend this program means they are very popular (Nagaike, 2012).

2.1.2 Idol and Idol's Identity

An idol, a sculpture that is worshipped and enshrined by people, is a metaphor for a symbol of a mysterious power in people's minds. "Idol" in modern vocabulary refers to the object that people pursue and worship (Ka, 2019). In the Japanese entertainment industry, there is a group of artists classified as "Idols." The positioning of artists is very clear, divided into actors, singers, models, comedians, idols, etc. Idols are a special existence in Japan, and Japanese people have unique feelings for idols. This is also the reason why Japanese idols have been able to prosper for a long time and set off a boom in Asia (Liu, 2019).

Identity is the overall appearance of a person, the whole picture of spirit and temperament, including world outlook, outlook on life, theoretical outlook, moral outlook, belief, interest, ability, etc. It is the sum of relatively stable psychological characteristics (Ning, 2021).

There are two rules that often use on idol's identity, which is 1) Occasionally showing shortcomings is more attractive: It is impossible to be completely yourself in front of the camera, and no one is perfect. Any public figure needs to be packaged, but it can moderately retain its own authenticity and show some shortcomings, which is easier to enhance intimacy and bring the audience closer. It can also be found from

recent community trends that content that is biased towards a sense of life is more likely to resonate; 2) Not too idealistic: The so-called extremes fail. The more perfect a character is, the greater the effect will be when it is broken. Overemphasizing a character that is close to perfection will be viewed with a magnifying glass. When a flaw is discovered, it will be easier to hang up negative words such as "deceit" and "lying" (Partipost, 2021).

2.1.3 Presentation of Idol's Identity

2.1.3.1 Appearance of the Idol

Appearance refers to the inherent elements of a person, such as face, hair, body, skin, etc. These are appearances, and appearance is not exactly the same as appearance. Appearance includes expressions, clothing, dress and so on.

The presentation of idol's identity is like helping an artist with makeup. The simple concept of makeup is to cover up the flaws of this person, and use makeup techniques to highlight the features of the facial features and make people memorable. However, in order to continuously stimulate the audience's freshness, or because similar images have been saturated, the entire industry has gradually turned into using exaggerated makeup to attract publicity, or even further "plastic surgery" to create a character that did not exist before (Yang, 2022). However, why

do idols still need presentation of idol's identity? In fact, when a brokerage company wants to introduce a person who is completely unfamiliar to everyone, it must have a "bright spot" that can attract people. Only with a bright spot can it attract attention and then achieve the purpose of "recognizing".

2.1.3.2 Personality of the Idol

Personality refers to the unique personality that an individual shows when he/she adapts to people, things, himself and even the environment during his life. This unique personality is manifested by the individual's needs, motivation, interests, abilities, aptitudes, attitudes, temperaments, values, living habits, and actions under the interaction of factors such as heredity, environment, maturity, and learning. The overall characteristics of the aspect, with considerable unity, persistence, complexity and uniqueness (May, 2011).

Taking the "foodie" character as an example, TWICE's MOMO and IZ*ONE's Jiang Huiyuan are both famous "foodie characters", but the two did not eat to meet the "personality," but the two were originally interested in food.

The behavior that people are very interested in food and like to eat more than other members is magnified, and then it is named "foodie" as an "identity" (Chen, 2019).

2.1.4 Exposure of Idols on Social Media

Social media is a virtual community and online platform that people use to create, share, and exchange ideas, opinions, and experiences. Use pictures and texts to share your views or life. Currently the most common social media are Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Before the emergence of new media, the public mainly relied on traditional media, such as newspapers, radio, television, etc., to obtain news. At this time, they tended to read, listen to or watch reports with a certain depth. After the emergence of new media, the Internet has become an important way for people to obtain information. At this time, people's motivations and behaviors for choosing media information have undergone great changes. Especially for the younger generation, the rapid development of online media has accompanied their growth process, so their media contact behaviors and tendencies are similar to that of their parents. There is a big difference (Jiang, 2014). In terms of the differences between traditional media and new media, some studies have shown that young people regard traditional media such as newspapers as a way to obtain leisure and entertainment, while new media such as mobile phones and the Internet are regarded as the main way to obtain information (Dimmick, 2003). In addition, college students regard understanding

information as the main motivation for their media consumption, but they prefer entertainment-type media content the most. Blind and passive consumption often occurs when surfing the Internet” (Peng & Zhang, 2008).

The Internet exposure rate has been increasing year by year. In 2016, the proportion of Internet access, such as the number of advertisements, surpassed the proportion of watching TV for the first time. The Internet has become the media with the highest contact rate among Taiwanese consumers. Among them, nearly 80% of users surf the Internet through mobile phones, reflected in the mobile budget investment. According to the 2017 Taiwan Digital Advertising Statistics Report released by DMA, the mobile budget investment ratio has increased year by year, and in 2017, it has exceeded 70%. Therefore, advertisers need to consider the "Mobile First" priority when planning their marketing activities, whether it is the allocation of advertising budgets on devices, the way advertising messages are presented on mobile phones, and the more real-time and in-depth interaction on mobile devices. Models and marketing tools will become the focus of brands (Cacafly, 2018).

2.1.5 Fans and Relationship with Idols

Fans follow idols, essentially pursuing a better version of themselves.

The attributes of idols determine the attributes of fans. There may be some unbeautiful people or things in real life, but we still tend to pursue beauty (Yimin, 2020). The relationship between idols and fans is a third-party unilateral fantasy pursuit between love and friendship. This pursuit is fruitless but the process is aspirational. They both benefited. Idols got money and spiritual achievement and a sense of being admired, and fans got a sense of spiritual sufficiency.

The relationship between idols and fans is a relationship of mutual encouragement and mutual support, because a fan admires and loves his idol very much. Then he usually uses his idols as his imitation objects. As for idols, as a star, in order not to disappoint his fans, he will try to be a better version of himself, hoping that he can be more perfect in the eyes of fans. To be worthy of the love of their fans for themselves (Du, 2021).

2.1.6 Fans' Self-Identity

In Taylor's self-identification theory (Henri & John, 1980), self-identity specifically refers to an individual's reflective understanding of himself based on his own experience. In the context of late modernity, Taylor made a new interpretation of

this concept. He believed that each individual has a unique nature. In the process of life, work, and social interaction, individuals will accumulate experience through the continuous accumulation of survival. This leads to a reflective understanding of the self. Therefore, self-identity is neither a certain social point of view, nor a staged inevitable result of an individual's existence and development (Li, 2018).

Self-identity refers to people's awareness or internal definition of their own identity in a certain sense. Giddens believes that self-identity is a self-construction completed by external factors (Giddens, 1996). Self-identity is defined as "the self formed by an individual based on life experiences as a reflective understanding", and self-identity is mainly achieved through two paths of self-reflection and referring to others. In this sense, self-identity can be understood as a state in which an individual's behavior and thoughts form, develop and reach agreement through self-reflection and interaction with others in a certain social environment.. Therefore, the construction of fans' self-identity in star chasing is not only a subjective psychological process, but also completed in the interaction with idols, and is reflected in their external star chasing (Zao, 2021). A person's change from an ordinary audience to a fan is usually due to the advantages they see in their idols, most of which are traits they wish to have, such as appearance, knowledge, athletic ability, singing and dancing ability,

character, acting skills, etc. (Lin, 2021). In the process of worship, fans regard idols as their models, project them inwardly, and over time become part of their own self, become part of their self-ideal, and supervise their behavior. Freud also described the relationship between this effect and the behavior of the group: "The mutual connection between the members of the group is of the nature of this kind of identification - based on a common quality. We may conjecture that this common quality It's the nature of the connection with the leader." (Person, 2018). Fans' love for idols is more like chasing a perfect self than our love for family, friends and partners. Crazy support for idols and rankings is not so much to help idols to pursue their dreams, but to say that in the process, it also seems to have achieved the dream that he could not achieve, and the success of the idol is also his own success (Tse, 2021).

2.1.7 Fan's Visual Self-Presentation

2.1.7.1 The Social Role Expectations of Youth Using Social Media

With the continuous innovation and promotion of mobile online social media technology, social media has extended its tentacles to all aspects of people's daily work. For young people, the use of social media occupies an extremely important position in their work and life. Young people are keen to use social media

for self-impression management and self-presentation, and to carry out various interpersonal communication and interactive behaviors. Self-presentation on social media has become an important field of interpersonal communication behavior research. In the use of social media, young people use social media to build their own social roles, use role interaction to strengthen their social expectations, and gather their social capital, especially the gathering and deepening of network social capital (Li, 2018).

2.1.7.2 Self-Presentation

Self-presentation is the process by which an individual tries to convey to others how he or she sees himself through the behavior of performance (Schlenker, 1980). The theory of self-presentation means that we will try to manage the impressions others have on us, to make an image display, and hope that others will evaluate us (Comma, 2018). Goffman (1959) likened daily life to the stage of different situations, and pointed out that self-presentation is like a performance performed by an individual to a specific audience. The experience, interaction or connection involved with the activity results in conscious attention, enthusiastic participation, and social connection to others through the activity (Wilson, 2010).

2.1.7.3 Idols Influencing Fans' Self-Presentation

With the development of communication technology in recent years, the distance between idols and fans is no longer limited to the stage and auditorium.

Fans can have a deeper interaction with idols through online media. Many Korean agencies will set up "official cafes" for their artists. In the official cafe community,

fans can get the latest news of idol activities, and some idols will also update their current situation in the official cafe to interact with fans. Official coffee makes fans

closer to the life of idols, and feels that idols have actually been with them all the

time. With daily greetings and emotional encouragement, when fans gain the power given by idols, their self-worth also increases (Li, 2021).

“If you convert the motivation of chasing stars into hoping that you can become as good as him, it can help you grow on your own path. This is a positive cycle” (Bao, 2021). From cheering for idols off the stage to fans being able to vote for active idols, the status of fans and idols is getting closer and closer. Trendy and diverse ways of chasing stars, idol controversy, fans' self-values are constantly changing in the interaction with idols. It is the indispensable meaning of star chasing to build a more complete self-identity through supporting idols that you admire (Yao, 2021).

2.2 Review of Related Theories

2.2.1 The Halo Effect Theory

The halo effect was proposed by an American psychologist Edward Thorndike in 1920 (Thorndike, 1920). Thorndike wondered if there was a characteristic, such as leadership, appearance, or loyalty, that military commanders had when assessing subordinate abilities that would influence the evaluation of other abilities. It was found that when soldiers grew stronger, they tended to be rated as high IQ, capable of leadership and good character (Shimin, 2021).

However, "how can being strong be related to being smart?" Thorndike thus discovered the existence of the moon halo effect. The name halo is because the statues of saints in many religions, including Jesus and Guanyin Bodhisattva, have a halo behind their heads to represent his holiness. When people see the aperture, people will think that the other party is all good (Ueki Rie, 2011).

In the 1970s, the famous social psychologist Richard Nisbett also demonstrated the case of the "halo effect". Nisbett and Wilson wanted to investigate how students who attended the lectures judged lecturers (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). The students were told it was a study of evaluating teachers. They were also specifically told that the experiments were interested in whether different assessments

depended on how much contact students had with a certain lecturer. This is purely a lie. The students were actually divided into two groups, and they would each watch two different videos about the same lecturer. And the lecturer happened to have a heavy Belgian accent (which is very relevant to the experiment). One group of students watched the lecturer answer a series of questions sympathetically and friendly. A second group of students watched the same lecturer answer the same questions in a cold, distant tone. Experiments have made it clear that it is obvious which personalities are more likable. In one personality the lecturer appears to love teaching and students, while in the other he looks more like an authority figure who doesn't love teaching at all (Xin, 2021). After each group of students watched the video, they were asked to rate the teacher's appearance, special language habits, and even his accent (special language habits were the same in both films). Consistent with the halo effect, students who saw the "kind" image of the lecturer found him more attractive, his language habits were more endearing, and even his accent was more attractive.

The academic journal "Nature" pointed out that the halo effect belongs to an attractive stereotype, such as smiling on the other side, people will feel that he must be easy to get along with and a good person. The opposite stereotype is the horn

effect, for example, bad looks are associated with bad personalities and bad people.

Both of these effects have a greater impact on people than traditional stereotypes such as age and race (Hardy, 2019).

The halo effect is also often used in communication strategies. For example, the boutique exhibition space is full of beautiful models, or the product packaging and design are exquisite, which can be regarded as the application of the halo effect in communication.

Idols are also workers who use the halo effect most often. For example, asking idols to endorse products, earning fans' admiration with gentle character settings or sunny character settings, etc., and then spreading the idol's popularity with communication strategies (Johansson, 2018).

However, when there is a scandal in the spokesperson, the halo effect will turn into the horn effect, making consumers "turn from fans to anti-fans".

For example, an American artist Jared Fogle once publicly stated that he was able to lose weight successfully because he liked to eat Subway, and became Subway's spokesperson from 2000 to 2015, until he was terminated after the scandal of having sex with minors broke out (Vinall, 2022).

2.2.2 Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura's social learning theory places a strong emphasis on the value of seeing, modeling, and copying other people's behaviors, attitudes, and emotional responses. The interaction of environmental and cognitive influences on human cognition and behavior is taken into account by the social learning hypothesis.

Bandura (1977) concurs with the behaviorist learning theories of classical conditioning and operant conditioning in terms of social learning theory. He does, however, add two crucial concepts:

1. Between inputs and reactions, mediating processes take place.
2. Behavior is acquired through the process of observational learning from the environment.

Children see how those around them interact and behave. This was demonstrated by the well-known Bobo doll experiment (Bandura, 2001).

According to Bandura, there are four mediational procedures:

a) Attention: The person must focus on the action and its effects, as well as create a mental image of the action. A behavior must catch our attention in order for us to emulate it. Every day, we see a variety of behaviors, most of which are unremarkable. Therefore, paying close attention is crucial to determining whether

a behavior has an impact on how others imitate it.

b) Retention: How vividly the action is recalled. Although the conduct may be observed, it is not usually recalled, which clearly prevents imitation. In order for the observer to repeat the activity later, it is crucial that a memory of it is developed.

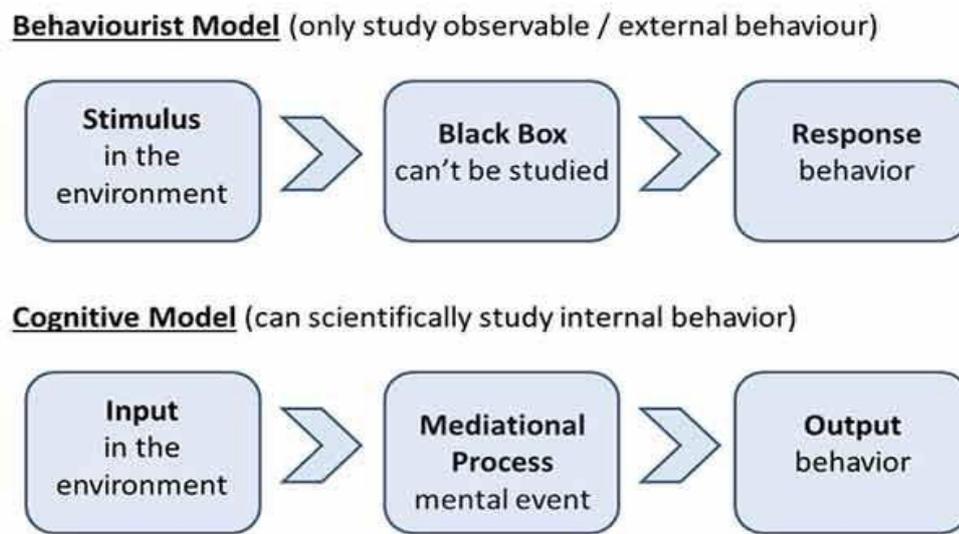
This technique is particularly important in situations when social learning is not always immediate. There must be a memory to refer to, even if the conduct is imitated right away.

c) Reproduction: This is the capacity to carry out the actions that the model just showed. On a daily basis, we witness a lot of conduct that we wish we could replicate but find it difficult to do so. Even if we wanted to replicate the behavior, we couldn't because of our physical limitations. This affects our choices regarding whether or not to attempt to mimic it. Consider a 90-year-old woman who has trouble walking watching Dancing on Ice. Although she may acknowledge that the skill is valuable, she won't make an effort to mimic it because she is unable to do so.

d) Motivation: The desire to carry out the behavior The observer will think about the benefits and drawbacks of a behavior. The likelihood of the observer imitating the conduct increases if the perceived benefits outweigh the perceived drawbacks, if there are any. If the observer does not consider the vicarious

reinforcement to be significant enough, they will not mimic the behavior.

Figure 2.1: Illustration of Social Learning Theory



Source: McLeod, S. (2016). *Simply psychology*. Retrieved from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html>.

2.2.3 Social Cognitive Theory

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) holds that individuals' actions and behaviors in society are learned by observing the behavior of others in society. That is, the learning of personal knowledge and behavior is acquired by self-modeling through self-motivation and self-regulatory mechanisms, in the context of social interaction and experience, based on one's own observation of others rather than

being influenced by teaching content materials and media (Glanz, 2002).

This theory provides a triangular model framework that includes people, behaviors, and environments. There are many concepts in this framework, of which Bandura emphasizes the self-efficacy. Similar to self-confidence, self-efficacy is a belief based on the belief that one has the ability to accomplish a task (Miwa, 2005).

N.E. Miller and J. Dollard first proposed the theory of social learning and imagination in 1941, which holds that human beings learn specific behaviors through observation. By imitating the observed behavior, the observer solidifies the learned behavior and obtains a positive reinforcement (Miller & Dollard, 1941).

The important concepts of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) are:

- a) Environment: Things that are situated physically outside of a person; they offer possibilities and social support.
- b) Situation: Correcting misconceptions and promoting healthy forms; perspective of the surroundings.
- c) Competence: The capability to carry out a specific behavior; encourage mastery learning through skill development.
- d) Expectations: Anticipated results of an activity; Positive results of healthy behavior as a model.

e) Expectations: The values a person places on a specific result, rewards;

Describe the results of the change that are useful.

f) Self-control: Individual control of behavior or performance that is directed toward a specific purpose; creation of opportunities for self-monitoring, goal-setting, problem-solving, and self-reward.

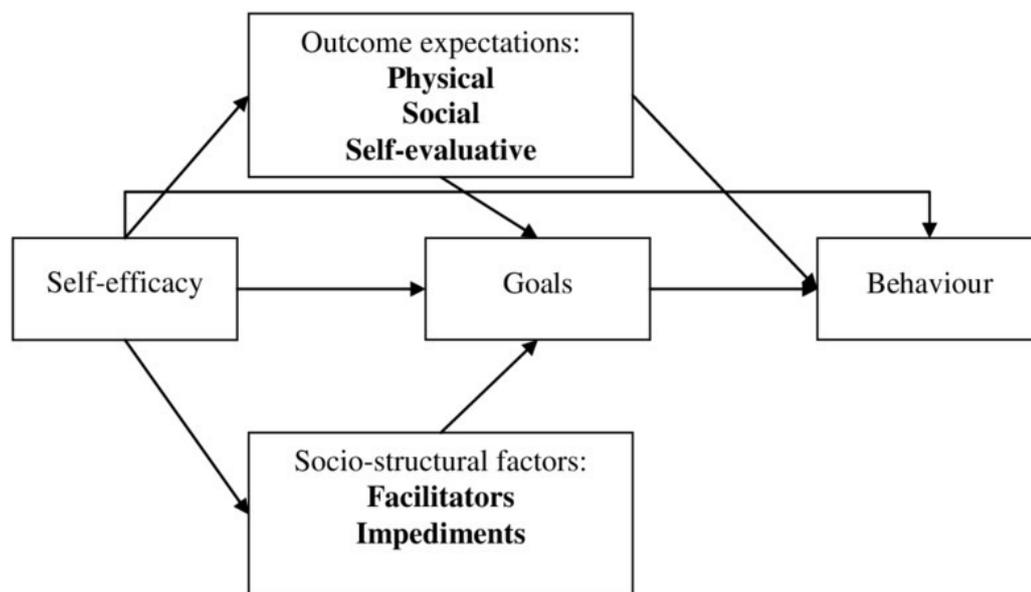
g) Observational learning: The acquisition of behavior by observation of the deeds and results of other people's behavior. Incorporate reliable role models who exhibit the desired behavior.

h) Reinforcements: Reactions to a person's behavior that either raise or lessen the likelihood of recurrence. Encourage self-initiated rewards and incentives.

i) Self-efficacy: A person's belief in their ability to carry out a specific conduct; to alter behavior successfully, take baby steps.* Emotional coping responses: Strategies or tactics that are used by a person to deal with emotional stimuli; provide training in problem solving and stress management.

j) Reciprocal determinism: The dynamic interaction between the person, the behavior, and the environment in which the behavior is performed; take into account a variety of behavioral change options, such as environmental, skill, and personal change. (Glanz, 2002).

Figure 2.2: Illustration of Social Cognitive Theory



Source: *ResearchGate* uploaded by *Ghasem Sam Toloo*. Retrieved from

[https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Illustration-of-Social-Cognitive-Theory-](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Illustration-of-Social-Cognitive-Theory-3-An-illustration-of-Social-Cognitive-Theory_fig2_259603466)

[3-An-illustration-of-Social-Cognitive-Theory_fig2_259603466](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Illustration-of-Social-Cognitive-Theory-3-An-illustration-of-Social-Cognitive-Theory_fig2_259603466).

2.3 Research Hypotheses

Based on the review of literature, previous studies and related theories, this study proposes to test the following research hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: Japanese fans' exposure to the presentation of idols positively influences their self-identity.

HP 1.1: Japanese fans' exposure to the presentation of idols positively influences their self-identity as sophistication.

HP 1.2: Japanese fans' exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influences their self-identity as sincerity.

HP 1.3: Japanese fans' exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influences their self-identity as competence.

HP 1.4: Japanese fans' exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influences their self-identity as excitement.

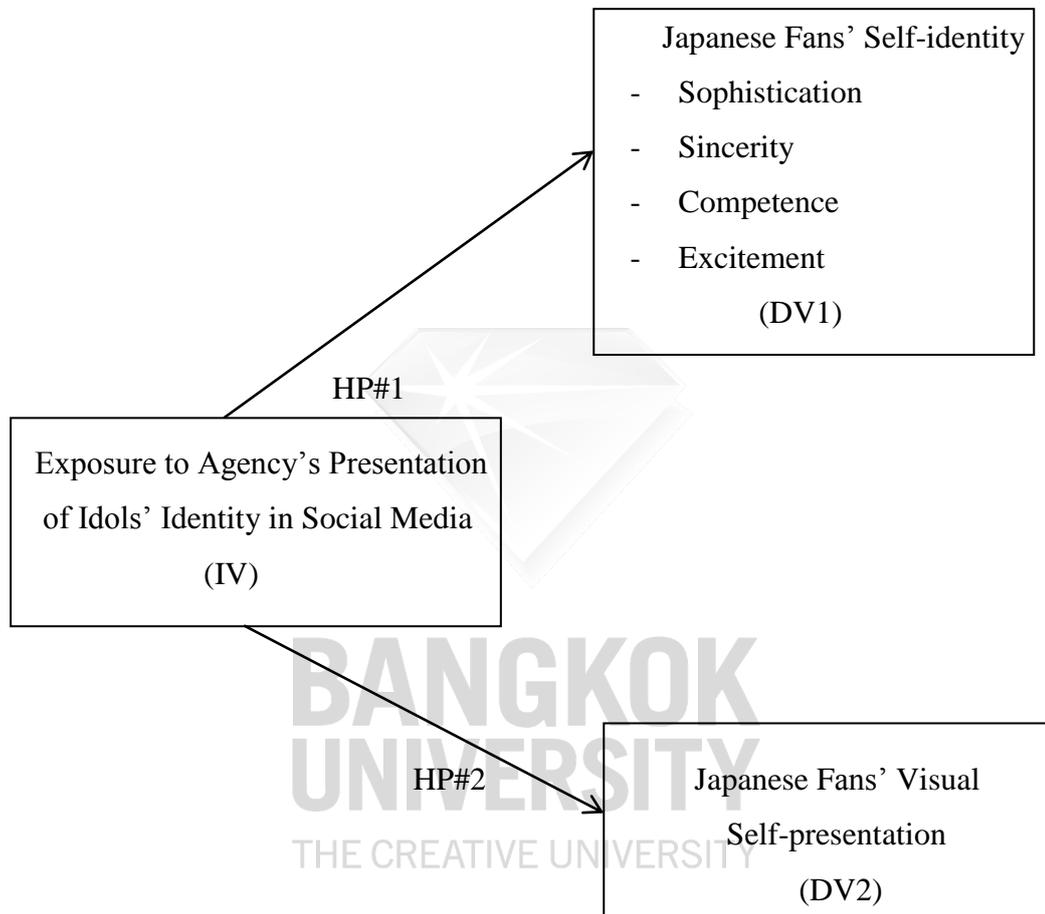
Hypothesis 2: Japanese fans' exposure to agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influences their visual self-presentation.



2.4 Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review above, a conceptual framework was developed to show that through social cognitive and social learning, Japanese fans' social media exposure to agency's presentation of idols' identity will not only influence their self-identity as indicated in HP#1, but also will influence their visual self-presentation as indicated in HP#2.

Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter summarized research methodology and procedures, together with a conceptual framework for testing the proposed research hypotheses. This chapter was divided into the topics as follows-- research design, population and sample selection, data collection procedure, research instrument, instrument pretest, data analysis, reliability and validity of the measurement.

3.1 Research Design

This study is a quantitative study using a survey method. In quantitative research, it aimed to determine the relationship between one thing (an independent variable) and another (a dependent variable) in a population. So the quantitative research method was suitable. Based on to research how exposure to agency's presentation of idols identity in social media affects Japanese fans' self-identity and Japanese fans' visual self-presentation, a questionnaire survey is used as the research method. The purpose of the study is to examine the causal relationship between fans' exposure to agency's presentation of idols personal characters in social media and

their self-identity and visual self-presentation. An online self-administered questionnaire would be used for data collection.

3.2 Population and Sample Selection

The population of this study are audiences who are the fans of Johnny's idols. According to the online data report, Johnny's own more female fans and were born in Generation Z (Ka, 2019). Therefore, this study focuses more on femalesfans in this generation with high school educational background or above and income per month between 1,000 USD to 1,600 USD. SurveyCake was used to select the samples and the survey will be posted on the open chat from LINE in Japan to find respondents. Base on the G*Power program, the sample size of this study is 200 persons.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was first written in English. In order to help Japanese participants who were not good at English to better understand and answer survey questions, the original questionnaire went through the back translation process.

A translator who was good at English and Japanese would check whether the

Japanese translation text had the same meaning as the original English text, and adjusted the Japanese translation according to the actual context to avoid misunderstandings caused by language differences. The questionnaire was sent to 50 participants for pretesting to ensure that all questions were fully understood and easy to answer. At the same time, researcher should assure all participants that their personal information was not leaked, and treat their personal information as confidential and protected.

“SurveyCake” platform was used to select the samples and the link of survey was posted on the open chat from LINE application where the place that available to chat with whatever the user would like to be named and whatever which kind of topic the user would like to join.

The purpose of survey will be clearly explained in detail. Guidelines for answering questions will be provided with the link of survey on the open chat platform.

3.4 Research Instrument

The researcher developed the questionnaire contains the following four parts: Demographic information of respondents, fans’ exposure to agency’s presentation of

idol's identity in social media, fan's self-identity and fan's visual self-presentation.

Part 1: Samples' Characteristics

The first part of the questionnaire mainly involved the demographic information of the participants including age, gender, level of education, occupation, financial status, age of worship and worship channel. The questions are in a multiple-choice format.

Part 2: Exposure to Agency's Presentation of Idols' Identity in Social Media

In this part, the scale was developed by Edwin (2020). Respondents were asked about how much time spent on social media watching information about Johnny's idols with a five point-scale ranging from 1 = short (less than 30 minutes/ day), 2 = quite short (30–60 minutes/ day), 3 = moderate (>1 hour –2 hours/ day), 4 = quite long (>2 – 3 hours/ day), to 5 = long (> 3 hours/ day).

Part 3: Johnny's idols fan's self-identity

In this part, the researcher used the fan identity scale which developed by Lunardo et al. (2015) to measure the dimensions of fan's self-identity which included four dimensions, including 1) sophistication, 2) sincerity, 3) competence, and 4) excitement. Responses of all the items are provided by five-point Likert scale, arranging from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree to (5) strongly

agree. The measurement of fan's self-identity was constructed as follows:

1. 'Sophistication' included three statements: (1) I am a refined person,
(2) I am a highly-developed person, and (3) I am an advanced person.
2. 'Sincerity' included three statements: (1) I am a trustworthy person,
(2) I am a genuine person, and (3) I am a loyal person.
3. 'Competence' included three statements: (1) I am an efficient person,
(2) I am a talented person, and (3) I am a capable person.
4. 'Excitement' included three statements: (1) I am an energetic person,
(2) I am a dynamic person, and (3) I am a person with full of energy.

Part 4: Johnny's idols fan's visual self-presentation

Visual self-presentation is measured by a 5-item scale, which was adapted from the article: Communicating via photographs: A gendered analysis of Olympic athletes' visual self-presentation on Instagram (Elsevier, 2016). It assesses the extent to which participants visually present themselves. Each of the five items had five response categories, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). The dimensions of fan's visual self-presentation were constructed as follows: (1) How often do you visually present yourself as a good-looking person? (2) How often do you visually present

yourself as a funny person? (3) How often do you visually present yourself as a cute person? (4) How often do you visually present yourself as a talented person? (5) How often do you visually present yourself as a smart person? (6) How often do you visually present yourself as an energetic person?.

3.5 Instrument Pretest

The questionnaire would be sent to 50 participants for pretesting to ensure that all questions were fully understood and easy to answer. At the same time, all personal information from participants should be assured is not leaked, and treat their personal information as confidential and protected.

3.6 Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher used SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to statistically analyze data. Linear Regression Analysis will be used to test both research hypotheses – HP#1: Japanese fans' exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influences their self-identity, and HP#2: Japanese fans' exposure to agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influences their visual self-presentation.

The test will treat “Japanese fans’ exposure to the agency’s presentation of idols’ identity in social media” as an independent variable and “Japanese fans’ self-identity” as its first dependent variable. The test will also treat “Japanese fans’ exposure to the agency’s presentation of idols’ identity in social media” as an independent variable and “Japanese fans’ visual self-presentation” as its second dependent variable.



3.7 Reliability and Validity

To ensure the construct validity, this study applied past studies to develop measurement for both independent and dependent variables.

Reliability analysis will be applied to test reliability of all Likert scales.

Its results reveal that measurements have Cronbach’s Alpha at 0.70 or higher which ensures an acceptable reliability of research measurement.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of this study. Descriptive statistics of respondents' personal information and the examined variables based on the conceptual model were presented, followed by the inferential statistics used to test the proposed research hypotheses.

4.1 Results of Descriptive Statistics on Samples' Characteristics

Respondent's personal information mainly involved the demographic information of the participants including age, gender, level of education, occupation, financial status, age of worship and worship channel. The questions are in a multiple-choice format and were analyzed in terms of frequency and percentage as shown in the followings:

Table 4.1 below shows that majority of respondents are female (n = 168, 88.0%). Male respondents accounted for 3.7% (n = 7) while respondents who do not want to answer accounted for 8.4% (n = 16), as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	7	3.7
Female	168	88.0
Do not want to answer	16	8.4
Total	191	100.0

Most of respondents are between 19-22 years old (23.6%). Followed by those who are 15-18 years old (20.9%), those who are under 15 years old (20.4%), and those who are 23-25 years old (19.4%). The smallest number of respondents are over 25 years old (15.7%), as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
Under 15 years old	39	20.4
15-18 years old	40	20.9
19-22 years old	45	23.6
23-25 years old	37	19.4
Over 25 years old	30	15.7
Total	191	100.0

In terms of level of education, majority of respondents got high school diploma or under (n = 92, 48.2%), followed by associate's degree (n = 49, 25.7%), Bachelor's degree (n = 43, 22.5%). Only few respondents got Master's degree (n = 4, 2.1%), as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
High school diploma or under	92	48.2
Associate's degree	49	25.7
Bachelor's degree	43	22.5
Master's degree	4	2.1
Doctor's degree	0	0
Total	191	100.0

In terms of occupation, most of the respondents are student (n = 93, 48.7%), followed by office worker (n = 43, 22.5%), freelancer (n = 35, 18.3%) and business owner (n = 13, 6.8%). One respondent is unemployed (0.5%) whereas six respondents got other occupations (3.1%), as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Student	93	48.7
Office worker	43	22.5
Freelancer	35	18.3
Business Owner	13	6.8
Others	6	3.1
Unemployed	1	0.5
Total	191	100.0

As for monthly income, majority of respondents have no income (n = 68, 35.6%), followed by respondents with over 1,600 USD (n = 50, 26.2%), respondents with under 1,000 USD (n = 28, 14.7%), respondents with 1,301-1,600 USD (n = 25, 13.1%). Respondents with 1,000-1,300 USD represent the smallest group (n = 20, 10.5%), as shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Income per Month

Income per month	Frequency	Percent
No income	68	35.6
Under 1,000 USD	28	14.7
1,000-1,300 USD	20	10.5
1,301-1,600 USD	25	13.1
Over 1,600 USD	50	26.2
Total	191	100.0

4.2 Results of Descriptive Statistics on Respondents and Johnny's Idols

4.2.1 Duration of Fondness for Johnny's Idols

As for duration of fondness for Johnny's idols, number of respondents like Johnny's idols for 1 - 3 years ($n = 57, 29.8\%$) is similar with those who like Johnny's idols for over 6 years ($n = 56, 29.3\%$), and those who like Johnny's idols for 4 - 6 years ($n = 50, 26.2\%$). Smallest number of respondents like Johnny's idols less than one year ($n = 28, 14.7\%$), as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Duration of Fondness for

Johnny's Idols

Duration of Fondness for Johnny's Idol	Frequency	Percent
Under 1 year	28	14.7
1-3 years	57	29.8
4-6 years	50	26.2
Over 6 years	56	29.3
Total	191	100.0

4.2.2 Media Source for Knowing Johnny's Idol

In terms of respondents' media source for knowing Johnny's Idol, majority of respondents know Johnny's idols via social media (n = 123, 62.4%), followed by television show (n = 87, 44.1%), friends (n = 69, 35.0%), and advertising (n = 30, 15.2%). The rest are others sources (n = 22, 11.1%), as shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Media Source for Knowing

Johnny's Idol

Media Source for Johnny's Idol Information	Frequency	Percent
Social media	123	62.4
Television show	87	44.1
Friends	69	35.0
Advertising	30	15.2
Others	22	11.1
Total	331	100.0

4.2.3 Paid Fan Club Membership of Johnny's Idols

As for paid fan club membership, slightly larger number of respondents did not join the paid fan club (n = 108, 56.5%), comparing to those who joined the pain fan club (n = 83, 43.5%), as shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Paid Fan Club Membership of

Johnny's Idols

Paid Fan Club Membership of Johnny's Idols	Frequency	Percent
No	108	56.5
Yes	83	43.5
Total	191	100.0

4.2.4 Social Media Exposure to Johnny's Idol Information

This question asked the respondents how much time spent on social media watching information about Johnny's idols with a five point-scale ranging from 1 = short (less than 30 minutes/ day), 2 = quite short (30–60 minutes/ day), 3 = moderate (>1 hour –2 hours/ day), 4 = quite long (>2 – 3 hours/ day), to 5 = long (> 3 hours/ day).

As shown in Table 4.9, the analysis result reveals that majority of respondents have long social media exposure to Johnny's idol information (n = 118, 61.8%), followed by those who have quite long social media exposure (n = 48, 25.1%), those who have moderate social media exposure (n = 17, 8.9%). Only few respondents have short (n = 5, 2.6%), and quite short social media exposure to Johnny's idol information (n = 3, 1.6%).

Table 4.9: Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Social Media Exposure to Johnny's Idol information

Social Media Exposure to Johnny's Idol information	Frequency	Percent
Long (> 3 hours / day)	118	61.8
Quite long (>2 – 3 hours / day)	48	25.1
Moderate (1 hour –2 hours / day)	17	8.9
Quite short (30–60 minutes / day)	3	1.6
Short (less than 30 minutes / day)	5	2.6
Total	191	100.0

4.3 Results of Descriptive Statistics on Examined Variables

Descriptive statistics in terms of frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze the variables of interest. Based on the conceptual model, analysis results of independent variables were presented first, followed by mediating variable, and dependent variable. It is also noted that some of respondents did not answer some questions, hence, there was inconsistency on the number of samples for each variable.

Table 4.10 presented the mean and standard deviation along with the measurement of internal consistency between items in each scale. All of the Cronbach's Alpha values are found to be greater than .70 without removal of

any items within scales to increase the values which means the survey measurement is reliable.

As shown in Table 4.10, interpreting the mean scores yield that samples have high level of Exposure to Johnny's idols' presentation of identity ($\bar{X} = 4.42$, S.D. = .913), high level of self-identity as sophistication ($\bar{X} = 4.55$, S.D. = .643), high level of self-identity as sincerity ($\bar{X} = 4.49$, S.D. = .607), high level of self-identity as competence ($\bar{X} = 4.39$, S.D. = .753), high level of self-identity as excitement ($\bar{X} = 4.52$, S.D. = .570), and high level of visual self-presentation ($\bar{X} = 4.46$, S.D. = .571).

Table 4.10: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis of Variables

Variable	N	Mean	S.D.	No. of Item	Cronbach's Alpha
Exposure to Johnny's idols' presentation of identity	191	4.42	.913	1	-
Self-identity as sophistication	191	4.55	.643	3	.842
Self-identity as sincerity	191	4.49	.607	3	.818
Self-identity as competence	191	4.39	.753	3	.879
Self-identity as excitement	191	4.52	.570	3	.802
Visual self-presentation	191	4.46	.571	6	.852

4.4 Results of Hypothesis Testing

HP#1 and HP#2 were analyzed by performing Simple Linear Regression model separately for each hypothesis as both hypotheses have only a single independent variable and a single dependent variable.

Hypothesis 1: Japanese fans' exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influences their self-identity.

HP 1.1: Japanese fans' exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influences their self-identity as sophistication.

Hypothesis #1.1 suggested an influence of idols' identity of Johnny's idols on Japanese fans' self-identity. This hypothesis was supported based on the result of the analysis using sophistication as the predictor, ($\beta = .571$; $t = 9.55$, $p < .001$). As hypothesized, the respondents' self-identity as sophistication directly resulted from their exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media.

HP 1.2: Japanese fans' exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influences their self-identity as sincerity.

Hypothesis #1.2 suggested an influence of idols' identity of Johnny's idols on Japanese fans' self-identity. This hypothesis was supported based on the

result of the analysis using the respondents' self-identity as sincerity as the predictor, ($\beta = .544$; $t = 8.90$, $p < .001$). As hypothesized, the respondents' self-identity as sincerity was directly influenced by their exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media.

HP 1.3: Japanese fans' exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influences their self-identity as competence.

Hypothesis #1.3 suggested an influence of idols' identity of Johnny's idols on Japanese fans' self-identity. This hypothesis was supported based on the result of the analysis using the respondents' self-identity as competence as the predictor, ($\beta = .506$; $t = 8.03$, $p < .001$). As hypothesized, the respondents' self-identity as competence was directly affected by their exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media.

HP 1.4: Japanese fans' exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influences their self-identity as excitement.

Hypothesis #1.4 suggested an influence of idols' identity of Johnny's idols on Japanese fans' self-identity. This hypothesis was supported based on the result of the analysis using the respondents' self-identity as excitement as the predictor, ($\beta = .494$; $t = 7.80$, $p < .001$). As hypothesized, the respondents' self-

identity as excitement was directly influenced by their exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media.

Table 4.11: Results of Linear Regression Analysis on Self-Identity

Exposure to presentation of idols' identity in social media	B	S.E.	Beta	t
1. Self-identity as sophistication	2.77	.042	.571	9.55
2. Self-identity as sincerity	2.89	.041	.544	8.90
3. Self-identity as competence	2.55	.052	.506	8.03
4. Self-identity as excitement	3.16	.039	.494	7.80

1. $R^2 = .326$, $df = 1$ ($p < .001$); * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

2. $R^2 = .296$, $df = 1$ ($p < .001$); * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

3. $R^2 = .256$, $df = 1$ ($p < .001$); * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

4. $R^2 = .244$, $df = 1$ ($p < .001$); * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Hypothesis 2: Japanese fans' exposure to agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influences their visual self-presentation.

Hypothesis #2 suggested an influence of idols' identity of Johnny's idols on Japanese fans' visual self-presentation. This hypothesis was supported based on the result of the analysis using visual self-presentation as the predictor, ($\beta = .361$; $t =$

5.21, $p < .001$). As hypothesized, the respondents' visual self-presentation was directly influenced by their exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media.

Table 4.12: Results of Linear Regression Analysis on Visual Self-presentation

Exposure to presentation of idols' identity in social media	B	S.E.	Beta	t
visual self-presentation	3.33	.048	.361	5.21

$R^2 = .130$, $df = 2$ ($p < .001$); * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

4.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, the inferential statistical analyses are conducted and presented. The findings revealed a connection between the factors under study. The research's conceptual framework's provided research hypotheses were also found to be supported by the findings. The following chapter, which deals with a summary of the hypothesis testing, discussions of the results, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further application and future research, is the last chapter of the study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The results of this study are summarized and discussed in this chapter, including how they are related to theory, earlier research, and the researcher's expectations. It also contains suggestions for future applications and research as well as the study's limitations. This chapter contains the following topics:

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.2 Discussion of Findings

5.3 Limitations of the Study

5.4 Recommendations for Further Application

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

5.1 Summary of Findings

The respondents of the study were Japanese youth audiences who were fans of Johnny's idols. The online survey was collected from 200 respondents, nine of them were invalid, resulting in a total of 191 respondents. They compose of more females (88.0%) than males (3.7%), and age range of most respondents was between

19 and 22 (23.6%). Majority of respondents are high school diploma or under (n = 92, 48.2%), get associate's degree (n = 49, 25.7%), or bachelor's degree (n = 43, 22.5%). Respectively in terms of occupation, most of them are mostly students (n = 93, 48.7%), office worker (n = 43, 22.5%), and Freelancer (n = 35, 18.3%). Most of them have no income (n = 68, 35.6%), or earn over 1,600 USD (n = 50, 26.2%). The samples are mix of those who fond of Johnny's idols for 1-3 years (n = 57, 29.8%), Over 6 years (n = 56, 29.3%), 4-6 years (n = 50, 26.2%), and under 1 year (n = 28, 14.7%).

Respondents know Johnny's idols via social media the most (n = 123, 62.4%), followed by television show (n = 87, 44.1%), friends (n = 69, 35%), advertising (n = 30, 15.2%), and others (n = 22, 11.1%). They have long exposure to information about Johnny's idols on social media (more than 3 hours) (n = 118, 61.8%).

The Cronbach's Alpha values of every measurement are found to be greater than .70 which reveals that the measurements have an acceptable reliability.

Simple Linear Regression was conducted to test HP#1, HP#1.1, HP#1.2, HP#1.3, HP#1.4, and HP#2.

Based on the Linear Regression Analysis results shown in Table 4.12 and Table 4.13, Japanese fans' exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media (IV) influence both Japanese fans' self-identity (DV1) and Japanese fans' visual self-presentation (DV2) ($\beta = .361$; $t = 5.21$, $p < .001$). As the Results of Results of Linear Regression Analysis on self-identity imply that Japanese fans' exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media caused lower influence on Japanese fans' visual self-presentation ($\beta = .361$; $t = 5.21$, $p < .001$), comparing to its influence on self-identity as excitement ($\beta = .494$; $t = 7.80$, $p < .001$), as competent ($\beta = .506$; $t = 8.03$, $p < .001$), as sincerity ($\beta = .544$; $t = 8.90$, $p < .001$), and as sophistication ($\beta = .571$; $t = 9.55$, $p < .001$).

5.2 Discussion of Findings

In terms of four types of fans' self-identity, it is interesting to see that samples' self-identity as sophistication is related to Sakuraishou, who belongs to Arashi from Johnny's. He graduated from Keio University, which is one of the top universities in Japan (see Figure 5.1). Samples' self-identity as self-identity as sincerity is related to Johnny's WEST who is the politest group from Johnny's (see Figure 5.2). Takahashi Kaito from King & Prince is the most representative person

for self-identity as competence, since he can sing and dance and even draw comic and design clothes (see Figure 5.3). Sakuma Daisuke from Snow Man always full of energy and energetic on even television shows or social media, who is the most representative person for self-identity as excitement (see Figure 5.4).

As for visual self-presentation, the finding shows that fans visually presented themselves in similar way as Johnny's idols present themselves to the public by wearing a similar costume or making a similar pose to their idols on social media (see Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.1: Johnny's Idol with Self-Identity as Sophistication-Sakuraishou



Source: Johnny's net. (2021a). *Johnny's net sakurai shou profile*. Retrieved from

<https://www.johnnys-net.jp/page?id=profile&artist=50>.

Figure 5.2: Johnny's Idol with Self-Identity as Sincerity-Johnny's WEST



Source: y.music. (2021). *Johnny's west ymusic*. Retrieved from

<https://y.music.163.com/m/artist?id=908200>.

Figure 5.3: Johnny's Idol with Self-Identity as Competence-Takahashi Kaito



Source: mainabinews. (2022). *Umito Takahashi and the solo first starring drama*

"Boy Friend Comes!" Bijual released. Retrieved from

<https://news.mynavi.jp/article/20220903-2443194/>.

Figure 5.4: Johnny's Idol with Self-Identity as Excitement-Sakuma Daisuke



Source: Johnny's net. (2021b). *Johnny's net snow man profile*. Retrieved from

<https://www.johnnys-net.jp/page?id=profile&artist=43>.

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Figure 5.5: Fans' Visual Self-Presentation



Source: Xiaohongshu (tao, bingzhenhetaoren, xiaowanzhen, tao). (2022).

Xiaohongshu. Retrieved from <http://xhslink.com/K9oDjn>.

In this section, the connections between the significance of study findings and prior research, pertinent theories, and researcher expectations are discussed.

The results of this study are generally in agreement with earlier studies.

According to the research results, the data shows that the exposure of idols on social media can indeed directly affect the personality of fans. Just like previous research results (Chen, 2018). This also confirms Yang's statement (2022) that social media is becoming more and more popular, making it more and more convenient for fans to pay attention to the worship behavior of idols.

For idols, fan investment and continuous attention can reflect the idol's personal value and possible commercial value. There are many social comparison phenomena in social media, which in turn affect people's worship behavior, because fans will express their dedication to idols through social comparison, so social comparison tendencies may be a kind of motivation that can further affect fans' investment and continued attention (Yang, 2022). Therefore, worship behavior is not only a process of supporting favorite idols, fans chasing stars, but also a process of building self-identity (Ka, 2022).

According to Erickson's Personality Development Theory, adolescents need to build self-identity, integrate their desires, abilities, and dreams into a complete self, and respond to various challenges and obligations in society, to verify your position in the group (Jane, 2020). Therefore, various behaviors of idols can further affect fans.

The results of this study also echo the Halo Effect Theory. If someone is designated as good, they will be surrounded by an aura of affirmation and have the quality that everything is excellent; if someone is marked as bad, they will be surrounded by an aura of negation and be thought to have many negative traits, just like the research results, the exposure of idols on social media can affect the self-identity of fans; if it is a positive image, it will have a positive impact on fans, and a relatively negative image will have a negative impact.

Finally, the results of finding are consistent with my expectations. It was assumed that Japanese fans' exposure to agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media does not only influence their self-identity but also their visual self-presentation in such a way that fans will dress themselves like their idols.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

This study is a quantitative study. The sample population is Japanese youth audience. Therefore, it is necessary to draft questionnaires in English and Japanese. Although the researchers first translated the questionnaire's English version into its Japanese version, they then had other experts in Japanese-English translations translate it back to English in order to compare the two versions' differences and

ensure that respondents could understand the questions better. The data gathered, however, indicates that few respondents still misinterpreted one or two of the questions. Those data were removed from the data analysis to ensure the reliability of the study.

It was also discovered by the researchers that some respondents filled out the questionnaire at random, which led to some data being inaccurate. Even after removing this portion of the data, the researcher was unable to completely guarantee the legitimacy of other data.

In terms of sampling method being used to recruit samples, this study only included chat members of selected social media platform who voluntarily answered the questionnaire. There was no reward or compensation for participation of the study, which resulted in samples being self-selected rather than random selected.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Application

The findings of this study provide some practical suggestions to idol agencies, social media influencers, and fans.

5.4.1 Idol Agencies

The findings of this study can help improve the application of idol agencies to increase their target audiences' exposure to idols' information on social media. Based on the research results, it can be found that fans spend most of their day on social media to get idol's information. Idol agencies can take advantage of this and focus on social media promotion to achieve the best publicity effect.

5.4.2 Social Media Influencers

This research result can also help the application of social media influencers on social media. According to the research results, fans will spend a lot of time on social media, and will also shape their own image because of the image of their idols. Social media influencers can apply this finding for increasing their popularity on social media by shaping positive image for themselves, and acting as a good role model for their fans.

5.4.3 Fans

The research results can also help fans to understand themselves better by knowing that idols' identities can affect fans' self-identity and visual self-presentation. In addition, fans can pay more attention to whether their favorite idols have a positive impact, thereby improving their positive image and application in own

image management.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

The quantitative approach was applied in this investigation, which gathered 191 reliable data. The accuracy of the study can be improved in the future by gathering more data. To see how each age stage affects the research hypothesis, the sample age range can also be constrained. This study can also be used to analyze research problems by qualitative method. The study will be much more reliable and effective if the qualitative and quantitative methods are combined. And this study focused on the influence of Johnny's idols exposure on their fan self-identity and visual self-presentation. In the future research, other variables can also be added, such as fans' support, fans' self-confidence, and so on. Other markets such as Thailand or South Korea can also be examined. It contributes to enhancing the research of the idol industry and increase the diversity of idol.

In addition, examining whether the effect of exposure to social media on fans' self-identity and visual self-presentation differs between males and female fans or fans with different duration of fondness for idols would be beneficial to marketing communication practitioners.

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APPENDIX

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Survey Questionnaire

My name is Lin Chi-Hsun, a graduate student of the Master of Communication Arts program in Global Communication at Bangkok University. As partial requirement for my Master's Degree Program in Global Communication at Bangkok University, I am conducting survey research on media exposure to Japanese idols and fans' self-identity and visual self-presentation. This survey consists of four sections and 19 questions which should take you approximately 10 minutes to complete. The questionnaire can be filled only once, and all responses will be kept confidential, and your answer will be used for educational purposes only.

Section 1: Respondents' Characteristics

Instruction: Please select only one answer that accurately reflects you.

1. Your gender

- 1. Male
- 2. Female
- 3. Do not want to answer

2. Your age:

- 1. Under 15 years old
- 2. 15-18 years old
- 3. 19-22 years old
- 4. 23-25 years old
- 5. Over 25 years old

3. Your highest level of education:

- 1. High school diploma or under
- 2. Associate's degree
- 3. Bachelor's degree
- 4. Master's degree
- 5. Doctor's degree

4. Your occupation:

- 1. Student
- 2. Office Worker
- 3. Freelancer
- 4. Business Owner
- 5. Unemployed
- 6. Others



5. Your income per month :

- 1. Under 1,000 USD per month
- 2. 1,001-1,300 USD per month
- 3. 1,301-1,600 USD per month
- 4. Over 1,600 USD per month
- 5. No income

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Section 2: Exposure to Presentation of Idols' Identity in Social Media

Instruction: Please select only one answer that accurately reflects you.

6. How long have you liked Johnny's idols?

- 1. Under one year
- 2. 1-3 years
- 3. 4-6 years
- 4. Over 6 year



7. How did you know Johnny's idols?

- 1. TV show
- 2. Social media
- 3. Friends
- 4. Advertising
- 5. Magazine
- 6. Others

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8. Are you a member of the paid fan club?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

9. How much time did you spend on social media for watching information about Johnny's idols?

- 1. less than 30 minutes per day
- 2. 30-60 minutes per day
- 3. >1 hour-2 hours per day
- 4. >2-3 hours per day
- 5. >3 hours per day



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Section 3: Self-Identity

Instruction: Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by selecting only one answer from five response categories, ranging from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, to (5) strongly agree.

Statements	Level of Agreement or Disagreement				
	1	2	3	4	5
10. Sophistication					
10.1) I am a refined person.					
10.2) I am a highly-developed person.					
10.3) I am an advanced person.					
11. Sincerity					
11.1) I am a trustworthy person.					
11.2) I am a genuine person					
11.3) I am a loyal person.					
12. Competence					
12.1 I am an efficient person					
12.2 I am a talented person.					
12.3 I am a capable person.					

Statements	Level of Agreement or Disagreement				
	1	2	3	4	5
13. Excitement					
13.1) I am an energetic person.					
13.2) I am a dynamic person.					
13.3) I am a person with full of energy.					



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Section 4: Visual Self-Presentation

Instruction: Please indicate how often you visually present yourself by selecting only one answer from five response categories, ranging from (1) never, (2) hardly, (3) sometimes, (4) often, to (5) very often.

Questions	Level of Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	5
14. How often do you visually present yourself as a good-looking person?					
15. How often do you visually present yourself as a funny person?					
16. How often do you visually present yourself as a cute person?					
17. How often do you visually present yourself as a talented person?					
18. How often do you visually present yourself as a smart person?					
19. How often do you visually present yourself as an energetic person?					

*** Thank you for your cooperation! ***

BIODATA

Name: Lin Chi Hsun

Email: lin.chih@bumail.net

Nationality: Taiwanese

Data of Birth: June 24, 1999

Contact Number: +886 968 305 611

Address: No. 8, Huacheng 1st Rd., Xindian Dist.,
New Taipei City 231049, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

Education: Master Degree of Communication Arts,
Bangkok University

Working Experience: Japanese Secretary