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

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ABSTRACT
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, visual self-presentation

INTRODUCTION

Idols refer to people to be worshipped or people with enthusiastic fans. Idols in the Japanese entertainment industry 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).

Idols are influential. Although they influence people in weird ways, they also affect people very positively. A large number 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. Everybody loves a person who works hard and gets to accomplish their dreams (Pione, 2018).

The idol market, being a consumption-oriented market based on the domestic spending of consumers to support idol groups, is based on the entertainment industry, including music, film and television, variety shows, advertising, etc. It is a cross-industry economy built on the entertainment businesses. The idol market was valued at 366 billion Japanese yen in fiscal year 2017. The market forecast implied a growing willingness of consumers to spend money on their preferred idol groups, with expenditures reaching more than 462 billion yen by fiscal 2024 (Statista Research Department (2022).

During the past two decades, 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. 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 led 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 nowadays (Liu, 2019).

Japanese idols used to be the mainstream of the world. Today, with the rise of the Korean Wave (Hallyu), the Japanese idol market is not as strong as it used to be, but it still has a certain degree of popularity in Japan. 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.

Although idol agencies in Japan still have such shortcomings in terms of media promotional strategy compared with South Korea, where the idol market is booming all over the world, the Japanese idol market is developing quite well. Accordingly, it would be beneficial to learn how Japanese idols can still occupy a unique place in the era of the rise of Hallyu. This study explores idol marketing strategy with a focus on idols' identity by examining one of the most famous and successful Japanese idol agencies in the past decades, Johnny & Associates (Johnny's).

Johnny's is a Japanese performing arts agency which mainly operates male idols and stage art performances. It is the largest male idol group in Johnny's is Arashi. Different from the communication strategy of Korean idol groups, the music and music videos of Johnny's idols are not broadcasted 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. Despite this strategy, the Johnny's idols still have a large number of fans, and have a place in the entertainment business.

Nowadays, we can see many idol groups like Arashi, Hey! Say! JUMP, Sexy Zone, King & Prince, and so on from Johnny's in Japan.

This study has two research objectives – 1) to examine the influence of the Japanese Idol agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media on the Japanese fans' self-identity, and 2) to examine the influence of the Japanese Idol agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media on Japanese fans' visual self-presentation.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Idol and Idol's Identity

An idol, a sculpture that is worshipped and enshrined by people, is a metaphor for a symbol of mysterious power in people's minds. "Idol" in modern vocabulary refers to the object that people pursue and worship. 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 an 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).

Presentation of Idol's Identity

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 an idol's identity is like helping an artist with makeup. The simple concept of makeup is to cover up the flaws of this person using 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, 2021). However, why do idols still need the presentation of idols' 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".

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).

Social Media Exposure

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 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).

Self-Identity

In Taylor's self-identification theory, 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. 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. sense and identity. 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).

Visual Self-Presentation

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).

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, 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).

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. The official cafe makes fans closer to the life of their 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, and 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).

Relevant Theories

According to the Halo Effect Theory by Thorndike, idols are usually used 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). This theory implies the impact of idols on their fans in terms of cognition, affection, or behavior.

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 (Bandura, 2001). In a similar direction, 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).

A review of the literature above leads to the development of the conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1.
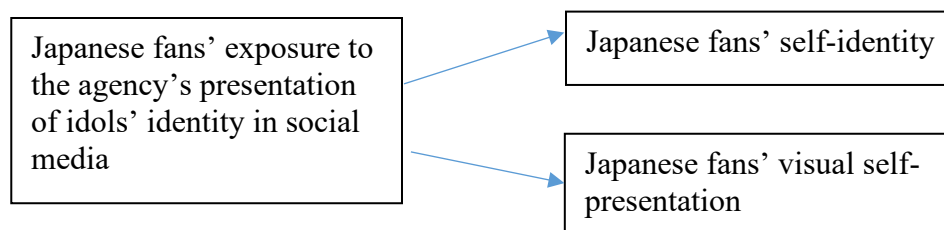
Figure 1 Conceptual Framework and Research Hypothesis

This framework displays the direct impact of fans' exposure to the idol agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media on fans' self-identity, and on fans' visual self-presentation. The following research hypotheses and sub-hypotheses are proposed as followings.

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

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

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

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

Sub-hypothesis 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 the agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media influences their visual self-presentation.

METHODOLOGY

Applying the quantitative research approach, this study used survey research focusing on Japanese fans to examine the influences of the Japanese idol agency's presentation of idols' identity on Japanese fans' self-identity and visual self-presentation.

The target populations are Japanese idol fans. Using purposive sampling, the participants are 200 Japanese Johnny's fans of both genders, aged between 10 and 30 years old. They have a high school educational background or above, with an income per month between 1,000 USD to 1,600 USD.

Measurement

A self-administered questionnaire was used as a research tool to collect data via an online platform, Survey Cake. The link to the survey was posted on the open chat from the LINE application, the place that is available to chat with whatever the user would like to be named and whatever kind of topic the user would like to join. All personal information is kept anonymous and confidential. The questionnaire contains four sections. The first section involves participants' demographic data regarding age, gender, level of education, occupation, monthly income, duration of worship, information channel for idols, and fan club membership. The second section is a measurement of exposure to the Japanese idol agency's presentation of idols' identity in social media. The participants were asked how much time they 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).

The third section is a measurement of Johnny's idols fan's self-identity. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on four dimensions of self-identity: 1) sophistication, 2) sincerity, 3) competence, and 4) excitement. Responses of all the items are provided by a five-point Likert scale, arranging from 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) neither agree nor disagree, 4) agree, to 5) strongly agree.

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.

The last section is a measurement of Johnny's idol fan's visual self-presentation. Respondents were requested to determine the extent to which they visually present themselves in six manners -- good-looking, funny, cute, talented, smart, and energetic person. Responses of all the items are ranging from 1) never, 2) rarely, 3) sometimes, 4) often, to 5) always.

Prior to actual data collection, the questionnaire was pretested with 50 persons who were asked to indicate whether there are any concerns about the wordings of instructions or content. The unclear or confusing items were then adjusted to ensure the validity of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used to statistically analyze the data. Descriptive statistics in terms of frequency, percentage, mean, and S.D. were used to describe the samples' characteristics and examined variables while Linear Regression Analyses were used to test the proposed two research hypotheses.

FINDINGS

The Cronbach's Alpha values of every scale are found to be greater than 0.70 which reveals the acceptable reliability of the measurement. Samples include females (n = 168, 88.0%), males (n = 7, 3.7%), and those who do not indicate their gender (n = 16, 8.4%). They are composed of fans who are 19-22 years old (n = 45, 23.6%), 15-18 years old (n = 40, 20.9%), under 15 years old (n = 39, 20.4%), 23-25 years old (n = 37, 19.4%), and over 25 years old (n = 30, 15.7%). Almost half of them is a student (n = 93, 48.7%), got high school diploma or under (n = 92, 48.2%), have no income (n = 68, 35.6%), and those over 1,600 USD (n = 50, 26.2%).

Duration of fondness for Johnny's idols is varied, ranging from less than one year (n = 28, 14.7%) to more than six years (n = 56, 29.3%). The majority of respondents know Johnny's idols via social media (n = 123, 62.4%), followed by television shows (n = 87, 44.1%), friends

(n = 69, 35.0%), advertising (n = 30, 15.2%), and others sources (n = 22, 11.1%). A slightly larger number of respondents did not join the paid fan club (n = 108, 56.5%), compared to those who joined the paid fan club (n = 83, 43.5%).

Based on the results of the examined variables in Table 1, the samples' exposure level to Johnny's idols' presentation of identity is considered high ($\overline{X}$ = 4.42, S.D. = .913). Samples agree on all four types of self-identity. They view their self-identity as sophistication ($\overline{X}$ = 4.55, S.D. = .643), sincerity ($\overline{X}$ = 4.49, S.D. = .607), competence ($\overline{X}$ = 4.39, S.D. = .753), and excitement ($\overline{X}$ = 4.52, S.D. = .570). They also agree on all six categories of visual-self presentation. In particular, they visually present themselves as good-looking ($\overline{X}$ = 4.57, S.D. = .710), funny ($\overline{X}$ = 4.41, S.D. = .862), cute ($\overline{X}$ = 4.30, S.D. = .937), talented ($\overline{X}$ = 4.27, S.D. = .992), smart ($\overline{X}$ = 4.42, S.D. = .881), and energetic person ($\overline{X}$ = 4.52, S.D. = .712).

Table 1 Results of Descriptive Statistics on Examined 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

According to Table 2, all sub-hypotheses of hypothesis # 1 were supported. Sub-hypothesis # 1.1 suggested an influence of social media exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity on Japanese fans' self-identity as 'sophistication.' This sub-hypothesis was supported based on the result of the Linear Regression analysis using fans' self-identity as 'sophistication' as the predictor, (β = .571; t = 9.55, p < .001).

Sub-hypothesis # 1.2 suggested an influence of social media exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity on Japanese fans' self-identity as 'sincerity.' This sub-hypothesis was supported based on the result of the Linear Regression analysis using fans' self-identity as 'sincerity' as the predictor, (β = .544; t = 8.90, p < .001).

Sub-hypothesis # 1.3 suggested an impact of social media exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity on Japanese fans' self-identity as 'competence.' This sub-hypothesis was supported based on the result of the Linear Regression analysis using fans' self-identity as 'competence' as the predictor, (β = .506; t = 8.03, p < .001).

Sub-hypothesis # 1.4 suggested an influence of social media exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity on Japanese fans' self-identity as 'excitement.' This sub-hypothesis was supported based on the result of the Linear Regression analysis using fans' self-identity as 'excitement' as the predictor, (β = .494; t = 7.80, p < .001).

Hypothesis # 2 suggested an impact of social media exposure to the agency's presentation of idols' identity on Japanese fans' visual self-presentation. This hypothesis was also supported based on the result of the Linear Regression analysis using fans' visual self-presentation as the predictor, (β = .361; t = 5.21, p < .001; R^2 = .130, df = 2, p < .001).

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

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In terms of the four types of fans' self-identity, it is interesting to see that the 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. Samples' self-identity as self-identity as sincerity is related to Johnny's WEST who is the politest group from Johnny's. Takahashi Kaito from King & Prince is the most representative person for self-identity as competence, since he can sing and dance and even draw comics and design clothes. Sakuma Daisuke from Snow Man is always full of energy and energetic on even television shows or social media and is the most representative person for self-identity as excitement.

As for visual self-presentation, the finding shows that fans visually presented themselves in a 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.

The results of this study are generally in agreement with earlier studies. According to the previous research results, the data shows that the exposure to 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 and 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 their 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 a person is marked as good, he or she will be shrouded in an aura of positive affirmation and endowed with the quality that everything is good; if a person is marked as bad, he or she will be shrouded in a halo of negative negation, and is considered to have various bad qualities, 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 findings are consistent with the investigators' expectations. It was assumed that Japanese fans' exposure to the 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.

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

As for social media influencers on social media, 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 use this to increase their popularity on social media and shape a positive image to create a positive influence.

The 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 their own image management.

The quantitative approach was applied in this study, 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. The study will be much more reliable and effective if mix-method research is employed. In future research, other variables can also be examined, such as fans' support, fans' self-confidence, and so on. It contributes to enhancing the research of the idol industry and increases the diversity of idols.

Examining whether the effect of exposure to social media on fans' self-identity and visual self-presentation differs between male and female fans or fans with different duration of fondness for idols would be beneficial to marketing communication practitioners. In addition, a comparative study between fans with different levels of attachment to idols, and between fans with different cultural dimensions should give more interesting findings regarding the impact of the presentation of idols' identity on fans.

LIMITATIONS

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 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 questionnaire items better. However, data cleaning indicates that a few respondents still misinterpreted one or two of the questions, and some of them filled out the questionnaire at random. Those data were removed from the data analysis to ensure the reliability of the study. In terms of the sampling method being used to recruit samples, this study only included chat members of selected the social media platform who voluntarily answered the questionnaire. There was no reward or compensation for participation in the study, which resulted in samples being self-selected rather than randomly selected.

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