

THE COMMODIFICATION OF IDOL CULTURE WITH A LOOT-BOXES-STYLE MARKETING STRATEGY PRACTICE IN THAI IDOL CULTURE AND ASPECTS OF CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY TOWARD UNCERTAINTIES

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ABSTRACT

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This review article grounds itself in the advent of idol business in Thailand. The business has originated in Japan and has business practices that differ from legacy entertainment business such as paid handshake, photoshoot and live streaming. The objective was to scrutinize the advent of idol business in Thailand and data collection was based upon systematic review of related literature. The review shows that intangible features of each idols can be transformed into a pragmatic business commodity through the process of culture commodification from various theory. Apart from services mentioned above, this business also has a unique way to sell their collectible goods which are sold in the randomized fashion which means buyers need to try their luck in every single purchase similar to an online game loot box. This article invokes the notion of consumer psychology towards uncertainties and provide a detailed account of how a repetition of decisions after receiving an uncertainty incentive. The review result show that this kind of business yield a new effect on customer perception toward the idol product and there are some difficulties in this business such as human resource development and youth scarification of idol. Future studies should extent the result of this review into a quantitative research to analyze the effect of uncertainties toward consumer behavior or qualitatively study an in-dept life of idol group members.

Keywords: Commodification; idol business; loot box

1. INTRODUCTION

Presently, the idol business, considered a newcomer in the industry, plays the important role in an entertainment industry. This type of business originated from Japan but invaded Thailand in late 2017, becoming famous and gaining more popularity as time goes by. At this time, there are more than 10 official pop

idol groups in Thailand entertaining happy customers namely *BNK48*, *Sweat16!*, *Daisy Daisy*, *Fever* and many more. This industry is continuing to emerge and plays an important role in entertainment for Thailand. Moreover, there are many aspects in business practice that differ from any other legacy entertainment business. Therefore, it is worth reviewing this avant-garde type of business practice in Thailand.

The objective of this review article was to scrutinize the advent of the idol business in Thailand. Data collection was based upon a systematic review of related literature from practitioners as well as academics, from both inside and outside Thailand including text books, research papers, practitioner papers, academic manuscripts and relevant online sources. This article aimed to examine the meaning and background of the idol business, as well as its commodification, cultural commodities, loot-box-style marketing practice and consumer psychology towards uncertainties.

2. WHAT ARE IDOLS?

Tajima (2018) described origin of the idol culture in his writing that idol culture in Japan was born in 1971, with an audition musical for a program for young talents called "A Star is Born!" in Nippon Television Network from 1971-1983 and made possible by the coming of a color television in ordinary households. This program produced many idols that were not necessarily talented singers or dancers but rather, were considered young and relatable girls. The 1970s were the beginning of the idol age right after a considerable promotion from typical popular magazines of post-war Japan such as *Heibon* and *Myojo*, boasting more than one-million readers consisting mainly of teenage boys and girls, published a wealth of information on idols.

Generally, an idol was a cute, girl-next-door singers who were designed, controlled and marketed just like product (Cole and Zorach, 2009). In other words, idols were consumer products that were carefully crafted to do the job for a few years before they retire to find opportunities as professional entertainment artists on their own later on. Presently, the meaning of 'Pop Idols' is still questionable as it stands between ordinary people and professional entertainers. In the mass media agencies, they use the word 'Pop Idol' and 'Artists' interchangeably. However, the real main characteristic that distinguishes pop idols from professional artists is the skill set. Cahoon (1993) said that youth looks and sentimentality are the only requirements for an idol and musical and performing skill are considered as a second priority for the job (Lin and Lin, 2007).

By perceiving idol as one of consumer products, there are several peculiar rule and regulation applied to pop idol group members. The most iconic one is no-dating policy. Truthfully, the reason that pop idols are prohibited from dating is a deep devotion to fans. If the fans find out that their beloved idol is dating someone, they will feel betrayed as idol does not solely dedicate to her role and fans will not support the idol and her music anymore (Galbraith, 2017).

Apart from its characteristic, the work practice of idols is also far more different from legacy artists. While almost artists emphasis on producing music work or performing live concert, idols have a lot of different things to do apart from those professional entertainers do. Apart from music works, three main works that indicate the uniqueness of pop idols are handshake event, photoshoot event and online live show.

The handshake event or Akushukai was the event that initiated by Japanese idol *AKB48* group (Galbraith, 2017). The very first event started in December 16, 2005 and this event was held by accident and unintentionally. On that day, a power outage and facilities equipment problem occurred during the live show at *AKB48* theatre located at the top floor of Don Quixote discount store in Akihabara. Concert-goers were upset as they paid to see the show. *AKB48* manager decided to establish a special handshake event outside the building to compensate for cancellation of the show due to power outage. Later on, he found that this event was successful and considered as a good idea for the business and it became the norm and compulsory event for every other idol group. There are two types of handshake event which are individual handshake and group handshake. The individual handshake, for this setting, fans get approximately 8-10 seconds per ticket to spend with a specific member and they are allowed to combine tickets to spend extra accumulated time handshaking and talking to the girl. The group handshake or 'hi-touch', on the other hand, fans shake hands or touch hands with all members in a row at once instead of an individual member. A ticket for a handshake event always comes with the copies of singles or can be sold separately with other related idol group product.

Generally, pop idols are not allowed to directly interact with fans. This includes having a conversation or taking a photograph with fans. Due to the perception that an idol was considered a type of consumer product, a photoshoot of fans and idol is considered as a product with an economical value (Van-Haecke, 2020). In order to take a photograph with their favorite idol, fans need to buy a Cheki ticket. The word Cheki is a Japanese term that stands for an instant photo taken by any type of instant cameras. Normally, a Cheki ticket, a ticket that allows you to join a photoshoot event, comes with an album or single as a complimentary product, but some idol groups sell Cheki tickets separately as a standalone product. There are 2 main types of Cheki which are 2-

shot Cheki and group shot. A 2-shot Cheki is a photograph of an idol with an individual fan club. There are 2 people in a one photoshoot (shot). Therefore, they named this type of product '2-shot'. Another type of photoshoot event is a group shot. Just like 2-shot but there is a group photograph of a group of idols with individual fan clubs.

Most idol groups in Thailand require their members to establish an online 'Live' show. The show can be in various online live platforms such as Twitch or Tutu Live. This show can be anything from doing nothing but reading the viewer real-time comments the entire live to cooking a meal or playing a console game. The idol online streaming live show itself is mostly free to view. However, if viewers feel enjoyable in the online live show, they can send out 'the gift' to the host to thank for the enjoyment of the show. This type of gift is an in-app purchase product and viewers need to buy this virtual gift by paying the real money. An idol who hosts the online live show may receive the gift, which can be turned into real money later on in return for the good and enjoyable live show (Jones, 2016). For instance, pop idol group *BNK48* has a virtual gift called 'cookies' up for sale online. Customers need to pay a real-world money for cookies and they can send out cookies to their favorite idol online live streaming show. Besides, *BNK48* also has a paid subscription system for live streaming show in the theater of this idol group. This means that fans need to pay a certain amount of money to literally see their favorite girl's live streaming show. This kind of practice can help idols and fans know each other more in personal life, attitude, and personality and was considered as the main difference between idols and legacy artists or musicians. According to this business practice, fans or customers become a part of idols' life because this business portrays idol as a girl-next-door and relatable person, not a star that is far away and out of reach.

These peculiar yet unique business practices can be found in an idol business and they are quite different from legacy music and entertainment industry (Galbraith, 2012). While legacy musicians and artists primarily focus on their music works and performance show at concert, idols put these things on the second priority. Because each idol's distinctive appearance features will often be experienced and appreciated by their followers. Idol agencies or officials can take an advantage on these points and turn them into business procedure that makes money.

3. COMMODIFICATION

A commodity is any type of product that is produced by humans (Cohen, 2006). However, certain products might not be considered commodities since products tend to be produced and consumed within house-holds (Becker, 2008). A product will be considered a commodity when that product is put on the market with economical value for trading or exchange. In accordance with the Marxian Theory, the value-producing process is the key (Yaffe, 1973) as the labor process tends to be a value producing process social relationships are converted into economic value under capital production.

According to capitalist economics, commodification is the process that transforms goods, services, ideas and people into commodities or a trading object with an economic value (Cole, 2007). Trading is a common phenomenon in capitalism and a trading object must have the same economic value. Generally, a product that is considered as a trading object has two forms of value, according to Marxian Theory, that are exchange value, a quantitative product value in the market system and use value, a common product value that directly responds to human needs. In case of commodification, product and services are commodified into a commodity with an exchange value. Thereby, a commodification is the process of transferring general consumption to commercial activities within a trading market system. This process aims to respond consumer need. In accordance with Storey, so as to understand what lays inside a capitalism logic, we need to comprehend the process of transferring everything into a commodity which is the main idea of the system (Storey, 1999). Before capitalism, many things were not considered commodities such as love, fame, honor and religious belief. In capitalism, in accordance with Marxist beliefs, there is an existing process that can transform almost exactly everything into a commodity ranging from human labor to the human spirit.

4. CULTURAL COMMODITIES

In general, Throsby defined a cultural commodity as a cultural embodiment or product and services that incarnate culture (Throsby, 1999). When this type of consumption occurred, not only a satisfactory was embodied in the product or services, but also an incorporated meaningful culture. This leads to the concept of a transformation of an abstract concept into a concrete product or commodity fetishism.

Theodore W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, cited in Billig (1999), presented a concept of commodity fetishism. This perception transforms an abstract or subjective aspect of economic value into an object or a genuine product that people in general perceive to have an intrinsic value (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1972).

The key success point of a capital economic is to make individuals want to pay for any kind of product or services. This includes both tangible and intangible products, namely cultural commodities. In accordance with The Frankfurt School of Critical Theory where Theodore W. Adorno was a leading member, presently, not only a tangible product makes a commodity fetishism meaningful, but also a cultural commodity. Because a cultural commodities root into human feelings and spiritual impact (Rausch, 2008). Therefore, according to Theodore W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer in an aspect of cultural industry analysis, nowadays in a capitalism economic system, cultures are produced by industrial capitalist for mass consumption, regardless of types of culture (Tarr, 2011).

5. POP IDOL CULTURE: THE COMMODIFICATION OF CHARISMA

In the idol industry, not just a charm, but a charisma of each idol artists plays the most important role to make this business profitable seeing that the word 'idol' itself is self-explanatory which means something that is supposed to be praised, adored or glorified. The word "charisma" originally stemmed from a spirit-filled Christianity doctrine (Neitz, 1987), a form of Protestant Christianity that emphasizes on the spiritual gift and modern miracles as a part of individuals' life and experience; nonetheless, presently this was transferred into a value-neutral term. By all means, modern-day charisma is institutionalized, which ultimately subverts its own fundamental character and sentimental vigor (Lindholm, 2018). In this context, socially valued products will come into play as the main character of the show.

Pierre Bourdieu (Rooksby, 2017), a French sociologist, anthropologist and philosopher, examined the social class via his theory of capital. This theory is used to elaborate the socially valued products that we all strive to procure both financially and socially. Capital plays an important role as a criterion for social class domination which implies that the more capital comes with the more power. He also categorized capital into four types which are economic, symbolic, social and cultural capital. Economic capital is comprised of financially based product such as property and assets. Symbolic capital is the method that a person presents his or her prestige and pride. For example, individuals wear a brand name to boost more confident in self-esteem or self-respect (Kristjansson, 2007). Social capital is a social network that we are a part of it. And finally, cultural capital, which is considered as the most related element in this review, refers to the habits, skills and tastes that we gain as a result of our position in the social class. Cultural capital is supremely essential on an individual level as individuals embodies it within themselves. The embodiment later on becomes what Bourdieu refers to habitus, the enduring dispositions that carve behaviors (Lizardo, 2004).

According to a review of related academic literature, there are several studies that focus on a commodification but the one that relates the most to pop idol business is Muay Thai. Van studied on a commodification of Muay Thai in media, the Live Show of Muay Thai on television station (Van-Esterik, 2000). The study referred to the Marxian Political Economy Theory to describe that Muay Thai was once a culture, an exercise practice and considered as an intangible heritage but now its use value is transformed in to an exchange value with an invisible hand of political economy of mass media that control its pricing (Wacquant, 1995). Moreover, the study also referred to a concept of cultural capital of Pierre Bourdieu in the part of bodily capital in order to analyze that the physical body of each Muay Thai boxers was considered as main factors of production that transforms Muay Thai into a commodity with exchange value or an economic trading object. The study also shows that Muay Thai was commodified due to pricing. In order to meet the capitalist's requirement, Muay Thai fighter body need to be perfect. That is the main reason why Muay Thai fighter body is the most appropriate factor of production as the fighter need to go through hard training, weight control and stamina building. What makes the commodification process of Muay Thai complicate and intensive is the mass media broadcasting as a capitalist, TV Station Muay Thai is produced as a commodity to exchange for advertising income.

Pop idol, in the same manner as Muay Thai, is commodified as an object for trade (Otmazgin and Ben-Ari, 2012). Cuteness, youth looks and sentimentality are once an intangible characteristic of young and relatable girls but now its use value is being transferred to an exchange value with an invisible hand of capitalism economy. These features of these cute idol girls are considered as a capital, symbolically and culturally. These cuteness features were determined as a core factor of mass production that transfer charismatic appearance to commodity or a trading object (Goodman, 2010). So as to meet customers or fans expectation, idol girls' physical body and appearance need to be well-crafted and unblemished. This is also the major reason why idol appearance and charisma are the most quintessential factors of production. The process of this production consists of dance and performing practice, weight control exercise and master of ceremony or public speaking skill training. An ordinary girl-next-door that has been through all these processes now

become a full-fledged pop idol that is ready to be put on the shelf for sale, suiting each customers' taste and appreciation (Yoshida et al., 2015).

The previous research has portrayed that pop idols' distinctive features namely physical looks and achievements are always appreciated and perceived by their faithful fans (Raviv et al., 1996). Furthermore, fans are supposedly to be attracted to idols if they perceived their ideal self-concept embedded in them (Swaminathan et al., 2009). Hence, these charismatic features are now be turned into an object for trade to suite their demand. To elaborate this, a handshake and photoshoot event take an advantage on each pop idols' charisma and turn into business activities. Ordinarily, taking a photography with your favorite artist and handshaking with your familiar musician are free of charge and viewers can enjoy TV or online streaming shows that their favorite legacy artists are hosting; however, for the pop idols, these events are for sale. The pop idol industry has turned intangible charisma appreciation and recognition into a profitable business practice.

To summarize, the process of charisma commodification is significant in this business. Many unique pop idol business activities such as handshake event, photoshoot event and online live show require both charm and charisma of each idol group member to make these events beneficial. Customers are willing to pay certain amount of their hard-earned money to buy handshake or photoshoot tickets in order to legitimately meet their favorite idol girls face to face, one on one. They are also willing to pay actual money to an online virtual gift for their beloved idol girl who is now hosting an online live show. What makes all these business practices truly possible unless the process of commodification of charisma.

6. LOOT-BOXES-STYLE OR 'GACHAPON' MARKETING PRACTICE

Apart from services mentioned above, what makes this kind of business different is the unique product that was provided to their faithful customers (Yamato, 2012). Each idol group supplies not only a live performance show or handshake event but also a physical and tangible product including photosets, badges, tapestries, t-shirts, caps, posters and audio CDs that come with various complimentary collectibles. However, these types of various collectibles come into the randomized order, which means the buyer cannot choose his or her favorite artist product. For instance, a collectible photoset of idol group *SWEAT16!*, a Thai-Japanese idol group that consist of several cute and charming members costs THB 250 per pack and one photoset pack is comprised of 5 collectible idol photography in random manner. This means that if your most favorite member is the captain of this idol group and you want to collect a beautiful photography of her, you need to try your luck in your purchase as you never know whose idol artist photography were put inside those photosets pack. Another thing in this business model that makes customers' heart pounding like a drum is a rare item called SR (Special Rare) and SSR (Super Special Rare). A rare item that labeled as SR or SSR is a product that comes with artists' genuine hand-written signature (e.g. a collectible idol photography with her real signature on it) or any special features that distinguish them from any common product. Rare items' drop rate is low and these uncommon objects often have high market price in secondary market. Some types of product need to be pre-ordered and are only available at a limited time which are considered as a limited-edition item and, for sure, in a random manner. For instance, *SWEAT16!* photosets 'The Idol Cup' was sold only on the sport day event, the day that *SWEAT16!* members played football together and allowing fans to attend the event, with a super limited supply. Even if 'The Idol Cup' photosets contain no SR and SSR, these photosets were implicitly rare and have a high value over the secondary market.

This seems to be unfair for the customers who pay for the product but cannot choose what they pay for; besides, general people might think that this marketing strategy would not be that much successful. Nevertheless, the faithful pop idols customers have proven the crowd to be wrong. This marketing strategy, however, is not considered as a new business practice. It has been applied to several entertainment businesses before the age of pop idols coming to Thailand. For example, card game and online game businesses have applied this model before. In card game business, the random fashion comes in to what is called a booster pack. This pack contains several playing cards in random order and the buyers never know what is inside (Kaufeld and Smith, 2006). This works the same as in the online game industry. Players or eSport spectators cannot directly purchase some essential items directly in game but they need to try their luck in the random virtual loot boxes. The term 'Loot Boxes' referred to items in video games that can be purchased for with real-world money and that items supply randomized in-game contents (Zendle et al., 2019). This type of random-fashion marketing strategy is considered as 'Gachapon' or in short 'Gacha'. Gacha is a term that comes from the Japanese word 'Gachapon', which refers to toys sold randomly via a machine vendor. Buyers do not know in advance which item they will receive after paying to the gachapon machine. Although the buyers never know in advance what they will get, they are still willing to buy anyway, psychologically (Kim, 2016).

Akiko Shibuya stated that the very first thing ever that was considered as a gachapon machine was a gum dispenser machine in the United States in 1907 by Adams Gum Company Limited. Buyers insert the coin into the dispenser machine and expect a gum which its favor or taste will come out in a random fashion (Shibuya et al., 2015). Presently, the Japanese technical term of 'Gacha' is considered as an onomatopoeia or the sound of the word that imitates or resembles the sound of a cranking action on a vending machine. In general, there are several products in the gachapon machine and these include a rare item with lower drop rate. However, unlike gambling, buyers cannot obtain real money as a reward within the context of purchase. However, the perception of reward from procuring rare and special limited-edition items can be similar to that of gaining monetary rewards from gambling. Customers can experience the sensation of a big win by paying increasingly larger amount of money (Brooks and Clark, 2019).

7. ASPECTS OF CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY TOWARD UNCERTAINTIES

In accordance with expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), individuals' behavior is reflected by an expectation that what they have done will hopefully get something in return. This can be divided into 3 parts which are the relationship between intention and achievement, achievement and rewards and rewards and personal goals. Therefore, motivation formula is a product of value of rewards, expectation and instrument. Value of reward will depend upon personal demand or desire. According to the formula, the more demand, the more value of reward and this results in an increase in motivation.

Shen et al. (2019) had conducted an in depth empirical research about how a repetition decision, quintessentially a recurring or repeating behavior such as purchasing after expecting to procure an incentive namely special discount privilege or uncommon item, can uncertainly supports a drive in repetition behavior and they found out that most human reactions to uncertainties are more complicate than what we commonly thought, in contrast from what old-school of economic prescribes and other traditional behavioral decision theories would expect. Besides, they discovered a reinforcing effect toward uncertainties that makes people repeat activities more in order to gain an uncertain incentive. Even if the uncertain incentive was considered financially worse than a certain one. Therefore, in the same concept as in-game gachapon, pop idol merchandise product that comes with a random fashion could drive a repetitive buying behavior (Alonso and Jigvall, 2018). Customers pay certain amount of money for a randomized idol merchandise product and expect to attain a rare item or their desired idol artists related item. The process of buying a gachapon-like product might be problematic or addictive now that these randomized merchandise packages are designed using highly similar reward schedule to those used in the design of a casino's slot machine or lottery. Griffiths stated in his work that the buying of loot boxes and expecting a rare or desired in-game item was similar to a form of gambling, specifically seeing that the prizes won are financially a lot less than a price paid (Griffiths, 2018). To elaborate, in the pop idol merchandise case, in a pack of photosets, a buyer can expect a rare item. If the buyers really got a rare item from this pack, this item would be speculative and would be sold in a higher price on the secondary market and considered as a big lottery win. If the buyers did not get a merchandise that they liked, as the products are randomized, it could expect a drive of repetitive purchase to fulfill their desire to get what they are longing for. Given the identified structural similarities between gachapon-like product and gambling (Drummond and Sauer, 2018), the known potential for these mechanisms to produce maladaptive behavioral consequences can be expected.

Now that loot box with uncertainties which cannot be physically foreseen in advance what they will procure, this type of product depends upon customer perceived value toward the product (Johansson and Grönström, 2020). The customer perceived value toward the product plays an important role and should be in every idol agency companies best interest as the fame and popularity of each idol members can help boost up the demand. Moreover, target customer for this market should be customers with a stable financial income. Like other hobbies that require a financial investment for individual's leisure and pleasure, in order to harvest on customer purse, idol business practitioner should plan to boost up popularity and fame among idol members in the group and train them to attract more new customers to join paid events such as had-shake event or paid live streaming.

However, from the supply side, this marketing practice is appealing and beneficial as it expects a positive encouragement in official goods purchase in a distinctive and unique way, compared to other legacy practices. As Shibuya stated in their work that customers who pay for a gachapon-style product have a chance to spend more which conform to what Shibuya et al. (2015) described in their research regarding uncertain incentive (Shibuya et al., 2015). The presence of gachapon can promote a boost up in merchandise sale and this could lead a customer to spend greater amount of money by expecting an uncertain reward in return.

8. IDOL BUSINESS SYNOPSIS

An entertainment business is lucrative and appealing. An idol group, as a new comer of an industry in Thailand, have shaken the competition among entertainment industry. Idols originated in Japan by a TV show in early 70's. The program presented young singers that were not a talented one in singing and dancing but rather young and relatable. Later on, an idol was considered as cute, girl-next-door singer and dancers who were managed, controlled and marketed just like product. On the other hands, idols were just a type of consumer products that were carefully made to execute the entertaining job for a period of time before they retire to find other opportunities. The true main characteristic of pop idols is not the professional skillset. Sentimentality and appearance are the requirement for the job; however, performing skill is regarded as a second priority. There are several business practices in pop idol business that differ from others which mainly are hand-shaking event, photoshoot event and online live streaming show.

In this business, intangible properties such as cuteness, youth looks, charm and charisma are commodified. Commodification transforms goods, services, ideas or even people into commodities or trading object with an economic value. Idol girls are commodified as cuteness, appearance and sentimentality are once an intangible characteristic of young and relatable girls but now its use value is being transferred to an economical exchange value. These features of these cute idol girls are considered as a capital. Pop idols' unique characteristic such as appearance and achievements are often appreciated by fans and they are likely to be attracted to idols for embodiment of ideal self-concept. The unique pop idol business practices such as handshake event, photoshoot event and online streaming live show require both charm and charisma of each idol group member to make these practices profitable by attracting fans to attend the event and pay for these services.

Services aside, the unique tangible merchandise is another thing that makes this business distinctive. Each idol group offers a physical goods namely collectible photosets that come with a randomized order. Since human reactions to uncertainty are more complicate than normal thought. This type of randomized merchandise could stimulate a repetitive purchasing behavior. Customers pay a certain amount of money for a randomized idol merchandise product and expect to procure a rare item or their desired idol artists' related item. Besides, according to previous studies, customers who pay for a randomized-style product have a probability to pay more by expecting a rare item. Therefore, this marketing practice is considered as a beneficial approach to gain more merchandise sale.

9. CONCLUSION

As mentioned previously, the main objective of this study is to scrutinize the advent of idol business in the context of Thailand's society and culture including new business practice impacting on customer. According to an extensive review of related literature, the objective of the article is achieved and the review result show that idol business is now considered as a new way of doing business with many novel business practices. This kind of business therefore yield a new effect on customer perception toward the tangible product of this business. According to the previous research findings (Shen et al., 2019), reinforcing uncertainty effect can be expected as customers tend to repeat a buying task more for a vague incentive than for a clear incentive even an uncertain incentive might be financially worse. The result from uncertainty provides a positive reinforcement of repetitive buying and this utility is perceived as the hidden value inside these uncertainties. Moreover, activities such as handshake, memorable photoshoot and live streaming event once were considered to be free of charge from the legacy entertainment business practice, but in idol business, these events are for sale and need to be paid to engage in these events. For example, the live streaming event, as per the previous study (Ham and Lee, 2020), there are many factors that affect the popularity of these practice. Mainly, the popularity of live streaming content was indicated by views, comments, gifts and a number of subscribers. This implies that the more the popularity of idol girls, the more views, comments, gifts and subscribers can be expected and this will result in a higher in revenue.

Even if there are many opportunities in this type of business, there are some difficulties and challenges. As mentioned earlier in the commodification of charisma section, from the business owner perspective, idol training, external look and health treatments, body and image are the main factors that make this business challenging. In order to sustain popularity among fans, these factors need to be consistently maintained and considered as an investment in human resource development. Moreover, girls need to sacrifice and give up their youth to become idols; they face the possibility of needing to trade off academic success for fortune and fame. These risks are considered hardships from an idol's viewpoint.

Even though this review shed light on novel aspects of the idol business and consumer psychology, there were limitations. As this article is a review article, future study should possibly extend the results of this review into a research to analyze the effect of uncertainties toward consumer behavior quantitatively and qualitatively. Moreover, qualitative research with the ethnography technique should be done to investigate the real life of an idol girl.

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