

Consumers' Motivation for Accepting the Traditional Product of “Johnny’s”

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Abstract

As streaming media is to be used in the context of the Japanese music market, the purpose of this research is to explore the success factors of Japanese entertainment "Johnny's" non-streaming business model in the Japanese music industry which is dominated by streaming media. The research question addressed in this research is: In the era of streaming media, why do consumers accept an entertainment company "Johnny's" that prefers to use physical albums to distribute music in the present market?

The theoretical framework will introduce relevant concepts to connect idols, entertainment company, and consumers in the context of the Japanese music market. The methodology of this research is based on a qualitative perspective, using semi-structured interviews to examine the reasons for the success of traditional approaches to music consumption, interviews were conducted with 10 consumers who follow Johnny's. The data collected from these interviews were analyzed with open coding using ATLAS.ti to obtain a Code Book based on the theoretical framework. The results of the analysis combined with the theory, on which a new framework was derived from the interviewer's perspective. There are five main directions of analysis: consumer preference, consumer loyalty, unique selling proposition, the significance of the traditional approaches to Johnny's and Japanese consumers, and Johnny's from the consumer's perspective.

From the interviews, we can conclude that consumers accept the non-streaming model in the streaming media era because based on Johnny's monopoly in the Japanese music market and control of resources, consumers have more access to their idols and are familiar with Johnny's as a brand. Idols not only exist in the market as products, but they also convey spiritual values to consumers through their music or performances, as well as the Junior system brings the joy of cultivating idols to consumers. In addition, the group activity-based strategy continues to solidify consumers' affection for the idols, the value that the idols bring out exceeds the drawbacks of the traditional approach.

Keywords: *J-pop, Johnny's, Japanese Music Industry, Idols, Consumers*

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1. Introduction

This research aims to explore the success factors of Japanese entertainment “Johnny’s” non-streaming business model in the Japanese music industry which is dominated by streaming media.

In an era where streaming media is the main distribution path, the conservative Japanese music market has also started to exploit music streaming platforms to increase its market share (Yagi, 2015). Most entertainment and record companies actively use streaming media to promote their artists, we can infer this is the mainstream approach in the Japanese music industry.

In the context of this development, it can assume that audiences take it for granted that entertainment companies in this industry use streaming media. However, there is a very different entertainment company in the Japanese music market: Johnny & Associates, generally shortened to “Johnny’s”. This entertainment company only cultivates male idols, their idols are the only one in the Japanese music industry that does not distribute music on streaming media. According to the current state of album sales in the market, the data from Oricon 2022¹ shows that in addition to the third group from South Korea, the remaining four Johnny’s groups sold 11 billion, 7.7 billion, 6.7 billion and 6.3 billion in 2022 respectively. This indicates Johnny’s idols are continuing to attract fans in the Japanese music market. The research question addressed in this research is: In the era of streaming media, why do consumers accept an entertainment company “Johnny’s” that prefers to use physical albums to distribute music in the present market?

With the development of the Internet and the digitization of the production process, the music industry is under pressure from the changing structure of the media industry. The emergence of streaming media has affected the foundations of the traditional music market (Lozic, 2019), at the same time because of worldwide streaming consumption, the music market has seen an increase in revenue (Impala, 2019), which has led to the declining number of CDs now being released by record

¹ Refer to Appendix (1) - Album Sales Amount

companies and declining at an increasing rate (Lozic, 2019). But we observe that when Johnny's was facing the development of this market, it persisted in releasing CDs instead of using music streaming platforms. To explore this phenomenon, this research will start from the consumer's perspective. Infer the reason that consumers are accepting the non-streaming model and why Johnny's is insisting on using the traditional music distribution approach.

There are already researchers that have analyzed the current state of the Japanese music market, including but not limited to the Japanese music market starting to replay on streaming media (Takagi, 2005; Manabe, 2008; Yagi, 2015; Kawata & Itano, 2021); the development of the Japanese idols in the music industry (Kiuchi, 2017; Galbraith & Karlin, 2012, pp. 97–112). This research will focus on the form of idols that have continued to insist on the traditional approaches to development which contrast with this market, the male idol entertainment company "Johnny's" is the major research object, it will provide new perspectives and views on the research of male idols and traditional music distribution approaches in the Japanese music market.

This research will analyze the following four parts. The first part focuses on the current development and evolution of the non-streaming music market in the Japanese music industry, we get the factors that affect the market by analyzing the changes in it. According to Jung and Hirata (2012), the development of Johnny's non-streaming market is influenced by two factors: gender and foreign competition, which also determine the development direction of entertainment companies and artists in this market.

Based on the analysis of the market context in the first part, we see that the development direction of Johnny's and the current market are completely opposite. Therefore, in the second part based on the consumption habits of the Japanese and the consumer preference, we mainly discuss how Johnny's through non-streaming media expands its own market and the extent to which Johnny's follows the trends.

The third section focuses on the consumer behavior and unique selling proposition of Johnny's idols. In this section, based on the theory of unique selling proposition we

discuss the success factors of the non-streaming music industry.

In part four here we explore the concept of consumer loyalty, based on Johnny's guidelines for the group and the Fan Club of it as the direction of development to analyze how Johnny's keeps consumers loyal in the competitive environment of streaming media through non-streaming services.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this section, I will explore the factors that potentially influence Johnny's success in attracting consumers through non-business models in the Japanese music market.

According to Karlin (2012, pp. 72–93), the relationship between idols and the Jimusho², the audience and the consumer cannot be ignored in the Japanese music industry. Therefore, I will explore the three directions based on the idols, the entertainment company which is Johnny's, and the consumers.

Based on these three directions, Karlin (2012, pp. 72–93) proposed the following three points. First of all, Japanese people prefer to use television. Based on this, I will illustrate the influence of Japanese consumption habits on Johnny's, and how Johnny's has evolved according to this. Second, idols are introduced as products. I will elaborate on "idols" as products based on the concept of consumer preference. Thirdly, the unique selling propositions of male Johnny's idols created by the entertainment company to meet the market demand will be explored, the concept of USP will also mention here. In addition, I will explore how consumers remain loyal based on Johnny's traditional approaches based on the concept of consumer loyalty.

2.1 Context of the Japanese music industry

2.1.1 The traditional media distribution

Looking at the current music market in Japan, the use of streaming platforms is now the dominant approach to the market (Yagi, 2015). Kaino and Suzuki (2010) argue that the diversification and digitization of consumer demand have made the music industry more competitive. Record companies must improve the hit rate in music marketing. Another piece of research shows that digital information pages like Fan Club and social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, as well as Weibo, have been welcomed and accepted by society. People receive various information through digital forms (Ueda et al., 2015). This suggests that the streaming of the

² "Entertainment company" in Japanese

music market in Japan has been accepted by consumers as it continues to evolve.

According to Kawata and Itano (2021), the music consumption format is divided into two parts, traditional media distribution and streaming media. Although the revenue of the Japanese music market has shown an overall tendency to decline from 369,602,000 yen (Japanese dollars) to 312,129,000 yen between 2010 and 2013 (Statistics Trends, 2019). Streaming media has propped up the music market during this time, as evidence that consumers already embraced it. However, according to Yagi (2015), 2013 was a turning point for streaming media in Japan, and the use of streaming media after 2013 showed a downward trend, with Japanese consumers still tending to consume physical albums and traditional media.

Take the Japanese girl group AKB48 as an example, the group's contribution to the Japanese music industry is huge. According to Kiuchi (2017), the music industry has been impacted internationally, especially due to legal and illegal downloading of music, which shrank from \$11.8 billion to \$7.1 billion in U.S. music sales between 2003 and 2012. Meanwhile, Mariko Yasu reports that consumer music revenues in Japan grew by 3% in 2012 (Kiuchi, 2017). This growth makes Japan the largest market in the world (A Decade of iTunes, 2015). The Japan Recording Industry Association also reported that music sales in Japan were approximately \$4.3 billion in 2012, surpassing sales in the U.S. Nikkei Weekly reported that "King Records made 8.5 percent of its earnings to 23 billion yen with the help of AKB48 (Nikkei Weekly, 2015). Although it was not only AKB48 that revived the Japanese music industry in the 2010s, it also the sales of physical albums that contributed greatly to the Japanese music industry regarding that phenomenon (Kiuchi, 2017). This phenomenon shows that even in the streaming media era, traditional media distribution continues to be accepted by Japanese consumers.

2.1.2 Idol development in the Japanese market

In Japanese society, idols are products introduced by entertainment companies. Nowadays, idols are seen as a business, and many people are entering the idol business through streaming media. However, it is suggested that the idol industry in

its traditional approach is also declining in this market (Kazukan, 2009).

According to Kazukan (2009), the term "idol" was first used in Japan in 1970, and in the latter half of the 1970s, the term became a generic term for artists. But this industry flourished in the 1980s and entered a period of chaos in the 1990s when the reduction of music programs in the television industry had a significant impact on the idol industry.

From the perspective of male idols, the male group produced mainly by Johnny & Associates was launched in the 90s (Wang & Oyabu, 2014). In the first half of 1990, SMAP, which was active in the field of variety, gained a lot of popularity, followed by groups such as KinKi Kids and V6. After the rapid development of Johnny's group through TV programs, it was almost overwhelmingly dominant in the market and was called the "Golden Age of Johnny's Jr." This entertainment company used TV programs, radio, Jr. concerts, magazines, news, and other channels to socially launch its idols, and these idols began to use these opportunities to start their actor activities (Wang & Oyabu, 2014).

In this period, not only male idols but also female idols were developing in the market, and consumers could come across various types of idols in this market. Johnny's continued to develop in this period, the company became known as "Johnny's Empire" (Kosuge, 2012), their idols always get more attention in this market.

According to Wang and Oyabu (2014), there is a big difference between the number of female and male idols in the Japanese music industry. Due to the vastly greater number of female idol groups than male idol groups, there is currently a discrepancy in the development of male and female idols in the Japanese music industry. There is a clear development gap between the gender in the market. Although the number of solo performances by singers and actors is few when we focus on the category of idols, the number of females is overwhelmingly high. In addition, entertainment companies also launch various types of female groups. why there are more female idols than male idols in the market is not known yet.

In the present Japanese society, there are many good-looking idols, but they have

been present in this market for a very short period. The strictly Japanese entertainment structure makes the industry change more quickly, it is more difficult for male idols to maintain their popularity than for female idols (Wang & Oyabu, 2014).

From the perspective of Glasspool (2012, pp. 113-130), the idol is not only associated with the commodity being marketed but becomes the image of the commodity. Idols need to be an "absolute presence" that provides a sense of security and firm support for fans (Ogawa, 1988; Sasakibara, 2004). And Glasspool also mentioned that the consumption of idols has the same process as the consumption of anime. Consumers get to build a whole narrative by consuming clips or episodes, while idols are constantly introduced and interviewed in magazines and on TV, both of which are provided more information.

This suggests that idols are not only providing music to audiences and consumers in the music industry, but they are also providing music consumers with a different value brought by the narrative. Based on this analysis, although male idols do not have a significant advantage in the market, I hypothesize that Johnny's idols bring value to consumers in addition to music, which makes consumers continuously attracted to them.

2.1.3 The competitors in the market

When we focused on whether Johnny's is partial to streaming media or traditional media distribution, the Japanese music industry is currently not only transitioning to a streaming model but also facing further market competition most typically the entry of K-pop singers (Jung & Hirata, 2012).

In Japan music market, there are also other groups besides Johnny's, such as AKB48 and EXILE TRIBE that are active in the market. These groups are different types from Johnny's, the members in AKB48 are all young girls, EXILE TRIBE is another representative group in Japan and their entertainment companies use streaming to aggressively grow the music market and to expand sectors outside of music.

The competition in the Japanese music industry, except for Japanese artists, there

are also K-pop artists. After K-pop artists have gained better results in the Korean music market, they will choose to start expanding their market in Japan to attract Japanese consumers (Jung & Hirata, 2012). Back in 2001, Korean artist BoA made her debut in Japan and TVXQ followed in 2005. SM Entertainment (Korea) and Avex (Japan) promoted BoA and TVXQ, and SM adopted a strict “localization strategy” for the marketing of BoA and TVXQ in Japan, which means that Korean artists entering the Japanese market will follow the development model of Japanese artists (Jung & Hirata, 2012). After BoA and TVXQ, SNSD no longer followed the “localization strategy” when entering the Japanese music market, although they are also SM artists (Jung & Hirata, 2012). Korean artists don't try to become J-pop artists either in the current situation, they enter the Japanese music market more to promote K-pop music.

The Korean entertainment company SM, after studying the development model of Johnny's, used such a model to develop artists (Jung & Hirata, 2012). After achieving success in the Korean music market, they cooperated with Japanese companies to continue expanding their influence in the Japanese music market. Not only this entertainment company but now more and more Korean idols are entering the Japanese market. Although these idols no longer follow the “localization strategy” that made by SM Entertainment, before entering the Japanese market they will re-release singles that have already been released in Korea and music videos will be reproduced with the orientation of Japanese consumers (Jung & Hirata, 2012).

It has been suggested that K-pop is the best alternative because of the strict copyright of the Japanese music market (Oh & Lee, 2014). Additionally, we can realize the use of streaming media has made it possible for K-pop artists' music to spread faster. In the face of the development of the competitors, Johnny's still keeps the traditional media distribution and maintains the attitude of refusing to use streaming media.

With the prospects that we mentioned above, the widespread use of streaming platforms in the Japanese music market and the competition from foreign artists, it can be suggested that the conservative attitude of Johnny's idols in the market does not have an advantage.

However, we can infer the consumer acceptance of Johnny's by the number of consumers who join the Fan Club, which is a system that provides fans (consumers) to follow the information of idols. The number of Fan Clubs in Figure 2³ shows that Johnny's has a very large number of consumers and audiences, Arashi had 3.07 million consumers join Fan Club in 21 years, King and Prince in second place attracted 920,000 followers in 4 years and 8 months, it seems to indicate that Johnny's idols still have enough appeal in the market, but K-pop artists didn't have much impact on them.

2.2 Promotion as a consumer strategy

2.2.1 Promotion method based on Japanese consumption habits

Although entertainment companies in the Japanese music market are now starting to use music streaming platforms to distribute the music of their artists (Takagi, 2005). Based on the research, it can be suggested that Japanese audiences and consumers still mainly prefer to buy physical albums (Karlin, 2012, pp. 72–93), and these are still the main choice for them.

According to Wang (2013), the Japanese government started promoting a strategic strategy named “Cool Japan” to expand global markets and market J-pop music items in 2010. This strategic plan is mainly aimed at breaking the deadlock of Japanese music in overseas markets, but the Japanese music market still relies on Japanese consumers so far. Meanwhile, Qiu et al. (2018) suggested from this phenomenon that Japanese consumers spend the most per year on music items worldwide and that the vast bulk of the domestic market is made up of physical recordings, demonstrating the enormous economic benefit of the traditional media in Japan.

According to data released by the Recording Industry Association of Japan (RIAJ), CD sales in Japan have been in decline since 2009, but the reason this figure can

³ Refer to Appendix (2)- The number of Johnny's Fan Club

decline more slowly than in other countries is due to local consumption habits in Japan, where people focus more on physical album consumption (Qiu et al., 2018). This means that even though Johnny's does not use music streaming media, it is appealing to Japanese audiences because of their consumption habits.

2.2.2 Consumer preference

According to Karlin (2012, pp. 72–93), idols in the market as products and products launched by the Jimusho. On this basis, the phenomenon of "Fan Club" (Kiuchi, 2017) formed by Johnny's fans and consumers, I will elaborate the concept of social class which is included in consumer preference and provide a theory for this phenomenon. Since taste level exists in popular music, this theory will be also mentioned. In addition, the commercialization of idols will be further elaborated.

Product

Here we will present the influence of products on consumer preferences while the artists of Johnny's as products (Kazukan, 2009). Since the artists are created by the entertainment company and are launched in the market with some persona, eventually the fans choose the products as consumers in the market.

The product has a meaning that goes beyond its functional utility. According to Hirschman (1981) and McCracken (1986), the product's capacity to impart meaning is what gives it its meaning. A product is a symbol through which people communicate something about themselves and others (Holman, 1981; Solomon, 1983). And this symbolism can influence consumer preferences. Symbolic meaning provides another way to differentiate products. Because of symbolic meaning, products that are otherwise undifferentiated become differentiated in the eyes of consumers (Govers & Schoormans, 2005). Johnny's consumers are distinguished from other artists by the symbolic meaning of the product in the process. The literature has also focused on brand personality, which refers to " the set of human character attributes connected to a brand" (Aaker, 1997).

Govers and Schoormans (2005), verified that product personality consistency has a

positive impact on consumer preferences, independent of the impact of user image consistency. Products can positively influence consumer preferences.

Social Class and Taste Level

In this section, according to Bourdieu's theory, the consumer preference for music is elaborated, providing a theory on whether the consumer embodies his or her identity in society in the process.

Based on data gathered in France in the 1960s, Bourdieu claimed that the disparities made between various cultural products are also social distinctions that help to create unequal relationships in society as a whole (Prior, 2013). The choices we make as consumers are an expression of our upbringing, our occupation, and whether or not we went to college - in short, our social class (Prior, 2013). At the same time, Bourdieu (1984) argues that consumer choices also have structural implications because of the differences they pile up between the higher and lower social classes that already exist, and their relative affinity for higher or lower cultures. And he argues that the appreciation of high culture is not at all a matter of purely aesthetic judgment, but a product of privileged social conditions, the basis for instilling a reserve of cultural resources. Although in the Japanese music market, we are now focusing our attention only on one company, Johnny's, which is the consumers who choose them as a reflection of social class in the process. The cultural frame of reference of different classes is reflected in what Bourdieu calls "habitus" (Prior, 2013). It is an unconscious system of dispositions that shapes the broad trajectory of individual behavior and life opportunities (Bourdieu, 1992).

Arguments about the merits of particular bands, genres, and songs are the weft and weave of everyday "music" (Small 1998) as they articulate our desire to share and connect. According to Prior (2013), it is possible to spend time with someone who has similar tastes to our own, someone with a similar record collection or well-made playlist who sees the world in a similar way to us.

When we focus on Johnny's, they are presented to the outside world in the marketplace with a specific aesthetic, and consumers choose them. They have formed

a small society belonging to this segment of consumers in the Japanese music industry, the so-called Fan Club. In this environment, are the consumers who like Johnny's artists looking at the company's performance in the market with the same views or ideas, or is it because this segment of consumers like Johnny's because they have the same way of looking at the world?

At the same time, In the same way as statements about knowledge of high culture and classical music are expressions of superiority and discrimination, according to Frith (1996), so too are claims about knowledge of popular music. In other words, there are hierarchies of taste within popular culture as well as between high and low cultures (Prior, 2013). Here Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is applied by Frith to show how a specific, pop music-originated capital can produce distinctions and struggles over aesthetic values. So, do Johnny's consumers also reflect a hierarchy of tastes when they choose these artists? What do the artists of Johnny's mean to consumers? What does the differentiation in the Japanese music market bring to consumers?

2.3 The significance of Johnny's to consumers

In this section, I will further elaborate on how Johnny's presents the company's unique selling proposition to the music industry based on consumer behavior. In addition, the concepts of consumer behavior and unique selling proposition (USP) will also mention here.

According to Sheth (2021), the biggest shift in marketing is in consumer behavior. The most important thing now is consumer experience and engagement. In the new field of marketing strategy research, six areas work well for consumers in order to shift the focus to them (Sheth, 2021). I will only mention here two areas that have relevance to Johnny's. In the following two parts will be mentioned.

2.3.1 Unique selling proposition - Focus on developing male idols

Before presenting Johnny's unique selling proposition, the concept of the unique

selling proposition will be explored. USP was introduced in 1960 by Reeves, an American advertising agency creative head. He proposed that each advertisement must present a specific benefit to the consumer, one that the competition either could not or did not offer. The offer must be unique to attract new customers to the product (Reeves, 1961). Although the concept was presented from an advertising perspective, I applied this to the Japanese music market to illustrate how Johnny's offered a unique selling proposition to consumers and audiences.

The major characteristic and uniqueness of the company which is it only produces male artists. According to Glasspool (2012), the majority of Johnny's consumers are female, and the reason for attracting female consumers is that distance and imagination are maintained between Johnny's idols and consumers.

Both the production and acceptance of Johnny's idols need to pass through the psychology of female fans, thereby constructing a specific imagination with the idols while containing a sense of distance and some possibilities with them. Female consumers' fantasies about idols have created a sense of emptiness for Johnny's idols, presenting a sense of unattainability and unsurpassable that induces female consumers to fantasize about them (Nagaike, 2012, pp. 97–112). The “emptiness” of Johnny's idols provides aesthetic and imaginative satisfaction. "Emptiness" is that the idols of Johnny's lack the quality of reality, but the audience is able to imaginatively transform them into images, creating a sense of unattainability in the process and making female fans fantasize about them. (Nagaike, 2012, pp. 97–112). Idols create an imaginary space for female consumers, and consumption links idols to people who are not just passive consumers in this relationship but also active producers (Nagaike, 2012, pp. 97–112). In addition, according to creating value for customers in the concept of consumer behavior (Sheth, 2021). A customer is a buyer and a user, buyers are searching for service value, users are searching for performance value, and payers are searching for pricing value. In other words, if you provide a quality product at a fair price with customer-friendly service, you can always gain clients (Sheth & Mittal, 2001). Male idols are featured in Johnny's marketing, they recommend male idols to Japanese consumers through traditional approaches which are TV programs and

physical CDs, providing quality idols to Keens' audience.

The number of male idols is not a significant competitive advantage in the Japanese music market. According to a review of its existing structure (Nagaike, 2012, pp. 97–112), the existence of Johnny's idols has caused a unique phenomenon to manifest itself. Faced with this position, Johnny's can both overcome the gender-based market disadvantage and create its advantages. In general, there are more female idols than male idols in the market nowadays, it also appears from the market's structure that Johnny's idols do not predominate, but the majority of the male artists who are more well-known in the market are all from Johnny's. According to Figure 3⁴, the number of Japanese concert audiences in 2022, the second to sixth ranking are the idols of Johnny's, these numbers add up to a total that far exceeds the number one ranked group, this is proof that this entertainment company can draw large numbers of consumers and audiences.

Except for the number of audiences that the artists attract, another point here that many people may have never considered is that Johnny's forbids idols to fall in love. One of the main principles of Johnny's is that idols should appear to be without lovers in order to remain attractive to female audiences, this rule of the company's management of artists is well known to the public (Glasspool, 2012, pp. 113–130). Idols sell their youth in exchange for the love and cultural consumption of consumers and audiences.

The difference between Japanese idols and Asian "assembly line" idols is that they are individually shaped by Jimusho. According to Marx (2012, pp. 35-55), the idols are the performers who generate income, Jimusho is an important link in shaping the performers who become the face and personality of the Japanese media world, they have strong control over the entertainment market, idols are the product of their company, and the company is committed to creating idols with the greatest economic potential. These male idols were created by Johnny's, and the so-called single persona will increase their attractiveness to women in the market. In addition, Johnny's idol

⁴ Refer to Appendix (3)- The number of Japanese concert audiences in 2022 (TOP 30)

production aims to make their favorite male idols successful by attracting female audience support and promotion (Karlin, 2012, pp. 72-93).

In this aspect, Johnny's idols are not only showing their music to female consumers, but they are also partly selling their persona as the audience and consumer's imaginary boyfriend, which confirms a sense of emptiness created by Johnny's idols as described earlier (Nagaike, 2012, pp. 97–112).

2.3.2 Johnny's Junior System

Johnny's has a system called "Johnny's Jr.", which is the production process of Johnny's Idol and finding potential idol candidates.

There are three traditional approaches to training artists in Japan (Wang & Oyabu, 2014): First, contest. The artists from the same company compete and the winner gets to debut. The second method is to train apprentices. This method of selection is mainly used in industries that place special emphasis on traditional music, such as Kabuki. Thirdly, Scout, which is a very efficient way to train artists. Johnny's innovated on the traditional approach by creating the Junior system and introducing the concept of "cultivate idols" for the first time in the market.

Johnny's Junior system is noticed by the public, and this system emerged to develop Johnny's idols. Johnny's will select people who can become idols in the future, the main selection criteria are the conditions that are necessary to be an idol, such as height, face, and personality (Wang & Oyabu, 2014). Temperament, education, and other related conditions will also be included in the scope of consideration, but the most important point is the preference of this market (Wang & Oyabu, 2014).

Here, we need to note that Johnny's Junior can follow their seniors in concert when they are not debuting, and they also have their own show, but the symbol of the debut is the physical album comes out as the real end of the status of Junior.

The significance of these Junior to consumers is that they can reach these teenagers before they debut and continue to follow them after they debut, switching from being

their audiences to consumers. Figure 4⁵ is the schedule for juniors in 2015. Through this table, we can see that if audiences want to know about juniors, they have a lot of ways to follow them. The TV program is just one option, they can also follow them in other ways, such as concerts that we mentioned above.

Although the meaning of cultivating idols had not been proposed before Johnny's, the Junior system of Johnny's is for consumers to watch these teenagers grow into artists and get satisfaction from it. According to an aspect of consumer behavior which is brand value (Sheth, 2021). Building the company's goodwill through the brand value that is directly related to its market value. The junior system reflects their identity for consumers, but at the same time in the market to establish brand value made by Johnny's. Korean SM Entertainment because of this brand value also began to follow the Junior system (Jung & Hirata, 2012).

The difference between the female consumers' fantasy of male idols, the Junior system is the embodiment of the female audience's motherly gaze on idols. Many female fans - especially fans of Johnny's idols - described how they often looked at their idols with a "motherly gaze", and that they derived pleasure from supporting and encouraging their idols' successes, male idols can make them fantasize about their lost youth and project the satisfaction of motherhood onto them (Karlin, 2012, pp. 72-93).

According to Matsumoto Mika (2007), She describes the role of female Johnny fans as "virtual mothers". Because Johnny's fans identified themselves with the idols they supported, fans would often talk about their idols as if they were part of their families. They would be proud of their idols' success. Johnny's idols are models of hard-working and successful male adolescents (Karlin, 2012, pp. 72-93).

This motherly gaze constructs women's desire to look at male idols, not in a sexual way at their bodies, but in the way that a mother looks at her child. Female fans achieve a deep sense of connection and intimacy with their idols. In these idol-fan relationships, like the relationship between a baby and its mother, the idol's

⁵ Refer to Appendix (4) - The Junior's program schedule

expression and emotional state are communicated and communicated between subjects through the fan's close identification with the idol (Karlín, 2012, pp. 72-93).

In addition, Johnny's fans reject the idea of artificial or produced celebrity images and strong demand to know the true self of their idol. The attention to their idol will resonate with these fans (Karlín, 2012, pp. 72-93). Because of the Junior system, these Junior idols can interact with consumers and audiences in the most direct way that they can get to know their idols better.

2.4 Consumer loyalty

After consumers are attracted to Johnny's Idol, how does Johnny's strengthen consumer loyalty? In this section, I will explain how Johnny's strengthens consumer loyalty by dividing Johnny's Idol as a group to launch in this market, Johnny's as a brand, and the Fan Club system.

An essential characteristic inherent in consumer loyalty is the concept of persistence (or long-term stability) (White & Tong, 2019), Oliver (1997) defines loyalty as "a firm commitment to repurchase or repurchase. A loyal consumer is one who remains loyal to the brand (persistence and resistance) despite the efforts of competitors but does not view the competitor's offer in an objective light. This behavior is a sign of a "strong" attitude (Lichtlé & Plichon, 2008). Frisou (2005) presents an innovative perspective that integrates more explicitly the relationship between loyalty and time. He defines it as "the underlying tendency of the customer to control his actions, manifested in the long term, so that he increases his purchases in support of the brand, despite the impact of circumstances that may make him leave." The "propensity" encompasses both the underlying motivation behind loyalty and response to the brand. Based on the context Johnny's consumers remain loyal to it in a market that has changed over time. Even if many consumers no longer follow their favorite Johnny's idols, they will still choose Johnny's again in this market next time. According to the theory of consumer loyalty, I will explain here why consumers have

liked this entertainment company for a long time and what are the reasons for staying loyal.

2.4.1 Guidelines for the group as the direction of development

One of the development guidelines of Johnny's idol is that the team is the main direction, and all individual development eventually feeds back into the team (Wang & Oyabu, 2014). From the perspective of Johnny's idols, they think of themselves as developing as part of a group, rather than being seen as separate individuals (Nagaike, 2012, pp. 97–112). Although Johnny's may not be a business looking to contribute to the music industry and Kitagawa may not be attempting to develop great entertainment professionals or gain extraordinary entertainment abilities, one of Johnny's guiding principles is to prioritize the requirements of its audience (Wang & Oyabu, 2014). The idols that Johnny's has produced in the market are not focused on bringing specialized performances than other musical actors or more professional people but will focus on performing as a group for mass entertainment and thus be accepted by the public.

We can infer that idols acting as a group are more alluring to audiences than individual works in the marketplace. But the emergence of a group will weaken the appearance of such a situation; in other words, the group can do more than a single person can do and can be more easily accepted by the audience.

The development of Johnny's idol can be summarized as follows: 1. long-term training after selection. 2. The characteristics of the individual are combined into the development of the group (Wang & Oyabu, 2014). They are active in the market as a group rather than as individuals. And appear in public as a group and construct situations that subconsciously attract female consumers (Nagaike, 2012, pp. 97–112). Johnny's idols can allow consumers to enjoy different types of idols within a team, which gives them psychological satisfaction.

Take Arashi (嵐)⁶ as an example, Figure 2⁷ shows they have the most fans among Johnny's group which attracted 3.07 million consumers. The five of them are a group, and each of them has unique qualities. Sho Sakurai is good at hosting, Jun Matsumoto is good at directing concerts, Tomo Ono is developing his activities in art-related fields, Masaki Aiba has a strong sense of variety, and Kazuya Ninomiya is a good actor. The members have developed in different areas, and eventually, each has attracted a large number of consumers. A Johnny's group includes members with different characteristics, these idols can continuously attract the consumers' attention from all aspects. Based on this context, we also need to focus on the perspective of consumers, Johnny's group is the reason for consumers to stay loyal or not. Is it assumed that even if the consumer loses interest in one of the members, another member of the team can continue to attract them?

Johnny's group model is also considered an innovative strategy (Wang & Oyabu, 2014). In the Japanese music market, there are not many artists who are in a group, so the group activities of Johnny's artists are considered to be unique and innovative. And this model makes the artists work harder and more actively for the group.

According to the Japanese entertainment industry (Wang & Oyabu, 2014), even jobs that can be finished by individuals are inevitably going to be subject to numerous limitations beyond their skills. And the point of the existence of a group is to be able to better handle what cannot be done by individuals, such a development simultaneously gets the job done more efficiently and attracts more audiences as consumers.

2.4.2 Develop as a brand

To a certain extent, the brand "Johnny's" reinforces the level of consumer affection for idols (Glasspool, 2012, pp.113-130). People who identify as Johnny's idols draw audiences to varied degrees on any stage, and artists who debut in this entertainment

⁶ Johnny's male group launched in 1999, made up by five male idols.

⁷ Refer to Appendix (2)- The number of Johnny's Fan Club.

company will get more attention than other artists. Sometimes Johnny's is more like a strong umbrella for these male artists (Glasspool, 2012, pp.113-130), just as a well-known cosmetic brand would be more popular in the market with the launch of its products. After being launched in the market, it seems like idols from Johnny's can be more popular than idols from other unknown entertainment compiles. According to the research (Kim et al., 2001), the questions are asked here about how brand personality affects brand loyalty. A brand is considered attractive when it helps a person to express himself or herself and when the person identifies with the brand (Belk, 1988). Aaker (1999) believed that branding is used for self-expression and reaction to self-concept. If expressed properly, brands can have a positive impact on consumer attitudes toward the brand. And based on this, Kim et al. (2001) argue that brand identity can have a positive impact on brand loyalty and word-of-mouth reports. The development of brand identification influences the establishment of the relationship between the brand and the consumer. When the brand personality looks attractive, the brand identity is created, and if the brand identity is improved, consumers will not readily leave (Kim et al., 2001).

For Johnny's idol, debuting in this entertainment company means a large part of success. Because the positive influence of the brand will make the audience put more attention to them and thus become consumers. From the perspective of Johnny's consumers, the idols who are titled Johnny's debut in this market will receive more attention from consumers, which is a huge advantage that other artists do not have. In this market, consumers like to choose popular artists, and other consumers are influenced to follow this behavior, the advantage that Johnny's has will turn them into a superstar like a snowball (Adler, 2006).

When the brand identification is formed, consumers will stay loyal to Johnny's, the next idol group that Johnny's cultivates will likely attract the same consumers again, consumers unconsciously choose them.

2.4.3 Strengthen consumer loyalty with Fan Club

If the audience is interested in Johnny's idol and wants to know more about the

idol, they can join the Fan Club. First, I will specify what is the Fan Club of Johnny's artists.

The most important feature of Johnny's operation model is the Fan Club system, each group has its Fan Club and belongs to the J-family brand (Johnny's Family Club). Fans need to pay 4,000 yen (Japanese dollars) to join it. After entering the Fan page, they can see the diary written by the idol they follow and all kinds of news about them.

Johnny's Fan Club provides a platform for consumers who like Johnny's idols and artists to get information about them. In addition, Fan Club is also a phenomenon of fan economy. According to Yang (2020), the term "fan economy" describes how admiring followers spend their money. The principal works of their idols serve as the foundation for fan behavior as consumers, which then evolves into the promotion of their idols and other closely related goods. This phenomenon mostly affects the entertainment sector, including the music, film, and television industries as well as the sports sector. The fan economy has increasingly entered consumers' minds in recent years, along with the Internet's rapid expansion. And the main idea of this economy is emotional identification.

There are now two types of research on the fan economy, the first is a model analysis of the big data of social media on the current network to explore the efficiency of information dissemination in social media (Bai et al., 2018), and another one is the impact of the platform on users, mainly on web service platforms (Chung & Kim, 2018). The second one is about the recent research exploring the impact of social media on users' patterns, mainly based on the fact that purposeful as well as targeted information dissemination in social media has shown great advantages and potential (Hanifawati, Dewanti, et al., 2019). In addition, publicity from them with commercial purposes will attract a large number of fan-based customers (Yang, 2020). Johnny's Fan Club embodies the second type, which targeted information dissemination for its own users.

In this competitive market, the number of albums sales is also a message to the entertainment company by fans. The economic benefits generated by "idols" have

gradually expanded, as has the scope and scale of application of "fans" as a special group, the strong identification between idols and fans is the main driving force and the most effective glue (Yang, 2020). The same phenomenon applies to Johnny's idols and consumers, the idol is highly commercialized, the company will put more effort into the idol and consumers will see more of the idol in the market, which is a win-win situation for both the entertainment company and audiences. Even though streaming has taken over as the primary method of music consumption in Japan (Takagi, 2005), fans still prefer to purchase physical albums since doing so implies that they value the artists they look up to.

Consumers join Fan Clubs in addition to getting information and purchasing albums about idols as mentioned above, another meaning of joining a Fan Club for consumers is to participate more in the activities of Johnny's Idol. Consumers who want to attend the concerts of the idols they follow need to be selected draw by lot, which in Japanese is *chusen*. A *chusen* is a process of creating demand for concert tickets. Accordingly, when the audience decides to buy a concert ticket, they usually cannot do that online. Instead, they can only join the Fan Club, and submit requests which does not necessarily mean they can buy the ticket. This process only gives them the opportunity to be selected by the ticketing system. After this process is finished, the system will randomly select those who participate, and those who are selected receive this concert ticket.

Concerts are not the only event that has a connection with consumers; there are other formats besides concerts, such as drawing to participate in a program. Through Fan Club, Johnny's continually deepens its relationship with customers to keep them loyal, customers continually interact closely with their artists.

Through the exploration, we can find that although the development of Johnny's is contrary to the development of the times, they can distribute the physical CD to promote their artists well, which is also a consumption habit of Japanese people. In addition, Johnny's is not only cultivating male idols, but the Junior system is also a feature that has the ability to attract the attention of the audience in the market competition, they also satisfy the mental demands of consumers. Based on these

unique characteristics, the audience has become consumers. Therefore, this company further develops “Johnny’s” as a brand and carries out activities with the team as the main guideline, so that consumers continue to follow the idols and keep their loyalty.

3. Method

The method design will be presented in this section, this includes an explanation of the research methodology, the screening of the sample, an overview of the size of data and the rationale, and finally the use of qualitative operationalization and the methods of analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The qualitative interview is applied as the method in order to answer the major research question ‘In the era of streaming media, why do consumers accept an entertainment company “Johnny’s” that prefers to use physical albums to distribute music in the present market?’. Qualitative interviews help gain a deeper understanding of possible factors influencing the conditions under study and motivations underlying certain phenomena. In this research, we are interested in uncovering audience motivations behind choosing a predominantly offline music distributor, "Johnny's" in a streaming-dominated music market.

However, qualitative interviewing varies largely in the approach taken by the interviewer (Bryman, 2012). And for some writers, this term seems to denote an unstructured interview, but more frequently it is a general term that embraces interviews of both the semi-structured and unstructured kind (Bryman, 2012). Focusing on the semi-structured and unstructured interviews, the interview process is flexible in both cases. In qualitative research, there are two distinct sorts of interviews and a lot of variation between them (Bryman, 2012).

The purpose of this research is to find the success factors of Japanese entertainment "Johnny's" non-streaming business model in the Japanese music industry, which is dominated by streaming media, this research question is to explore possible reasons why the audience and consumers of Johnny’s prefer them in the market. I investigated this by interviewing the audiences and consumers of Johnny’s. Based on this context, I tried to explore the reason that Johnny’s can continue development in the Japanese music market even though it does not conform to the times.

I used semi-structured interviews where the interviewee has a lot of leeway in how

to respond, but the researcher has a list of questions or very specified themes to cover, commonly referred to as an interview guide⁸. While the interviewer listens to the interviewees' responses, additional questions that are not covered in the interview guide may be raised. Most of the questions will be asked and will be phrased similarly from interviewee to interviewee (Bryman, 2012).

3.2 Sampling

Since the research question of this research is an attempt to find the success factors of Johnny's, namely the reason why consumers of Johnny's accept the traditional approaches, the main limitation of sampling is to embrace the traditional media distribution and become a consumer of this entertainment company. In addition, there is no restriction on gender or age in the sampling.

The conditions for sampling will be shown in the figure below.

Criteria	Indicator	Measure
Fan Club Members	Last one-year users	First, we found out that they were Johnny's fans in the Fan Club and then asked by direct message whether they are users for more than one year. (Joining Fan Club means being a consumer.)
Social Media	Fans in Twitter, Instagram, Weibo	First by searching the number of posts they made on social media, then determining if they were active Johnny's audiences, followed by asking them by direct message if they were consumers of it and accept the traditional approaches.

⁸ Refer to Appendix (5) – Interview Guide

We selected consumers from as many different regions as possible for two main reasons. First, according to the theoretical framework, I can find that Japanese people are very familiar with the traditional media distribution of Johnny's, so as this point illustrate, I wanted to reach out to fans outside of Japan for their perspectives on the traditional media distribution. Secondly, I hoped that we can get different viewpoints on the local Japanese market from the interviewees because of their different cultural backgrounds and regions.

3.3 Size of data sets

Guest et al.(2006) suggest that twelve interviews are sufficient to reach data saturation. In order to provide answers to the research questions, interviewees were screened according to the criteria described in the table, and a total of 14 interviewees were eventually identified, but four interviewees preferred to conduct written interviews. For this reason, I selected 10 interviewers to finish the semi-structured in-depth interviews online via Zoom and WeChat meetings and informed them by WhatsApp and WeChat. Each interview was about an hour long, took two weeks to complete the interview.

By the time I reached the 7th interviewee, I found that their views had begun to overlap, so I decided to stop when we reached the 10th interview. A total of 10 hours of interviews over the two weeks of the survey will be recorded and transcribed into text using transcription software so that the results can be analyzed.

3.4 Operationalisation

In order to make the concepts in the theoretical framework observable in the interviews, the interview guide was very important in this qualitative research, I split the research question into many sub-questions in order to get closer and to find the result clearly.

Based on the theoretical framework, I tried to infer the situation that consumers choose the Johnny's idol in the market through the concept of consumer preference.

To explore the characteristics that make Johnny's attractive to consumers, the concept of a unique selling proposition was used. Furthermore, to find out why consumers remain loyal to Johnny's in the streaming media era, I used the concept of consumer loyalty here.

The interview guide was therefore structured into four sections. The first section covered the general background of the fans (consumers), such as their age, when they started following Johnny's, their education level, and how much money they spent on Johnny's idols roughly.

The second part looked at the key factors, based on the concepts of consumer preference and consumer loyalty, considering the development of the market as well as the competition and whether it has had an impact on consumers. In the face of the competition in the Japanese music market and streaming media, idols as products according to the concept of consumer preference, I posed the question to the interviewees why they choose the idol of Johnny's and the differences between other idols in the Japanese music industry. Additionally, in the theoretical framework section, the competition from Korean idols in the market was illustrated, there also posted questions to consumers about the difference between Johnny's idols and Korean idols. In order to understand the loyalty of Johnny's consumers, "Are you obsessed with this entertainment company "Johnny's" and their idols?" was mentioned. Team activities or individual activities based on Johnny's team guidelines also raised a question there, which is "If your favorite artist could choose between group and individual activities, what would you choose?"

The third part is based on Johnny's traditional approach accepted by Japanese consumer habits. The main consumption habits of the Japanese are physical albums and TV programs. According to the research question, Johnny's traditional media distribution was an important part of the question, I raised the interview questions related to traditional media, including "Do you think that would be a factor that would discourage consumers from choosing their artists?", the perspective of these consumers think about the non-streaming media convenience or not was also presented in this part. The question of whether consumers want Johnny's to switch

from traditional media to streaming media was also raised here.

In the fourth section, I tried to find out the unique selling proposition of Johnny's and their idols to the consumer. Based on the concept of it, the spiritual value of the male idols and maternal love from the Junior system were explored in the theoretical framework. According to the two aspects, the questions of whether the idols the interviewees followed were playing a special role in their lives, "What role do Johnny's idols play in your life and are they very important to your life?" "Have you ever thought about what you can get from the artists, whether it comes from a spiritual aspect or something else?" would also be mentioned there. The interview guide also provided enough space for the interviewees to talk freely about ideas not covered in the guide. In addition, all answers related to the questions answered by the interviewees during the interview will be categorized in the result section.

3.5 Data analysis

After completed the interviews, open coding is performed using ATLAS.ti The process of decomposing, examining, comparing, and conceptualizing (Bryman, 2012) clearly generate concepts through open coding (Bryman, 2012). In this process, patterns may be found that lead to new results from the research questions, and concepts may be grouped and turned into new categories. At the same time, assumptions are made on a theoretical basis, that is, the initial intuition about the relationship between concepts (Bryman, 2012).

I used the first sample as the initial code, according to Charmaz (2006), which tends to be more detailed to provide an initial impression of the data. At the initial stage, it was critical to keep an open mind and generate as many new ideas as possible to produce the necessary coding to encapsulate the data. This is the first step that qualitative researchers take to make sense of their data. Based on this reason, after the first sample is generated, axial coding was used. And after the second sample was generated, the new data collected was to be compared with the initial coding and re-structured according to the initial impression of the data in order to provide links between the concepts.

In the interviews, based on what is mentioned in the theoretical framework, I analyzed this research question from different directions, mainly focusing on the consumer's perspective on the Johnny's. The interviews were conducted according to the four directions that we mentioned above and recorded at the same time. After the interviews were completed, the content was converted to text, since the transcription did not convert each sentence to text very clearly, I played back at a speed of 0.7 times, the interviewees' answers could be reproduced clearly and the results could be obtained at the same time.

4. Result

In this section, after screening the interviewees according to the above-mentioned criteria, the study participants were interviewed according to the interview outline.

The 10 interviewees consisted mainly of fans from Japan, China, and Australia. The 10 interviewees were all women, mainly between the ages of 20 and 30, education level includes undergraduate and graduate students, including both Fan Club members and non-Fan Club members. All interviewees were informed about the following interviews and agreed to have their opinions included in the research. The basic information provided by the interviewees can be found in Appendices⁹.

By using ATLAS.ti, I was able to obtain Code Book¹⁰ based on the main factors examined in the theoretical framework and the relationships between the factors shown in the network¹¹. In addition, using ATLAS.ti and the perspectives expressed by the interviews, I created a different network from the theoretical framework from the perspective of the interviewees.

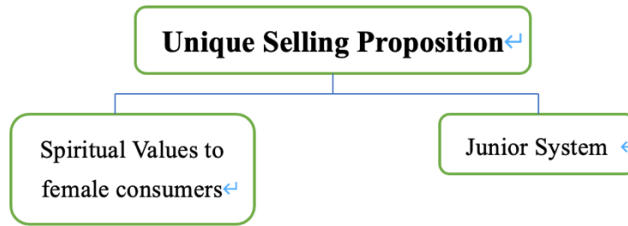
There are five main factors that emerged from audience interviews. First, the spiritual value and Junior system is the unique selling proposition that consumers follow Johnny's idols. The second point is the brand effect, team activities, and market competition become the reason for consumers to stay loyal. Thirdly, Johnny's development in the market has influenced consumer preferences. Fourth, Johnny's focuses on the Japanese music industry and Japanese consumption habits are perceived reasons for using traditional media. Fifth, there will elaborate on what I did not focus on in the theoretical framework section, but the consumers mentioned in the interviews about the relationship between consumers and Johnny's. Meanwhile, the five directions will be explored according to the guideline shown in the following graphics.

The first factor:

⁹ Refer to Appendix (6)- The overview of the (anonymous) respondents

¹⁰ Refer to Appendix (7)- Code Book

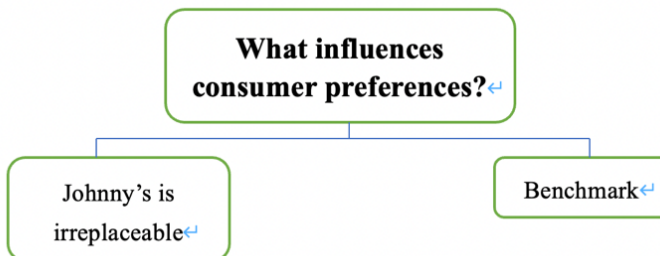
¹¹ Refer to Appendix (8)- Network



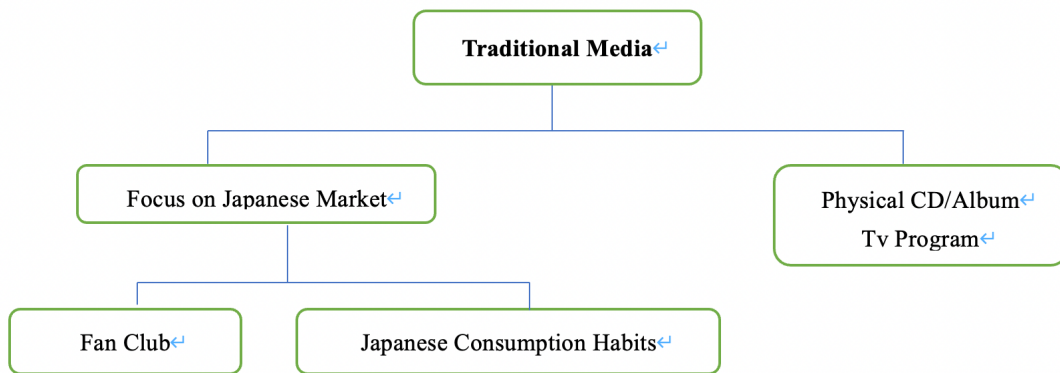
The second main factor:



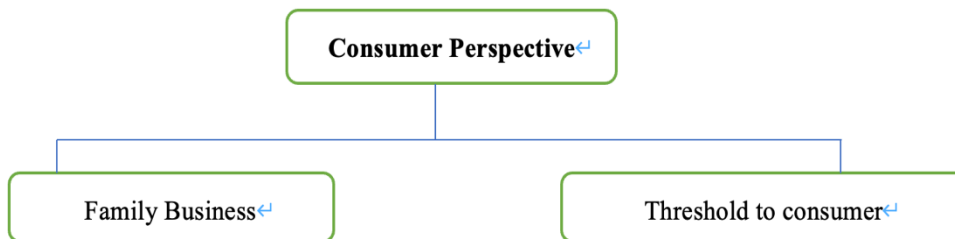
The third factor:



The fourth factor:



The fifth factor:



4.1 Consumers are attracted to the unique selling proposition of Johnny's.

4.1.1 Providing spiritual values to female consumers.

The fact that Johnny's only cultivates the male idol we already mentioned above, all the consumers interviewed said that the influence of Johnny's on themselves is a step-by-step attraction to themselves rather than a kind of purpose to follow this idol; their existence will not bring too much value to their lives but will bring a lot of happiness to their spiritual level.

Although we did not restrict the gender when selecting interviewees, all the interviewees we contacted were female. I think it can be shown from the side that the male idols of Johnny's are very attractive to female audiences and provide them with spiritual support. The 27-year-old interviewer from a Japanese fashion school said,

"When I was unhappy last week, I suddenly saw a picture of Mchieda Shunsuke¹² and thought he was so handsome, so I felt happy." Another interviewee from China studying classical music explained: "Johnny's idols are still an important part of my life because I'm a person who doesn't pursue much in terms of relationships, I'm more used to being alone, but having their goods with me makes me feel like an idol is with me."

In times of unhappiness, stress, and mental emptiness, the presence of these idols will fill that emptiness as well as have a positive impact on one's mood. This also confirms that Johnny's also wanted to be able to bring dreams to consumers in the beginning, not to create a very professional image in the music market .

The difference between Johnny's idols and other male idols was mentioned by the interviewees. "Although I have paid attention to Korean male idols before, compared to them, I would feel that the idols of Johnny's would have their own specialties, they would have attractive points that would bring me a sense of reality."

Johnny's idols bring more reality compared to other idols, they are not out of reach for consumers, 7 out of 10 interviewees mentioned this point at the same time. The male idols as the unique selling proposition, it takes spiritual support to female consumers, and also attract more female audiences. In addition, the authenticity of Johnny's idol is that other idols cannot bring to consumers.

4.1.2 Junior system.

The Junior system is also an aspect of Johnny's unique selling proposition, Until the Junior system was made by Johnny's, the Japanese music market had no such system for developing artists. The interviewee from Chengdu, China, said "The seniors lead the juniors together, for me, I think there is a deep bond, you can know the whole Johnny's through one person. The presence of the Junior system also allows you to experience the feeling of cultivation, it is not easy to leave them, this system influences you in a subtle way, in this way I can also experience the 'Yousei'¹³."

¹² A member from Johnny's group named "Naniwadanshi"

¹³ "Cultivate" in Japanese

Although the interviewees did not mention the “motherly gaze” (Karlin, 2012, pp. 72-93), through such development, we can find that even the Junior system just cultivates young idols, the consumer can experience the joy of it, it can be a symbol of Johnny’s for consumers.

4.2 Consumer loyalty

4.2.1 Johnny’s as a brand

“Johnny’s” is now more like a brand in the minds of consumers than an idol. Johnny’s can be directed to keep attracting a category of consumers in the market. Some interviewees say that idols bearing Johnny’s name will attract their attention more easily. More than half of the interviewees suggested that even if they no longer liked Johnny’s idols they previously chose, they would still be attracted to other Johnny’s idols next time, “Even my friend did not follow the senior group of Johnny’s already, but in the next time, she still liked other groups of Johnny’s.” One interviewee who is currently working as an engineer mentioned that this phenomenon is not only limited to herself but also to her friend.

This company probably represents more of a unique aesthetic, the so-called “Johnny’s orthodox idol”. One interviewee mentioned this concept, orthodox idols, Johnny’s idols who dress like princes on stage, prince-style clothing are also typically dressed for this entertainment company's artists to finish their performances. “The aesthetics of Johnny’s, this kind of dress, I thought it was so ugly at first, but it's the so-called orthodox idol style of Johnny’s.” This is the own aesthetics that Johnny’s made in the Japanese music market, consumers can clearly distinguish them from other idols in the market through the genre that made by Johnny’s.

We can also assume that the brand of Johnny’s expresses the self-concept by itself (Aaker, 1999), it prompted a positive influence on consumer attitudes towards the brand.

4.2.2 Group activities

The types of artists in Johnny's are also very different. Although idols have their personas, the types of them are different and can meet a variety of different needs of consumers and their fans. These artists are also involved in different fields, some will be good at acting, and some will be good at hosting. With the group as the main development of these idols, they show a lot of characteristics within a group and can attract a wide range of consumers. For these artists, their efforts outside the group are for the team to improve because the company's longstanding standard is to give back to the group regardless of their progress outside the group.

When the hypothesis was put to these interviewees that if they could choose whether their favorite idol would continue to work in this current group or do individual activities, all of them chose group activities. "With my own personality, I prefer the feeling of everyone being together and being a team, there is a sense of family and comradeship in team activities. There is some spark or some miracle that happens in group activities, like in a variety show." The 30-year-old interviewee from Australia, who works in a logistics-related field said.

An interviewer from Jiangsu, China, said, "Johnny's is all about the group as a business, and a lot of things serve the group. If we as fans, are actually pushing the whole group. You can favor one member in the group, but you can't just like one of him." Group activities are a guideline for Johnny's (Wang & Oyabu, 2014), each member formed a group, and the group activities are done by each member together. These members can continuously attract consumers from all aspects, thus enabling them to increase their loyalty to the group. Although the interviewees did not mention whether team activities are more efficient, their views clearly express the attractiveness of groups in a way that individual activities cannot achieve.

Take the example of Arashi, whose Fan Club numbers are increasing every month, even though they are no longer doing group activities. The Australian interviewee said that the reason Arashi attracted many consumers is because of their nationalism. "Arashi was not very popular at the beginning, looking back at their history, the pre-growth period would have been longer, which would have been a more difficult time

for the members to go through, the reunion power of them made this group suddenly become very national popularity." National popularity means the extent of the artist's audience in that country. A high national popularity means that almost everyone in that country knows the artist. This also a side indicates that the influence of the group that Johnny's has cultivated has been growing in the market and is continuous in Japan.

4.2.3 Competition from outside the Japanese music market

Depending on the perspective of the current audience, the group from Korea may gradually have an impact on the development of Johnny's and the Japanese music market. Based on the market phenomena observed by the interviewees during their consumption of Johnny's, we can suggest that even if Johnny's now holding almost most of the resources in the Japanese music market, it is inevitable that the entry of K-pop groups into Japan will have an impact on the local music market. According to data from Figure 3, we can see that the 21st and 27th places in the Top 30 concert numbers are Korean artists. In order to verify the interviewee's statement, I also found a statement about Seventeen, which was ranked in 27th place, they opened their first mini concert in September 2018 and in November 2022 has been able to tour in Japan's largest concert venue which is the Dome (people.com.cn, 2018).

In addition, the interviewee from Jiangsu, China claimed that Korean artists are also invited to music performance shows and to New Year's Eve concerts in Japan. Although some foreign artists were invited a few years ago, the number of Korean artists available to consumers has been particularly high in the last two years. This part of Korean artists entering the Japanese music market uses streaming media along with physical album releases, it seems that streaming media does not appear to have an impact on the sales of Korean groups now. Therefore, compared to Johnny's traditional approach, Korean groups can attract younger consumers more easily in this market.

However, an interviewee who works in the education industry has suggested that while streaming media will attract a part of younger audiences, older Japanese

audiences will do more consumption for their idols, “Physical albums are valued part of Johnny’s profits, with a mature traditional consumption approach that older Japanese audiences who purchase the physical album may be more familiar with.” In the face of the impact of K-pop on the market, because of the presence of these consumers, Johnny’s still maintains confidence in the traditional approaches.

Although times are constantly changing and streaming media is now the mainstream mode of consumption, the rising age of audiences dictates that they have the strength to become consumers of Johnny’s, this segment of audiences who are younger and inclined to use streaming is not a major revenue earner for this entertainment company. In order to keep the profit, I infer that Johnny’s does not want to cater to the preferences of younger consumers because they do not bring more benefits.

To summarize this phenomenon, even in the context of K-pop impacting the market, consumers with an economic foundation are the main aim of Johnny’s, their age and consumption habits lead them to be willing to accept the traditional approaches, because they are acquainted with it, and to be loyal consumers.

4.3 What influences consumer preferences?

4.3.1 Consumer preferences in Johnny’s consumers

According to the theoretical framework that we mentioned above, the consumer preferences in three aspects which are products, social class, and taste level based on the perspectives of interviewees will be elaborate.

Two of the interviewees mentioned that idols are products that are distributed by entertainment companies, in particular, the interviewee who works in the education industry explicitly said “Idols are products created on the basis of human beings.” Consumers choose idols according to their preferences in the industry. Idols as products in the market convey significance to consumers, validating that such significance can influence consumer preferences.

A consumer who engaged in engineering said she only follow Johnny's for a year, but she found a phenomenon, "Inside this environment, some people would say that before expressing your own opinion, show how much you spend for your idol. The money you spend determines everything, and those who spend more money have speaking rights." From these words, we can actually see that Johnny's Fan Club also reflects social class inside this walled city, the economic interests that exist in this environment also bring influence consumers. In addition, a consumer of classical music mentioned the taste level, saying that there is a chain of contempt in the music industry, Johnny's music is a genre that is difficult for classical music students to enjoy, but once they start to listen, it is hard to "escape".

Although not many interviewees mentioned consumer preferences, I can be informed from their answers that the three aspects of consumer preferences we focus on exist among Johnny's consumers.

4.3.2 Consumer choice shows Johnny's is irreplaceable in the market

With a well-known idol, a large Japanese audience, and numerous consumers, Johnny's is currently among the top entertainment company in the Japanese music market. The male idols created by this company are well-liked by consumers and audiences in this market, it has a lengthy history and a solid position in the mature Japanese music market. A large number of appearances in the market will increase the chances of consumers choosing Johnny's music. Even though J-pop music is not high art, Johnny's began to influence consumer tastes by promoting it extensively in the market through traditional media.

As a result of ongoing development, Johnny's continues to hold a dominant position in the Japanese music market, interviewees refer to call this entertainment company the "Johnny's Empire". "Johnny's is sticking to its model because of capital." An interviewee from China who now works in the education industry expressed her opinion, while she also said that "the generation of Johnny's has countless capital; power channels; and has emerging technologies, including the idols we talk about in this industry, the whole Japanese music market is built by them. The

Japanese are very old-fashioned." For this interviewee, Johnny's is an untouchable presence in the Japanese music market, it is a regular phenomenon for Johnny's to insist on its traditional approaches.

Although the interviewees would know and follow Johnny's through different approaches, they have also pointed out in their interviews that Johnny's has a monopoly on resources in the market, they believed that this company can bring better resources to their idols and make their idols develop better, which answered the question I posed at the theoretical framework speculating that consumers who like Johnny Artist are viewing the company's performance in the market with the same views or ideas. Although they see the presence of idols as more appealing to them than the company, it is also a fact that Johnny's is constantly influencing their preferences in the market. According to interviewees, although consumers do not reflect the taste class when they choose Johnny's, only consumer tastes are changed by Johnny's, not consumers changing their expression in the market.

4.3.3 Hope to become the market benchmark of Johnny's

According to an interviewee who also follows Johnny's idols and different male idols from other entertainment, Johnny's is unwilling to alter its business model because of the company's belief that Japanese male idols will eventually learn to conform to their own standards rather than altering them in response to market changes. Fans and consumers are hardly able to change its marketing techniques in the market when dealing with a large company like Johnny's. Some interviewers suggested that Korean entertainment companies can make changes according to the current market, fans, and consumers. But Johnny's keeps its own development model regardless of how the market changes.

Johnny's now has a virtual monopoly in the market for male idols in the Japanese music market. For this reason, there are many resources available to Johnny's artists, so consumers have access to their idols in many places, such as through regular appearances on TV shows. The Japanese music industry is one in which almost every entertainment company has its own independent development model, so in such an

environment, it would be a huge shift for the company if Johnny's were to abandon its traditional approach.

Although this section does not explicitly explain the impact on consumer preferences, Johnny's sought to influence the market, the development of idols in the market has influenced consumer choices to a certain extent.

4.4 The reason that Johnny's insists on traditional media distribution

4.4.1 Focusing on the Japanese music industry

No matter how much Johnny's develops, it remains a very traditional Japanese company. Consumers implicitly accept the traditional approaches. They believe that this entertainment company has no intention of expanding its market, for overseas consumers, Johnny's approach is entirely from the standpoint of the Japanese market. Additionally, the local market is sufficient for Johnny's because the Japanese music market is complete and mature, which leads them to keep the main center locally. The traditional approach is reasonably available to consumers who have been following Johnny's for a long time.

Johnny's only focuses on the Japanese music market with the following two points. First, regarding the Fan Club, which is very important for fans, a Japanese address is required to join the Fan Club, the company did not consider the inconvenience of overseas consumers at all.

Johnny's has been focusing only on the local consumer market in Japan, resulting in overseas consumers having to overcome many difficulties to join Fan Club. An interviewee who followed Johnny's idol only for one year said, "Although I am speechless about this model, I need to accept it, because I am willing to follow them, and I very much hope that Johnny's can change its approach." Even if such a traditional approach is difficult for overseas consumers to accept, the love of Johnny's idols will change the attitude of consumers. From the initial forced acceptance to take this model for granted. Even if there are fans who have opinions about such a model, most of them will accept it. Although Fan Club can only follow the news and

information of idols for overseas consumers, it is a sign that they are Johnny's fans.

Second, based on Japanese consumption habits. Japanese people are more preferring to buy physical albums, which validates the Japanese consumption habits we mentioned in the theoretical framework. For local audiences, the traditional approaches will be more applicable to Japanese consumers, which also led to the streaming media did not cause much impact on Johnny's. Overseas consumers are quite dissatisfied with Johnny's approach to maintaining tradition, but since they only develop locally, consumers have no right to interfere with the company's development, so they are forced to accept this model on the one hand. Three interviewees said that overseas consumers can only match the habits of Japanese consumers, and one of them said "I like Japanese idols, so I can only get used to their consumption habits."

In addition, Johnny's uses traditional approaches to attract consumers. Its approach to attracting an audience is essential to make a consumer through a path other than music and then finally come to buy the physical album. More than half of the interviewees discovered Johnny's from watching Japanese dramas, with eight of them discovering these idols this way and one being referred by a friend.

Johnny's long-standing partnership with television stations has allowed its artists to have a steady stream of dramas to shoot constantly. These idols' acting aims to attract audiences to enjoy the stage and eventually consume. In addition, television as one of the traditional approaches of consumption by the Japanese, has also become a tool to promote idols. The collaboration between the two can continue to attract audiences to become their own consumers. Japanese interviewees said that Johnny's artists appear on TV almost every day in Japan. She suggested that even though she does not want to actively contact these idols, they can be seen everywhere because Johnny's appears so frequently in Japan. Not only commercials, dramas, advertisements, and variety shows, but many times audiences will gradually accept and become consumers at the same time.

When I asked the interviewees if they wanted Johnny's to expand overseas, they said that even if Johnny's were to expand overseas, it would be with a focus on the

United States. The interviewees did not care about this as a consumer outside the United States, they thought that even if Johnny's plans to expand the market changed in a short period of time, they did not have much hope for this. In addition, a consumer has raised the hope that the pattern of being monopolized by Johnny's in the Japanese market will be broken and diverse development models can emerge.

4.4.2 The significance of the physical album for Johnny's

Album sales are a major part of the profit for this company and the use of streaming media may have an impact on the number of physical albums. An interviewee said that there are two Johnny's groups that are now starting to use streaming media: Arashi and Travis Japan. Travis Japan debuted in the United States, which has to use streaming media because of the local audience, Arashi debuted in Japan a very long time, opening streaming media does not really have a big impact on album sales.

From the entertainment company's point of view, the emergence of streaming media will have an impact on album sales, but from the consumer's perspective, the emergence of streaming media will not affect the sales of physical albums. Nine out of ten interviewees surveyed claimed they would still purchase physical albums even if Johnny's music was available on the streaming platforms because physical albums mean more to them like collectible items than a vehicle for listening to songs. The only one left said that he would no longer buy physical albums because in her opinion Johnny's albums don't make a lot of sense. Consumers outside of the Japanese region said there would be an approach to the problem of not being able to use streaming media, but the interviewees all expressed strongly in their interviews about their desire for Johnny's to use streaming media.

4.5 Consumer perception

4.5.1 Family business model

Stick to the family business model behind the traditional approaches, which have

been criticized by consumers. In addition to being developed only locally in Japan, the family business development is strongly unaccepted by customers, and the absence of a dedicated person to manage the company has a negative impact on the company's prospects for growth. The increasing number of artists who have quit the company in the last two years has made audiences and consumers come up with questions about this entertainment company.

In the theoretical framework, although we did not mention the industrial structure of this entertainment company, according to the interview results, all 10 interviewees mentioned that the disadvantage of Johnny's is that it is a family business. Family businesses obstruct the shift from traditional media to streaming media, which is a major factor in why consumers claim this company did not choose streaming media.

According to one Australian interviewee, "There is a rumor going around among fans that Johnny's is not so averse to streaming because the current president's daughter said: it is beneficial to have streaming media. Johnny's consequently started utilizing YouTube and Instagram. Even if it is a rumor, it shows how ridiculous this family business is. A company's decision is the president of the daughter of an inadvertent" All the interviewees believe that Johnny's does not lack the ability and resources to launch streaming media, perhaps the biggest reason they refuse streaming media is because of the family business model. The interviewee who is a fan of Arashi mentioned "Arashi's member Kazuya Ninomiya opened a YouTube account with an interesting project and the account was well received among fans, but Johnny's did not start streaming services during that period." she also thinks that Johnny's is essentially reluctant to open it.

4.5.2 The threshold set by Johnny's for outside audiences

When we did the interview, we also talked about streaming media and traditional media as an approach to filter audiences. The use of traditional media is cumbersome, but it is difficult for consumers to get out of it once they have fully accepted it. This threshold is screening consumers, an interviewee suggested that "Johnny's insistence on traditional media acts like an enhanced purchase difficulty in luxury goods, if you

don't have a way to cross that purchase difficulty, then you're not its audience." Its actions are sending us a message that they want consumers to like the idols they cultivate over a long period, not for a short time.

We also cannot ignore the fact that copyright and portrait rights are taken very seriously in Japanese society. Johnny's fans are actively defending the background of this market atmosphere while continuing to consolidate the traditional approaches. Consumers outside Japan will have a harder time getting direct access to Johnny's music. It can be assumed that this is an invisible threshold set by Johnny's for consumers, traditional approaches are very difficult to change in such a context. Under this threshold set by Johnny's, the purchase of physical albums has been a necessary part of them.

We can compare this entertainment company to a walled city, where consumers inside the wall are reluctant to come out, the form inside the wall has been gradually accustomed to them. As Johnny's is a Japanese company, consumers from overseas will also begin to adapt to the various requirements of the Japanese music industry in this environment, especially the copyrights, Japanese consumers are very disgusted by piracy. This behavior of copyright maintenance is likewise based on the economic foundation of consumers, who do not have a sufficient economic foundation and cannot obtain resources to follow these idols, the same validation that they may not be the audience of Johnny's. Similarly, consumers who spend less money are unable to express their opinions in Fan Club, I predict that under such a development consumers will accept such an environment and continue to strengthen such a consumer environment if they already adapt.

Although Johnny's has been relying on the traditional approaches of development, and also because there are fans in the process who also continue to adhere to the traditional consumption habits, the two sides of the non-change also led to Johnny's in the streaming media era having the bottom line to adhere to the traditional approaches.

5. Conclusion

This research paper was based on the research question: “In the era of streaming media, why do consumers accept an entertainment company “Johnny’s” that prefers to use physical albums to distribute music in the present market?”

From the interviews, we can conclude that consumers accept the non-streaming model in the streaming media era because based on Johnny's monopoly in the Japanese music market and control of resources, consumers have more access to their idols and are familiar with Johnny’s as a brand. Idols not only exist in the market as products, but they also convey spiritual values to consumers through their music or performances, as well as the Junior system brings the joy of cultivating idols to consumers. In addition, the group activity-based strategy continues to solidify consumers' affection for the idols, although Johnny's traditional approach is very cumbersome for consumers, the value that the idols bring out exceeds the drawbacks of the traditional approach.

In interviews, people tend to refer to idols and artists as products launched by entertainment companies in the market, the performance of the companies in the market further influences the direction of consumers' choice of products. The corporation we are focused on has established a monopoly in the Japanese music market, which leads consumers to choose only them. Because most of the resources of male idols belong to Johnny’s, consumers who prefer male idols mostly choose artists from it.

Some of the interviewees stressed how much they loved Johnny's as a category of idols and made it very obvious how different Johnny's idols were from other idols on the market. However, some of the interviewees suggested that their recognition of the company's idols did not come from this brand effect or its wide influence in the market, which is a subjective preference. But we will learn in the course of our interviews that the company's actions in the music market directly affect consumers' choices of “artist product”.

When the interviewees were further asked why they would accept traditional media in the context of Johnny’s monopoly of resources in the Japanese male idol market, I

received the following three main responses. First, consumers consider that they will satisfy their psychological needs during the tedious consumption process, which is a recognition of themselves rather than of the company. Johnny's idols become an escape from the consumers in real life and can bring a spiritual level of satisfaction. Second, the Junior system has attracted the attention of consumers, allowing them to come into contact with the growing Junior idols and experience the joy of cultivating them while gradually accepting traditional media distribution. The third point is that Johnny's current focus remains on Japan, and consumers in the Japanese music market continue to prefer traditional media. In addition, not planning to expand the market and Japanese consumers preferring physical consumption are also the reasons why Johnny's insists on traditional media and physical albums being a major part of their profits.

In this question, we could not ignore the cultural background of the Japanese music market, which is the Japanese preference for physical consumption. Johnny's has almost all the resources in this market, through other sources, such as Japanese drama, and TV shows, it attracts the audience to become its consumers in the music market. We can find that the traditional model is a good cyclic development for it. The audience is exposed to these artists in TV programs and after further understanding will become interested in the music and thus consume it; in addition, the music will continue to capture the consumers' attraction to pay attention to the artist's works in non-music fields or to consume them. However, the disadvantage of this model is the market monopoly we mentioned, which further entrenches the company's monopoly over the market.

Although this research is not focused on how to break the unbalanced development of Japanese male idols in the music market, the interviewees also expressed that they do not want to see the market environment very homogeneous and gradually lose competitiveness compared to other music markets, so making the market diversified is a scenario that consumers would expect to see, in addition, the types of products that consumers can choose from would also become more available.

Even though the situation will not change for the time being with Johnny's

insistence on the traditional approaches, consumers and audiences are looking forward to a future where we can see Johnny's music no longer relying solely on traditional media and expanding a larger market.

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7. Appendices

Appendix (1) – Figure 1. Album Sales Amount

	Artists	Sales Amount (Unit: Japanese Yen)
1	Snow Man	11 billion
2	King&Prince	7.7 billion
3	BTS	7.4 billion
4	SixTONES	6.7 billion
5	Naniwadannshi	6.3 billion

(Data from the Oricon website (<https://www.oricon.co.jp/>), translated by the author.)

Appendix (2)- Figure 2. The number of Johnny's Fan Club (until October 2022)

Group Name	Number	Time of Establishing Fan Club	Duration of the Fan Club Establishment
Arashi	3,070,000	04/2001	21 years and 6 months
King&Prince	920,000	02/2018	4 years and 8 months
Snow Man	854,000	11/2019	2 years and 11 months
Kanjani	780,000	04/2012	10 years and 6 months
Hey!Say!JUMP	732,000	09/2009	13 years and 1 months
KinKi Kids	614,000	06/1996	26 years and 4 months
Kis-My-Ft2	567,000	02/2012	10 years and 8 months
Naniwadanshi	560,000	08/2021	1 years and 2 months
SixTONES	550,000	11/2019	2 years and 11 months
Sexy Zone	471,000	05/2013	9 years and 5 months
Johnny's WEST	460,000	07/2016	6 years and 3 months
NEWS	410,000	04/2012	10 years and 6 months
KAT-TUN	262,000	04/2012	10 years and 6 months
TOKIO	120,000	03/1995	27 years and 7 months
A.B.C-Z	81,000	07/2016	6 years and 3 months
Kimura Takuya	78,000	07/2020	2 years and 3 months
20 th Century	62,000	11/2021	11 months
Miyakeken	58,000	11/2021	11 months
Okada Junichi	47,000	11/2021	11 months
Johnny's Jr.	1,540,000	-	

(Translated by the author.)

Original Data Sources:

ジャニーズFC会員数 2022年10月中旬

グループ	FC会員数	FC発足	FC発足から現在まで
嵐	3,070,000	2001年4月	21年6ヶ月
King & Prince	920,000	2018年2月	4年8ヶ月
Snow Man	854,000	2019年11月	2年11ヶ月
関ジャニ∞	780,000	2012年4月	10年6ヶ月
Hey! Say! JUMP	732,000	2009年9月	13年1ヶ月
KinKi Kids	614,000	1996年6月	26年4ヶ月
Kis-My-Ft2	567,000	2012年2月	10年8ヶ月
なにわ男子	560,000	2021年8月	1年2ヶ月
SixTONES	550,000	2019年11月	2年11ヶ月
Sexy Zone	471,000	2013年5月	9年5ヶ月
ジャニーズWEST	460,000	2016年7月	6年3ヶ月
NEWS	410,000	2012年4月	10年6ヶ月
KAT-TUN	262,000	2012年4月	10年6ヶ月
TOKIO	120,000	1995年3月	27年7ヶ月
A.B.C-Z	81,000	2016年7月	6年3ヶ月
木村拓哉	78,000	2020年7月	2年3ヶ月
20th Century	62,000	2021年11月	0年11ヶ月
三宅健	58,000	2021年11月	0年11ヶ月
岡田准一	47,000	2021年11月	0年11ヶ月
ジャニーズJr.	1,540,000		

Appendix (3)- Figure 3. The number of Japanese concert audiences in 2022 (TOP 30)

	The Name of Groups	Number of Participants (Unit: ten thousand)	Number of lives
1	EXILE	124.4	37
2	King&Prince (Johnny's)	91.4	42
3	Johnny's WEST (Johnny's)	77.8	45
4	Kis-My-Ft2 (Johnny's)	77.1	31
5	Mr.Children (Johnny's)	65.7	14
6	Sexy Zone (Johnny's)	58.9	34
7	Hey!Say!JUMP (Johnny's)	52.8	36
8	Kanjani (Johnny's)	50.4	18
9	Kuwata Keisuke	47.7	13
10	Yuzu	47.6	32
11	Nogizaka46	47.2	39
12	Sutoburi	47.2	14
13	GENERATIONS from EXILE TRIBE	46.2	27
14	Naniwadanshi	44.8	39
15	Snow Man (Johnny's)	42.4	35
16	SixTONES (Johnny's)	41.7	37
17	Aiyonn	41.5	38
18	Yazawa eikichi	41.1	23
19	SEKAI NO OWARI	40.6	13
20	Fukuyama	39.6	33
21	SEVENTEEN (Korea)	39.3	8
22	Oda Kazumasa	39.3	31
23	KinKi Kids (Johnny's)	38.5	7
24	NiziU	38.4	20
25	Official dism	36.6	40
26	NEWS	35.5	25
27	NCT 127 (Korea)	34.4	7
28	Back number	33.5	25
29	Perfume	32.9	24
30	THE RAMPAGE from EXILE TRIBE	32.0	25

(Translated by the author.)

Original Data Sources:

2022年 音楽ポップス興行規模 年間ランキング TOP30

順位	アーティスト名	興行規模 (万人)	公演回数 (回)
1	EXILE	124.4	37
2	King & Prince	91.4	42
3	ジャニーズWEST	77.8	45
4	Kis-My-Ft2	77.1	31
5	Mr.Children	65.7	14
6	Sexy Zone	58.9	34
7	Hey!Say!JUMP	52.8	36
8	関ジャニ∞	50.4	18
9	桑田佳祐	47.7	13
10	ゆず	47.6	32
11	乃木坂46	47.2	39
12	すとぷり	47.2	14
13	GENERATIONS from EXILE TRIBE	46.2	27
14	なにわ男子	44.8	39
15	Snow Man	42.4	35
16	SixTONES	41.7	37
17	あいみょん	41.5	38
18	矢沢永吉	41.1	23
19	SEKAI NO OWARI	40.6	13
20	福山雅治	39.6	33
21	SEVENTEEN	39.3	8
22	小田和正	39.3	31
23	KinKi Kids	38.5	7
24	NiziU	38.4	20
25	Official髭男dism	36.6	40
26	NEWS	35.5	25
27	NCT 127	34.4	7
28	back number	33.5	25
29	Perfume	32.9	24
30	THE RAMPAGE from EXILE TRIBE	32.0	25

※興行規模＝公演回数×各開催会場の最大収容人数 *実際の動員数とは異なる

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Appendix (4)- Figure 4. The Junior's program schedule

Broadcast time	Title of the program	Name of Junior
Monday to Friday 13:30-14:00	Go on a date with Cinderella	Morohoshi Shoki
Monday to Thursday 18:55-19:25	The rule of R (NHK E (education TV))	Morohoshi Shoki Jeshi Tanaka Itsuki Muraki Ryota
Every Monday 20:00-20:29	Heart Net TV	Kazama Shunsuke
Every Tuesday (Start at 6/1/2015) 22:00-22:54	War on Money (Kansei TV)	Takada Sho
Every Thursday 20:00-20:43	Period drama "Fool" (NHK)	Kazama Shunsuke
Every Friday 13:55-15:50	GOGO! Smile! (CBC TV)	For U
Every Friday 23:15-00:15	The Story of the Black Clothes (Morning TV)	Yasui Kentarou
Every Saturday 01:45-02:15	Gum (Morning TV)	Johnny's Junior

(Data from Junior's official website, translated by the author.)

Appendix (5) – Interview Guide

Interview Guide

The research is based on the audience's perspective to explore the success factors of the Japanese entertainment company "Johnny's" using traditional media distribution to grow in the streaming media era in the context of the Japanese music industry.

This research revolves around traditional media, the Japanese music market, and consumers. Therefore, the interview questions will focus on consumer preference, consumer loyalty, Japanese consumer habits which is the traditional media, and the significance of Johnny's unique selling proposition for consumers. And the listed questions may be asked in other forms during the interview or may spawn other questions that are asked by the interviewees or the interviewees.

Background

1. What is your age?
2. Could you please tell us about your occupation and education level?
3. Where are you from?

Do you live in Japan?

4. When you became a fan of Johnny's, were you a student or already working?
5. How much money do you spend on Johnny's artists every month?
6. How did you know about Johnny's artists?

Consumer Preference and Consumer Loyalty

7. There are many artists in the Japanese music market now, why did Johnny's artists attract your attention?
 - a. Do you think they are different from other idols?
8. Do you follow any artists from other companies or K-pop idols?
 - a. If have, what do you think is the biggest difference between them?
9. Are you obsessed with this entertainment company "Johnny's"?

- a. Do you think Johnny's idols are more attractive to you than other idols in the market?
 - b. Does it make you feel that I will only like them in this market?
10. If your favorite artist could now choose between group and individual activities, what would you choose? What is the reason?

Consumer Habit - Traditional Media

11. Johnny's music is almost not on streaming platforms, do you think that would be a factor that would discourage consumers from choosing their artists?
- a. Do you think such a format is convenient or inconvenient?
12. As a fan and a consumer, have you ever thought that one day 'Johnny's' would change the way so that people no longer need to listen to the songs through physical albums?

Unique selling proposition

13. What role do Johnny's idols play in your life and are they very important to your life?
14. Have you ever thought about what you can get from the artists, whether it comes from a spiritual aspect or something else?
15. Besides Johnny's, do you follow other art fields?
16. Is 'Johnny's' your aesthetic preference? Or has it changed your aesthetic?

Appendix (6)- The overview of the anonymous respondents

1. Interviewee 1

Age: 27 years old.

Gender: Female

Level of education: Postgraduate degree

Place of residence: Japan

Occupation: Student, studying at a fashion school in Tokyo.

Whether or not join the Johnny's Fan Club/ Length of time: 2 year

2. Interviewee 2

Age: 26 years old.

Gender: Female

Level of education: Master degree

Place of residence: Sichuan, China

Occupation: Work in the administration of the university

Whether or not join the Johnny's Fan Club/ Length of time: Less than two years

3. Interviewee 3

Age: 20 years old.

Gender: Female

Level of education: Bachelor degree

Place of residence: Hubei, China

Occupation: Student

Whether or not join the Johnny's Fan Club/ Length of time: Three or four years

4. Interviewee 4

Age: 21 years old.

Gender: Female

Level of education: Bachelor degree

Place of residence: China

Occupation: Student

Whether or not join the Johnny's Fan Club/ Length of time: Five months

5. Interviewee 5

Age: 27 years old.

Gender: Female

Level of education: Bachelor degree

Place of residence: China

Occupation: -

Whether or not join the Johnny's Fan Club/ Length of time: Yes (The exact length of time is not known)

6. Interviewee 6

Age: 25 years old.

Gender: Female

Level of education: Bachelor degree

Place of residence: China

Occupation: -

Whether or not join the Johnny's Fan Club/ Length of time: One year

7. Interviewee 7

Age: 24 years old.

Gender: Female

Level of education: Bachelor degree

Place of residence: China

Occupation: -

Whether or not join the Johnny's Fan Club/ Length of time: From 2016

8. Interviewee 8

Age: 25 years old.

Gender: Female

Level of education: Mater degree

Place of residence: Jiangsu, China

Occupation: Engineering

Whether or not join the Johnny's Fan Club/ Length of time: Less than two years

9. Interviewee 9

Age: 30 years old.

Gender: Female

Level of education: Bachelor degree

Place of residence: Australia

Occupation: Logistics-related work

Whether or not join the Johnny's Fan Club/ Length of time: No

10. Interviewee 10

Age: 26 years old.

Gender: Female

Level of education: Mater degree

Place of residence: China

Occupation: Work in the education industry

Whether or not join the Johnny's Fan Club/ Length of time: Nearly two years

ATLAS.ti Report

MA- FINAL THESIS

Codes

Report created by RUNBI LI on 24 May 2023

- **Age**
- **Benchmark**
- **Brand**
- **Communication**
- **Consumer preference**
- **Country**
- **Education level**
- **Emptiness**
- **Family business**
- **Fan Club**
- **Focus on Japanese market**
- **Group**
- **Idols as product**
- **Individual activities**
- **Japanese consumption habits**
- **Johnny's**

- **Johnny's aesthetic**
- **Johnny's Jr.**
- **K-pop**
- **Loyalty**
- **Male idol**
- **Market**
- **Market competition**
- **Market expansion**
- **Physical CD**
- **Physical magazines**
- **Portrait rights**
- **Reality**
- **Social media**
- **Spiritual level**
- **Streaming media**
- **Threshold**
- **Traditional**
- **TV Program**
- **USP**

Appendix (8) – Network based on the theoretical framework

