



An Exploratory Study of the Otaku Adolescent Consumer

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ABSTRACT

High accessibility to Internet technology and popularization of focus media has given rise to various emerging subcultures among the younger generation who constantly seek novelty. The otaku is such an adolescent subculture of avid collectors who have a special lifestyle and who are obsessed with anime products. This study explores this specific adolescent segment's traits and purchasing behavior patterns. A focus-group interview was conducted with some adolescent otaku to allow them to express their opinions and purchasing behaviors. Then, a questionnaire was developed based on the interview's findings, and data from a survey of 105 respondents were collected. Exploratory factor analysis was applied to extract the otaku's trait factors, while confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling were used for the verification of the scale and structural model, respectively. The results show that the adolescent otaku present an obsessive preference for visual perception. The main factor influencing the otaku's purchasing intentions in terms of animation, comics, and games (ACG) is their strong interest in and participation willingness toward ACG. Strategic marketing directions applied to this adolescent group should emphasize information visualization to entice their buying behavior. © 2012 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

The purchasing behavior of adolescents has received much attention from marketing practitioners and researchers over a long period of time. The purchasing behavior of adolescents is not only easily influenced by fashion trends, peers, and purchasing habits (McAlister & Pessemier, 1982), but has also played a gradually more important role in affecting the purchases of their families (Arnett, 2002; Beaudoin & Lachance, 2006; Belk, 2003; Kamaruddin & Mokhlis, 2003; Moschis & Moore, 1979). Even in recent years, some studies have mentioned "Global Teens," which refers to the explosive growth of teen consumers in global markets (Arnett, 2002; Kamaruddin & Mokhlis, 2003), result of this explosive growth, mainly because the buying behavior of adolescents susceptible to pandemic trends, peer, and consumer characteristics (McAlister & Pessemier, 1982). They pay a lot of attention on shopping, as often as the task of the family shopping (Arnett, 2002; Beaudoin & Lachance, 2006; Belk, 2003; Kamaruddin & Mokhlis, 2003; Moschis & Moore, 1979). Therefore, adolescents' buying behavior caught a lot attention in marketing field.

The omnipresence of Internet access has provided an optimized environment to enter the "visualization era." The development of information technology has resulted in the gradual alteration of human lifestyles. Additionally, human lifestyles have changed along with the progress of information technology, and the rise of the Internet era has brought about the reorganization of interpersonal relationships and a re-orientation of personal values. The dynamic impact of the mass media and widespread use of computers have led to the popularization of computer games, animation, and cartoons. Adolescents, who were born into the electronic era, can easily acquire various types of electronic equipment as if this equipment was an extension of their bodies (Takana, 2002). In such an environment, this new generation group can adapt to the massive number of messages from the exploding information and get extreme enjoyment from flat-screen images. Besides, with the changes in emotion projection, human's preferences for physical objects have been transferred to various virtual figures and contexts. The evolution of the lifestyle of this new generation group has diminished