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## Virtual Youtuber (Vtuber): A New Frontier of Content Marketing

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#### Abstract

Recent technological advancements have shaped a digital society, with Vtubers (Virtual Youtubers) rising as a popular new form of entertainment. Unlike traditional anime, Vtubers interact with audiences in real-time, fostering closer fan connections and communities. HypeAuditor's 2019 data shows Vtuber engagement rates are three times higher than real KOLs. As the Vtuber market grows, businesses are leveraging their influence by collaborating or creating branded Vtubers to engage younger audiences and boost sales. This study divided Vtubers into entertaining and professional types and used online questionnaires to collect data, gathering 305 valid survey responses. The result shows consumers prefer brands that align with their identity and build emotional attachment, enhancing trust and loyalty. Besides, Vtuber fans community cohesion effectively strengthen brand connections and drive purchase intention. To sum up, this study helps brands better understand the factors affect purchase intention and how to choose Vtuber to cooperate and build closer relationship with customers and affects their purchase intention.

Key words: brand identity, emotional attachment, fans community cohesion, purchase intention

# 虛擬 Youtuber (Vtuber): 內容行銷的新領域

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#### 摘要

近年來,隨著科技的快速發展,逐漸建構數位社會。隨著串流媒體平台的 興起, Vtuber (Virtual Youtuber) 這種新興直播風格走進人們的日常生活, 並開 始在網路社群中流行。此外,Vtuber 還成為了"活 IP",與傳統動漫產業人物 無法與觀眾互動不同,VTuber 可以在直播過程中與觀眾即時互動,從而促進與 粉絲之間更加緊密的聯繫,並逐步形成專屬粉絲社群。根據社群媒體分析網站 HypeAuditor 報告顯示, 2019年 Instagram 上的 Vtuber 整體互動率平均比真人 KOL ( 關鍵意見領袖 ) 高出三倍。隨著 Vtuber 市場的持續擴展, 其高人氣與影 響力吸引了眾多企業的關注。企業紛紛開始與 Vtuber 合作,甚至創建自己的品 牌專有的 Vtuber 來吸引年輕一代族群,以吸引年輕受眾並促進銷售成長。本研 究將 Vtuber 分為娛樂型和專業型,並以線上問卷調查的方式收集樣本資料。共 採集 305 份有效樣本。透過研究結果發現,消費者更傾向選擇能夠與自身認同 感相符並建立情感連結的品牌,進而增強信任感與忠誠度。此外, Vtuber 粉絲 社群的凝聚力能有效強化品牌與消費者之間的連結,並提升購買意願。綜上所 述,本研究有助於品牌深入了解影響消費者購買意願的關鍵因素,並為企業選 擇合適的 Vtuber 合作對象提供參考,以建立與消費者更加緊密的關係,進一步 提升品牌影響力及市場競爭力。

關鍵字: 品牌認同、情感依附、粉絲社群黏著度、購買意圖

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### **INTRODUCTION**

#### Background

In recent years, Vtubers have a new content marketing method, Vtubers not only build connections between brands and customers, but also increase consumers' purchase intention. These virtual influencers are not only featured on brand fan pages, business communities, and official websites but are also increasingly being used as brand spokespersons. They allow companies reached their target audience, especially the younger generation that is well adapted towards and prefers such kind of digital content. From the statistics of HypeAuditor, reveals that Vtuber's fans are concentrated in the age group of 18 to 34 years old, among them as high as 14.64% of the fans are between the ages of 13 and 17 years old, Much higher when compared to only 7% of the fans of real Internet celebrities between the ages of 13 and 17 years old.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, if a brand chooses to cooperate with Vtuber, it will have a better chance of attracting the attention and interaction of young people. Brands can capitalize on this by using Vtubers to drive interactive experiences, product launches and brand messaging that resonates personally and entertaining. What is more, Vtubers are good at establishing long-term relationships with viewers; it happens because their own different character setting and personality makes them catch certain group of fans also help to the viewer loyal. Essentially, as this trend continues to evolve and take over in the coming years, the brands that start to adapt and work with Vtubers in increasingly amazing ways be able before all others to capture that coolest of cat-like attention from increasingly techie consumers. As this trend continues to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "The Top Virtual Instagram Influencers in 2021," The Top Virtual Instagram Influencers in 2021, HypeAuditor, 2021, accessed December 7, 2021, https://hypeauditor.com/blog/the-top-instagram-virtual-influencers-in-2021/.

grow, adapting and integrating Vtubers into their marketing strategies are likely to gain a competitive edge in capturing the attention of consumers.

Vtuber roughly divide into agency, group and kojinzei (independent). Agency created Vtuber by themselves, the operation behind the scenes may be a team, including corporate graphics, programming, voicing, training, public relations and so on to fit brand image and promoting brand. The other way is to cooperate with group or independent Vtuber, to connect with potential customers. To sum up, Vtubers are transforming not just entertainment but also the way businesses engage with customers and build relationships.

Some brands are starting to put resources into cultivating brands' own virtual spokesperson and interact with customers specially and directly. For example, the one of the biggest video platform Netflix, pushing their first official anime Vtuber The-Nko in April 2021. Sharing information about drama, anime and movies with audiences on personal show (The N-ko Show) every week in order to make connection with customers. Famous alcoholic beverages brand Suntory push their own Vtuber-Suntory Nomu, not only advertising brand alcohol products but also opened Vtuber own social media accounts, singing song, doing game live stream, hosting talk show and so on. The number of Suntory Nomu's singing Music Video exceeded millions views and even reached the highest number of views even reached 5.18 million. Covering popular songs to connect with people or customers has received a huge response from audiences. The number of subscriptions has also reached close to 170,000. It can be said that it is a very successful corporate Vtuber. Besides, Japanese fashion brand GU, in order to make its products and dressing styles more relevant to real customers, randomly selected 200 Japanese women, aged 17 to 33, measured each person's body shape, and then integrated the average of the data to create GU

The first Vtuber is named "YU". This allows YU to showcase products in a way that resonates more authentically with the audience, potentially helping customers visualize how the clothing would fit them. To sum up, Business make Vtuber by themselves would not only increase flexibility but have more content to develop, which have more diversity than celebrities or influencers.

Cooperating with celebrities and influencers used to be one of the ways for brands to share information, products, and brand image with customers. Nowadays, however, more and more brands tend to choose Vtuber instead. In 2022, The Influencer Marketing Factory conducted a market survey among more than 1,000 Americans over the age of 18. At least 58% of the respondents followed a virtual influencer, of which the rate for Generation Z (born 1995-2010) was as high as 75%, and 65% of the followers purchased products endorsed or introduced by virtual influencers. Compare to celebrity and influencer will have the possibility of gossip, news, or any action to damage brand image, Vtubers are not afraid of scandals and stay young forever. What's more, more like blank paper and "under control" could make it to be exactly fit the brand image if the brand created Vtuber by their own. Another reason for choosing Vtuber, the audience desires streamers or influencers to respond and interact with them, in order to raise attention, attractive content and brand image are not enough, brands have to create more interaction with the audience and link the connection between customers. Based on the social media analysis website HypeAuditor, Vtuber report data on Instagram in 2019 shows that the overall interaction rates of Vtuber is three times higher than real KOL on average. Moreover, in 2021, the number of posts related to the keyword "VTuber" increased by a total of

138% across the three platforms of Facebook, Instagram and YouTube<sup>2</sup>, indicating that the discussion of Vtuber in Taiwan is constantly rising. This shows that during the epidemic, Vtuber can become a partner for brands to cooperate with when using influencer marketing .

In other words, for the audience, the attraction of Vtubers could be compared with real people to bring the same or even better publicity effect.<sup>3</sup> According to the "2022 Internet Celebrity Marketing Trend Report" released by KOL Radar, due to the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, people generally stay at home frequently, For these people, the Internet is the best way to express themselves. They don't have to go out and bear the risk of the epidemic, and they can also get enough entertainment. Social media became the central avenue for brands to connect with audiences, leveraging influencers and virtual personalities to create engaging, relatable content. This approach helped drive a boom in internet celebrity marketing, opening new paths for brands to promote products and building consumer relationships in a digital-first world.

# Motivation

When consumers have an excellent preference and attitude of a specific brand or product, purchase intention will be formed, that is to say, purchase intention refers to the subjective idea of purchasing a certain brand product. Thus, customer perceptions on brands can be affected by brands' strategy and movement, that is, predict sales in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 網紅行銷趨勢 Trends 趨勢分享, "VTuber 是什麼? AI 虛擬網紅會取代一般網紅嗎?," KOL Reader (March, 24 2022), https://www.kolradar.com/trend-sharing/vtuber-marketing-trend/.
<sup>3</sup> 耿慶瑞, 丁慧瑩, and 鄭壁嫻, "虛擬角色代言人對網路廣告的影響一擬社會互動與產品涉入的 干擾效果," [The Advertising Effect of Avatar on Internet-Moderating Effects of PSI and Product Involvement.] 資訊管理學報 19, no. 2 (2012), https://doi.org/10.6382/jim.201204.0228.

the future and determine how the actions they take will impact customers' purchasing behavior. Morwitz & Schmittlein<sup>4</sup> support that purchase intention can be used to forecast actual buying behavior. Therefore, marketers have always believed that purchase intention is the factor that can most accurately predict consumers' purchase behavior toward brand or product.

There are some previous studies that reveal a variety of factors that drive consumer purchase intention. First of all, Rong Huang and Emine Sarigollu revealed that brand awareness is important for consumers when making purchase decision.<sup>5</sup> Brand awareness works to help familiarize customers with a product or brand through promotions, advertising, social media events, etc. Therefore, it exerts a strong impact on the purchase intention, behavior and choices made by consumers. Secondly, Kamins and Marks claim that brand image has a positive influence on purchase intention.<sup>6</sup> Brand images are the impression that stays in customer mind based on their perception of brand and their experience through interactions. Thus, brands can trough marketing, brand activities even CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) to boost brand significant image. Third, Qiyu Yu through combining literature and data analysis determined that price still has a certain degree of impact on customer purchase intention, although based on different level of acceptance of customer.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, price can also influence the perceived value of a product, if there is a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Vicki G. Morwitz and David Schmittlein, "Using segmentation to improve sales forecasts based on purchase intent: Which "intenders" actually buy?," *Journal of Marketing Research* 29, no. 4 (1992), https://doi.org/10.2307/3172706.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Rong Huang and Emine Sarigollu, "How Brand Awareness Relates to Market Outcome, Brand Equity and the Marketing Mix," Journal of Business Research 65 (01/31 2012), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.02.003.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Michael Kamins and Lawrence Marks, "The Perception of Kosher as a Third Party Certification Claim in Advertising for Familiar or Unfamiliar Brands," Journal of The Academy of Marketing Science - J ACAD MARK SCI 19 (06/01 1991), https://doi.org/10.1177/009207039101900303.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Qiyu Yu, "Research on Factors Affecting Consumers' Purchase Intention," Advances in Economics, Management and Political Sciences 37 (11/10 2023), https://doi.org/10.54254/2754-1169/37/20231835.

product with lower price among similar product consumer may choose with lower price without thinking preference of brand awareness and brand image. The research by Della found that the more discounts, the higher the brand interest and the higher the purchase intention.<sup>8</sup> Showing that price works as an influence element for customers to take consideration as purchase decision making. Besides, Researchers have empirically proved the positive and significant relationship of product quality with consumer purchase intention.<sup>9</sup> Also, in Cannière study, found out quality leads to a strong relationship with a consumer's purchase intention while purchase intention significantly influences purchase behavior.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, Customer will weighing brand or product if can bring the value with worthy price and quality then cause purchase behavior.

Previous research has already shown brand awareness, brand image, price, brand quality and so on, positively affects purchase intention. However, there is limited literature from the influencer side which has a great influence on marketing or consumer purchasing behavior. According to the research launched by TikTok which has over 1 billion monthly active users globally, showing that<sup>11</sup>

i. Community Influence vs. Brand Influence: Customers in Indonesia,

Thailand, and Vietnam, are more influenced by content communities than

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Albert Della Bitta, Kent Monroe, and John McGinnis, "Consumer Perceptions of Comparative Price Advertisements," Journal of Marketing Research 18 (11/01 1981), https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800402.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Abdullah Sarwar et al., "Customer's Perception Towards Buying Chinese Products: An Empirical Investigation in Malaysia," *World Applied Sciences Journal* 22 (01/01 2013), https://doi.org/10.5829/idosi.wasj.2013.22.02.371.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Marie Canniére, Patrick De Pelsmacker, and Maggie Geuens, "Relationship Quality and Purchase Intention and Behavior: The Moderating Impact of Relationship Strength," *Journal of Business and Psychology* 25 (03/01 2010), https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-009-9127-z.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Jasmine Tan Benjamin Zhang, Hannah Qian Lin, Lee Mun Yee, Christal Tang, Sherwin Ng, "Shoppertainment 2024:The Future of Consumer & Commerce," *TikTok*, no. Shoppertainment 2024 (2024), https://reurl.cc/dybRDD.

by brands alone. For instance, in Vietnam, 53% of consumers are influenced by content communities, versus just only 20% influenced by brands. In Japan and South Korea, content communities also play a role though, brands still maintain a considerable influence.

- Content Types that Drive Purchases: A majority of consumers (79%) are affected by content types that are not related to discounts. Only 21% are highly sensitive to discounts. This indicates that consumers value quality and experience over mere price reductions.
- iii. Preferred Type of Content: Recommendations by influencers and creators,
   Product detail and benefits can bring to customers, reviews from others are
   highly effective to encourage consumers buying decisions.

Take deeply into the format of influencer and creator recommendations, audiences and consumers trust more the influencers they like and follow compared to branded marketing campaign. By displaying the detail and comments the review of product through social media from influencers has stronger motivation for customers to drive purchases. Consumption patterns gradually change, emphasize the growing importance of influencers, creators and community-driven marketing in shaping consumer purchase intention and decisions. That is to say, influencers and community on internet became one of effective factors influenced consumer purchase behavior, indicating that brands not only should maintain their influence in market but also engaging with communities.

The higher the level of interaction, the more members who share common values, it is easier for these members to identify with the brand and the community. Brand community identification will result in a high willingness to recommend the brand's products or services, and as members' stronger identification with a specific brand lead to increase product loyalty and repurchase intention. In addition, social network theory states that trust can be transferred between individuals in a network , and an individual's trust in an entity may be affected by others.<sup>12</sup> Lee believes that there is a positive relationship between consumer trust and loyalty.<sup>13</sup> Singh and Sirdeshmukh believe that trust is a key mediating variable in pre- and post-purchase purchasing behavior, which can lead to long-term customer loyalty and bring both parties to the transaction closer together.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the members believe everything published about products in the brand's social media platform fan page, which helps make their trust for it rise and therefore loyalty to buy more of this branded product. Based on the results of research, a positive correlation exists between trust in brand community and loyalty to brand. The higher consumers' brand loyalty is, the lower possibility of changing their behavior to buy another brand. Furthermore, they will continue to purchase the same brand in the present and in the future as they have in the past.<sup>15</sup> That is to say, it supported that brand community has the positive influence on consumer purchase intention.

Through previous research, brand awareness, brand image, price, brand quality and so on can positively affect purchase intention. Nonetheless, there is the literature gap from the influencer side which with great impact on marketing or consumer purchasing behavior. Besides, previous research reveals that brand fans page on social media has influence on consumer purchase intention. However, there is limited

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Yi-Fen Chen Tzu-I Jou, Wan-Hsin Yen, "Effects of Facebook Fan Pages on Consumer Brand Loyalty and Purchase Intention," *Research Square* (2023), https://reurl.cc/rvjLQ4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Jungwon Lee, Kim Jinwoo, and Jae Yun Moon, *What makes Internet users visit cyber stores again? Key design factors for customer loyalty* (2000).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Jagdip Singh and Deepak Sirdeshmukh, "Agency and Trust Mechanisms in Consumer Satisfaction and Loyalty Judgments," *Journal of The Academy of Marketing Science - J ACAD MARK SCI* 28 (12/01 2000), https://doi.org/10.1177/0092070300281014.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Robert Morgan and Shelby Hunt, "The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing," *the journal of marketing* 58 (07/01 1994), https://doi.org/10.2307/1252308.

literature that fans community influence on consumer purchase intention from influencer, especially Vtubers. Therefore, this study aims to observe from new influencer angle of Vtuber and identify the factors that can form Vtuber fans community and fans community effectively influence customer purchase intention. Additionally, it aspires to provide practical recommendations or suggestions for brands to ride the new, still growing but powerful Vtuber trend.

#### **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to explore Vtuber fan community cohesion shaping influence in customer purchase intention. Additionally, identify the factors that form Vtuber fan communities and assess how these communities affect customers' perceptions of brand identity, emotional attachment on brand, value and purchase intentions. This research combines Vtuber case study and statistical analysis to explore some successful factors of the role Vtuber and Vtuber's fan communities playing in marketing, hopes these findings can be helpful for those industries and businesses to have the new and effective connection with their customers.

# **Research Questions**

Previously, there has been limited research on the fans community cohesion affects purchase intention. Especially, through new trend of influencer- Vtuber. Therefore, I conduct qualitative and quantitative research to identify the factors that can shape fans community cohesion through the traits of Vtuber. Then, I use statistical analysis to verify the antecedents of Vtubers' fans community cohesion and the influence of Vtubers' fans community on purchase intention.

- 1. How Vtubers' fans community cohesion affects purchase intention
- 2. How to build Vtuber fans community cohesion

# Contribution

A lot of studies in the past have paid attention to examining a variety of factors influence of purchase intention. However, since the rise of social media platforms brings the trend of Vtuber which affects consumers' behavior and firms' performance. Therefore, this study, emphasizes the factors that influencer- Vtuber fans community can influence customers' purchase intention, adding a new viewpoint in the existing literature.

According to my research questions, found that purchase intention influenced by brand identity, emotional attachment of brand, and Vtubers' fans community cohesion. Customers often look for a brand that aligns with their own values and lifestyle. If brand can resonate with them, it will also further increase consumers' sense of belonging to brands and significantly increase their inner recognition of the brand. Clearly conveying its unique characteristics, values, and personality, makes brands more recognizable and appealing to consumers. In order to achieve consistency with brands, customers will show more active and enthusiastic behaviors towards brands, which also helps with higher customer's' brand identity sense. Besides, when brands reflect consumers' lifestyle, values, or personal identity, they will see brands as more than just product or service. Consumers are more likely to support a brand they feel connected to, even when other options are available. That is to say, building a positive emotional connection fosters a strong sense of trust and loyalty.

Therefore, the cohesion within Vtuber fan communities significantly impacts purchase intention by cultivating a strong sense of shared identity, interest and

connection among fans. In tightly connect communities, fans not only share a common admiration, identity and like for a particular Vtuber with other fans but also participate in collective experiences, discussions, and sharing that deepen their bond. This collective support creates a reinforcing cycle of engagement, where fans feel themselves play an important part of a group with shared values and loyalty to the Vtuber.

As fans engage with each other, they often influence one another's thoughts, including purchasing decisions, with the overlap of fans' ideas and perspectives makes sharing and discussion within the community highly persuasive. The feeling of belonging and closer relationship within the community leads fans to support brands that are endorsed or used by their favorite Vtuber as a way of showing solidarity. Meanwhile, it becomes a way to show loyalty and support to Vtuber which drives fans to purchase. Besides, the way Vtubers interact directly with their fan communities, making fans feel recognized and valued, amplify the " take action to show loyalty" thought. For fans, this personal connection often translates into a greater willingness among purchase merchandise, support brand partnerships, or invest in products associated with the Vtuber. To conclude, the cohesion within Vtuber fan communities strengthens fans' emotional attachment, loyalty, and ultimately, their purchase intention.

The case study shows that when brands shape the personality and behavior of Vtubers, they can adopt several key strategies to ensure consistency with their brand personality. First, the brand should clearly define its core values and the brand message it hopes to convey to guide the shaping and development of Vtuber to attract potential audiences. For example, the JINS glasses brand is a young brand that emphasizes new trends and creativity. The character of its Vtuber should be lively,

entertaining, interesting and energetic. Therefore, Vtuber's character design, appearance, personality traits and behavioral patterns, including the voice and personality of the Nakanohito should be fit those features. Such as the case study mentioned Japanese Vtuber Mochikomame to ensure that it fits the overall image of the brand and attracts the audience. In addition, it is crucial to choose a Vtuber based on the characteristics and needs of your audience. For example, choosing Vtuber which needs to use technology products for a long time and frequently, also often streaming and maintaining their fans communities online to emphasize the importance of eye health and the need to choose suitable glasses. Besides, using virtual technology to let Vtuber wear JINS glasses to enhance the audience's sense of involvement and belonging to the brand. At the same time, the characteristics of the Japanese Vtuber who learning Chinese is a complement to resonate with the Japanese glasses brand JINS enter Taiwan market and add cultural novelty and interesting in the process of introducing products.

Another case, Chunghwa Telecom Vtuber Lumina, showing professional knowledge and friendly image, thinking from the perspective of consumers, and solving technology product problems in daily life. She explains the operation mode of the product in a simple and easy-to-understand way and recommends how Chunghwa Telecom's products can improve the quality of life, thereby attracting multiple audiences. Regardless of whether the audience purchases Chunghwa Telecom's products, they can understand and learn through Lumina, which satisfies the audience's thirst for knowledge and invisibly affects their perception of the Chunghwa Telecom brand. Lumina's character and setting complement Chunghwa Telecom's friendly, professional, and think from customers' side image, effectively establishing an emotional connection with consumers, virtually shaping the fan base, and laying

the foundation for the potential customers in the future.

The fans community of Vtuber built by people who loved Vtuber, in this way, when Vtuber introduces product, those groups of people will have more patience, identity and emotional attachment toward brand. Vtuber similar to the concept of celebrity, forming their fans community cultivate trust, identity and emotional attachment and adhesion, however, in lower cost. Vtuber play a role as linking brand and customers, reducing consumer uncertainty and making it easier for them to make purchase decisions. Also, using the same product with their loved Vtuber brings happiness same as buying Vtuber's goods, feeling they are closed to their idol. Therefore, brands can make changes or put effort into these aspects, evaluating brand position and choosing Vtuber properly to interact with those potential customers.

According to the statistical results, the researcher found that brand identity, emotional attachment, and Vtuber fans community cohesion positively affect consumer purchase intention. The study highlights a novel perspective: the cohesion within Vtuber fan communities as a powerful factor influencing purchase intention. In order to build fans community cohesion, different traits of Vtubers' entertaining, professional can attract different group of people. Therefore, brands can put effort into these aspects to create or find the Vtuber can match brand value and image, to appeal to customers. To cultivate this community cohesion, Vtubers with distinct traits whether entertaining, or professional—can draw attention in different audience groups. Brands can through these Vtuber's traits find Vtubers who resonate with brand values and image, through Vtuber to convey brand value and image, creating a more authentic connection with potential customers. This strategic connection can not only strengthen the emotional connection fans feel toward the brand but also builds a cohesive fan community that can thereby effectively drive purchase intentions.

### Limits

Since I cannot directly interview brand and Vtuber, I couldn't gain practical insights into the factors influencing Vtubers' fans community cohesion and how to establish it by their view side.

#### **Delimits**

Although I don't have precise data on Vtuber audiences and who have the experience of watching of Vtuber, this study instead categorizes Vtubers into "Entertaining" and "Professional" types and examines real cases of Vtuber-brand collaborations to understand how different Vtuber characteristics and engagement styles align with brand goals and influence fan community dynamics. To broaden insights, a questionnaire was administered to capture public opinions on Vtuber content, appeal, and influence on brand perception and perception of fan community. Additionally, Vtuber trends in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan were analyzed to reveal how regional differences in brand strategy and audience preferences shape fan communities. This multi-faceted approach provides a clearer view of Vtubers' roles in building brand connections and fostering strong fan communities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Vtubers, Virtual YouTubers, are 2D or 3D avatars that are through the voices, reactions, and movements of real people, who is referred to as a Nakanohito (i.e., voice actors) in Japanese. Different from ordinary YouTubers, Vtuber's creative content is accepted to using anime-style character voices or using VR technology to present unrealistic performances.<sup>16</sup> These avatars are given unique personalities and aesthetics to appeal to specific audience groups. Nakanohito, the voice actors behind the Vtubers, play a crucial role in bringing these characters closer to real life by making them with human emotions and spontaneous reactions. This human element enhances the connection between the audience and the virtual character (Vtuber), making the content feel more relatable and attracting. The combination of technology and human creativity allows Vtubers to host live streams, interact with viewers in real-time, and participate in various online events with other influencers no matter real people or virtual character, making them a powerful tool for digital marketing and fan engagement.

In the past decades, Japanese manga, video games and anime have gained widespread popularity around the world. Besides, Japan is also the first one rise the concept of virtual character, The history of avatar-based virtual idols can be traced back to the mid-1990s. The first two avatar-based idols, Kyoko Date and Yuki Terai, were created in Japan in 1996-1997.<sup>1718</sup> In 2007, the first generation of virtual idol

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Zhicong Lu et al., "More Kawaii than a Real-Person Live Streamer: Understanding How the Otaku Community Engages with and Perceives Virtual YouTubers" (Proceedings of the 2021 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, Yokohama, Japan, Association for Computing Machinery, 2021).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Patrick St. Michel, "A Brief History of Virtual Pop Stars," *Pitchfork* (July 15 2016), https://pitchfork.com/thepitch/1229-a-brief-history-of-virtual-pop-stars/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Michel, "A Brief History of Virtual Pop Stars."

singer in the world debuted and held multiple VR concert tours, Hatsune Miku (初音  $\stackrel{<}{_{\sim}}$   $\stackrel{<}{_{\sim}}$  ), has attracted a massive fan base and coverage internationally.<sup>19</sup> Also, got the advertisement of video games, hair make up and even has 3D stage to do live stream and sing in front of audiences and soon became an international phenomenon. Although Hatsune Miku is not Vtuber but virtual character but solidified the future development of Vtuber. Due to the strong base of their anime industry, Japan is the first country made Vtuber industry chain. Since the market debut of Japan's first Vtuber, Kizuna AI in 2016, has brought new view on a variety of markets and became the important part of developing Vtuber field. Now, basically, Japan has two biggest for-profit Vtuber agencies, Nijisanji and Hololive, having the most Vtuber in the industry and other company or business could cooperate with those Vtuber were run by agencies. The Nissin Food Group had great sales number on cooperated with Vtuber Kaguya Luna, Minato Akua (湊あくあ), Usada Pekora (兎田ぺこら), Ōzora Subaru (大空スバル) and so on. Besides, Vtuber La+ Darknesss (ラプラス・ダーク ネス) hold her first solo concert "火ク波ク DARK NIGHTMARE" on February 23 at "Nissin Food POWER STATION [REBOOT", Nissin's online exhibition hall focusing on V-Tuber and Vocaloid-P culture ]" was held, and released the original single MV of hololive and Nissin on her YouTube channel.

Although Vtuber are similar to anime characters, however, they do stream and chat with audiences every day, giving them a strong sense of companionship. Affected by the severe social isolation and technological trends caused by the epidemic, people are more likely to be closer to Vtuber than real people, and after a long time it become

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> https://pitchfork.com/thepitch/1229-a-brief-history-of-virtual-pop-stars/

spiritual support.<sup>20</sup> The appearance of Vtuber is fake, but the companionship is real. Some people think that behavior of chasing Vtuber is difficult for outsiders to understand, someone on the Internet said: "Watching Vtuber is his motivation in life." Because when he was at a low point in his life and wanted to commit suicide, he relied on the live broadcasts of Vtuber to survive. Some people also pointed out that the fun of watching Vtuber is to follow their footprints to growing up. Most Vtubers only have character settings at the beginning, and then they will be given soul by the "person behind the character", Nakanohito. In other words, people are attracted by the soul than appearance so people can feel the interaction with Vtuber through their real emotion and reaction, since appearance is not the point for them. Even can say because appearance is not the point for both sides so can focus on mental conversation, that's why the relationship between Vtuber and audience can be tighter than real celebrity. For example, In 2020, a mother of a child with cancer wrote a message to Taiwanese Vtuber Hoonie (虎妮) from Yahoo TV to thanks for bringing joy to her child and giving her the courage to face the disease. Figure 1. "This is what makes virtual characters special. If they can accompany fans, giving recognition, it is easy to gain the trust of fans, which is why donation can be higher than real people." Vtubers will do QA questions and answers from viewer, and receive a variety of questions including works, studies, interpersonal relationships, etc., "Compared to real people, they more believe what Vtuber said."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> 楊政勳, "虛擬網紅撫慰癌童心靈 「陪伴感」減輕生理痛苦," *鏡週刊* (May, 22 2021), https://www.mirrormedia.mg/story/20210514insight019/?utm\_source=feed\_related&utm\_medium=sev en&OpBrowser=1.



**Figure 1.** Accompany fans example- Yahoo TV Vtuber Hoonie Source Reference: https://www.mirrormedia.mg/story/20210514insight019

Most of the Vtubers start from YouTube video platform, Vtuber, a new broadcast method that emerged in 2018, began to grow explosively after the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020. In the industry, online audio and video platforms are one of the beneficiaries of this wave of boring economy, and the number of platform users is growing increasingly strongly. According to the official blog information of the world-renowned video and audio social platform YouTube (YouTube Official Blog, 2023), the number of monthly active users of the platform has exceeded 2.5 billion worldwide, accounting for 1/4 of the world's population, and billions of users are generated every day. Number of views. Thus, the popularity of Vtubers has surged in recent years. According to analysis by Japanese data survey and analysis company User Local, as of October 2021, the number of registered Vtubers around the world has grown from more than 1,000 in 2018 to 16,000. Based on December 6, 2022, more than 20,000 Vtubers have logged in their information on the User Local ranking page.<sup>21</sup> In 2017, YouTube launched a new reward function - Super Chat, which allows viewers to donate money to their favorite youtubers, leave messages directly to the youtubers, and pin it on the top of the live chat room. Therefore, there are more opportunities to interact with influences or youtubers. According to Playboard's monitoring data of YouTube channels, Vtuber occupied 7 of the top 10 Most Super Chatted list in the world in 2020<sup>22</sup>, which shows based on the unlimited possibility of Vtuber, the market of Vtuber expanding rapidly, that's why more and more companies and businesses choose Vtuber to market their product or services to get more attention from audiences.

# **Brand Identity**

Also, conceptual named brand identification, with visible unique characteristics to convey brand value to customers, including brand logo, name, color, design and message. Customers allowed through their feeling by eye, ears, and thoughts together create a distinct image from consumer's view. First pointed out by Lastovica and Gardner<sup>23</sup>, sharing that brand identity refers to a declaration or constraint effect of an individual's choice of brand, that is, the degree of emotional or psychological attachment that consumers have to a certain brand of the same product category. This psychological Status will reflect consumers' loyalty to the brand and belief in the brand. When consumers and brands have the same values, wrises resonate and enhance consumer emotional attachment to the brand, generally becoming a sense of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> 星藍, "虛擬直播熱潮當道!全球 Vtuber 數 5 年內突破 20,000 名," *QooApp* (December, 6th 2022), https://news.qoo-app.com/post/295508/user-local-vtuber-ranking.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Playboard, (2020), https://playboard.co/en/youtube-ranking/most-superchatted-all-channels-in-worldwide-yearly?period=1577836800.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> JL Lastovicka, "Components of involvement," *Attitude Research Plays for High Stakes/American Marketing Association* (1979).

identification with the brand and creating an emotional attachment and positively effects on brand loyalty. For consumers, brand identity is like managing interpersonal relationships.<sup>24</sup> When consumers are attracted by the brand's personality or believe that the brand's characteristics are consistent with their own personality,<sup>25</sup> brand identity will occur.<sup>26</sup> Before the brand can successfully establish brand identity with consumers, it must first focus on using innovative thinking and unique marketing techniques to create a uniquely charming brand personality and brand image. When the brand has value that can satisfy consumers' emotions and trust, it will promote consumers' recognition of the brand, and then consolidate brand loyalty.<sup>27</sup>

## **Emotional Attachment**

The concept of emotional attachment originates from the psychological theory of human attachment proposed by Bowlby<sup>28</sup>. Related field experts Ball & Tasaki<sup>29</sup> discussed the role of emotional attachment in consumer behavior and proposed a conceptual definition of emotional attachment. They believed that emotional

https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/6D35C7A344107195D97FD7ADAE06C807.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Chung Kim, Dongchul Han, and Seungbae Park, "The Effect of Brand Personality and Brand Identification on Brand Loyalty: Applying the Theory of Social Identification," *Japanese Psychological Research* 43 (11/01 2001), https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5884.00177.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Sven Kuenzel and Sue Halliday, "The chain of effects from reputation and brand personality congruence to brand loyalty: The role of brand identification," *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing* 18 (11/01 2010), https://doi.org/10.1057/jt.2010.15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Hongwei He, Yan Li, and Lloyd Harris, "Social identity perspective on brand loyalty," *Journal of Business Research - J BUS RES* 65 (05/01 2012), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.03.007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Xiao Tong, Jin Su, and Yingjiao Xu, "Brand personality and its impact on brand trust and brand commitment: an empirical study of luxury fashion brands," *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education* 11, no. 2 (2018/05/04 2018),

https://doi.org/10.1080/17543266.2017.1378732, https://doi.org/10.1080/17543266.2017.1378732. <sup>28</sup> John Bowlby, "The Bowlby-Ainsworth attachment theory," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 2, no. 4 (1979), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X00064955,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> A. Dwayne Ball and Lori H. Tasaki, "The Role and Measurement of Attachment in Consumer Behavior," *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 1, no. 2 (1992/01/01/1992), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S1057-7408(08)80055-1,

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1057740808800551.

attachment is the deep emotional connection that consumers form with the items they own. This connection plays an important role in maintaining and enhancing selfconcept. Besides, In the study of Belaid and Temessek<sup>30</sup>, emotional attachment is specifically defined as the deep emotional connection between consumers and brands. Research highlights the importance of this emotional attachment in the world of marketing, particularly in building consumer loyalty and lasting relationships with brands. The article explores how emotional attachment affects brand trust, commitment and satisfaction, and points out that emotional attachment is an important factor that cannot be ignored in brand management. Emotional attachment is one of the critical factors for brand as the promise becomes an emotional basis for brand loyalty and repeat purchases. This phenomenon typically occurs when customers develop a deep emotional "bond" with a brand, as illustrated by the structure of brand emotional attachment. For marketers, this emotional connection is crucial because it drives consumers to choose the brand again and again, thereby achieving exclusive brand loyalty.<sup>31</sup>

## **Fans Community Cohesion**

The characteristics of Vtuber, it can also be regarded as a kind of Internet celebrity/influencer SMI in online media. Besides, same as KOL own the huge influence online and become the path for customer to choose which kind of goods, brand, service is better for them. By knowing a variety of choices, evaluate what

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Samy Belaid and Azza Temessek Behi, "The role of attachment in building consumer-brand relationships: an empirical investigation in the utilitarian consumption context," *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 20, no. 1 (2011), https://doi.org/10.1108/1061042111108003, https://doi.org/10.1108/1061042111108003.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Douglas B Grisaffe and Hieu P Nguyen, "Antecedents of emotional attachment to brands," *Journal of business research* 64, no. 10 (2011).

needs and wants then to do the purchase behavior. According to the article of Liu Xinhua<sup>32</sup> the study found that: 1. KOL reputation will positively influence brand emotional attachment. 2. Brand emotional attachment positively influences: consumers are willing to pay higher prices and word of mouth recommendation.

Due to previous research, has examined the marketing effect of KOL or Internet celebrities through the human brand theory, and showing the popularity, image, and persuasiveness of an Internet celebrity as a brand can become a marketing technique to generate satisfaction, trust, and commitment among consumers,<sup>33</sup> thereby deriving the market value of support, purchase, and other behaviors.<sup>34</sup>

As the role of Vtuber has the characteristics of KOL in social media, becoming the new direction and option for consumers to and holding even much more stable and long-term connection when compared to real people, through one of the biggest Vtuber agency Nijisanji has described themselves, entertainment company, which means they are training the Vtuber is like the way train real person celebrity or idol. Hence, the concept turning Vtuber into "people" that be used and as a valued marketing tool or marketing medium, people as a marketing tool for brands, like products, services and other commercial value products, must be recognized by consumers in their hearts in order to deepen their impression and generate commercial value in this field. Taking the human brand theory proposed by Thomson, celebrity itself can be regarded as a brand when used as a marketing method and intangible

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> 劉禕璠, "KOL 特質對消費者國貨化妝品購買意願之影響研 究——以中國大陸地區為例" (碩 士 輔仁大學, 2021), https://hdl.handle.net/11296/4k2m48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Matthew Thomson, "Human Brands: Investigating Antecedents to Consumers' Strong Attachments to Celebrities," *Journal of Marketing - J MARKETING* 70 (07/01 2006), https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.70.3.104.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Chung-Wha Ki et al., "Influencer marketing: Social media influencers as human brands attaching to followers and yielding positive marketing results by fulfilling needs," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 55 (07/01 2020), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102133.

asset. Overall, the psychological satisfaction needs of human theory by Thomson could be divided into three following elements.

- I. Autonomy: Based on the theory, autonomy considered as an individual feels that he or she has control over things, which means he or she has the right to choose. In this way, people are allowed to get rid of pressure, free to express themselves. If supporters received recognition and trust and meet the needs of Autonomy, they may develop a sense of attachment to the particular brand.<sup>35</sup>
- II. Relatedness: According to Thomson's saying, people will tend to follow the things, people, thoughts which are similar to themselves, feeling the link between and obtain emotional support and comfort. Generally, build a sense of attachment.<sup>36</sup>
- III. Competence: In Thomson's article, people will not only find someone similar to them but who could become the goal they can pursue, including challenges or achievements. In the process of learning and imitating, increase the sense of self-affirmation and positively affects attachments on certain brand.

The role of Vtuber also seems like a type of Internet celebrity. The performance and reputation of an idol or celebrity are often two major indicators of supporters' impression of their brand. When the personal characteristics and advantages of a personal brand can convince and rely on supporters, supporters may regard the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Richard M. Ryan and John H. Lynch, "Emotional autonomy versus detachment: Revisiting the vicissitudes of adolescence and young adulthood," *Child Development* 60, no. 2 (1989), https://doi.org/10.2307/1130981.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, "Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000), https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68.

personal brand as a leader in the field, creating a top personal brand image, thereby strengthening the attachment effect. and translated into attachment switching behaviors such as purchasing.<sup>37</sup> In previous study, there are some examples on used personal brand theory to explore the impact and market value of idols and celebrities on fans. Mei-Lien Tung<sup>38</sup> studied personal brand loyalty and conversion, exploring the relationship between idols, consumers and the media; Huang, Lin, & Phau<sup>39</sup> explored whether supporters' sense of attachment to idols affects personal brand loyalty, that is, supporters' continued consumption intention; Jing-Yi Chen<sup>40</sup> used Personal brand, analyze the impact of online KOL characteristics on Internet users' emotional attachment, and understand how KOL characteristics affect consumers'

As mentioned before, Vtuber can not only be seen as a KOL celebrity but a marketing partner worthy of brand owners' attention. Based on the HypeAuditor website, showing that fans have a higher stickiness rate with Vtuber and are more willing to interact with them, even higher than real celebrities. It shows that Vtuber potential ability to help brands create greater social volume and quickly accumulate reputation. Through fan culture, gathered the people who have a good impression of the Vtuber, also it won't only limited to own country, or it may be a club co-founded

https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.03.045,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Julian Hofmann et al., "Talent or popularity: What drives market value and brand image for human brands?," *Journal of Business Research* 124 (2021/01/01/ 2021),

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0148296319302280.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> 董美戀, "人身品牌忠誠與轉換之研究: 偶像、消費者與媒體關係之探討" (博士 國立暨南國 際大學, 2015), https://hdl.handle.net/11296/euu6e8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> 陳禹諭, "名人品牌塑造歷程之探究—以林書豪林來瘋熱潮為例" (碩士 淡江大學, 2012), https://hdl.handle.net/11296/tek5k6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> 陳靜怡, "KOL 特質對網絡用戶情感依戀的影響研究-以時尚涉入作為干擾變量" (碩士 輔仁大 學, 2023), https://hdl.handle.net/11296/7xcdus.

by fans all over the world. Vtuber fan groups and communities can not only allow audiences to connect and resonate with each other, but also form a unique culture and language with Vtuber.

Thomson & Whan applied brand attachment in the field of consumer behavior. Brand attachment is derived from attachment theory and represents consumers' emotions for a specific brand that will lead to loyal behavior.<sup>41</sup> In this study, Vtuber as the bridge between consumer and brand, the product and brand enter Vtuber fans community has be chosen to fit the atmosphere among the group. Thus, brand have to understanding what customer needs, values customer preferences and worthing to choose the same brand even facing the alternative choices.<sup>42</sup> Maciag believes that stickiness is an invisible power that allows viewers to continuously return to a certain brand, and also allows users to return again and use it again for using a longer period of time.<sup>43</sup> When facing the large number of competitive business and high homogeneity and strong substitutability environment. It is easy for customers to switch to another brand quickly, therefore, how to attract the attention of consumers and make them willing to spend more time participating and staying in contact with brand has become a major challenge. At the moment, the existence of Vtuber is an important factor to hold those potential audience for brand.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Matthew Thomson, Deborah J. MacInnis, and C. Whan Park, "The Ties That Bind: Measuring the Strength of Consumers' Emotional Attachments to Brands," *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 15, no. 1 (2005), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1501\_10,

 $https://myscp.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1207/s15327663 jcp1501\_10.$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> G Allison et al., "Online Behavior–Final Project Stickiness," (1999).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Gregory A Maciag, "Web portals usher in, drive away business," *National Underwrite* 104, no. 50 (2000).

## **Customer Perceived Value**

Customer perceived value is the relationship between product and customer, weighting the value of the product and the cost have to paid.<sup>44</sup> Perceived value encompasses economic, social, and emotional dimensions, meaning consumers factor in emotional satisfaction and social recognition when making purchase decisions.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the exist of KOL, celebrity as Vtuber can enhance consumers' loyalty to the brand by enhancing their emotional experience and social identity. Earlier studies highlight the moderating role of perceived value in the relationship between trust, satisfaction, purchase intention, and loyalty to business stakeholders. That is, higher the perceived value then greater the customers' attachment to and satisfaction with the business, which in turn improves their purchase intention.<sup>46</sup> Chen suggests that consumers' purchase intention on social media is positively related to perceived value, "The greater the dependence on social media, the higher the perceived value and trust in it.". The study shows that perceived value significantly impacts consumer purchase intention on social network site<sup>47</sup>, social media platforms.<sup>48</sup> Hence, perceived value has been considered as a factor positively affecting consumer purchase intention.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Valarie A. Zeithaml, "Consumer Perceptions of Price, Quality, and Value: A Means-End Model and Synthesis of Evidence," *Journal of Marketing* 52, no. 3 (1988), https://doi.org/10.2307/1251446, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1251446.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Jillian C. Sweeney and Geoffrey N. Soutar, "Consumer perceived value: The development of a multiple item scale," *Journal of Retailing* 77, no. 2 (2001/06/01/2001), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4359(01)00041-0,

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022435901000410.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Hsin-Hsin Chang and Hsin-Wei Wang, "The Moderating Effect of Customer Perceived Value on Online Shopping Behaviour," *Online Information Review* 35 (06/21 2011), https://doi.org/10.1108/14684521111151414.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Hsiu-Ju Chen and Tzu-Hui Sun, "Clarifying the impact of product scarcity and perceived uniqueness in buyers' purchase behavior of games of limited-amount version," *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics* 26 (04/08 2014), https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-07-2013-0084.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Chunmei Gan and Weijun Wang, "The influence of perceived value on purchase intention in social commerce context," *Internet Research* 27 (06/08 2017), https://doi.org/10.1108/IntR-06-2016-0164.

## **Purchase Intention**

Purchase intention comes from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TRB)<sup>49</sup>, both developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in the 1970 and 1980. According to Fishbein and Ajzen, the construction of purchase intention is determined by attitudes towards behavior (product), subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Therefore, purchase intention can be used as a key indicator to predict consumer behavior and is the subjective tendency of consumers to purchase objects. Consumer's purchase intention can be shaped by their attitude towards products and brand, depending on positive or negative feelings abouts purchasing a product, influenced by the value they perceived. Zeithaml research reveals that consumer will weighing the utility and benefits obtained from the product and the cost paid by the consumer paid in the process of purchasing the product, after evaluating the product then purchase.<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, when audiences facing unfamiliar brands or products, the value perceived from the products or brand may be influenced. At the moment, the review from influencers and the social environment around the brand or product will be important factors in the process of evaluating. Customer will through other's evaluation to rise or down the desire to the brand or product.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> M. Fishbein and Icek Ajzen, *Belief, attitude, intention and behaviour: An introduction to theory and research*, vol. 27 (1975).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Zeithaml, "Consumer Perceptions of Price, Quality, and Value: A Means-End Model and Synthesis of Evidence."

## **Research Hypotheses**

#### H1: Brand identity positively affects purchase intention

McGoldrick believes that the communication of brand image through relevant celebrity endorsements or media advertisements can promote consumers' awareness and attitude towards the brand, thereby improving consumers' image of the brand and increasing their purchase of the brand's products. purchase intention.<sup>51</sup> A brand with a good image allows consumers to identify with the product and perception of the brand, which can increase the willingness to purchase the product. When companies and brand manufacturers are looking for product spokespersons, they will consider whether the characteristics and adaptability to the brand image are compatible, which is important for marketing. It can create good advertising benefits and increase consumers' willingness to purchase products.<sup>52</sup>

#### H2: Emotional attachment positively affects purchase intention

Also, Min-Chin Miao's and Kim's study also found that Internet celebrities shorten the distance with audience through videos, endorsements, and posts, so as to stimulate fans' sense of trust and admiration.<sup>53</sup> When Internet celebrities launch products or cooperate, they can quickly attract the attention of fans in a short period of time, increase the exposure of their products, and through the effect of attachment to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> MONICA McGOLDRICK and NYDIA GARCIA PRETO, "Ethnic Internarriage," *Family Process* 23, no. 3 (1984), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.1984.00347.x, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1545-5300.1984.00347.x.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> 藍俊雄 and 朱士全, "品牌代言人行銷對消費者購買意願之研究以運動商品為例," [The research of Brand Ambassador Marketing on Purchase Intention in Based on the sports goods.] 觀光與 休閒管理期刊 6 (2018), https://doi.org/10.6510/jtlm.201808\_6(s).0003.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> 繆敏志 et al., "網紅代言人可信度對購買意願之影響:影片內容可信度、信任傾向與刺激尋求 之調節式中介模型檢測-以美妝 YouTuber 為例," [The Effect of Internet Celebrity Endorser Credibility and Purchase Intention: A Moderated Mediation Model of Video Content Credibility, Propensity to Trust, and Sensation Seeking- The Case of Beauty YouTubers.] 觀光與休閒管理期刊 11, no. 2 (2023), https://doi.org/10.6510/jtlm.202312 11(2).0005.

idols, fans will have the intention to purchase related products.<sup>54</sup> The study indicates that when users feel a strong emotional connection among groups, especially intimacy and familiarity, which are similar to the degree of interaction and psychological support with relatives and friends.<sup>55</sup> They are more likely to trust and share the information and perceive it as useful, positively boost their intention to make a purchase. Therefore, cooperating with famous influencers would boost the brand identity and then positively influence on purchase intention.

# H3: Fans community cohesion of Vtuber positively affects purchase intention

Fans Community Cohesion refers to the level of connection and solidarity among members within a fan community, reflecting the bonds between fans and their shared commitment to supporting a particular figure or brand, such as Vtuber. This cohesion can show as a strong sense of belonging and unity among fans, often leading them to actively engage with and promote community-related activities or merchandise, either voluntarily or through encouragement from others in the group. McMillan & Chavis<sup>56</sup> believe that community belonging is a kind of value that members attach to each other and the group, and it is also a shared value that meets members' mutual needs through the commitment of participating in the group. Building a fan community with shared values fosters group resonance, which, similar to customer stickiness, is foundational for long-term business success. Customer stickiness prevents loyal customers from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Kyuree Kim, Te-Lin Chung, and Ann Fiore, "The role of interactivity from Instagram advertisements in shaping young female fashion consumers' perceived value and behavioral intentions," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 70 (01/01 2023), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2022.103159.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Min Wang, Lin-Lin Sun, and Jun-Dong Hou, "How Emotional Interaction Affects Purchase Intention in Social Commerce: The Role of Perceived Usefulness and Product Type," *Psychology Research and Behavior Management* 14 (04/14 2021), https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S301286.
 <sup>56</sup> David McMillan and David Chavis, "Sense of Community: A Definition and Theory," *Journal of*

Community Psychology 14 (01/01 1986), https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6629(198601)14:13.0.CO;2-I.

switching to competitors, even in the face of attractive offers or discounts, and reduces customer churn. By enhancing customer stickiness, companies can nurture loyal customers, thereby promoting sustainable growth and profitability. Reichheld & Sasser<sup>57</sup> pointed out that improving customer stickiness can significantly increase overall business profits, expand market share, reduce marketing costs, and enhance profitability. Besides, this collective identity fosters an environment where fans feel motivated to support the Vtuber by purchasing merchandise, attending events, or participating in community-driven initiatives. McAlexander<sup>58</sup> believe that emotions or experiences about a brand (Vtuber) can be easily and frequently shared through online communities. The experience gained in the community forms part of the customer's brand experience and further affects the social impact. Groups generate feelings of belonging, trust and responsibility, and the degree of integration between members and the Vtuber's community will also affect customers' loyalty to the brand.

Moreover, the emotional bonds formed in the fan community can lead to both active and passive purchasing behaviors. For instance, fans who are deeply engaged with the community may actively purchase merchandise to express their loyalty and commitment to the Vtuber, seeing it as a way to strengthen their identity within the fans community. Conversely, passive purchasing can occur when fans feel pressure from other fans community members. When other fans engage in discussions about new products or merchandise within the community, it can create a sense of selfobligation to support the Vtuber, prompting them to make purchases even if they initially had no intention to do so. Furthermore, shared experiences and interactions

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> FF Reichheld, "Zero Defections: Quality Comes to Services," *Harvard Business Review* (1990).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> James McAlexander, John Schouten, and Harold Koenig, "Building Brand Community," *Journal of Marketing* 66 (01/01 2002), https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.66.1.38.18451.

among community members, such as celebrating milestones or participating in collaborative activities—reinforce the emotional attachment fans have to the Vtuber. This heightened sense of belonging encourages fans to make purchases as a way of demonstrating their support to Vtuber and contributing to the community's collective goals. By cultivating a strong, connected community, brands can effectively leverage this cohesion to boost customer loyalty and increase sales, ultimately contributing to the long-term success of both the Vtuber, brand and associated products.

# H4: Entertaining of Vtuber positively affects Fans community cohesion

In this study, entertainment is regarded as a key factor of autonomy as proposed by Thomson's human theory, allowing audiences to express their emotions and relieve life's pressures. When people achieve mental fulfillment through entertainment, they often develop a sense of attachment to the brand (Vtuber), which strengthens engagement, loyalty, and influential behaviors within the fan community. Research by Hong Zhao and Qiaohong Shi also demonstrates that community experiences affect purchase intention through multiple interrelated dimensions, namely entertainment, information, and interaction, which all directly shape how users perceive the brand.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, experts I-Ping Chiang, Cheng-Chan Chuang, Chih-Hui Huang<sup>60</sup> believe that when consumers perceive social media advertising as entertaining, it greatly enhances the effectiveness of the advertisement. Consequently, it can be assumed that

https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.911594.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Hong Zhao and Qiaohong Shi, "Evaluating the Impact of Community Experience on Purchase Intention in Online Knowledge Community," Original Research, *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (2022-June-14 2022), https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.911594,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> 江義平, 莊承展, and 黃智彙, "社群媒體廣告衡量研究," [Measuring the Effects of Social Media Advertising.] *中原企管評論* 17, no. 1 (2019).

entertainment boosts content appeal, satisfaction, and loyalty by fostering greater engagement, emotional connection, and social interaction. Thus, in business or media, entertainment can be considered as a central factor in attracting audiences and building fan communities.

Vtubers entertainment often comes from interactive and unique content that resonates with fans, which helps to build a cohesive sense of community. For instance, many Vtubers conduct gaming livestreams, Q&A sessions, or virtual gatherings where fans can directly interact with Vtuber. This allows fans to feel a part of a shared, joyful experience, increasing their sense of connection and belonging toward Vtuber. The real case, the Vtuber Mochikomame effectively demonstrates how Vtuber content can enhance fan engagement. In this collaboration, Mochikomame not only tried on different types of JINS glasses but engaged fans with fun, personalized interactions, including livestream events where she discussed her own fashion point about wearing glasses and invited fans to participate to share opinions. Also, showing the unique language and movement that only fans could understand not only in order to raise fans resonate but made fans feel they are special to understand and connected with Vtuber. By creating a relaxed, enjoyable atmosphere and highlight immersive engagement, these interactions help foster community cohesion, where fans not only engage with the Vtuber making fans feel valued and connected but also form bonds with other fans and share common enjoyment with other fans. In this way, strengthened the bonds among fans and reinforced a collective fan identity form bonds with other fans, these interactions help foster community cohesion. To sum up, Vtuber entertainment helps to drive community cohesion, thereby enhancing their loyalty and willingness of purchasing to support Vtuber.

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# H5: Relatedness needs fulfillment between audience and Vtuber positively affects Fans community cohesion

Based on Thomson's theory of Relatedness, it emphasizes the importance of Vtubers creating connections that resonate with their audience. In order to the reason that people will instinctively seek emotional comfort through connection with others and aim to avoid feeling isolated. By looking for the traits that make others approachable, they choose to take the initiative to approach or change themselves and find a bridge between themselves and others<sup>61</sup>. When an individual feels that they have more common tastes and preferences with others, the more emotionally connected they will be to that other person . Therefore, followers will take the initiative to approach the Vtuber (personal brand) and seek common ground between themselves and Vtuber. Additionally, Vtubers are good at cultivating communities with shared values, interests, or goals. Through this, fan interactions naturally revolve around shared passions, allowing fans to express themselves, share their enthusiasm, and receive support and validation from like-minded people.<sup>62</sup> This sense of connection motivates fans to actively engage with the Vtuber and the fan community, ultimately leading to a strong, cohesive fan base. This interaction creates a supportive community that fosters emotional encouragement, understanding, and a sense of acceptance, contributing to building a strong, cohesive fan community.

For example, Korone Inugami Vtuber for instance, is well-known for love of playing video games and frequently do gameplaying stream. Her enthusiasm for video

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Ryan and Deci, "Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Min Kim, Soyoung Wang, and Seongcheol Kim, "Effects of Online Fan Community Interactions on Well-Being and Sense of Virtual Community," *Behavioral Sciences* 13 (10/30 2023), https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13110897.

games can resonate with fans who share this interest, thus creating a unique connection with fans over a common interest. Similarly, Houshou Marine Vtuber actively discusses her love of Japanese pop culture, particularly anime and manga, during her streaming. In this way, based on this shared interest to attract people who also anime and manga fans. These interactions build a cohesive community where fans feel understood and valued, reinforcing loyalty to the Vtuber and strengthening fan community bonds.

When a Vtuber's style matches the listener's own preferences and matches the listener's personality, style or values, the listener will have the opportunity to gain a sense of belonging from the Vtuber. Through these shared values and relatable content, Vtubers like Korone and Marine create a positive feedback loop that enhances community cohesion. Fans can experience a sense of satisfaction and relatedness, motivating them to participate in the community actively and support the Vtuber. By fulfilling their fans' connection needs, Vtubers establish emotional bonds that increase both individual loyalty and the collective cohesion of the fan community.

### H6: Professional of Vtuber positively affects Fans community cohesion

According to Thomson's theory, individuals often seek to follow those who have already achieved their goals, aspiring to emulate their success. As a result, fans are more likely to remain engaged in communities where they perceive the "leader" (the Vtuber) as capable and trustworthy. In addition, since leader or experts are considered to be highly qualified and more likely to make accurate and valid assessments and increase the sense of trust, consumers are more accept the content and advice

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conveyed by influencers who are considered experts in the field.<sup>63</sup> Vtubers can cultivate a sense of professionalism that significantly enhances fan community cohesion by demonstrating their expertise and reliability in their respective fields.

Moreover, the quality of the information provided by Vtuber will affects audience satisfaction. Mckinney believes that the quality of website information content will affect website user satisfaction, and the level of satisfaction is one of the important factors affecting trust and loyalty.<sup>64</sup> When audiences find the content valuable, their trust in the Vtuber and the community increases, fostering a sense of belonging. The sense of competence among fans fuels pride as they connect with a highly capable individual, leading to increased interaction and engagement within the community. Fans may actively participate in discussions and share insights, thereby deepening their relationships with each other. Not only do they learn how to improve their own skills, but they also enhance their bonds with fellow fans, contributing to a cohesive fan community.

For instance, Lumina, a Vtuber from the Taiwanese telecommunications company Chunghwa Telecom. Lumina's content focuses on promoting the company's services while engaging audiences with informative discussions about technology and digital trends. By presenting complex topics in an entertaining and accessible manner, Lumina establishes herself as a knowledgeable figure within the fans community. Her ability to convey valuable information while maintaining an engaging persona fosters trust among her audience, encouraging them to actively participate and share their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Manjit Yadav et al., "Social Commerce: A Contingency Framework for Assessing Marketing Potential," *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 27 (11/01 2013),

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2013.09.001.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Vicki McKinney, Kanghyun Yoon, and Fatemeh Zahedi, "The Measurement of Web-Customer Satisfaction: An Expectation and Disconfirmation Approach," *Information Systems Research* 13 (09/01 2002), https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.13.3.296.76.

thoughts. This interaction not only strengthens their connection to Lumina but also builds a sense of unity among fans who share common interests in technology, digital culture and even the audience only wants to solve the technology problem faced in daily life.

To conclude, the professionalism displayed by Vtubers plays a crucial role in enhancing fan cohesion, as it cultivates an environment of mutual learning and respect. Besides, audiences feel connected to a highly capable and professional individual, not only can learn how to complete or solve task effectively but improve self-ability which enhances their bonds with one another and form cohesion of fans community.

### METHODOLOGY

### **Research Design**

This research aims to investigate the influence factors that enhance customer purchase intention of the cooperation of Vtuber and brand. Besides, based on the structure of Thomson human theory to clarify the role and characteristics of Vtuber which bring the view in the marketing environment and to maximum the effectiveness of Vtuber to cause purchase intention and behavior.

This research hypothesizes that the traits of Vtubers significantly influence consumers' fans community cohesion on Vtuber affects purchase intention, and the following research framework was developed.

# **Data Collection**

### **Qualitive Research**

For the case study, I have collected the Vtuber trend, market and the development including Japan, Korea and Taiwan.

Vtuber trend in Japan, collected information from COVER company, quarterly financial report from July to September 2023, COVER company official Vtuber Production website, ANYCOLOR company, Report of Tokyo Stock Exchange Market in June. 8 2022, ANYCOLOR company official Vtuber Production website. Vtuber trend in Korea, collected information from LOCUS-X official website, Plave-VLAST official website.

Vtuber trend in Taiwan, collected information from Yahoo TV official website, Changhua City official office magazine, Taichung official Tourism magazine report, Taichung City Government Global Information website, Chunghwa Telecom HiNet Light Generation Vtuber Lumina website/YouTube channel, Springfish studio website, Meridian Project studio website.

Also, take a deeper look at Entertaining and Professional Vtuber case on questionnaire. Entertaining Vtuber case study collected information from JINS official website, Mochikomame YouTube channel. Professional Vtuber case study collected information from Chunghwa Telecom HiNet Light Generation Vtuber Lumina website/YouTube channel.

### **Quantitative Research**

In this study, I used the quantitative research online questionnaire form; in order to collect in-depth understanding of the views from audience on Vtuber, the questionnaire includes a series of questions about the variable of purchase intention behavior building. Divided into two characteristics of Vtuber, Entertaining and Professional, put the endorsement video with brand first, and depend on the video and impression to answer questionnaire. I use statistical methods (ex., Linear regression analysis) to examine the causal relationship between variables. According to the statistical results, the researchers can verify which factors positively impact consumer purchase intention. 305 questionnaires were collected. After the data collection, I use SPSS software to check the reliability and analyze the data.

### Measures

In previous research, the Likert scale used to design surveys and questionnaires to measure people's attitudes, opinions, or perceptions. Based on the research purpose and literature review, the variables and content of survey will structurally divide into Entertaining Vtuber 7 parts, Professional Vtuber 6 parts and personal information part. In the evaluate Vtuber parts, used the Likert scale to show the results, from one

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to seven, seven degrees which are strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. Higher score means audience have the higher agreement on the question.

### **Mediating Variables**

**Fans Community Cohesion:** Based on previous research, internet celebrity as the marketing path for brand recognize Vtubers' fans community cohesion related to brand adhesion of audiences.

Table 1. Measurement of Fan Community Cohesion on Brand Understanding,Trust, and Participation Through Vtubers

Mediating Variables	Measurement item	
	1. I think I understand the JINS/	
	Chunghwa Telecom brand better through	
	Vtuber.	
	2. I will consider participating in the	
	cooperated event between Vtuber and	
	JINS glasses/ Chunghwa Telecom brand.	
Fong Community Cohosion	3. I feel that Vtuber has reduced the	
Fans Community Cohesion	distance between me and the JINS	
	glasses/ Chunghwa Telecom brand.	
	4. I feel that JINS glasses/ Chunghwa	
	Telecom brand understands my needs	
	very well.	
	5. I think JINS glasses/ Chunghwa	
	Telecom brand is trustworthy.	

### **Mediating Variables**

**Entertaining:** When the style of speaking and behavior can make the audience feel interesting, it will arouse the interest of the audience. Create a friendly and approachable impression on Vtuber, further shorten the distance between the two, and

satisfy the connection needs of followers. The measurement of questions referred to Lee, Jui-Ting<sup>65</sup>

# Table 2. Measurement of the Impact of Entertainment Value on Audience

Mediating Variables	Measurement item	
	1. I think this Vtuber is very interesting	
Entertaining	2. I think this Vtuber is funny	
	3. I think this Vtuber is very humorous	

# **Perception Through Vtubers**

## **Mediating Variables**

**Relatedness:** Relatedness needs fulfillment refer to study of La Guardia et al.<sup>66</sup> and modified based on Thomson's human theory. The measurement of questions referred to Lee, Jui-Ting.

# Table 3. Measurement of the Impact of Relatedness Need Fulfillment on

# **Audience Connection Through Vtubers**

Mediating Variables	Measurement item	
	1. This Vtuber makes me feel very close to	
Relatedness need fulfillment	him/her	
	2. This Vtuber is full of familiarity to me	
	3. This Vtuber gives me an approachable	
	feeling	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> 李睿廷, "以人身品牌理論探討台灣 VTubers 之行銷效果" (碩士 國立陽明交通大學, 2022), https://hdl.handle.net/11296/d6b7rq.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Jennifer La Guardia et al., "Within-Person Variation in Security of Attachment: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective on Attachment, Need Fulfillment, and Well-Being," *Journal of personality and social psychology* 79 (09/01 2000), https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.79.3.367.

**Professional:** Providing information and behavior can make the audience feel like earning something new, it will arouse the admire of audience. Create a knowledgeable and professional impression on Vtuber, moreover decrease the distance between audiences. Based on the study of Liljander, Gummerus, & Söderlund<sup>67</sup> and Lee, Jui-Ting to design the measurement of questions.

Table 4. Measurement of the Impact of Perceived Professionalism on AudienceTrust Through Vtubers

Mediating Variables	Measurement item	
Professional	1. When I watched the content created by this Vtuber, I felt that he/she was very professional.	
	2. When I watch the content created by this Vtuber, I think he/she is very capable	
	3. When I watch this Vtuber's creative content, I feel that he/she has rich experience	
	4. When I watch the content created by this VTuber, I feel that he/she is knowledgeable	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Veronica Liljander, Johanna Gummerus, and Magnus Söderlund, "Young consumers' responses to suspected covert and overt blog marketing," *Internet Research: Electronic Networking Applications and Policy* 25 (08/03 2015), https://doi.org/10.1108/IntR-02-2014-0041.

# **Dependent Variables**

**Purchase intention:** Intentions are distinct from attitudes, which represent an evaluation of something, whereas intentions refer to conscious planning and effort to perform a behavior.<sup>68</sup> In this study, based on the Vtuber personality and the relationship between brand and product.

Dependent Variables	Measurement item	
Purchase Intention	1. I may consider buying JINS glasses/	
	Chunghwa Telecom brand products.	
	2. When I have glasses-related needs, I will	
	give priority to the JINS glasses/ Chunghwa	
	Telecom brand.	
	3. I would consider recommending JINS	
	glasses/ Chunghwa Telecom brand to others.	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Alice H. Eagly and Shelly Chaiken, *The psychology of attitudes*, The psychology of attitudes., (Orlando, FL, US: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1993).

# **Independent Variables**

**Brand identity:** Based on brand identity dimension of Bergami and Bagozzi<sup>69</sup>, and modified Min-Hsuan, Tseng<sup>70</sup> brand identity measurement.

# Table 6. Measurement of Brand Identity on Consumer Perception and

Independent Variables	Measurement item	
Brand Identity	1. JINS glasses/ Chunghwa Telecom brand	
	has unique recognition.	
	2. JINS glasses/ Chunghwa Telecom brand	
	is a high-quality brand.	
	3. JINS glasses/ Chunghwa Telecom brand	
	has a good reputation.	
	4. JINS glass/ Chunghwa Telecom brand	
	products are of great significance to me.	
	5. I will pay attention to the relevant	
	information of JINS glasses/ Chunghwa	
	Telecom brand for a long time.	
	6. The concept conveyed by the JINS	
	glasses/ Chunghwa Telecom brand is	
	consistent with my beliefs.	
	7. I strongly identify with JINS as glasses/	
	Chunghwa Telecom brand.	

## Engagement

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Massimo Bergami and Richard P. Bagozzi, "Self-categorization, affective commitment and group self-esteem as distinct aspects of social identity in the organization," *British Journal of Social Psychology* 39, no. 4 (2000), https://doi.org/10.1348/014466600164633.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> 曾敏萱, "全家聯名網紅創造新商機?!品牌認同、品牌關係黏著度及聯名品牌態度對行為意 圖之影響"(碩士 南臺科技大學, 2024), https://hdl.handle.net/11296/upmhzw.

# **Emotional attachment:** Emotional attachment refers to the deep emotional connection between consumer and brand. According to the study of Bowlby and design the measurements below.

# **Independent Variables Measurement item** 1. I often use JINS glasses/ Chunghwa Telecom's brand products. 2. I think the service provided by JINS glasses Chunghwa Telecom brand is very good. 3. Almost all my family and friends use JINS glasses brand/ Chunghwa Telecom products and services. 4. I care about the fate of the JINS glasses/ **Emotional Attachment** Chunghwa Telecom brand. 5. When my friends and family complain about the service of JINS glasses/ Chunghwa Telecom brand, I will defend the brand. 6. I enjoy discussing the services JINS/ Chunghwa Telecom provides with others. 7. Overall, I am satisfied with the service provided by JINS/ Chunghwa Telecom.

# Table 7. Measurement of Brand Identity on Consumer Perception and

# Engagement

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

### **Case Study**

### **Vtuber Trend in Japan**

Obviously, the birthplace of Vtuber, Japan is still the most popular region for the entire Vtuber community. Since the Japan has the hugest trend of ACG, Anime, Comic and Games, around the world, compare to the other countries, the publics' acceptance of virtual people is much higher. Through the analysis website Streams Charts, has analyzed channels those with total viewing time more than 1,000 hours in mid-2023 (at the same time, the total viewing time since Vtubers debut has reached 1 million hours), and figured out that the most popular Vtubers are all from Japan.<sup>71</sup> Nowadays, among the Japanese Vtuber subscription rankings, shows that the top 10 are from Nijisanji and Hololive company.

Take Hololive's respective company Cover for example, there are currently 82 employed Vtubers, In 2020, starting recruited overseas Vtubers, including Indonesian and English called Hololive English (ホロライブ English). Gawr Gura, after debuting in 2020, open the market of English Vtubers environment, reached one million subscriptions in only 40 days, becoming the fastest reached million subscriptions Vtuber under Hololive Production. Additionally, the main Vtuber market in Japanese, the Vtuber Kiryuu koko (桐生ココ) from Hololive Production, become the first place Youtuber with the most super comment in the world, with more than 150 million yen in 2020. In 2021, the YouTube with the highest number of super comments in the world is still Vtuber under Hololive Uruha Rushia (潤羽るしあ)

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> 曾子軒, "日本 VTuber 年收可破億日圓!講英文,人設有趣成就新世代勝利組," Noverember,
 23, *遠見雜誌* (2023), https://www.gvm.com.tw/article/107776.

reaching nearly 200 million yen.<sup>72</sup> Also, nine of the top ten YouTubers with super comments that year were Vtubers who also came from Hololive. Benefited from those impressive experience, financial report from July to September 2023, revenue was approximately 12.3 billion yen (approximately NT\$2.6 billion), YoY (Year-over-Year rate is a simple way to compare how something changes from one year to the next) growth reached 58%, net profit reached 1.7 billion yen, and YoY growth reached an impressive score 155%. Cover company benefited from an average annual income of approximately 300 million yen, which is approximately NT\$64 million based on the exchange rate on November 22, 2023.

In addition to the rapid rise in popularity of Hololive, Hyakumantenbara Salome (壱百満天原サロメ) from Nijisanji also reached 1 million YouTube subscriptions in only 13 days in 2022, it became the fastest Vtuber to reach 1 million subscriptions so far. Nijisanji's parent company ANYCOLOR, with 156 Vtubers and an average income of over 100 million yen. It was successfully listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange market in 2022. This IPO also became the highest opening market value in Japan in 2022 (144.2 billion yen). Nijisanji used the term "entertainment factory" to describe itself. Indeed, the operation of the two Vtuber offices is very similar to the way Japan and South Korea develop real-life idol groups, in order to support own Vtuber and do the purchase behavior, increasing the Fans adhesion turn the number into the revenue of company.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> 亞小安, "2021 Vtuber 斗內榜出爐,潤羽露西婭近2億日圓奪冠," *4GAMERS* (January, fifth 2022), https://www.4gamers.com.tw/news/detail/51504/2021-vtuber-superchat-list-released.

### Summary

Japan leads the Vtuber trend, fueled by its strong ACG (Anime, Comic, and Games) culture and higher acceptance of virtual characters compared to other regions. According to Streams Charts, the most popular Vtubers in mid-2023, with average millions of viewing hours, were all from Japan, particularly from major companies like Nijisanji and Hololive. In addition, Japan has depended own advantage of anime culture expand Vtuber market to other language and countries, such as English, Indonesia, Germany to attract audience around the world, shows that huge market and trend of Vtuber.

### Vtuber Trend in Korea

The Korean music (K-pop) market has been more and more famous in the past ten years, not only creating idol singers such as BTS, BLACKPINK, and TWICE that are popular around the world and influenced a variety of related industries. Among the Korean high competition market of entertainment, Vtuber raise a new wave, Virtual idols have effectively solved the crisis of character collapse that has been common in the Korean entertainment market but always maintain a good image "frozen in age". Rozy is South Korea's first virtual internet celebrity and model, created by Sidus Studio X in 2020, lively and fashionable outfits have been loved by the MZ generation (born 1981-2010), with a total of 170,000 followers on social media so far. In July 2021, the South Korean insurance company "Shinhan Life" boldly chose Rozy to be the main character of its advertisement. In just 20 days, YouTube had nearly 10 million views. In addition to becoming famous in such a short time, it also brought her a large number of advertisements and invitations. She has not only been featured in magazines such as "Vogue", "GQ" and "W Korea", but also loved by boutique brands and advertisers. Her annual income from advertising endorsements reaches 1 billion won. In 2022, she even became a singer and successively released singles, showing the diversity of Virtual character.<sup>73</sup>

Different from Rozy don't have Nakanohoti, can't interact with people immediately, the new Korean virtual idol group PLAVE debuted in 2022 Figure 2., has a "real person" inside each character, when the "real person" of each member communicates, the true side of the character will be revealed. This human side will make audience feel more empathetic and they are actually "exist". Their debut MV has been viewed more than 8 million times, and their first fan video call event attracted fans from 35 countries.<sup>74</sup> With sophisticated technologies such as intelligent learning and 3D simulation, it not only has a realistic and attractive appearance, but can also produce most of the real and fine expressions and movements of human beings, almost the same as real idols.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup>費比安, "虛擬網紅當道——「不是人」卻坐擁百萬粉絲!," SOUND OF LIFE (October, 27 2023), https://zh.soundoflife.com/blogs/people/virtual-influencer-trend-vmodel-and-vtuber.
 <sup>74</sup> "虛擬偶像席捲全球! 韓國 AI 偶像團體 PLAVE 風靡 35 國 | AsiaKOL 跨境網紅行銷," AsiaKOL (2023), https://www.asiakol.com/article/516.

# Summary

In South Korea's competitive entertainment industry, Vtubers has risen the new trend, offering virtual idols that avoid scandals by maintaining ideal, unchanging personas. Even enter music market, showcasing the versatility of virtual characters. After Rozy, virtual idol group PLAVE, creating a more relatable and interactive fan experience. Additionally, it reveals that the entering of Vtuber market enhance the diversity of the entertainment environment.



Figure 2. Korean idol group- Plave

Source Reference: https://reurl.cc/oyA5yg

### Vtuber Trend in Taiwan

As Vtuber culture is spreading rapidly in Japan, effecting the development of Vtubers in Taiwan. In 2018, the first one Vtuber Hoonie (虎妃) push from Yahoo TV open the new field in Vtuber. This kind of commencement model increase the activity and diversity of Vtuber, attract people attention and notice the brand and up the brand image. For instance, in 2021, the Taiwanese beverage brand FormoCha cooperated with Japanese Vtuber Kumonoue Yumemi(雲之上夢見/くもの上ユメミ). In addition to inviting Kumonoue Yumemi to shoot videos and live-stream of drink tastings for online promotion, FormoCha also made Vtuber's business opportunities and launched a series of activities to attract fans to support and purchases, such as event-limited drinks, purchasing a set package and displaying Vtuber's signed copies and hand-painted menus in the store. Not only brand cooperation, Vtuber even started to be the city tourism promotion ambassador. Japanese Vtuber Kumonoue Yumemi became the Changhua's city ambassador and shot the video introduced the Changhua local dessert Mochi from making process to food tasting and received the signature of city mayor on the box of mochi.<sup>75</sup>

Besides, Taichung city has own Vtuber Yume 雨宮夢, with city mayor promoting local Taichung food and culture together holding activity of top ten souvenirs for endorsement promotion makes people know what should buy if visit Taichung city. In addition, Yume had a live conversation with Taichung City Councilors, the connection showed impressiveness with Taichung and was getting more popular. In order to promote Taichung City souvenirs and penetrate into the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> 萌朧雪猴, "想化身麻糬! Vtuber 雲之上夢見 收到彰化市致贈麻糬 將公開宣傳影片," Vtuber, (Juanury, 31 2021), https://www.moelong.com/moelongnews/archives/7261.

young market<sup>76</sup>, in July 2022, the Taichung City Industrial and Commercial Development Investment Promotion Association cooperated with more than 40 Vtubers across Taiwan. By shooting a promotional video of Taichung souvenirs, conduct online popularity voting, and held a special themed market.<sup>77</sup> Creating innovative marketing that combines reality with virtual reality can be said the first and unique in Taiwan. In addition, the event adds the factors of interesting and visible through online popularity voting from Taiwanese. By calling on Taiwanese people to provide opinions, souvenir shops would check and improved how to promote and attract votes from fans on social media Vtuber would also made much more effort on promote the endorsed products. Therefore, this event is not only a PK for local shops in Taichung, but also the first and largest Vtuber PK event in Taiwan. With the Vtuber wave, the innovative and impressive marketing methods made the Taichung event become topic and spread quickly among people.

Some company has smelled the potential commence in Vtuber market and start creating innovative marketing way to promote own products. For example, one of the famous Telecom companies in Taiwan, Chunghwa Telecom, has a good knowing and sense of Vtuber's characteristics, by "having a large number of young generations" and launches "Virtual Spokesperson Lumina", hoping to make the brand younger and enhance the interactive experience of the younger generation. Vtuber Lumina introduced the Chunghwa Telecom product and information on social media, Instagram and YouTube. By this way, using the platform that popular in younger

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> 張峻棟、陳秉豪, "Vtuber 雨宮夢!永遠 19 歲 和盧秀燕推廣台中超可愛," 生活, (October, 12 2021), https://www.setn.com/News.aspx?NewsID=1011215.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> 沈佑諳, "40 位 VTuber 創全臺最大規模 臺中伴手禮票選破 20 萬票," (August, 31 2022), https://reurl.cc/NI9AKx.

generation, enhancing the opportunities of interacting with young people and improving the brand image increases consumers' favorability and makes the recognition on customers' mind. Experience Ambassador Vtuber Lumina at the opening of Chunghwa Telecoms new generation technological store quickly allowing the audience to know what kind of space this is through a 5-minute video and introducing various areas for design details, besides personally experiencing how "user experience" in each area. In addition to the live stage at Lumina and a merchandise store, there will also be a "Lumina Interactive Navigation Area" where viewers can interact with Chunghwa Telecom's Vtuber in both virtual and real-life space, so they feel closer with brand (Vtuber) ever before.

Also, Chunghwa Telecom Vtuber Lumina launched the activity to achieved Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), supporting the development of Taiwan Little League and convey the message called audience to pay attention on the education issues of rural school children. On the project of "Qianqiu Little League Dream", Lumina uploaded the video of introduced the "Qianqiu Elementary School Little Baseball League" on YouTube and invited fans to go to the Chunghwa Telecom HiNet Light Generation Fan Group to like the projected post and share the video to let more people not only know this event but the gap between city and countryside school problem and issue behind. The total number of accumulated likes will be used as a donation amount. Lumina played an important role in its social influence and attracted a large number of fans to respond to the event. In the end, by donating \$NT 11,538 dollars, obviously, successfully and perfectly ending the project.

There is no denying that Vtuber trends and culture have gradually emerged in recent years in Taiwan. Hence, the number of numbers of Vtubers and Vtuber

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agencies and studio has greatly risen. Taiwan's Vtuber agency "春魚創意 Springfish" is a studio that established in 2018 and committed to the entertainment industry of Virtual Youtuber(Vtuber) and idol groups, the target group is mostly the young generation of Internet. It has "Square Live" jointly established with STORIA/Narator game studio, and has launched "終端少女 Terminal Girls", "瀕臨絕種團 RESCUTE ", "惡獸時代 Monstar", "極深空計畫 Xtreme Deep Field Project" and "瑟拉斯蒂歐 Celestial" in December 2023. In addition, there is still continued to push more Vtuebrs as the upcoming Vtuber group "諦覓司 Timaeus" in 2024. The agency has cooperated with other manufacturers and government units across borders several times. For example, the 2024 Paris Olympics Figure 3, "春魚創意 Springfish" has become a sponsor of the Chinese Taipei Olympics and take charge of the important responsibility of the "Annual Virtual Promotion Ambassador". Not only the promotional video for the 2024 Paris Olympics have been released but related live broadcasts, sports promotional videos, offline experiences and other activities also be released. Hoping that more people can take this cross-border cooperation to inspire interest in sports and cheer for the Taiwanese players and athletes.



Figure 3. Springfish x Chinese Taipei 2024 Paris Olympics Source Reference: https://reurl.cc/ReWdYz

Since the establishment of "子午計畫 Meridian Project" in 2022, a total of six Vtubers have been launched, including "浠 Mizuki", "汐 Seki", "響 Hibiki", "KSP" and the firstly debuted as a group "霓 NEO(n) " with three female Vtubers. In 2022, launched the three male Vtubers group "月蝕屋 M $\Phi$ ONLIT ". "子午計畫 Meridian Project" has been committed to promoting virtual live hosts and has many popular Vtubers, with a total of more than 800,000 followers on various social platforms. Therefore, given the high popularity of Vtubers, the "Meridian Express Travel

Taichung" event cooperated with Taichung MRT, and first time combined Vtubers with the concept of theme stations Figure 4. People can complete the collection at specific stations from May 1 to July 31, 2024. After stamping, fans can redeem event-limited souvenirs and take photos with favorite Vtubers. The vending machines at the theme station also sell joint products with "子午計畫 Meridian Project ".



Figure 4. Meridian Project x Taichung MRT

Source Reference: https://reurl.cc/WNR4Ak

As the increasing number of Vtuber, has shown quite diverse development directions and the acceptability of Vtubers of Taiwanese people. The Playboard analysis website reveals that Most Super Chatted on YouTube in monthly February 2024 in Taiwan, has break the new score the numbers of new Vtuber on the list Figure 5. On fourth place of Vtuber "熙歌 Cygnus" earn the NT\$222,670, fifth place "浠 Mizuki" NT\$211,585, sixth place "瑪格麗特·諾爾絲 Margaret North" NT\$201,803 are all above NT\$200,000 in a month.<sup>78</sup> Besides, the rank from fourth to eleventh place are all Taiwanese Vtubers. Among the top 200 on the monthly list, there are 33 new Vtubers, accounting for 1/6, which also significantly increased the average Super Chatted value and showed the Changing environment on Taiwanese people watched on YouTube.

Most	Super Chatted				2024年2月
Rank		Channel	Super Chat Revenue	Count	Videos
1		撃敗虎先锋虎俄魔虎三傑的萬事通事務所 #阿宅反然軍 #朱學道	+NT\$306,488	+1.4K	
2	۲	莎皮寨維爾 #莎皮 #莎皮恩能助	+NT\$304,467	+677	
3		型男雅長臨狂詹姆士 #振兵 #飛燈	+NT\$281,918	+1.6K	
4		Cygnus ch. 服歌	+NT\$222,670	+2.5K	
5		<b>通Mizuki Channel</b> #歌曲 #歌ってみた	+NT\$211,585	+527	
6	9	瑪格麗特·諾爾特 / Margaret North【箱箱The Box沂應】 #問題 #認知論符	+NT\$201,803	+ 499	<b>哄</b> ▶88K
7		Aoi Hinamori Ch. #⊞™vtuber #Vtuber→III	+NT5197,746	+ 762	NAZK 7
8		Tabasuko Ch. 塔芭鹅可 #IAXO #OV	+N1\$189,495	+ 339	新生 5.4.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.
9 NEW		Lucida ch. 資料記 #Vsuber #Vsinger	+NT5183,627	+1.6K	Daak
10		Neko Matsuri Ch. 編祭 #哈哥 #vtuber	+NT\$161,150	+ 496	In June 1975
11		海克莉爾 HercuLes ch. #司師 #助子	*NT\$155,518	+1.3K	除夕。初一家

Figure 5. Most super chatted in Taiwan in February 2024

Source Reference: https://reurl.cc/g61anp

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Playboard, in *Playboard* (February, 2024). https://playboard.co/en/youtube-ranking/most-superchatted-all-channels-in-taiwan-monthly?period=1706745600.

# Summary

Influenced by Japan's Vtuber culture, the Vtuber trend in Taiwan has grown rapidly. Since Hoonie (虎姄), Taiwan's first Vtuber, debuted in 2018, brands and cities starting used Vtubers for promotion. For example, FormoCha collaborated with Japanese Vtuber Kumonoue Yumemi (雲之上夢見) to promote beverages, and Taichung City created own Vtuber to endorse local food and culture. Companies like Chunghwa Telecom launched Vtubers like Lumina to engage younger audiences and improve brand image. By the trend of rise of Taiwanese Vtuber agencies expanded into cross-industry partnerships. Vtubers' popularity in Taiwan also reflected in their Super Chat earnings, these trends show the growing influence of Vtubers in Taiwan.

### Entertaining Vtuber Example- Mochikomame 茸茸鼠(もちこまめ)

As a Japanese personal virtual YouTuber who officially debuted on July 25, 2021. Although she is a native Japanese, she has lived in Taiwan for a period of time. She loves Taiwanese food and culture. Her fluency in Chinese and Taiwanese is often jokingly called "Taiwanese Vtuber". In the early days of debut, Mochikomame mainly used songs as live broadcast content.

In September 2021, Mochikomame collaborated with another Taiwanese Vtuber, Locolost 洛可洛斯特, and teach Mochikomame more "local" Chinese in a meme video. After that, Mochikomame started a live stream to learn Taiwanese memes, and often used Chinese and Taiwanese in various live broadcasts and social media. Internet meme, or meme, is a cultural item (such as an idea, behavior, or style) that spreads across the Internet, usually used by young generation, primarily through social media platforms like YouTube, Twitter, and Reddit. Internet memes manifest in a variety of formats, including images, videos, GIFs, and other viral content. Key characteristics of memes include their tendency to be parodied, their use of intertextuality, their viral dissemination, and their continual evolution.

By her unique voice and the advantage speak in Taiwanese and Chinese not only closed the distance with Taiwanese audience, but ride meme wave to attract young generation, fans can see her improvement on practicing Chinese and follow with her footprint to enjoy a variety of view from Japanese. Although, Vtuber is start from Japan, some Taiwanese audience can't interact with Vtuber since language barriers. However, the exist of Japanese Vtuber who understand Chinses or even Taiwanese brought the new experience for Taiwanese and looking her growing from "parents" side. Depend on a variety of interesting factors and newly experience, therefore, quickly build a fans community could resonate Taiwanese and share meme language.

Since then, the number of subscriptions has increased significantly, exceeding 100,000 on October 14 of that year, making it the Vtuber with the fastest growth rate of subscriptions. In the same month, Mochikomame channel started benefiting and set a single-day Super Chat record of fifth place in the world that month. In 2023, joined Taiwan's Vtuber agency "Spring Fish Studio 春魚創意" as a personal Vtuber, and also become one of the Chinese Taipei team's publicity ambassador in Paris Olympic 2024. Now, own almost 223,000 followers on YouTube.

JINS was founded over 20 years ago with a mission to provide functional, innovative, and lightweight eyewear for everyone at an accessible price. Every JINS frame is designed in Tokyo and carefully assembled with the spirit and passion of Japanese craftsmanship. The audience of Mochikomame are basically younger generation, interested in Japanese culture (Vtuber) and other her personality. The case cooperated with Japanese brand glasses JINS allowed to introduce product in more heart closed Japanese language and help JINS glasses brand to enter Taiwanese younger generation market. Moreover, Vtuber is position who used 3C for a long time every day, in order to keep the relationship with audiences, having long time live stream. Therefore, glasses product is suitable for Vtuber to endorse and introduce. In the other hands, although she is not very good at Chinese, audience are attracted by she tried her best to convey the thing she learned and combine the meme language with fans group.

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# Summary

Mochikomame builds fan cohesion by connecting with Taiwanese audiences through her entertaining style, language skills, and memes culture in young generation. Embracing Taiwanese and Japan culture and humor, creating a shared experience and a sense of growth that Taiwanese fans follow closely. Her engaging personality also led to a collaboration with Japanese eyewear brand JINS, resonating with young fans interested in Japanese culture. Mochikomame's mix of humor, cultural integration, and language efforts has fostered a close, loyal community, therefore, cause fans community cohesion.



Figure 6. JINS x Mochikomame Vtuber

Source Reference: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASmPrft-Elk

### Professional Vtuber Example- Lumina 璐咪娜(ルミナ)

Lumina) is the virtual spokesperson for Chunghwa Telecom's HiNet Light Generation, launched on November 21, 2019. In order to close the distance with the younger generation, Chunghwa Telecom also decided to keep up with the trend and launched a new virtual spokesperson Lumina after various planning and design. Compared with the past simple designs of mascot of telecom babies and light generation supermen, Lumina is obviously more ingenious in appearance and character setting and is closer to the young group.<sup>79</sup> In addition, Lumina has cooperated with League of Legends famous professional games player, Westdoor 西 門夜說. For professional games players, who relies on the Internet for all his life and work, high speed and smooth Internet is the only requirement. Through the cooperation, to marketing Chunghwa Telecom own service of the light generation. In 2019, At Asia's largest e-sports carnival, Chunghwa Telecom invested heavily in 3D character modeling technology, combined with optical motion capture technology commonly used in Hollywood animated films and the Japanese animation industry, to demonstrate the high fluency of virtual idol movements and to serve as the virtual spokesperson Lumina design debut single song and interact with the audience.

In this way, interacting with younger generation target customer or answer question, suggest advice and explain problem about telecom, plays a role to link the relationship between brand and consumer in young and interesting way.

Besides, Lumina plays multiple roles and adds value to Chunghwa Telecom's IP in a variety of ways *Figure 6*. Since the hard-working of Lumina, Chunghwa

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> 科技新報, "提升年輕世代互動體驗, 中華電信推出全新虛擬代言人 Lumina," (November, 22 2019), https://today.line.me/tw/v2/article/xmjgpn.

Telecom's "HiNet Light Generation" won 8 first places in the "2020 Home Broadband Network Usage Behavior and Satisfaction Survey", including upload speed, customer service, overall service, and network stability. Degree, value-added services, customer loyalty, brand reputation, and brand recognition.

In fact, Chunghwa Telecom's "HiNet Optical Generation" not only won 8 first places in the "Broadband Satisfaction Survey", but in the detailed survey of all Internet behaviors, "HiNet Light Generation" also ranked first in "Playing games online without being offline" and "The smoothest in movies, video and live broadcast watching " scored the highest in customer recognition in these two projects, obviously shows the good quality of service.

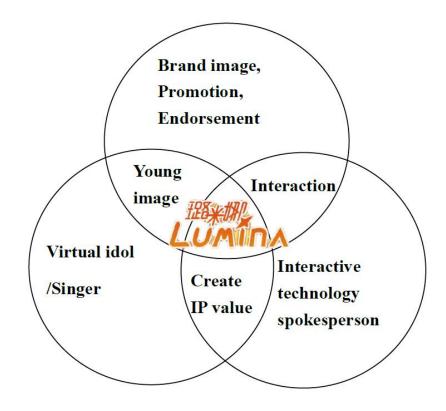


Figure 7. Multiple roles of Lumina



Figure 8. Chunghwa Telecom Vtuber Lumina Source Reference: https://reurl.cc/YqpXx0

# Summary

Lumina fosters fan community cohesion by engaging Chunghwa Telecom's huge range of audience with her approachable, professional and informative image. Through interacting with fans, answers or explains telecom questions, and collaborates with popular influencers like pro-gamer or celebrity to expand her influence. Moreover, it has caught the range of audiences of Telecom's customers. At events, her live virtual appearances use advanced motion capture, allowing fans to connect with her in real-time. These interactions build a loyal fans community around the brand, creating a shared, diverse experience for her followers.

# **Reliability Analysis**

Composite reliability must exceed 0.7 for results to be acceptable. **Table 8.** and **Table 9.**, all facets have composite reliability and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficients above 0.7, indicating the collected samples are reliable.<sup>80</sup>

Table 8. Reliability Analysis of Entertaining Vtuber

Reliability test- Entertaining Vtuber			
Construct	Cronbach's alpha		
Entertaining	0.866>0.7, reliable		
Relatedness need fulfillment	0.944>0.7, reliable		
Purchase intention	0.899>0.7, reliable		
Fans community cohesion	0.911>0.7, reliable		
Brand identity	0.932>0.7, reliable		
Emotional attachment	0.933>0.7, reliable		

# Table 9. Reliability Analysis of Professional Vtuber

# **Reliability test- Professional Vtuber**

Construct	Cronbach's alpha
Professional	0.925>0.7, reliable
Purchase intention	0.907>0.7, reliable
Fans community cohesion	0.888>0.7, reliable
Brand identity	0.946>0.7, reliable
Emotional attachment	0.932>0.7, reliable

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Claes Fornell and David F. Larcker, "Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error," *Journal of Marketing Research* 18, no. 1 (1981), https://doi.org/10.2307/3151312, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3151312.

# **Statistical Analysis**

# Table 10. Correlation Matrix of Entertaining Vtuber

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5
Entertaining	4.3191	1.54920					
Relatedness need fulfillment	4.6175	1.50004	0.816**				
Fans community cohesion	3.9764	1.36274	0.7**	0.709**			
Brand identity	4.0862	1.21933	0.507**	0.558**	0.787**		
Emotion attachment	3.3564	1.39462	0.42**	0.446**	0.688**	0.805**	
Purchase intention	3.8317	1.43935	0.573**	0.556**	0.788**	0.753**	0.663**
p<0.01**							

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations\* of Entertaining Vtuber

Table edited by author

Table 11. Correlation Matrix of Professional Vtuber

,	,					
Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4
Professional	4.8156	1.17129				
Fans community cohesion	4.4433	1.29593	0.668**			
Brand identity	4.7335	1.28586	0.557**	0.816 **		
Emotion attachment	4.4632	1.39813	0.47**	0.734**	0.875**	
Purchase intention	4.5650	1.37870	0.511**	0.772**	0.813**	0.793 **
p<0.01**						

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations\* of Professional Vtuber

Table edited by author

#### **Regression Coefficients**

Table 12. Standardized Regression Coefficients from Analyses PredictingPurchase Intention of Customers Watching Vtuber

# Standardized Regression Coefficients from Analyses Predicting Purchase

Independent variable	Model
Brand identity	0.289***
Emotion attachment	0.85***
Fans community cohesion	0.502***
Model F	203.036***
R <sup>2</sup> (sqare值)	0.669
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.666

Intention of Customers watching Vtuber (N=305)

Table edited by author

### H1: Brand identity positively affects purchase intention

According to **Table 12.**, brand identity positively affects purchase intention. Hypothesis 1 is supported ( $\beta$ =0.289, p<0.001), through Vtuber with entertaining and professional characteristics. Brand identity builds a strong impression and preference in the minds of audiences and consumers. A powerful and positive brand identity may set a brand apart. Therefore, brand identity can cause purchase intention and stand out in the market competition when compared to other alternatives.

#### H2: Emotional attachment positively affects purchase intention

According to **Table 12.**, hypothesis 2 is supported ( $\beta$ =0.85, p<0.01). For audiences watching Vtubers, emotional attachment to a brand has emerged as an important factor influencing customer purchasing behavior. Furthermore, this attachment often becomes a priority when selecting products and brands, ultimately driving purchase intention.

### H3: Fans community cohesion of Vtuber positively affects purchase intention

As can be seen from **Table 12.**, hypothesis 3 is supported ( $\beta$ =0.502, p<0.001), even through Vtuber with different personality. Vtuber fans community has positively influence on combination of brand and Vtuber. With similar connections with brand and product, and the relationship with Vtuber will affect purchase intention. Therefore, Fans community cohesion of Vtuber positively affects purchase intention.

Through Hypothesis 3, demonstrates that fan community cohesion positively influences consumers' purchase intentions. Therefore, I aim to further explore the specific factors of Vtubers building and strengthen community cohesion.

Table 13. Standardized Regression Coefficients from Analyses PredictingCommunity cohesion of Vtuber

### Standardized Regression Coefficients from Analyses Predicting Fans Community

Independent variable	Model	
Entertaining of Vtuber	0.363***	
Relatedness need fulfillment	0.413***	
Model F	182.584***	
R <sup>2</sup> (sqare值)	0.547	
AdjustedR <sup>2</sup>	0.544	

cohesion of Vtuber(N=305)

Table edited by author

### H4: Entertaining of Vtuber positively affects fans community cohesion

According to **Table 13**., Entertaining characteristics of Vtuber positively affects community cohesion. Hypothesis 4 is supported ( $\beta$ =0.363, p<0.001). The entertaining aspects of a Vtuber significantly enhance fan community cohesion by creating a shared, enjoyable experience that draws fans closer together. Through interactive content, humor, and engaging performances, their unique style, humor, and charm make watching their content enjoyable, prompting audiences to return for more. This cohesion is strengthened as fans bond over shared enjoyment and mutual support for the Vtuber, which in turn reinforces loyalty, encourages participation, and sustains a lively and connected fan community.

# H5: Relatedness needs fulfillment between audience and Vtuber positively affects Fans community Cohesion

From **Table 13.**, hypothesis 5 is supported by the result ( $\beta$ =0.413, p<0.01), shows that audiences gain relatedness need from entertaining Vtuber and positively affects fans community cohesion. The fulfillment of relatedness needs between customers and Vtubers positively influences fan community cohesion in several ways. Vtubers who actively interact with their fans, by responding to comments and creating unique content, for instance, Q&A sessions or share experiences around daily life, helps fulfill these relatedness needs and encouraging fans to connect with other fans. Shared experiences, such as livestreams and collaborative content, further strengthen this bond, allowing fans to bond over common interests and develop a collective identity. Additionally, fans feel comfortable sharing their thoughts then cultivate trust and mutual respect, reinforcing community ties. As fans feel more connected, they are motivated to participate actively in discussions and support community initiatives, contributing to a vibrant atmosphere. Fulfilling relatedness needs leads to increased loyalty towards both the Vtuber and the fan community, ensuring long-term cohesion and commitment among fans. Table 14. Standardized Regression Coefficients from Analyses PredictingCommunity cohesion of Vtuber

#### Standardized Regression Coefficients from Analyses Predicting Fans

#### **Community cohesion of Vtuber(N=305)**

Independent variable	Model
Professional of Vtuber	0.668***
Model F	243.836***
R <sup>2</sup> (sqare值)	0.446
AdjustedR <sup>2</sup>	0.444

Table edited by author

### H6: Professional of Vtuber positively affects Fans community cohesion

As can be seen from **Table 14.**, hypothesis 6 is supported ( $\beta$ =0.668, p<0.001). Vtuber introduced products in professional way or with professional streaming style positively affects fans community cohesion. The professionalism of Vtubers significantly enhances fan community cohesion by establishing a sense of trust and credibility. When Vtubers demonstrate expertise in their respective fields, for example, through knowledgeable sharing, high-quality content and explaining, or skillful performances, fans perceive them as reliable sources of information and entertainment. In addition, they might welcome audiences to ask questions, show their skills and professional image and provide fans with valuable insights. This not only satisfies fans' desires for knowledge and growth but also promotes a sense of belonging within the community as members share common interests and goals. This experience not only satisfies fans' deep desires for knowledge, personal growth, and

development but also fosters a strong sense of belonging within the community, as members come together to share common interests, values, and goals. Through this collaborative environment, fans engage in a shared learning process that not only enhances their understanding but also strengthens emotional bonds between them. As they connect over these experiences, a collective identity emerges, further solidifying their commitment and loyalty to the Vtuber and the community as a whole, creating a more united and supportive fanbase.

# **Research Results**

Table	15.	Hypotheses	Results
10010		ing poeneses	<b>I C S C C S C C S <b>C C S C C S C C S C C S C C S C C S C C S C C S <b>C C S C C S C C S C C S C C S C C S <b>C C C S C C S C C S <b>C C C S C C S C C S <b>C C C S C C C S <b>C C C S <b>C C C S C C C S <b>C C C S <b>C C C S <b>C C C C S <b>C C C C S <b>C C C S <b>C C C S <b>C C C C C S <b>C C C C C S <b>C C C C C C S <b>C C C C C C C C C C</b></b></b></b></b></b></b></b></b></b></b></b></b></b></b></b></b></b></b></b></b>

Number	Hypotheses	Results
Н1	Brand identity positively affects purchase intention	Support
Н2	Emotional attachment positively affects purchase intention	Support
НЗ	Fans community cohesion of Vtuber positively affects purchase intention	Support
H4	Entertaining of Vtuber positively affects Fans community cohesion	Support
Н5	Relatedness needs fulfillment between audience and Vtuber positively affects Fans community cohesion	Support
Н6	Professional of Vtuber positively affects Fans community cohesion	Support

Table edited by author

#### CONCLUSION

For the first research question, how Vtubers' fans community cohesion affects purchase intention? The Vtuber cases of cooperating with brands indicate that customer of brand identity, emotional attachment and Vtuber's fans community are the factors that contribute to consumer purchase intention. For the second research question, How to build Vtuber fans community cohesion? Through quantitative research method, collected the viewpoint of public audiences, revealed with Vtuber personality, characteristics and style are the elements of build fans community cohesion and by choosing appropriate Vtuber who related to product can positively affects customer perceived value on brand and cause purchase intention.

VTubers often use personalized interactions to deepen emotional attachment to their fans. For example, according to the entertaining Vtuber's case study, Japanese VTuber Mochikomame has made an effort to learn Chinese and use Taiwanese cultural references and humor in her streams. The culture conversation between Japan and Taiwan, through the high popularity of meme culture trend among younger generation, this personal touch makes Taiwanese fans feel special and valued, creating a feeling of, "She understands us." Additionally, the willingness and offer of even using the language she isn't good at, still wants to connect with audience, demonstrates Mochikomame's commitment and valued to her fans, which enhances audiences' sense of closeness and loyalty toward her. Thus, it helps to build fans community cohesion. By creating unique content that bridges Japanese and Taiwanese culture, Mochikomame crafts an experience that feels both familiar and exclusive to her Taiwanese fans, enhancing their engagement and sense of belonging. This cultural blend not only entertains but also fosters a shared identity among her audience, who feel connected through common cultural touchpoints and thoughts. Moreover, this

interactive and culturally content approach encourages fans to actively participate in her streams, share ideas, exchange thoughts and even engage in discussions with other fans. This shared enthusiasm and interaction among fans amplify the sense of cohesion in community, this enhanced community cohesion makes fans more likely to support Mochikomame. Moreover, fans feel motivated to support these products by viewing their purchases as a way to reinforce their connection with Mochikomame and show support and appreciation for her efforts, also, reveals the loyalty and unity in fans community.

Lumina, Chunghwa Telecom's virtual spokesperson, employs a range of strategies to enhance community cohesion among her fans and strengthen their connection to the brand. Lumina takes on an approachable, informative and professional role by presenting Chunghwa Telecom's services in a way that's easy to understand and engaging. Lumina not only aligns herself with her audience's interests by engaging deeply with the gaming and e-sports communities, which are popular in the young generation, also sharing the product that will be used in daily life or explaining the technological problem will meet in life, attracting the huge group of audience from young to old generation. Additionally, Lumina enhances her credibility by sharing behind-the-scenes insights into the technical work of Chunghwa Telecom's engineers, such as installing and troubleshooting technological products. By participating in these areas, with a credible and professional image, becomes a role to share knowledge and stand as customer side to recommend or introduce product in order to improve customers' life quality, which help to fostering fans' identity and emotional connection. Additionally, Lumina also participates in both virtual interactions and live events like Lumina virtual guides the store and tech fairs. By participating in live events, providing considerate services such as exclusive advisory

customer service, where fans can interact with her both virtually and in physical settings, creates an immersive brand experience that resonates with fans in both digital and physical interactive ways. In this way, allowed fans to feel more immersed in the brand experience, creating a stronger emotional bond and loyalty, increasing fans community cohesion and thereby positively affects customer loyalty to purchase intention.

Through the statistical results, brand identity, emotional attachment, and fans community cohesion have a positive impact on purchase intention. Firstly, brand image is important in the process of building brand awareness. Firstly, brand identity is one of the important factors of building purchase intention. Consumer by understanding, agreeing with the value of brand, thus, brand can find ways to increase brand identity sense in order to create purchase intention. Secondly, emotional attachment makes consumers feel brands are on the same side with them, as friend, as partner, help consumers more interested and trust in brand. Third, through the existence of Vtuber, the rise of Vtubers has created a lively fan community and fans community cohesion, providing brands with a unique space to engage audiences. By collaborating with or marketing through Vtubers, brands can capture consumers' attention in a dynamic and interactive way, connecting with fans who are already deeply connected to the Vtuber. Moreover, the relationship between brand and Vtuber is important for decreasing the distance between brand and customers. Entertaining, relatedness and professional traits of Vtuber benefited the form of Vtuber fans community. Different characteristics can attract different needs groups of people. Therefore, depend on needs of potential customer groups cooperated with Vtuber to maximum appeal consumer. Additionally, brands post relevant information and activities with Vtuber through social media platforms, which can establish interaction

and attention from fans and public, and vice versa. In this way, build fans and increase followers' loyalty to brand and Vtuber. Vtuber fans community cohesion has a positive impact on purchase intention because consumers are pay attention about what they are interested in and willing to purchase from brands recommended by their loved Vtuber. Also, fans community helps to affect other fans thoughts and encourage purchase behavior in fans community. In summary, for all brands and business, the most important and crucial goal is to build customer purchase intention. These results provide businesses with important insights into how to successfully shape and promote their brands by Vtuber. Also, through Vtuber fans community cohesion to affect customer purchase intention creates a win-win situation for both brand and the Vtuber.

#### Suggestion

In a highly competitive market environment, effectively changing ways of attracting attention from customers has a great impact on helping increase market share and improve performance. According to the research findings, I offer the following suggestion. First of all, brand identity, emotional attachment on brand, Vtubers' fans community cohesion are crucial factors in building consumer purchase intention. Brands can invest resources and effort in these areas. Also, positioning brand unique meaning, image and impression in customer mind. Crafting customers' brand identity and emotional attachment can pique consumer interest in purchasing. Furthermore, Vtuber are essential for capturing consumer attention. By smartly choosing Entertaining and Professional Vtuber based on brand traits, which can benefit in purchase intention, which more fit the brand image in customer mind. Vtubers' perspectives and styles significantly influence customer behavior. Thus,

brands can also experiment with collaborations involving different Vtuber styles to test customer preferences. Incorporating Vtuber elements into product and packaging design can attract consumers, for example, language, meme and design which can raise fans and customers' attention and resonance.

#### **APPENDIX**

### Questionnaire

親愛的先生/小姐:

我是文藻外語大學的研究生,首先,衷心感謝您撥冗參與此項研究。

這是一份學術研究問卷,主要目的是探討「虛擬人物 Vtuber 在幫助推廣品牌中的影響 力」。此問卷大致將分為兩部影片探討 Vtuber 在推廣品牌上的效益性,<u>已將影片剪輯在一 分鐘以內</u>,希望能耽誤您幾分鐘的時間,懇請您提供寶貴意見。本問卷以不記名方式作 答,且不對外公開,您的回答僅供學術研究使用,請放心填寫。完整填寫問卷者將可以參 與抽獎,抽獎會於問卷收集完畢後進行,感謝您在百忙之中抽空填答此問卷,在此獻上最 誠摯的謝意。

敬祝事事順心、健康愉快!

文藻外語大學國際事務系學生:陳郁昀

指導老師: 吳紹慈 教授

# 第一部分:基本資料

1.您的性别?

□男□女□其他

2.您的年齡?

□15-18 歲 □19-21 歲 □22-25 歲 □26-29 歲 □30-33 歲 □34-37 歲 □37 歲以上

3. 職業:(可複選)

□學生 □服務業 □商業 □工業 □軍公教 □自由業 □製造業 □家管 □以上 皆非

4. 平均月收入:

□10000 元以下 □10001 元~20000 元 □20001~30000 元 □30001~40000 元 □40001~50000 元 □50000 元以上

第二部分.影片(一)



Vtuber 推廣 JINS 眼鏡品牌例子

□已完整觀看完畢

# 請根據上題影片回答下列問題:

<u>如果用 1-7 分來表示,1 表示非常不同意、7 表示非常同意,請選擇一個數字代</u> <u>表您的情形。</u>

<b>問卷題目1:</b> (娛樂性)	1 非常不同意	2 不同意	3 稍微不同意	4 普通	5 稍微同意	6 同 意	7 非常同意	
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1.	我覺得這位 Vtuber 很風趣				
2.	我覺得這位 Vtuber 很搞笑				
3.	我覺得這位 Vtuber 很幽默				

	<b>問卷題目 2:</b> (連結需求滿足)	1 非常不同意	2 不同意	3 稍微不同意	4 普 通	5 稍 微 同 意	6 同 意	7 非常同意
4.	這位 Vtuber 讓我感覺與他/ 她很親近							
5.	這位 VTube 對我來說充滿 親切感							
6.	這位 Vtuber 給我一種平易近 人的感覺							

<b>問卷題目 3:</b> ( <u>顧客感知價值</u> )	1 非常不同意	2 不同意	3 稍微不同意	4 普 通	5 稍微同意	6 同 意	7 非常同意
7. 我可能會考慮抖內贊助這位 Vtuber。							
<ol> <li>我可能會考慮成為這位 Vtuber的付費會員。</li> </ol>							

9. 我可能會考慮購買這位 Vtuber 所出的周邊商品。							
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<b>問卷題目 4:</b> ( <u>購買意圖/周邊產品</u> )	1 非常不同意	2 不同意	3 稍 微 不 同 意	4 普 通	5 稍 微 同 意	6 同意	7 非常同意
10. 我可能會考慮去購買 JINS 眼 鏡品牌。							
11. 當有眼鏡相關需求,我會考 慮優先考量 JINS 眼鏡品牌。							
12. 我會考慮向他人推薦 JINS 眼 鏡品牌。							

	1 非	2 不	3 稍	4 普	5 稍	6 同	7 非
	常	同	微	通	微	意	常
問卷題目 5:	不	意	不	_	同		同
(社群/品牌黏著度)	同		同		意		意
	意		意				
13. 我覺得透過 Vtuber #	え更加了 □						
解 JINS 這個品牌。							
14. 我會考慮參加 Vtuber	與 JINS 🛛						
眼鏡品牌的連線活動	o						
15. 我覺得透過 Vtuber 演	〔少了我 □						
與 JINS 眼鏡品牌的距	巨離感。						
16. 我覺得 JINS 眼鏡品牌	₽很理解 □						
我的需求。							

17. 我覺得 JINS 眼鏡品牌是值得				
信賴的。				

<b>問卷題目 6:</b> (品牌認同)	1 非常不同意	2 不同意	3 稍微不同意	4 普通	5 稍 微 同 意	6 同 意	7 非 常 同 意
18. JINS 眼鏡品牌有著獨特的辨 識度。							
19. JINS 眼鏡品牌是個擁有高品 質的品牌。							
20. JINS 眼鏡品牌有較好的聲 譽。							
21. JINS 眼鏡品牌產品對我意義 非凡。							
22. 我會長期關注 JINS 眼鏡品牌 的相關資訊。							
23. JINS 眼鏡品牌所傳達的理念 與我的信念是相符的。							
24. 我非常認同 JINS 這個眼鏡品 牌。							

<b>問卷題目 7:</b> (情感連結)	1 非常不同意	2 不同意	3 稍 微 不 同 意	4 普 通	5 稍 微 同 意	6 同 意	7 非常同意	
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25.	我經常使用 JINS 眼鏡品牌之					
	產品。		]	]	]	]
26.	我覺得 JINS 眼鏡品牌提供的					
	服務很好。					
27.	我的家人朋友幾乎都使用					
	JINS 品牌的產品與服務。					
28.	我關心 JINS 眼鏡品牌的命					
	運。					
29.	當我的朋友和家人抱怨 JINS					
	眼鏡品牌的服務時,我會捍					
	衛該品牌。					
30.	我喜歡與其他人討論 JINS					
	提供的服務。					
31.	整體來說,我對 JINS 公司					
	提供的服務感到滿意。					

# 第三部分.影片(二)



□已完整觀看完畢

# 請根據上題影片回答下列問題:

<u>如果用 1-7 分來表示,1 表示非常不同意、7 表示非常同意,請選擇一個數字代</u> <u>表您的情形。</u>

(1	<b>問卷題目1:</b> <u>專業性:</u> 給觀眾專業感,能夠對 傳達的資訊感到信任。)	1 非常不同意	2 不同意	3 稍微不同意	4 普通	5 稍微同意	6 同 意	7 非常同意
1.	我在觀看這位 Vtuber 的創作 內容時,我覺得他/她很專業							
2.	我在觀看這位 Vtuber 的創作 內容時,我覺得他/她很能幹							
3.	我在觀看這位 Vtuber 的創作 內容時,我覺得他/她具有豐富 的歷練							
4.	我在觀看這位 Vtuber 的創作 內容時,我覺得他/她是知識淵 博的							

<b>問卷題目 2:</b> ( <u>顧客感知價值:</u> )	1 非常不同意	2 不同意	3 稍微不同意	4 普 通	5 稍微同意	6 同意	7 非常同意
5. 我可能會考慮抖內贊助這位 Vtuber。							
6. 我可能會考慮成為這位 Vtuber 的付費會員。							
7. 我可能會考慮購買這位 Vtuber 所出的周邊商品。							

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	非	不	稍	普	稍	同	非
	常	同	微	通	微	意	常
問卷題目 3:	不	意	不		同		同
(購買意圖/周邊產品:)	同		同		意		意
	意		意				
8. 我可能會考慮購買中華電信	_						
的服務。							
9. 若要購買電信服務,我會考慮							
優先考量中華電信。							
10. 我會考慮向他人推薦中華電							
信。							

<b>問卷題目 4:</b> ( <u>社群/品牌黏著度</u> )	1 非常不同意	2 不同意	3 稍微不同意	4 普 通	5 稍微同意	6 同 意	7 非常同意
11. 我覺得透過 Vtuber 我更加了 解中華電信這個品牌。							
12. 我會考慮參加 Vtuber 與中華 電信的連線活動。							
13. 我覺得透過 Vtuber 減少了我 與中華電信品牌的距離感。							
14. 我覺得中華電信很理解我的 需求。							
15. 我覺得中華電信是值得信賴 的。							

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	非	不	稍	普	稍	同	非
	常	同	微	通	微	意	常
問卷題目 5:	不	意	不		同		同
(品牌認同 代表某品牌或城市)	同		同		意		意
	意		意				
16 由苏雷佐士英辉战站动地座。							
16. 中華電信有著獨特的辨識度。							
17 上共雨公日加快上六口所四							
17. 中華電信是個擁有高品質服							
務的品牌。							
18. 我對中華電信品牌有較好的							
聲譽。							
19. 中華電信品牌的產品與服務							
對我意義非凡。							

20. 我會長期關注中華電信品牌				
的相關資訊。				
21. 中華電信品牌所傳達的理念				
與我的信念是相符的。				
22. 我非常認同中華電信這個品				
牌。				

<b>問卷題目 6:</b> (情感連結)	1 非常不同意	2 不同意	3 稍微不同意	4 普 通	5 稍微同意	6 同意	7 非常同意
23. 我經常使用中華電信的相關 服務。							
24. 我覺得中華電信提供的服務 很好。							
25. 我的家人朋友幾乎都使用中 華電信的服務。							
26. 我關心中華電信品牌的命運。							
27. 當我的朋友和家人抱怨中華 電信的服務時,我會捍衛該品 牌。							
28. 我喜歡與其他人討論中華電 信公司提供的服務。							
29. 整體來說,我對中華電信公司提供的服務感到滿意。							

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