

Consumerism within fandom community in Rin Usami's Idol, Burning (2020)

¹Huwaida Nisrina Najla*, ²Eni Nur Aeni, ³Aidatul Chusna
¹⁻³English Literature, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

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Corresponding Author

Huwaida Nisrina Najla
English Literature, Universitas
Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia
Email:
huwaida.najla@mhs.unsoed.ac.id
Address: Jl. DR. Soeparno
No.60, Karangwangkal, Kec.
Purwokerto Utara, Kabupaten
Banyumas, Jawa Tengah 53122

This article provides an examination of consumerism within fandom communities, focusing on Rin Usami's novel *Idol, Burning* (2020) as a case study. A fandom is a community united by a shared enthusiasm for cultural products, where fans form participatory cultures by actively engaging not only with media but also creators and fellow fans. This research investigates how consumer behavior manifests uniquely within fandoms. It emphasizes the roles of consumption patterns, commodification of fan-related goods, and how fans construct and express their identities through material acquisition. To achieve this, the research employs a qualitative research approach and conducts extensive, in-depth analyses of various data sources. The research focuses on the four stages of the consumption process: selection, acquisition, utilization, and maintenance and repair. Findings reveal that acquisition goes beyond mere casual transactional activities, serving as a crucial part of identity construction and community establishment within fandoms. This research suggests that consumerism in fandoms is closely tied to the shaping and commodification of fan identities. By highlighting these dynamics, the research offers valuable insights into broader discussions on consumer culture. It challenges the normalization of excessive consumption in the entertainment industry and encourages critical reflection on consumption behaviors within fan communities.

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INTRODUCTION

With the growth of the global economy, driven by relentless marketing strategies and constantly changing product options, it is clear that consumerism has become an essential part of contemporary society, as we live in a world increasingly shaped by consumerism (Stearns, 2006). Its impacts extend beyond the economic sector, significantly shaping social and cultural life by influencing personal behavior, preferences, and lifestyles. People's choices about what to buy and how much to consume can have a significant impact on their lives. Our relationship with consumer products, which are essential to many aspects of our daily routines, is closely connected to consumerism (Miles, 1998). As Stearns (2009) stated, consumerism often involves the tendency to purchase non-essential goods, motivated by the belief that these items will improve one's personal image or social standing. This describes a society where people primarily focus on achieving personal goals by purchasing unnecessary goods, which then become an integral part of their identity. Gabriel and Lang (1995) argued that the act of consumption has evolved into more than just an economic activity; it has also become a moral principle and a way to measure a good life.

The pattern of consumption takes on a unique form within communities united by shared passions, also known as fandoms. Fandom refers to a community of people connected by a shared enthusiasm for cultural products, including music, films, books, games, or celebrities. It is widely regarded as a form of participatory culture, where fans actively engage with media texts, creators, and one another (Booth, 2018). Through their interactions and contributions, fans within fandom collaboratively create and shape culture, often expressing themselves and their identities through consumption. Therefore, such participation is closely linked to consumption patterns (Gray et al., 2017), which can influence consumer behavior. Thus, within fandom culture, purchasing related merchandise or experiences becomes a way for fans to express their identity and strengthen their sense of community, demonstrating how consumerism is intertwined with personal and shared experiences.

Consumerism, particularly in the context of fandom communities, can be thoroughly understood through various methods, including the analysis of literary works that explore these themes in depth. The rapid rise of fandom culture, driven by the emergence of numerous global idol groups, makes it a relevant topic for research. A clear example of the link between consumerism and fandom is seen in the entertainment industry, where idols are often treated like consumer products, carefully packaged and marketed to attract fans. In her acclaimed novel *Idol, Burning* (2020), Rin Usami offers a compelling look at this dynamic, showing how consumerism is deeply embedded within fandom communities.

Idol, Burning (2020) tells the story of Akari Yamashita, a sixteen-year-old high school student struggling with anxiety, academic pressure, and isolation. Finding comfort and purpose in her admiration for Masaki Ueno, a member of the idol group *Maza Maza*, Akari immerses herself deeply in various fangirl activities, including blogging, extensive research on Masaki's life, actively attending fan events, and collecting exclusive merchandise. Her intense dedication to her idol leads her to spend excessive amounts of money on material goods and experiences related to her fandom. These activities demand a significant financial and emotional commitment. Akari's quest for exclusive items, often produced in limited editions by the idol groups' agencies, highlights the commercial mechanisms at work in the idol industry. Fan spending on merchandise and events fuels the industry's profits. When a scandal involving Masaki occurs, it profoundly impacts Akari, revealing the vulnerability of fans to the complexities of the idol world. Through Akari's story, Usami highlights the emotional bond fans have with their idols, the way the entertainment industry profits from this connection, and the significant influence of consumerism on fans' social well-being. The novel provides a detailed examination of the intricate relationship between the entertainment industry and consumer culture, illustrating how fans' purchasing habits influence their emotions and social interactions.

Therefore, this research fills a significant gap in consumerism research in fandom by providing a literary analysis of Rin Usami's novel *Idol, Burning* (2020). The novel explores consumer culture within the context of Japanese idol group fandom, a social and cultural setting that has not been thoroughly explored in existing academic research. By analyzing how consumerism is reflected through the behaviors, emotions, and identities of the fans portrayed in this novel, this research uncovers the complex relationship between fans' genuine dedication and the commodification inherent in the entertainment industry marketing strategies. This research thus contributes to the broader conversation on consumer culture within fan communities. It aims to raise awareness among fans and scholars about how fandom can sometimes become a market where fans are treated as exploitable consumers rather than as individuals with genuine feelings and interests. Ultimately, this research challenges the idea that fans are simply consumers, instead presenting them as complex individuals with diverse intentions and emotions.

METHOD

This research applied a qualitative method, which emphasizes descriptive interpretation of data. As Denzin & Lincoln (2017) noted, qualitative research consists of interpretive activities that involve multiple interpretations. It aims to provide an in-depth understanding of phenomena through the subjective experiences of participants (Palmer & Bolderston, 2006). This approach involves analyzing information in a detailed and comprehensive manner to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter being studied. Therefore, this approach is appropriate for this research because it offers a thorough analysis of consumerism within the fan community in Rin Usami's novel, *Idol, Burning* (2020). The qualitative method interprets the meaning of textual representations and character behavior in novels by connecting them to broader socioeconomic and cultural contexts.

In the data collection process, document analysis was used in this research. This is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating printed and digital documents. It involves examining and interpreting data to extract meaning (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). According to Labuschagne (2003), the process consisted of extracting and categorizing relevant quotations, passages, and narrative segments into thematic categories. The steps were as follows:

1. Read the novel *Idol, Burning* (2020) carefully and reread it to gain a deeper understanding of the plot and characters.
2. Identify the character behaviors, interactions, and narrative passages in the novel that reveal aspects of consumerism.
3. Identify and gather notable quotes, dialogues, and descriptions that illustrate consumer behavior.
4. Gather additional information from secondary sources like journals, books, articles, and other references related to the issue.
5. Organize all collected data in a systematic way into clear categories for effective analysis.

Document analysis is a method of examining written or recorded materials by skimming, reading, and interpreting their content. It is closely related to content analysis, which systematically organizes information into categories that align with the main research questions. Therefore, content analysis (Bowen, 2009; Stemler, 2015) was employed to systematically categorize and interpret the data in relation to the research questions. The process consisted of:

1. Gather and categorize all relevant text materials and supporting data related to the novel, including quotations, conversations, and external references.
2. Examine and interpret the portrayal of consumerism within the fandom community in the novel *Idol, Burning* (2020) focusing on character behaviors, motivations, interactions, and patterns in the narrative.
3. Summarize the main findings by drawing clear conclusions from the analyzed data that directly address the research objectives related to consumerism within the context of fandom.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section examines the portrayal of consumerism in Rin Usami's novel *Idol, Burning* (2020), particularly within the context of fandom community. The analysis focuses on examining various instances of consumerist behavior depicted in the book, interpreting these actions as reflections of broader social and cultural trends. To systematically investigate these consumer behaviors, this research applies a sequential consumption framework (Gabriel & Lang, 1995; Campbell, 2005; Solomon & Russell, 2023). This model breaks down the consumption experience into several stages, including selection, acquisition, utilization, maintenance and repair, and disposal. Each stage is a crucial part of how consumers decide to select, purchase, use, maintain, and ultimately discard products. By examining these stages individually, this research aims to gain a better understanding of why consumers behave as they do and how they interact with the items they consume. However, while the five stages listed above are outlined, the novel *Idol, Burning* (2020) does not explicitly depict the disposal phase of consumer goods. Therefore, this research focuses its analysis on the first four stages.

The following sub-sections present the findings according to the four stages of consumption. They reveal how the characters navigate their identities as fans and consumers, illustrating how their behaviors reflect the complexities and social dynamics of actual fandom communities. This approach enables this research to provide a clearer understanding of how consumption operates within the fictional world of *Idol, Burning* (2020), as well as in real-life fan cultures.

Selection

The act of selection lies at the core of consumerism and serves as a key principle behind the entire phenomenon of consumer behavior. The choice or selection phase represents the initial stage of the consumption process, where individuals actively express their preferences by selecting an option from a wide range of options available on the market. While this stage may seem trivial, it is significant because it forms the basis for later stages of the consumption process. This phase goes beyond a simple act of picking an item; it requires careful consideration of how well the product aligns with personal desires and social values (Gabriel & Lang, 1995). The process of selecting what to consume is influenced by numerous factors, including cultural norms, social dynamics, personal preferences, and psychological aspects, all of which make it a complex and multi-layered experience. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017).

In the context of fandom, this selection process is influenced by a fan's enthusiasm for a specific artist, show, or brand. Fans are constantly exposed to a continuous stream of merchandise related to their favorite idols. The release of these products intensifies fans' attraction to the figures, motivating them to express their deep affection and adoration through their purchasing behavior. As fans move through the selection stage, their choices reflect a mix of personal interests, social influences, and the available options that align with their identity. They willingly invest significant time, effort, and money to acquire goods and services that help them form a deeper emotional connection with their idols. This ultimately satisfies their emotional needs and desires (Zhuang, 2019).

The following excerpt explains how selection works within the fandom community:

The indie idol group she (Narumi) followed let fans take photos with their favorite group member after live shows. Until last year she'd supported a major label group, but now she talked about leaving the mainstream idols on their pedestals and getting up close and personal with the underground. Come over to the dark side, she'd say. It's so much better. They remember who you are, and you could get to talk one-on-one (Usami, 2020, p. 3).

The passage highlights a pivotal moment in the story through Akari's thoughts about her friend Narumi, who is a very dedicated fan. Narumi's devotion to her idol is not superficial, as she is fully invested in the fandom and actively enjoys the emotional attachment. It becomes clear when she chooses to spend money on a photo session with her favorite idol, which marks a significant turning point in her journey as a fan. She transitions from supporting mainstream idols who are popular and recognized by everyone, based on how often they are discussed in the media, and their relevance (Barone, 2023), to support underground groups. These groups' idols have yet to achieve mainstream success in commercial and media outlets (Galbraith & Karlin, 2016), but they offer a closer, more personal connection between idols and fans.

This particular character's decision to support an underground idol group rather than continuing to invest in a commercially successful idol signed to a major label serves as an interesting example of the complex selection process that influences consumer behavior within fandom. This shift can be analyzed through the lens of cultural factors, as outlined in Kotler's marketing principles. These factors encompass the core values, perceptions, desires, and behaviors that members of society learn from their families and other important sources (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017).

Narumi's decision has implications beyond her musical preferences. It reflects a more profound shift in her values, the kind of connection she seeks with her idol, and how she wants to engage with fandom culture. Her switch from being a fan of mainstream idols to underground idols is based on a complex evaluation of her personal values, preferences, and the benefits she expects from each option. Her choice is shaped by broader cultural trends that favor authenticity and personal connection over polished, mass-market idols. By choosing an underground group, Narumi consciously prioritizes qualities like intimacy and authenticity in her fandom experience. This decision not only rejects the highly commercialized mainstream idol archetype but also fosters a more meaningful and personal relationship with her chosen idol, distancing her from traditional idol culture ideals.

Mainstream idols are often worshipped and elevated to iconic status, a phenomenon metaphorically described in the excerpt as being placed on a "pedestal." This idealization creates a sense of distance, portraying mainstream idols as untouchable and distant. In contrast, underground idols offer a more down-to-earth, relatable, and accessible experience, which aligns perfectly with the character's inner longing for a genuine and personal connection with the idols she admires. The phrase "Come to the dark side. It's much better" in the excerpt captures this transition perfectly. It presents underground idol groups as a superior alternative in the eyes of Narumi's characters, inviting fellow fans to reconsider their loyalty and shift it from mainstream idols to underground idols for a more fulfilling experience.

Acquisition

Once consumers have selected a product or service they like, they move to the acquisition stage. This stage marks the transition from interest or consideration to action, when their decision results in a purchase. This is the point where the actual purchase takes place (Kirana, 2021), marking an active process in which consumers make a conscious decision to buy the products offered by the seller (Zhuang, 2019).

Consumer acquisition considerations can vary greatly. The factors that ordinary consumers consider when purchasing basic necessities often differ from those that fans consider when acquiring

merchandise related to their idols (Kirana, 2021). Fans of celebrities tend to follow a more straightforward approach when deciding to buy a product. Their purchasing behavior reflects their self-identity as fans, providing them with a sense of belonging and satisfaction (Zhuang, 2019). In other words, fans' typical process is as follows: they see their idol promoting something, decide to buy it, and then talk about it positively afterwards (Wang, 2020).

The novel *Idol, Burning* (2020) presents a narrative that exemplifies the acquisitions of fans. The following excerpt illustrates this acquisition process:

I finally got one—yes, none other than the item officially known as the "Voiceful ★ Heartbeat Alarm Clock." Ever since we saw the promo, people have been saying they'd have preferred something more understated—maybe a pen with a logo, or a pouch? Others have called it an idol merch triple threat—useless, embarrassing, and expensive—but funnily enough it seems like quite a few of us have gotten one anyway. For all our grumbling, we'll turn around and go buy an 8,800 yen alarm clock (!). We're easy marks, I know. But that's merch acquisition syndrome for you. So this one was nearly a flop before it even went on sale, but do you know what? I actually really like it (Usami, 2020, pp. 37–38).

In the excerpt, Akari shares her opinion of the item she just bought on her blog. She wants to express her joy and sense of accomplishment to her followers after acquiring a special alarm clock officially released by her favorite idol group. Despite initial hesitation and complaints from other fans about the cost and perceived uselessness of the merchandise, which was considered embarrassing, Akari admitted that she and some of her fellow fans bought the items anyway.

The narrative about "Voiceful ★ Heartbeat Alarm Clock" highlights a common phenomenon in fan communities, where fans continue to buy their idol's merchandise despite holding mixed or negative opinions about the products' practicality, usefulness, or overall value. Fans openly share their dissatisfaction and disapproval, criticizing the merchandise as excessive, embarrassing, and expensive, which reflects the shared frustration many fans feel toward the commercial side of fandom culture. However, despite these complaints, Akari and many other fans continue to purchase these items. This pattern illustrates a typical cycle of consumerism within fandoms. Emotional bonds with idols and a strong desire to collect and own items associated with them motivate these purchases. This desire often outweighs practical concerns and rational judgment, leading to buys that might seem irrational or unnecessary from a purely functional point of view.

Akari jokingly referred to fans as "easy marks," suggesting they are easily tricked or targeted by marketers into purchasing merchandise. She openly admitted that fans, including herself, can be convinced to buy almost any item with little persuasion. This happens because their strong desire to connect with their idol outweighs their logic or personal preferences. In other words, fans value sentimental feelings and excitement more than practicality when it comes to owning a piece of their idol. It is fair to say that fans are vulnerable to marketing tactics and sales strategies. They often buy new merchandise because of hype or the hope of acquiring something special, rather than a genuine need.

The behavior aligns with Wang's (2020) statement on how celebrity fans typically go through a simplified purchasing process. When their idols endorse products, fans often buy them and leave positive feedback. Even if they have initial doubts or negative opinions, they tend to leave positive reviews, regardless of whether they genuinely like or need the product. This cycle of consumption is maintained partly because fans usually suppress their dissatisfaction to avoid seeming disloyal, as admitting disappointment might be seen as letting down their idol or other fans.

This is shown in Akari's experience in *Idol, Burning* (2020), and is clear in her and many other fans' initial reactions to "Voiceful ★ Heartbeat Alarm Clock". Despite their complaints and doubts, fans rarely stop buying the products because of their deep emotional bond with the idol. They find ways to justify that a purchase is worthwhile or enjoyable. It is evident in the excerpt where she said, "So this one was nearly a flop before it even went on sale, but do you know what? I actually really like it." The high price and unusual design made the alarm clock initially seem like a poor choice. However, after owning it, Akari's view shifted. This shows how emotional loyalty can turn initial skepticism into genuine appreciation. Fans buy merchandise to feel closer to their favorite idol, and this emotional bond increases the product's perceived value. Some might judge or criticize fans for these actions as irrational or foolish. In reality, fans dedicate considerable time and energy to getting to know their idol deeply. Over time, they see the celebrity less as a person and more as a trusted "brand." This strong trust often leads fans to skip the usual purchase process and buy immediately, confident that anything related to their idol is worth it, even if outsiders find it questionable (Wang, 2020).

Utilization

Most transactions involving the purchase of goods and services naturally lead to the use of the acquired product, as emphasized by Mothersbaugh & Hawkins (2015). Similarly, Douglas & Isherwood (2002) noted that once an object is purchased, it serves a purpose through its use, reflecting the broader scope of consumption, which they define as the “use of material possessions beyond commerce and free within the law.” It focuses on maximizing the perceived value and overall satisfaction of these goods. Using a product is more than just a routine action, as it shapes how consumers perceive the value of their purchase. The perception of a product's overall usefulness or utility is increased by the unique or satisfying experience it provides (Ram & Jung, 1991).

This is especially important and is closely tied to fandom communities. After purchasing merchandise, fans actively participate in and express their relationship with their idol and community by using fandom-related items (Cheng et al., 2023). Within fandoms, product utilization is highly connected to social interaction and shared experiences. Merchandise is often used by fans as a way to start a conversation, as a status symbol, or as a tool for self-expression, both online and offline. It helps create a sense of belonging and strengthens community bonds, thereby enriching and deepening the overall consumer experience. This emotional bond motivates fans to invest their time, effort, and money in supporting the artist (Shi, 2021).

The novel *Idol, Burning* (2020) offers an example of that kind of experience when using products, as illustrated in the following excerpts:

My sister handed me a package of CDs, and I went to my room and carefully unwrapped them and took out the voting tokens. Each two-thousand yen CD came with one vote, so these meant I had fifteen votes. The results determined the number of lead vocals and center spots each member had on the next album, and the member with the most votes would get a long solo (Usami, 2020, pp. 28–29).

In the excerpt, Akari receives a package of Compact Discs from her sister and carefully unwraps them. These CDs serve a dual purpose: beyond just enjoying the music, they also act as voting tokens, with each CD containing one token. Akari has gathered a total of fifteen tokens, meaning she has bought fifteen CDs, each costing 2,000 yen. These tokens are more than souvenirs; they give Akari the ability to vote for her favorite group members. The number of votes each member receives influences their popularity in the group's upcoming album, specifically affecting how many lead vocals and center positions they will get. Also, the member with the most votes will earn a special opportunity: a solo performance. This system makes purchasing CDs an interactive experience that directly links fan support to each member's success and visibility.

The excerpt clearly shows how consumerism functions within fandoms. It shows that buying products is not just about collecting items but also about actively participating and shaping the community. In this case, the CDs, priced at 2,000 yen each, serve two roles: they provide music enjoyment and include a voting token that goes beyond mere collectability. This token enables purchases to be a strategic move, allowing fans to directly influence the creative decisions and future content of the idol group they support. Fans who purchase these CDs can cast votes that impact key decisions, such as which members receive more prominent roles, like lead vocals or solos, in the next album. Fans can effectively gather more votes by purchasing multiple CDs, which multiplies their influence and boosts the chances that their favorite idols will succeed. In the excerpt, owning fifteen CDs equals fifteen votes, giving fans significant sway over the group's lineup and how the spotlight is shared. This setup turns consumption into an interactive, rewarding experience where fans see real results from their investments. It blurs the line between being a passive consumer and an active participant in the fandom's creative process. Furthermore, Akari's specific action of extracting tokens and using them to vote clearly shows how fans engage with merchandise beyond basic ownership. She does not treat the CDs only as music albums or collectibles; instead, she uses the voting system to make her voice count within the fan community. This behavior is a strong example of product utilization—using purchased items as tools to take part in decision-making and influence the idol group's future.

At this stage, the company focuses on deepening the emotional bond between fans and artists. This stronger connection encourages fans to participate in activities that enhance and support the artists' commercial success. Fans are eager to devote their time, energy, and money to these efforts, which have become essential for the artists' career development. The intense emotional bond and personal involvement fans feel strengthen their loyalty and inspire continued purchases and ongoing

engagement. This cycle of emotional attachment and active participation establishes a stable foundation for the artists' long-term success and visibility in the market.

Maintenance and Repair

The final stage of this research focuses on maintenance and repair practices aimed at preserving both the physical condition and the symbolic significance of consumer goods. By repairing or preserving objects, consumers seek to "freeze" the passage of time for the items they own. This allows them to maintain the appearance, functionality, and emotional value of their possessions as closely as possible to their original state. The process involves more than just practical maintenance; it also includes preserving the associated connection and identity (Gregson et al., 2009).

Fandom communities often perform maintenance and repair activities as part of their dedication to preserving fan merchandise. Fans frequently use various preservation methods to protect their collectibles from damage and retain their sentimental value. This may involve physical protective measures to prevent any harm, as well as arranging items for display to earn recognition and appreciation from other community members. This preservation effort highlights the dual role of fan merchandise, which functions both as a practical item and a treasured symbol of fandom. It motivates fans to dedicate time and care to maintaining these items.

The novel *Idol, Burning* (2020) offers a glimpse into how fans maintain their idol-related merchandise. The following excerpts illustrate this practice:

Each time the group released a new single, I displayed the CD on the shelf that in fandom circles was known as a "shrine" (Usami, 2020, p. 32).

Like the cross inside a church, or the main deity in a temple, a big signed photo of my oshi was displayed on the highest shelf, and around it an array of posters and photos spread across the walls, framed in subtly different shades of cobalt, indigo, teal, and sky blue. The shelves were packed with DVDs, CDs, magazines, and flyers in chronological order, stacked up in layers like geological strata. Every release day, the CD on the highest shelf moved to the next one down to make way for the newest disc (Usami, 2020, p. 33).

The excerpts above show how Akari thoughtfully and meaningfully displays her collection of CDs and merchandise related to her favorite group. She places the CD on a special shelf, known in fandom circles as a "shrine", every time a new single is released. This shelf serves not just as storage but as a sacred space where fans honor their idols. At the top of the shrine, a large autographed photo of Akari's *oshi*, Masaki, is displayed like a worshipped symbol, similar to a cross in a church or a deity in a temple. Posters and photos in various shades of blue, Masaki's official color, are neatly arranged around the signed photo. The shelves are filled with DVDs, CDs, magazines, and flyers, all organized chronologically. Each release day, the newest CD is placed at the top, pushing the previous top CD down one level, creating a dynamic display. Updating this shrine is a ritual that reflects the ongoing devotion of fans. The arrangement highlights that fandom is expressed not only through owning merchandise but also through caring for and maintaining these items.

The excerpts clearly show Akari's careful efforts to display and care for her treasured collection, honoring her idol and the fandom community. Each CD is carefully arranged on a shelf, often referred to as a "shrine" in fandom culture. These shrines are special spaces where fans showcase their admiration and passion. The most prominent spot on the shrine is reserved for a signed photo of Akari's favorite idol, emphasizing its importance and her personal connection. Surrounding this centerpiece are various memorabilia, including posters and DVDs, all arranged with great attention to detail. Akari's pride and thoughtful care are evident in her careful selection of placement, color coordination, and orderly arrangement of these items. Furthermore, Akari's dedication to caring for her collection shows in how she displays it. She regularly rearranges by moving older CDs to lower shelves to free up space for new releases at the top. This reordering maintains the display's visual appeal and keeps the collection organized and fresh. Through this routine, Akari emphasizes the importance of preserving each item's condition and respects the changing nature of her fandom.

The careful and organized display of CDs, DVDs, and memorabilia, as shown in the two data excerpts, can be seen as a form of maintenance. However, in this context, "maintenance" does not refer to physical repairs or upkeep. Instead, it signifies the emotional, symbolic, and visual care given to these arrangements. The shrine is intentionally curated, with each item carefully placed in a meaningful position. This intentional placement not only preserves the physical objects but also the memories,

meanings, and emotional values tied to the idols and their merchandise. This act of preservation demonstrates that fandom-related consumer goods are not merely used and discarded but are treated with deep devotion and respect.

CONCLUSION

The research analyzed consumerism within fandom communities by examining Rin Usami's novel *Idol, Burning* (2020). It reveals that consumerism in fandom extends beyond simple purchases, significantly impacting individual identities and shaping social connections among fans. The study identified a consumption cycle experienced by characters like Akari Yamashita, which includes four stages: selection, acquisition, utilization, and maintenance and repair. Fans' decisions are influenced by personal preferences, social interactions, and marketing strategies, leading to emotional and financial investments in idols and their merchandise. These items serve as tools for community involvement and self-expression, while caring for collections helps sustain emotional bonds and encourages ongoing consumption. Overall, consumerism in fandom is a complex phenomenon that fulfills emotional needs and actively involves fans in the economy, turning fandom into a powerful social and economic force. This research helps us understand how the entertainment industry leverages fans' passions and converts their emotional investments into market value.

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