

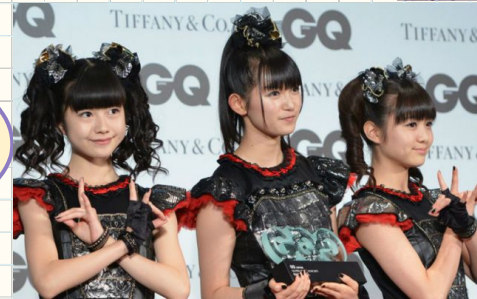


# Behind the Scenes: Japanese Idols and Negative Fan Culture

Alyssa Powell  
JAPN308-01\_FA22  
Professor An Pham

**Question: Why has fan culture surrounding Japanese pop idols become so negative?**

Due to management enforcing standards of Japanese pop idols to remain youthful, pure, and hyperactive, when these traits are opposed, both agencies and fans expect punishment for idols, leading to a normalization of fan obsessions and stalking situations



# Who are Japanese Pop Idols?

- ❖ Young women ages 14-24 who join music companies to perform song and dance for audiences

## Expectations of Japanese pop idols from management and fans:

- ❖ Remain pure, youthful, “squeaky-clean lifestyle” both in private and in public (Loriguillo-Lopez)
- ❖ Comply with men’s expectations
  - Success of girls dependent on social media outreach and ‘votes’ from fans
  - Must wear outfits such as school girl uniforms, bikinis, and short skirts and dresses
  - Expected to maintain slim appearance and unflawed skin
- ❖ *Some groups, such as the wildly popular AKB48 are forbidden to have romantic relationships (Loriguillo-Lopez)*
  - In 2013, after being caught with a man leaving her apartment, Minami Minegishi had to shave her head and apologize to her fans on video to forgive her for her ‘impure’ actions





# “Tokyo Idols”

## Who are Japanese idols?

- ❖ Mostly younger, female women between ages of 14-24

## Who are fans of Japanese idols?

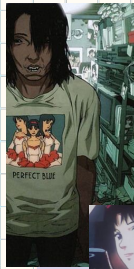
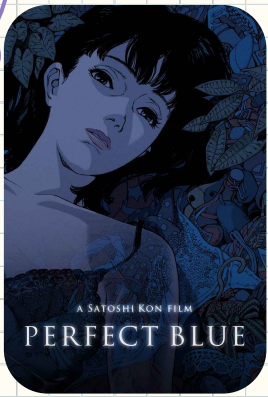
- ❖ People of all ages, overwhelming amounts of older men 30-40 years old

*Fan Interactions as Observed in Lindsay Nelson’s Review of “Tokyo Idols” (2017) documentary*

- ★ “One man comments that he likes these [younger] idols the best because they're **not "fully developed,"** and that if they were **older they "wouldn't interest"** him.” (Nelson)
- ★ “When two of the men say that they think of these girls as their **"good friends,"** the director, who is mostly invisible in the documentary, snaps back, "That's a big age gap for friends." The men look mildly abashed. **"It's not that big of an age gap,"** they say.” (Nelson)







# Obsessive Fans

Idol agencies encourage fan obsessions to increase sales, but these 'otaku' obsessions can grow into stalker situations and violence

- ❖ In the film "Perfect Blue" by Satoshi Kon, ex-idol Mima tries to live a normal life but faces the guilt of her old life, and is seen to be stalked by a man referred to as Me-Mania
- ★ In 2014, two members of AKB48 were attacked with a saw during a fan meet and greet (CNN)
- ★ In 2016, idol Mayu Tomita was stabbed 61 times by a stalker fan after she had rejected his marriage proposal and returned gifts (CNN)
- ★ In 2019, an obsessive fan found an idol's location through the reflection in her eye from a photo posted to social media. The man followed her home and molested her before being arrested (BBC)



# Thank you!

## Cited Sources

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