Analyzing the Dimension of Korean Popular Culture Among Malaysian Adolescent

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Abstract

In line with varieties of globalised explosion of products and images, people’s consumption patterns especially the youth are subject to range of influences. In this modern world where information can be spread quickly seems to have a great influence the on the values and ways of life of the world societies. This can be seen in the domain of broadcasting and entertainment. In the past American popular music, films, books and fashion were only considered the best allusion and became frenzy especially for teenagers, but the society today has more selections to choose as an alternative. This development has inspired South Korea to commercialize their cultures as a package commodity through Hallyu. South Korean has more focuses on language, culture, dramas and K-Pop (Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin and Zaharani Ahmad, 2011). Despite the extensive qualitative research on the influence of Korean popular culture which has focused on popular music in Malaysia, there is a lack of quantitative research on measuring this particular variable. A need to look into Korean popular culture dimensions is called for, as each popular culture is believed to have similar unique set of dimensions. This conceptual paper identifies the critical Korean popular culture dimensions among adolescents resided in Klang Valley, Malaysia. In this study, the Korean popular culture dimensions are based on the study done by Zailin Zainal Ariffin et al. (2012) who has explored the relationship between American popular culture and some selected aspects of consumer behaviour among Malaysian adolescents. The measurement will be modified based on literature review.

Keywords: Korean popular culture, K-pop, Hallyu, adolescents, consumer behaviour.
Introduction

In confronting the challenges of globalization, most countries have been cultivating various positive ways in order to be persistently competitive. In this modern world where information can be transmitted or broadcasted quickly seems to have a great influence on the values and ways of life of the world’s societies. This can be seen in the domain of broadcasting and entertainment. However, in the past years American products were only considered to be the best products and became the main choice especially among teenagers. However, society today is more selective and constantly searching for alternatives. This development has inspired South Korea to commercialize their cultures as a package commodity through Hallyu (Korean Wave). South Korean has more focuses in their effort of exporting and commercializing their culture through language, dramas and popular music (Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin and Zaharani Ahmad, 2011).

Based on the observation distributed to Malaysian teenagers, it is evident that Hallyu (Korean Wave) is more popular and has successfully been absorbed into the life of Malaysian teenagers in particular and Asian teenagers in general. In 2011, Malaysia local radio channel, Astro Hitz with Korean Tourist Organization has published new programs K-pop Hitz Talent Show. According to the celebrity television website (2011), manager of Astro Hitz, Sheong Cheng-wei says this programme gets higher rating and this further validates the public’s acceptance and its tremendous demand. Various styles and fashions from South Korea have been followed by adolescents in Malaysia. Moreover, dramas, k-pop music, language, skin care products of Korea brands are progressively becoming very popular in Malaysia especially among the adolescents (Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin and Zaharani Ahmad, 2011).

Economic factors have also managed to make Korea as a successful country in exporting their culture. Rapid globalization and liberalization of media which began in 1990 has seen the use of cable television and free internet to help achieve this Hallyu project. As an example, Sang-Yeon (2010) in Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin and Zaharani Ahmad, (2011) states that despite the economic crisis in Asia, the Korean wave has managed to alter Taiwan’s society's perception of popular artwork culture from Korea.

Price factor also plays a significant role in spreading Korean popular culture as Korean dramas are cheaper than Japan and Hong Kong dramas. Shim (2006) claimed that the prices of one Korean drama are 25% of the price for Japanese drama and 10% of the Hong Kong
drama. Korean drama has achieved increased export earnings from $12.7 million in 1999 to $37.5 million in 2004. Shim (2006) further argues that Korean artists have successfully contributed to the positive impact on the culture of buyers, including food, fashion, makeup and skin care even plastic surgery.

Furthermore, the electronic media has managed to import the k-pop culture from its origin successfully. Farihad Shalla Mahmud (2010) reported in his article “Korean fever” that in an interview with Nazri Noran, the manager of a local radio station, Era FM, he claims that almost every day the taste conscious radio station’s listeners opt for or prefer to listen to Korean songs. This report further strengthens the claim made by Norliza (2011) that the influence of Korean song has been accepted by teenagers in Malaysia. Now, there have been concerts by Korean artists which were organized by the Malaysian organizers to cater for the youth’s demand for K-pop music (Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin and Zaharani Ahmad, 2011). Furthermore, this phenomenon of Hallyu (Korean Wave) has been well accepted and given a positive impact in promoting Korean socio-culture in Malaysia. Besides that, Korean movie have also taken a place in some foreign countries such as China, Japan, and Vietnam and even in some European and American countries (Pacquet, 2001). Due to the overwhelming influence of the new popular culture (i.e.: Korean popular culture) in Malaysia, adolescents have a higher tendency to imitate their role models and expressed their idolization (Zailin Zainal Ariffin, 2010).

In a research done by Samsudin (2005), his observation discovers 100% Malaysian teenagers watch television, 59% of teens watch satellite television and 91% of all teenagers own a personal computer and surf the internet. These figures indicate how teenagers today have easy access to international dramas and Korean dramas are definitely one of them. According to Cho (2010) the aggressive growth of Hallyu in Malaysia has been extensive. Even to this day, Korean drama continues to gain ground in Malaysia’s local television during the day time afternoon slot. Even the influence of Hallyu has infected Malaysia’s local satellite television channel, Astro, in which they have installed KBS World channel to cater their subscribers’ preference for Korean dramas.

Continuous efforts must be taken to conduct further research related to the effects of Korean Popular Culture in Southeast Asia. Marketers from various industries will have to continue their effort to survive and contribute to economic growth. As part of their survival effort,
products’ manufacturer must continue their research in understanding the decisions of adolescents’ consumption. Some argue that adolescents are at the forefront of globalization (Dasen, 2000; Schlegel, 2001). Success in the changing global market place will require firms to fully understand their position in this regards. Given the rapid growth and market opportunities that are available in developing countries, it is important that this information is obtained for these markets. In the long run, all parties involved in various industries in the market whose adolescents are their target customers must be prepared to meet the challenges posed by a change in the preferences of these adolescents. Marketers need to study the changing needs of adolescents in the modern and more affluent Malaysian societies (Zailin Zainal Ariffin et al. 2012).

In the current era, researchers further found that the borderless information phenomena have further transformed today’s young generation. Arnett (2002) proposes that many adolescents in today’s world of globalization have developed a “local identity” based on their indigenous tradition, as well as a “global identity” based on their exposure to a global culture conveyed through the media. Therefore, Korean popular culture is claimed to have aspects that are able to transcend across racial, ethnic and geographical boundaries. Even though youth do not behave or think in exactly the same way, many similarities suggest that the vast majority of adolescents fit somewhere within the mainstream of Korean youth popular culture.

Literature Review

Adolescents

Adolescents are categorized as youth who are between childhood and adulthood. They have one foot secure in childhood and one foot in moving into the world of adulthood. Adolescence is a unique period of the human life span. Adolescents have three sub-stages; early adolescence, middle adolescents and late adolescence. Early adolescence is between 10 until 14 years old, middle age is 15 until 17 and late adolescence is 18 until early 20 (Connell et al., 1975).

Notoatmodjo (2007) states that adolescence is one period of human development. It is a time for change or transition from childhood to adulthood that include biological, psychological and sociological changes. In most societies and cultures, adolescence generally begins at the age of 10-13 years and ends at age 18-22 years. According to Soetjiningsih (2004), adolescence is a time of transition between the times when children start to become sexually matured which is between the age of 11 or 12 years to 20 years, and this is also known as the
phase of young adulthood. The different age stages for adolescence is further elaborated by different scholars such as Adams and Gullota (1997) who include age between 11 to 20 years, whereas Hurlock (1990) divides adolescence into early adolescence (13 to 16 or 17 years) and the end of adolescence (16 or 17 years to 18 years). Early and late adolescence is distinguished by Hurlock (1990) because at the end of adolescence the individual has reached the transitional developments closer to adulthood.

Adolescence is derived from the Latin word meaning to grow or grows into adulthood. Adolescence term has a broader meaning that includes mental maturity, social emotions and physical attributes. Teenagers do not have a specific place because they neither still a child nor adult. According to Sri Rumini and Siti Sundari (2004) adolescence is a time of transition from childhood to adulthood when they began to experience all aspects of the developments or functions to enter the adulthood phase.

**Subculture**

Generation X commonly abbreviated to Gen X was born after the Western post World War II baby boom from the early 1960 to the early 1980 while Generation Y begins from the latter 1970 or the early 1980 to early year 2000. Generation Y is also known as the Millennial Generation.

A subculture is a culture within a broader mainstream culture, with its own separate values, practices, and beliefs. In sociology, the concept of subculture explains the behaviour of some social groups. According to Redhad (1990) in (Bennett, 1999) subculture is produced by subcultural theorists, not the other way around. Furthermore, popular music and deviant or stray youth styles never fitted together as harmoniously as some subcultural theory proclaimed.

A subculture can also be further defined as a set of people with a distinct set of behaviour and beliefs that differentiate them from a larger culture of which they are a part. For an example, they may be distinctive in terms of the member age, race, ethnicity, class or gender; however, they are further characterized by their distinctive aesthetic, religious, political and sexual qualities.
Popular Culture

Many attempts have been made by cultural and critical theorists (Morrell, 2002; Adorno and Horkheimer, 1999; Docker, 1994; Hall, 1998; McCarthy, 1998; Storey, 1998; Williams, 1995, 1998) to define popular culture. However, a few recent studies have defined the variable as indicated in Table 1. These theorists saw popular culture as a site of struggle between the subordinate and the dominant groups in society. Popular culture, they argue, is not an imposed mass culture or people’s culture; it is more a terrain of exchange between the two.

Recent research done by Zailin Zainal Ariffin, (2010) on the relationship between American popular culture and some selected aspects of consumer behaviour focusing on Malaysian adolescents defines “Popular culture is that which is “in”, contemporary and has the stamp of approval of young people”. Specifically, the conceptual definition mentioned above was adopted from Harper (2000).

Table 1: Definitions of Popular Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHORS</th>
<th>DEFINITIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zailin Zainal Ariffin, (2010); Harper (2000)</td>
<td>Popular culture is that which is “in”, contemporary and has the stamp of approval of young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storey (2009)</td>
<td>Popular culture is to say that popular culture is simply culture that is widely favoured or well-liked by many people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Popular culture refers to the beliefs and practices, and the objects through which they are organized, that are widely shared among a population. This includes folk beliefs, practices and objects rooted in local traditions, and mass beliefs, practices and objects generated in political and commercial centres. It includes elite cultural forms that have been popularized as well as popular forms that have been elevated to the museum tradition (Badley, et al. 2010).
Santino in Badley, et al. (2010) defines popular culture as “the expressive elements of daily life,” with expressive referring to the attachment of symbolic meaning and daily life referring to everything except elite art. Browne in Badley, et al. (2010) proposes an even broader definition: “Popular culture is the television we watch, the movies we see, the fast food, or slow food, we eat, the clothes we wear, the music we sing and hear, the things we spend our money for, our attitude toward life”. It is the whole society we live in, that which may or may not be distributed by the mass media. Popular culture also in general terms can be referred to the practice of aesthetic or ordinary life, in both statistical and qualitative sense.

According to Storey (2009), the history of cultural theory’s engagement with popular culture is a history of the different ways in which the two terms have been connected by theoretical labour within particular historical and social contexts. An obvious starting point in any attempt to define popular culture is to say that popular culture is simply a culture that is widely favoured or well-liked by many people. Undoubtedly, such a quantitative index would meet the approval of many people. Storey (2009) also states popular culture is often supported by claims that popular culture is a mass-produced commercial culture, whereas high culture is the result of an individual act of creation.

Types of Popular Culture
In this sub section, we will discuss several types of popular culture such as pop music, advertising, fashion, television and cinema (refer to Figure 1) as highlighted by Strinati (2004) and Mowen and Minor (1998).

a. Pop Music
Pop music with its mass production for a predominantly youth market, is an important sphere for the consumption of popular culture (Hogg and Banister, 2000). Mowen and Minor (1998) believe that “music also shapes popular culture” (p. 578). Popular music always has been and remains preoccupied with love and sex (Brown et al., 2002).
A study done by Zailin Zainal Ariffin (2010) explains the impact of American Popular Culture on the consumption patterns of Malaysian adolescents aged between 16 to 19 years old. Her study also investigates the impact of popular music as the prominent source of American Popular Culture. She quoted that the importance of music is unsurprising, given the central role of music to youth culture.

Another similar finding by Piancentini and Mailer (2004) reveals that adolescents do not choose friends based on their clothes, but they do make judgments about musical taste on the basis of clothes. The study done by North et al. (2000) highlights the importance of music to adolescents because it allows them to portray an “image” to the outside world and satisfy their emotional needs.

According to a survey by Roberts (2000), 8 to 18 year olds spend on average 6 to 7 hours a day with some form of mass media. More portable and teen-focused media such as music and magazines are most appealing to older teens who listen to music more frequently than television watching – on average more than 20 hours per week, via radio, compact disks or tapes. Stewart et al. (2003) believe that the combined elements of frequent exposure, repetition, heavy interest among adolescents and the sociocultural power of music itself have made popular music a potentially strong influence on our gender identities.

Sources: Adapted from Zailin Zainal Ariffin (2010) and Strinati (2004).
Boehnke et al. (2002) argue that current popular music, especially in its “hardest” varieties, tends to be something that parents do not like and thereby may give adolescents a chance to form an identity of their own. The main explanation of why adolescents listen to music (sensation seeking) is potentially unrelated to developmental aspirations (unless one wants to postulate that adolescence is a life phase where people need more “good feelings” than in other life phases). The second answer, however, seems to be clearly related to development. Adolescents may use popular music as a tool to enhance intergenerational distinction in a life phase where identity formation is an essential task (Boehnke et al., 2002).

Another study done by Ibrahim (2007) on the influence of Korean popular music towards the development of Y generation in Indonesia has revealed that pop music is considered to be successful on its power of drawing huge applauses and profits.

b. Advertising

Advertising becomes popular culture when its images, themes and icons are embraced by the mass public (Mowen and Minor, 1998). In the same sense, Stewart et al. (2003) claim that research has demonstrated that people are influenced by the images portrayed in magazine advertising. According to a similar study done by Lafky et al. (1996) cited by Stewart et al. (2003), high school students who view advertisements with stereotypical images of women were more likely to transfer these perceptions to a “neutral” photograph. The research also found that even brief exposure to a limited role portrayal may influence a person’s subsequent perceptions.

The academic literature in advertising provides ample evidence of the positive effects of using celebrities on both advertisements and brand evaluations (Ohanian, 1990). A widely accepted explanation for celebrity endorsers’ effects has been that celebrities bring credibility to advertising messages (Choi and Rifen, 2007). Advertisers are well aware of the positive influence that celebrities can bring to a persuasive message; therefore it is unsurprising that approximately 25 percent of all United States television commercials feature celebrities (Shimp, 2000).

Advertisements are considered to be persuasive communications that emanate from several sources (Choi and Rifen, 2007). The model introduced by McCracken (1989) suggests that advertising is a way of distributing and enhancing the meanings perceived to reside in
celebrities in the consumer world. Choi and Rifon (2007) argue that when celebrities are hired as endorsers in advertising, marketers hope that consumers accept and consume the meanings that these celebrity endorsers and link these meanings to their products. These authors further argue that in today’s society, consumers are constantly transporting symbolic properties out of products into their lives to construct their self-image.

According to related research done by Peirce (1990) it was found that the magazines that have become most popular with adolescent girls are full of advertising and editorial copy about how to achieve the “look” that will attract the right kind of male. YM magazines (1998), one of the overseas magazines, for example, recruits readers by saying, “If you like finding out about yourself and guys and fashion and relationships and beauty…subscribe now” (p.17).

c. Fashion

Fashion is also regarded as one of the types of popular culture (Zailin Zainal Ariffin, 2010, 2012). Bao and Shao (2002) argue that teens want to be “cool” and “sweet”, that is, they want to be exclusive and cutting edge in terms of fashion. Thus it appears that advertising, peers and celebrities/role models have the potential to contribute to brand choices among young people. An article by Scotti (2000), “The Same, Only Different” has further discussed about the youth culture phenomenon. She mentioned in his article that an overwhelming 45 percent teenagers like trying new products before they become popular. Scotti further argues that teens tend to be characterized by individual taste, style and attitude, e.g., body piercing (Bao and Shao, 2002).

Other fashion related activities such as tattooing and body piercing have become increasingly prevalent in popular culture over the last 30 years (Featherstone, 1999; Sweetman, 1999). Martin (1997) argues that adolescence is a time when a teenager finds that body modification becomes particularly appealing as adolescents struggle for identity and control over their changing bodies. Nevertheless, some assume that body piercing and tattoos are nothing more than fashion accessories (Craik, 1994). As mentioned earlier, fashion is one of the relevant sources of popular culture.

Past research also suggests that teenagers watch music videos to learn the latest fashions (Brown et al., 1986; Ledbetter, 1995; Bjurstrom, 1990). Thus, the heroes of popular culture
seen on television, in movies, or on stage may become icons of style, as quoted by Englis et al., (1993) and provides the prototype that consumers strive to emulate. The researchers also reveal several differences in consumption imagery as part of a function of musical genre. As compared to other genre, dance music videos contain the most fashion-oriented imagery – including preference and consumption activities involving clothing, jewellery, lingerie, hairstyle and make-up. Although dance videos contain a great deal of fashion-related products, they were lowest in brand appearances. Another related study, done by Hogg and Banister (2000), reveals that pop stars have the power to make certain looks popular and fashionable. The researchers found that the imitation of fashion trends was an important instrument for meaning transfer from the pop stars to the adolescents.

Nearly half of the space of popular magazines for teenage girls is devoted to advertisements, mostly for fashion and beauty products as these two elements have become prominent topics of the articles in these magazines (Evan et al., 1991). These magazines also feature articles on relationships and information about boys and the intricacies of heterosexual relationships (Evans et al., 1991). Other related research done by Zollo (1995b) argues that girls rank magazines just after friends as the most important source of information on the latest trends, fashions and lifestyle choices and they often “shop print ads and editorial fashion photos as if they were catalogs”.

d. Television Programmes and Movies

Mowen and Minor (1998) argue that “television does more to create popular culture than other medium” (p. 578). Indeed, Alley quoted by Inge (1989) proclaims that television has “become pre-eminently the popular culture and a primary purveyor of values and ideas” (p. 1368). Gen-Y has been heavily influenced by media, including movies and television (Bennett, 2006). Many elementary-school students spend more time watching television than they do sitting in a classroom (Brook-Gunn et al., 1979 cited in Stewart et al., 2003). Media consumes a large portion of the segments time, often between 33 and 38 hours per week (Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, 1999).

A related study done by Larson (1995) shows adolescents use television as a way of turning off the stressful emotions that have been accumulated during the day. However, Cordiner (2001) argues that most adolescents are media-savvy and consume multiple forms of media.
Many in this segment listen to music via the radio; have access to an average of 62 television channels and are frequent movie goers (Morton, 2002).

For the length of time that the young people watch television, the image they receive of male and females is out of the hands of parents or teachers, instead these transmitted images are in the hands of scriptwriters and advertising agencies (Stewart et al., 2003). According to a similar study done by Strinati (2000), television determines what people think and what they do and thus controls them psychologically and socially. It is used by many adolescents as a way of diverting themselves from personal concerns with passive, distracting, and undemanding entertainment (Larson, 1995).

A study by Roberts (2000) found that youths’ accessibility and exposure to the full array of media, as well as the social contents in which media exposure occurs is due to their access to electronic media such as television. It was found that more than 97 percent of the homes represented in his study have televisions, VCRs and audio systems. He also found that 70 percent have video game players; and more than two-thirds have personal computers. Arnett (1995) argues that teenaged adolescents watch more movies than any other segment of the population. In the same sense, Englis et al. (1993) regard music television as a significant force in popular culture that is a hybrid of several entertainment and commercial forms of communication.

According to the article written by Weiss (2003) on Generation Y consumers, the MTV’s researchers were shocked when they added up the hours and found that the average time totalled was more than 24 hours a day. “Young people managed to squeeze 31 hours into a 24-hour period”, says Betsy Frank, executive vice president of research and planning for MTV Network, New York. In the article written by Weiss (2003), Betsy Frank is quoted by stating that the youth manage to read magazine while watching television and going online simultaneously. She mentions further that young people are the masters of multitasking.

**Korean Popular Culture**

a) **Definition of Korean Popular Culture**

The term ‘Korean Wave’, also known as Hallyu or Hanryu, refers to the popularity of South Korean popular culture in other Asian countries. Korean popular culture such as movies, TV dramas, and pop music is overwhelmingly powerful and TV dramas are one of the most
remarkable popular cultures of these. They are not only popular in terms of the fantasticalness of audiences and fans, but also bring considerable profit to the national income. The Korean wave brings a different level of Korean fever in certain East Asian countries, such as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, and the Philippines and also Malaysia (Nor Hashimah and Zaharani, 2011). She found that many types of music, dance and fashion from Korean Culture especially from Korean artist have influenced many adolescents in Malaysia.

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<td>Also known as Hallyu or Hanryu refers to the popularity of South Korean popular culture in other Asian countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park, Shin-Eui and Chang, (2001)</td>
<td>Refers to Korean music, drama, film, and even fashion cuisine that have swept the world since the late 1990.</td>
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The Korean wave or hallyu refers to Korean music, drama, film, and even fashion cuisine that have swept the world since the late 1990s. At first, Korean pop culture diffused naturally to its neighbouring countries. Seeing the massive potential of the Korean wave, the government has made extensive efforts to maintain and reinforce Korean culture worldwide. This act of reinforcement is done by supporting producers of culture in the entertainment industry (Park, Shin-Eui and Chang, 2001).
The mass media and concerned scholars have given the appellation of “Korean Wave” (Hallyu in Korean) to Korean cultural products such as television dramas, popular music, and movies that are increasingly becoming popular in Korea’s neighbouring countries. Since the mid years 1990, Korean popular culture has spread over the pan ethnic-Chinese countries including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore at first, then continue to spread into Southeast Asian countries as Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, followed by Mongolia, Japan, and even beyond East Asia. (Yang, 2012)

The Korean wave ”hallyu” refers to a surge in the international visibility of Korean culture, beginning in East Asia in the 1990s and continuing more recently in the United States, Latin America, the Middle East, and parts of Europe (Ravina, 2008,). As a result, the Korean wave is manifested as a regional cultural trend signifying a triumph of Korean culture (Hyejung, 2007) in Lee (2011).

b) **Dimension of Korean Popular Culture Influences**

i) **Role Model**

Attractive characters are potent role models that facilitate attention and emulation (Bandura, 1986). True role models are those who possess the qualities that we would like to have and those who have affected us in a way that makes us want to be better people (Nor Hashimah and Zaharani, 2011). In their study, among the Korean singers/music bands who are idolized among Malaysian adolescents are Rain, Super Junior, Generation Girl and Wonder Girl. Their idols appearances have become a main attraction to K-Pop celebrities. They claim that the majority of Korean artist have an attractive physical appearances which include fashion clothes, shoes and hair style (Nor Hashimah and Zaharani, 2011).
Based on the study by Hogg and Banister (2000) the results stated that one of the most important instruments for the transferal of meaning and imagery from the pop star to adolescents is fan behaviour. Being a fan involves liking, fancying or being influenced by the pop group, but does not require liking all the songs in the album.

Numerous studies have claimed that gender role identity is an important aspect of identity formation, and media is perceived to have a massive influence during this process (Steele and Brown, 1995; Brown and Hendee, 1989; Greenberg et al., 1992; Arnett et al. 1995). Another related study by Frith (1987) claims the conspicuous consumption of pop music among teenagers is a mean of expressing their identity, socio-cultural values or beliefs that they are adhered to. Besides, adolescents also take ideals of what it means to be a man or a woman partly from the media, which present images of physical and behavioural gender ideals through music (Ackerman, 1997), movies (Greenberg et al., 1986), television (Brown et al., 1990; Hogg and Banister, 2000) and magazines (Denski, 1992 in Hogg and Banister, 2000; Evan et al., 1991).
Past studies also suggested that even those who are not seeking such lifestyles may be influenced by the ubiquitous and apparently normal use of alcohol in most media content (Brown et al, 2002). Stewart *et al.* (2003) states that research literature on female images in rock music and other popular music forms reveal mainly negative stereotypes of women. According to a study, this literature reveals three recurring images of women in popular songs: the ideal woman/Madonna/saint; the evil or fickle witch/sinner/whore and the victim (Butruille *et al*., 1987). In general, role portrayals are highly stereotypical; women are wives, sweetheart, mothers or wicked witches (Stewart *et al*., 2003). These stereotypical images of females can be found in all genres of popular music; including pop, country and rock.

**ii) Expression of Idolization**

In the previous subsection, the researcher has illustrated role modelling and expression of idolization as part of the dimensions of the American popular culture construct. In this subsection, the researcher will discuss further the sub dimensions of expression of idolization (one of Korean popular culture dimension). As seen in Figure 3, expression of idolization is further explained by three sub dimensions, i.e., imitation, adoration and knowledge and consumerism (adapted from Zailin Zainal Ariffin, 2010; Zailin Zainal Ariffin *et al.* 2012 and Raviv *et al.* 1996).

**Figure 3**

Expression of Idolization Dimensions of American Popular Culture Construct

Source: Adapted from Raviv *et al.* (1996) and Zailin Zainal Ariffin (2010).
The phenomenon of idolization comes from various domains of life such as sport, entertainment, music, politics and religion. Thus, sport champions, movie actors/actresses, singers, television personalities, pop star and political or religious leaders are legitimate to be idolized figures. In most popular culture, the idolized figures come from music, sports and entertainment. These domains and the celebrities who excelled in them receive wide exposure in the mass media and concerts (Raviv et al. 1995; Nor Hashimah and Zaharani, 2011). Previous research argues that based on the idolization of pop singers, the consumption and collection of music reflects a normal appreciation of music (Zailin Zainal Ariffin, 2010). Therefore, it is based mostly on two important components: worshipping and modelling (Zailin Zainal Ariffin, 2010; Raviv et al. 1995). According to Zailin Zainal Ariffin (2010) and Raviv et al. (1995) worship or adoration refers to an unusually intense admiration and reverence of an idol. This can be expressed in behaviours such as actively collecting information and artifacts related to an idol or trying to meet him/her personally. Modelling refers to the desire to be like an idol, which may involve imitation of the idolized figures by, for example, copying their attires, hairstyle, speech, activities and any other social behavioural patterns related to modelling (Zailin Zainal Ariffin, 2010; Raviv et al. 1995). Thus, in general modelling can take different forms, and its expression depends on culture, age, gender and environmental conditions.

**Discussion And Recommendation**

Popular culture studies have been replicated in several studies. A recent socio-cultural study by Nor Hashimah and Zaharani (2011) on the Hallyu (Korean Wave) reveals that Hallyu is more prominent and has successfully infiltrated into the life of many Asian teenagers, particularly among the Malaysian youth. They further claim that the phenomenon of Hallyu has been well-accepted and this development has instantaneously given a positive impact in promoting Korean socio-culture in Malaysia.

Another similar study by Mayasari (2011) on the impact of Korean pop music towards Y generation in Indonesia has discovered several significant findings. The study reveals that there are several important reasons underline the explanation on the formation of Indonesian Y- generation’s identity through Korean pop music. Among the important reasons are the creation of a new wave of fashion identical to K-pop fashion, the use of new argots and
jargons reflecting Korean lifestyle and the changed orientation of career selection among Indonesian Y- generation.

Both fore-mentioned studies have highlighted the importance of exploring the impact of Korean popular culture due to the globalization effect throughout the world. However, the measurement of Korean popular culture variable has been left unexplored. Therefore, this paper attempts to further investigate the possible dimensions and sub dimensions of Korean popular culture variable. Table 2 highlight the items to measure the role model dimension for Korean popular culture variable. While Table 3, 4 and 5 are focusing on the items for sub dimensions of expression of idolization (i.e.: imitation, adoration and knowledge and consumerism).

**Table 2**

*Items to Measure the Role Model Dimension for Korean Popular Culture Variable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Items</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides a good role model to follow</td>
<td>All five items were adapted from Zailin Zainal Ariffin et al. (2012), Zailin Zainal Ariffin (2010) and Martin and Bush (2000).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leads by example</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sets a positive example for others to follow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibits the kind of work ethic and behaviour that I try to imitate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts as a role model for me</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3**

*Items to Measure the Imitation Sub-Dimension for Expression of Idolization Dimension in Korean Popular Culture Variable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Items</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adoption of singer’s style of dressing</td>
<td>All five items were adapted from Zailin Zainal Ariffin et al. (2012), Zailin Zainal Ariffin (2010) and Raviv et al. (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption of singer’s hairstyle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption of singer’s opinions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption of singer’s mode of speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption of singer’s behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

Items to Measure the Adoration Sub-Dimension for Expression of Idolization Dimension in Korean Popular Culture Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Items</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hanging singer’s posters.</td>
<td>All five items were adapted from Zailin Zainal Ariffin et al. (2012), Zailin Zainal Ariffin (2010) and Raviv et al. (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying souvenirs related to the singer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching for information about the singer in magazines and newspapers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting in touch with other fans of the singer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting personal details about the singer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

Items to Measure the Knowledge and Consumerism Sub-Dimension for Expression of Idolization Dimension in Korean Popular Culture Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Items</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A number of singer’s records and cassettes purchased.</td>
<td>All five items were adapted from Zailin Zainal Ariffin et al. (2012), Zailin Zainal Ariffin (2010) and Raviv et al. (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to singer’s music.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending singer’s performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching the singer on TV or VCR.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to know the melodies of the singer’s songs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to know the lyrics of the singer’s songs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


Ninth Malaysia Plan 2006-2010 (2006). The Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister’s Department, Putrajaya, Malaysia.


