

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

#### 5.0 Introduction

This last chapter overviews the study, concludes the major findings, explains the managerial implications, highlights the contributions of the study and limitations of the study, gives some suggestions for future research and finally concludes the overall thesis.

#### 5.1 Overview of the Study

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the objective of this research is to investigate the effect of American popular culture on Malaysian adolescents' buying behaviour. Specifically, this research examines the effects of American popular culture on conspicuous consumption, price sensitivity, brand sensitivity, fashion consciousness and American music television exposure among Malaysian adolescents. This study assesses the moderating effects of religiosity, gender, ethnicity, family income level and primary education stream on each possible relationship between American popular culture and five dependent variables (i.e., conspicuous consumption, price sensitivity, brand sensitivity, fashion consciousness and American music television exposure). Special attention was given to the development of a newly constructed American popular culture scale. In addition, the study also seeks to enrich the body of literature by purifying the measurement for another six constructs, namely, conspicuous

consumption, price sensitivity, brand sensitivity, fashion consciousness, American music television exposure and religiosity.

Understanding consumer behaviour is vital in order to satisfy their need. Several researchers have focused on understanding adolescents purchase behaviour. Many studies have been done on conspicuous consumption, price sensitivity, brand sensitivity, fashion consciousness and music television exposure. However, none have focused on the effects of American Popular Culture towards conspicuous consumption, price sensitivity, brand sensitivity, fashion consciousness and American music television exposure. Thus, this study is seen as important and will contribute significantly to the body of knowledge. Practitioners can determine marketing strategies on the basis of adolescents' consumption behaviour. Academicians can benefit from the research so long as it contributes to our understanding of the effect of demographic variables and the effect of American Popular Culture on adolescents' consumption behaviour.

Altogether, six constructs (American Popular Culture, conspicuous consumption, price sensitivity, brand sensitivity, fashion consciousness, American music television exposure) and five moderators (religiosity, gender, ethnicity, family income level and primary education stream) have been concluded in the present study. Most of the measures used in this study have been taken from previous research. However, American Popular Culture is a newly developed measure. Developing a survey questionnaire with multidimensional and multi-item scales is indeed time consuming. However, the reliability and validity of the constructs are considered satisfactory.

We examined the relationships between the independent variable (American popular culture) and each of the dependent variables (conspicuous consumption, price

sensitivity, brand sensitivity, fashion consciousness and American music television exposure). Specifically, Hypothesis 1a to Hypothesis 1e focused on the direct relationship between the variables and Hypothesis 2 to Hypothesis 6 focused on the moderating effect of religiosity, gender, ethnicity, family income level and primary education stream in the relationship between American popular culture and five selected aspects of consumer behaviour (please refer Figure 5.1).

In terms of the measurement, the independent variable (American popular culture) is self developed by researcher and explained by two dimensions, namely, role model and expression of idolization. In the expression of idolization dimension, the research further divided it into three main sub-dimensions – imitation, adoration and knowledge and consumerism. Another six variables are formulated and modified from past literature. The measurement for conspicuous consumption construct was adopted from Md Nor (1988), which comprised eight items. The price sensitivity construct was measured by nine items, which were taken from the multi-item scale developed by Md Nor (1988) and Wakerfield and Inman (2003) (please refer Table 3.6).

The present study has adopted the scale developed by Kapferer et al. (1983) and Lanchance et al. (2003) involving six items to measure the brand sensitivity construct (please refer Table 3.7). Based on past literature, the current researcher has adapted the fashion consciousness measurement developed by Wells and Tigert (1971) and Manrai et al. (2001) involving six items (please refer Table 3.8). The seventh item, fashion consciousness, (*“I enjoy reading fashion magazines”*) was added based on the most recent related research done by Dutta-Bergman (2006). The newly developed items to measure the American music television construct involved five items (refer to Table 3.9). The last variable, the religiosity measurement, was adapted and adopted from

Wilkes, Burnett and Howell (1986), Md Nor (1988) and Safiek (2006) and involved ten items.

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire consisting of 79 all close-ended questions. The questionnaires was divided into two sections, i.e., Section 1, to measure the American popular culture, conspicuous consumption, price sensitivity, brand sensitivity, fashion consciousness, American music television exposure, and Section 2, to investigate the demographic profile of the respondents. The reasons why all the questions were jumbled up in one section were to prevent bias from the respondents when answering the questions. The questions in the questionnaires were asked using the two main languages used by Malaysians, i.e., English and Malay.

A non-probability sampling, specifically, quota sampling was employed in this present study. In the present study, a quota for five demographic variables, namely, ethnicity, gender, age, family income group and regional areas in Peninsular Malaysia, were set prior to the data collection stage. The quota sampling for the present research in terms of ethnicity was 50:50 for male and female respondents, 55:35:15 for Malay: Chinese: Indian.

The quota sampling was also based on regional areas in Peninsular Malaysia. The regional areas were divided into four main regions of Peninsular Malaysia. They were northern, southern, central and eastern Peninsular Malaysia. The northern region includes Kedah and Pulau Pinang. The southern region covers Johor. The central region is made up of the Klang Valley areas and the eastern region covers Terengganu. The selection of the four regional areas was followed by the identification of the districts from each regional area.

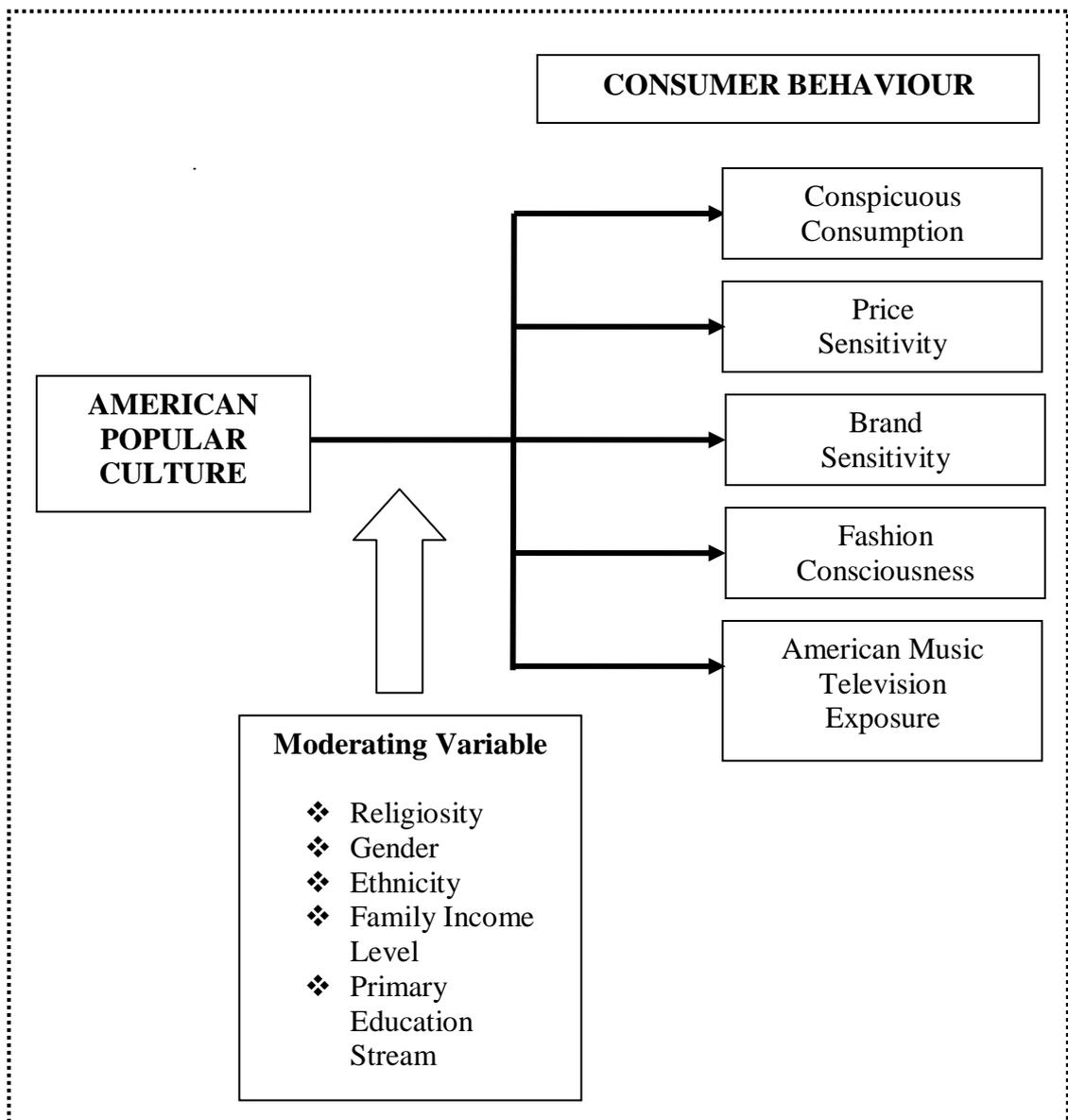
A total of 1200 questionnaires were distributed, from which 990 were returned within a period of eight weeks, making the response rate about 82.5 percent. However, 820 questionnaires were completed and considered useable for the study. The present research employed self-administered questionnaires to collect data from the respondents. The structured questionnaires were distributed to Malaysian adolescents aged 16 to 19 years old in northern, southern, central and eastern Peninsular Malaysia. The researcher, University Malaya's staff, qualified teachers, Ph.D. colleagues, friends and relatives were involved in distributing and collecting the survey questionnaires, which took about two months (November to December).

Both simple and complex statistical tools were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics (frequency distribution, the mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson's Correlation, t-test, One-way ANOVA, Simple Regression and Hierarchical Multiple Regression) procedures provided support in analyzing the data collected. Both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis were performed to enrich the knowledge of American popular culture influences on Malaysian adolescents. While Pearson's Correlation results show the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The American popular culture construct was regressed using simple regression and hierarchical multiple regression analysis against each dependent variable as mentioned earlier. The model used was found to be fit to test the hypotheses. Table 5.5 summarizes the results of the hypotheses as discussed in Chapter 4.

Figure 5.1 shows the final conceptual model of this study after considering the dimensions that emerged from factor analysis, which served as a basic guideline for the statistical testing of hypotheses and discussions of the results. Ten factors were extracted from the exploratory factor analysis. However, items with factor loadings of

0.50 and above were considered significant in interpreting the factors. Factor 8 was dropped from subsequent analysis as it had limited use in regression analysis due to its low reliability. The internal consistency reliability scores ranged from 0.563 to 0.877. Thus, nine factors or dimensions (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F9 and F10) emerged, representing 46 of the items.

**Figure 5.1**  
**Final Framework of the Study**



Factor 1- “Imitation and Adoration” dimension as two dimension aspects, i.e., imitation and admiration collapsed in this dimension. Factor 2 called as “Religiosity”. Factor 3 labelled as “Knowledge and Consumerism”. Factor 4, called as “Brand Sensitivity”. Factor 5 labelled as “Price Sensitivity”. Factor 6 called “Fashion Consciousness”. Factor 7 considered as “Role Model”. Factor 9 called “Conspicuous Consumption”. Factor 10 labelled “Music Television Exposure”. The internal consistency reliability scores from each factor were moderate to high level of reliability and acceptable, with alpha scores exceeding 0.5, the threshold recommended by Nunnally (1967) for exploratory research and the evaluation guidelines suggested by Peter (1979). The overall alpha for the scale was found to be 0.776 and was considered as very high.

## **5.2 Hypotheses Testing**

The hypotheses of this study were tested using simple regression and hierarchical multiple regression. The summary of the hypotheses testing is discussed below.

### **a. American Popular Culture and Five Aspects of Consumer Behaviour - Hypotheses 1a – 1e**

The results of the hypotheses testing are summarized in Table 5.1. The Simple Regression analysis for the present study showed four out of five hypotheses have been found significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) and one showed an opposite direction (i.e., Hypothesis 1b).

**i. The Relationship between American popular culture and conspicuous consumption**

**Hypothesis 1a: The higher the level of American popular culture, the higher will be the conspicuous consumption among the respondents.**

In terms of the relationship between American popular culture and conspicuous consumption, a simple regression was utilized. A standard coefficient was found to be 0.200, with a t value of 5.832, and adjusted R Square of 0.039. The significant level of 0.000 was found for this hypothesized main effect at a highly significant level of 0.05. This means that Hypothesis 1a was accepted. The results strongly indicated that the higher the level of American popular culture among respondents, the higher would be the level of conspicuous consumption.

There is no studies have been done to link the relationship between American popular culture and conspicuous consumption. However, the related study's finding is consistent with a recent study done by O'Cass and McEwen (2004) and Piancentini and Mailer (2004), which found that role model (American popular culture dimension) plays a significant role in conspicuous consumption. O'Cass and McEwen (2004) and Piancentini and Mailer (2004) concluded that adolescents that are highly influenced by celebrities (role model a dimension of American popular culture) want to show to others that they can afford the products (conspicuous consumption). Furthermore, the finding related to role model (as a dimension of American popular culture) is proven to be in line with previous literature (Goffman, 1959; Erickson et al., 1984; Belk, 1988; Ewen, 1988; Braun and Wicklund, 1989; Hwan Lee, 1990; Scitovsky, 1992; Raviv et al., 1996). All these studies found that role model (as a dimension of American popular culture) may lead to consuming products or services conspicuously.

**Table 5.1**  
**Summary of Hypotheses Testing**

<b>Hypothesis No.</b>	<b>Hypothesis Statement</b>	<b>Results of Hypotheses Testing</b>
H1a	The higher the level of American popular culture, the higher will be the conspicuous consumption among the respondents.	<b>Supported</b>
H1b	The higher the level of American popular culture, the lower will be the price sensitivity among the respondents.	Not Supported*
H1c	The higher the level of American popular culture, the higher the brand sensitivity among the respondents.	<b>Supported</b>
H1d	The higher the level of American popular culture, the higher the fashion consciousness among the respondents.	<b>Supported</b>
H1e	The higher the level of American popular culture, the higher the American music television exposure among the respondents.	<b>Supported</b>
H2a	Religiosity moderates the relationship between American popular culture and conspicuous consumption.	<b>Supported</b>
H2b	Religiosity moderates the relationship between American popular culture and price sensitivity.	<b>Supported</b>
H2c	Religiosity moderates the relationship between American popular culture and brand sensitivity.	<b>Supported</b>
H2d	Religiosity moderates the relationship between American popular culture and fashion consciousness.	<b>Supported</b>
H2e	Religiosity moderates the relationship between American popular culture and American music television exposure.	Not supported
H3a	Gender moderates the relationship between American popular culture and conspicuous consumption.	<b>Supported</b>
H3b	Gender moderates the relationship between American popular culture and price sensitivity.	Not supported
H3c	Gender moderates the relationship between American popular culture and brand sensitivity.	<b>Supported</b>
H3d	Gender moderates the relationship between American popular culture and fashion consciousness.	<b>Supported</b>
H3e	Gender moderates the relationship between American popular culture and American music television exposure.	Not supported

**Table 5.1, continued**  
**Summary of Hypotheses Testing**

H4a	Ethnicity moderates the relationship between American popular culture and conspicuous consumption.	<b>Partially Supported</b>
H4b	Ethnicity moderates the relationship between American popular culture and price sensitivity.	Not supported
H4c	Ethnicity moderates the relationship between American popular culture and brand sensitivity.	<b>Partially Supported</b>
H4d	Ethnicity moderates the relationship between American popular culture and fashion consciousness.	<b>Supported</b>
H4e	Ethnicity moderates the relationship between American popular culture and American music television exposure.	<b>Partially Supported</b>
H5a	Family income level moderates the relationship between American popular culture and conspicuous consumption.	Not supported
H5b	Family income level moderates the relationship between American popular culture and price sensitivity.	Not supported
H5c	Family income level moderates the relationship between American popular culture and brand sensitivity.	<b>Supported</b>
H5d	Family income level moderates the relationship between American popular culture and fashion consciousness.	<b>Supported</b>
H5e	Family income level moderates the relationship between American popular culture and American music television exposure.	<b>Supported</b>
H6a	Primary education streams moderates the relationship between American popular culture and conspicuous consumption.	Not supported
H6b	Primary education streams moderates the relationship between American popular culture and price sensitivity.	<b>Partially Supported</b>
H6c	Primary education streams moderates the relationship between American popular culture and brand sensitivity.	<b>Partially Supported</b>
H6d	Primary education streams moderates the relationship between American popular culture and fashion consciousness.	<b>Partially Supported</b>
H6e	Primary education streams moderates the relationship between American popular culture and American music television exposure.	<b>Partially Supported</b>

\*The relationship was significant but in the opposite direction

**ii. The Relationship between American Popular Culture and Price Sensitivity**

**Hypothesis 1b: The higher the level of American popular culture, the lower will be the price sensitivity among the respondents.**

To test the relationship between American popular culture and price sensitivity, a simple regression was utilized. The standardized coefficient was found to be 0.112, with a t value of 3.222 and adjusted R Square of 0.011. The significant level of 0.001 was found for this hypothesized main effect at a highly significant level of 0.05 but in the opposite direction to that hypothesized. This means that hypothesis 1b was rejected.

There is no research have linked American popular culture and price sensitivity. However, there is a related study done on role model (dimension of American popular culture) and price done by Martin and Bush (2000). A survey conducted in 74 different high schools from a large metropolitan area in United States by Martin and Bush (2000) examined the role models influences to teenagers' purchase intentions and behaviour. They found that adolescents do not appear to be strongly influenced by potential role models when price is a central issue. In short, any slight price increase will have a greater impact on the buying decision of adolescents. Therefore, the less the influence of the role model, the more price sensitive they are. In other words, the highly price sensitive consumers will be less influenced by the role model (famous icon - e.g., popular singer/music band).

### **iii. The Relationship between American Popular Culture and Brand Sensitivity**

**Hypothesis 1c: The higher the level of American popular culture, the higher the brand sensitivity among the respondents.**

With regards to the relationship between American popular culture and brand sensitivity, simple regression was utilized. The result showed that the standardized coefficient was 0.115, with a t value of 3.317, and adjusted R Square of 0.012. The significant level of 0.001 was found for this hypothesized main effect at the highly significant level of 0.05. This means that Hypothesis 1c was accepted. The results strongly indicated that the higher the American popular culture among adolescents, the more likely it would lead to higher brand sensitivity.

There is no research have linked the relationship between American popular culture and brand sensitivity. However, there is a related study done on role model (dimension of American popular culture) and brand conducted by Bush et al. (2004). He tried to associate the positive relationship between role models (American popular culture dimension) and brand. They argued that the stronger agreement among peers about their favourite athlete role models (American popular culture dimension) will influence adolescents to recommend products or brands to others and encourage their friends or relatives to purchase certain products or brands (Bush et. al, 2004). O’Cass and McEwen (2004) argued that brands are seen as important in creating an identity, a sense of achievement and identification for consumers.

More empirical evidence was found in the study conducted by Martin and Bush (2000) in United States, which indicates that vicarious role models have a much greater impact

in terms of influencing adolescents to switch or alter their brand choice (to be more brand sensitive), compared to influencing adolescent consumers to remain loyal to one particular provider. Athletes are role models to many teenagers and they look up to them for what's "cool" in products and brands. In short, vicarious role models (American popular culture dimension) have a greater impact on encouraging consumers to be more selective in choosing brand (brand sensitivity).

**iv. The Relationship between American Popular Culture and Fashion Consciousness**

**Hypothesis 1d: The higher the level of American popular culture, the higher the fashion consciousness among the respondents.**

In terms of the relationship between American popular culture and fashion consciousness, simple regression was utilized. The results showed the standardized coefficient was 0.269, with a t value of 7.995, and adjusted R Square of 0.071. The significant level of 0.000 was found for this hypothesized main effect at the highly significant level of 0.05. This means that Hypothesis 1c was accepted. The results strongly indicated that the higher the American popular culture among Malaysian adolescents, the more likely it would lead to higher fashion consciousness.

There is no research have linked the relationship between American popular culture and fashion consciousness. However, a number of studies try to link role model (American popular culture dimension) and fashion consciousness. Clothes plays an important part in pop stars' appeal for fans, and clearly communicate certain messages about that pop star's identity and also their music (Hogg and Banister, 2000). When the fans criticize the fashion sense of pop stars, they are often voicing their disapproval of the kind of

music produced by that artist. Pop stars have the power to make certain looks popular and fashionable. Imitation (American popular culture dimension) of fashion trends is an important instrument for meaning transfer from the pop stars to the adolescents; and can be linked to the grooming ritual identified by McCracken (1986) for the transfer of meaning from products to consumers. Thus, the heroes of popular culture seen on television, in movies, or on stage may become icons of style and thereby provide prototypes that consumers strive to emulate. We believe it is reasonable to infer that the greater the influence of American popular culture, the higher the possibility the consumer will be fashion conscious.

More empirical evidence has found a link between role model (American popular culture dimension) and fashion consciousness. Wan and Wells (2001) argue that highly fashion conscious people have colourful entertaining activities. They believe that fashion conscious consumers are more likely to go to concerts and movies. Compared to other facets of fashion consciousness, individuality is more correlated with activities such as going to pop or rock concerts and movies. Importantly, this indicates that highly fashion conscious people are more likely to be influenced by American popular culture.

Recently, Kavak and Gumusluoglu (2007), who explore the segmentation for foreign and domestic food markets in Turkey, claim that fashion conscious people admire the West and see western products as being modern and fashionable (an act of being highly influenced by American popular culture). They argue that the respondents perceive those who prefer domestic products as traditional. Kavak and Gumusluoglu believe that the Turkish go to McDonald's not only for the product, but for its western and fashionable character (i.e., American popular culture). They further argue that McDonald's itself is the fashion for many Turkish individuals.

v. **The Relationship between American Popular Culture and American Music Television Exposure.**

**Hypothesis 1e: The higher the level of American popular culture, the higher the American music television exposure among the respondents.**

To test the relationship between American popular culture and American music television exposure, a simple regression was also utilized. The result showed that the standardized coefficient was 0.449, with a t value of 14.385 and adjusted R Square of 0.201. The significant level of 0.000 was found for this hypothesized main effect at the highly significant level of 0.05. This means that Hypothesis 1e was accepted. The results strongly indicated that the higher the American popular culture among Malaysian adolescents, the more likely it would lead to higher American music television exposure.

There is none empirical research and theoretical model on the nature had been explored. However, recent empirical studies suggest that there is a positive relationship between role model (dimension of American Popular Culture) and American music television exposure. A related study conducted by Sun and Lull (1986) argue that United States adolescents like to watch music videos because the images enhance their enjoyment and appreciation of the music and help them understand the message of the songs. In other words, they watch MTV to see particular groups, singers and concerts or have a generalized attraction to the musical content of MTV.

Earlier related study conducted by Englis (1991) examines American music television influences on consumers, consumer culture and the transmission of consumption

messages. In the same sense, Englis et al. (1993) utilise United States and Sweden samples investigate the consumption imagery in music television. They regard music television as a significant force in popular culture that is a hybrid of several entertainment and commercial forms of communication. Both studies believe that music television acts as a consumer socializing agent; it associates consumption imagery with relevant outcomes for its role models. Englis et al. (1993) also argue that MTV-Europe was launched in 1987 and is a powerful vehicle for exporting popular culture. Another scholar, Martin and McCracken (2001) found that almost half of the music videos broadcast in the United Kingdom contain more role model behaviour outcomes than New Zealand music videos. Lastly, Potratz (2007) argues that MTV has a powerful influence on youth and is a major reference of popular culture, fashion, music and social trends.

**b. Moderating Variables between American Popular Culture and Five Aspects of Consumer Behaviour - Hypothesis 2 to Hypothesis 6**

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to analyse the moderating effect of religiosity, gender, ethnicity, family income level and primary education stream between each possible relationship between the independent variable and five dependent variables. All moderating variables indicated mixed results between all the possible relationships (refer to Table 5.1).

Looking at religiosity as moderating variable, the study found religiosity showed a moderating effect towards all relationships except American music television exposure (Hypothesis 2e was rejected). In terms of gender, the results showed a moderating effect on all the above relationships except price sensitivity and American music television

exposure (Hypothesis 3b and 3e). However, no comparison could be made regarding these outcomes due to no previous study have examined on both issues.

Ethnicity showed mixed results among three main ethnic groups, i.e., Malay, Chinese and Indian. The Malay and Chinese ethnics showed significant results as a moderator for the relationship between American popular culture and five selected aspects of consumer behaviour except for price sensitivity. However, the Indians only showed significant result for fashion consciousness. The results indicated three out of four hypotheses showed partially supported results for conspicuous consumption, brand sensitivity and American music television exposure (Hypothesis 4a, 4c and 4e). No study has been found to address the issue of ethnicity as a moderating variable between American popular culture and five selected aspects of consumer behaviours.

Examining family income level variable, the study found that all family income levels integrations showed significant results as a moderating effect except for conspicuous consumption and price sensitivity (Hypothesis 5a and 5b). Lastly, the primary education streams indicated four out of five hypotheses with partially supported results (Hypothesis 6b, 6c, 6d and 6e). Sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan Tamil (SRJKT/Tamil based National Primary School) stream and Private Primary School stream showed not significant results to all relationship between American popular culture and five selected aspects of consumer behaviour. However, no study has been found to address the issue of family income level and primary education stream as moderating variables between American popular culture and five selected aspects of consumer behaviours.

### **5.3 Contribution of the Study**

The contributions of this study are significant in terms of theoretical, methodological and practical perspectives. Each of these contributions is discussed below:

#### **5.3.1 Theoretical Contributions**

Research is conducted with the aim of filling the gap in the research area and contributing new knowledge to the body of literature. This study found that the selected dimensions of American popular culture have an effect on five selected aspects of consumer behaviour, as discussed in the earlier chapters. The important aspect of the theoretical contribution of the present study relates to the American popular culture's direct effect on five aspects of consumer behaviour, namely, conspicuous consumption, price sensitivity, brand sensitivity, fashion consciousness and American music television exposure. Lack of empirical research in this subject has led to the on-going debate on American popular culture sources and its impact to the whole world. Another important theoretical contribution of the study relates to the moderating effects of religiosity, gender, ethnicity, family income level and primary education stream between the relationships mentioned earlier.

As discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, most of the previous studies examined each variable, namely, American popular culture and five aspects of consumer behaviour separately. As such, the current research also expected to make theoretical contributions in several ways. First, the linkages between American popular culture and conspicuous consumption have never been explored. However, related empirical studies suggest that there is a positive relationship between role model (dimension of American Popular

Culture) and conspicuous consumption (O’Cass and McEwen, 2004; Piacentini and Mailer, 2004). Second, the relationship between American popular culture and price sensitivity has never been studied. Nevertheless, there is a related study done on role model (dimension of American popular culture) and price done by Martin and Bush (2000) in United States. Third, there is also no research have linked the relationship between American popular culture and brand sensitivity. However, there are a few studies done on role model (dimension of American popular culture) and brand conducted by Bush et al. (2004), O’Cass and McEwen (2004), Martin and Bush (2000) and Lim and O’Cass (2001).

Fourth, there is no research have linked the relationship between American popular culture and fashion consciousness. However, a number of studies try to link role model (American popular culture dimension) and fashion consciousness done by Raviv et al. (1996), Sproles (1979), Harter (1989), Kaplan (1987) and Hogg and Banister (2000). Fifth, there is none empirical research and theoretical model on the nature had been explored on American music television exposure. However, the overview of related previous literature suggests that there is a positive relationship between role model (dimension of American Popular Culture) and American music television exposure. A few related researches have been conducted in United States by Brown et al. (1986) and Sun and Lull (1986) in United States.

Finally, another significant theoretical contribution of this study involves the moderating variables of religiosity, gender, ethnicity, family income and primary education stream. This study departs from most previous studies by adding the moderating effect insight. No previous studies examined the effect of religiosity, gender, ethnicity, family income level and primary education stream as the moderating

factors in the relationships between American popular culture and five selected aspects of consumer behaviour.

### **5.3.2 Methodological Contributions**

The present study generally provides a few methodological contributions. In terms of adding to the body of literature, the significant methodological contribution of this study involves the newly developed American popular culture construct. The multi-item scales used are reliable and valid. As such, this is a major contribution to other researchers (especially academicians and practitioners). As discussed in previous chapters, to provide a measurement for American popular culture, multiple dimensions (role model, imitation and adoration and knowledge and consumerism) were used in the study.

In this study, the researcher decided to take a weighted average for the dimensions to represent the American popular culture variable. This is the first contribution of this study as no past studies had conducted such research to develop a measurement of American popular culture. In this study, the American popular culture variable is the weighted average for three separate dimensions. Among the studies that used weighted average approach were Albers-Miller (2000) and McDonald (1995). Thus, the application of this integrative insight into the theoretical development of American popular culture measurement is expected to provide a significant contribution to the American popular culture literature. In Chapter 3, Table 3.1 - Table 3.4 show the newly developed measurement of the independent variable - American popular culture. This study departs from most of the previous studies that only focused on American popular

culture sources, i.e., popular music, music records, movies, advertisements, and etc. as discussed in Chapter 2.

Secondly, this study adds to the existing consumer behaviour research in terms of developing new measurement for American music television exposure. In Chapter 3, Table 3.9 shows the measurement of the American music television exposure. The newly developed American music television exposure construct was measured using five items. Thus, this also provides a significant methodological contribution in terms of scale development for American popular culture and American music television exposure constructs.

Thirdly, all measurement for American popular culture, conspicuous consumption, price sensitivity, brand sensitivity, fashion consciousness, American music television exposure and religiosity were proven to be valid and found to be highly reliable, when examined by both exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach's coefficient alpha, and confirmatory factor analysis using structural equation modelling (please refer to Figure 4.3). All measurements were assessed and modified by the measurement model developed for testing each of the main variables in the present study. From the review of the previous literature, none of previous studies have run confirmatory factor analysis and construct validity for each variable.

Lastly, to date there is no known study investigates the effect of American popular culture on various areas pertaining to consumer behaviour, namely, conspicuous consumption, price sensitivity, brand sensitivity, fashion consciousness and American music television exposure. Therefore, it is a significant methodological contribution to

the body of knowledge in terms of new findings pertaining to the effect of American popular culture on consumer behaviour areas.

### **5.3.3 Practical Contributions**

The present study provides a number of contributions to practice. This section describes the contributions derived from the findings of the study. The primary focus of this study is to examine the dimensions of American popular culture constructs. The first implication of this study is the three dimensions of American popular culture, namely, role modelling, imitation and admiration and knowledge and consumerism that influences five selected aspects of adolescents' consumer behaviour. This finding will enable the retailers to manipulate these three dimensions to create a more refined strategy to meet adolescents' basic needs and desires. In addition, this contribution could be discussed further in terms of the American popular culture dimensions. The findings of the study suggest that role modelling, imitation and admiration, and knowledge and consumerism help the retailers to further understand about the influence of American popular culture. Retailers could construct marketing strategies concerning role modelling, imitation and admiration and knowledge and consumerism to choose a suitable brand endorsement or usage of spokesperson for their products or services to maximise the promotional activities.

The second implication of this study is related to the market segmentation for American popular culture influences. The segmentation strategies can be focused to several factors, i.e., gender, ethnicity, family income level, age, religiosity, primary education streams and etc. For instance, ethnicity aspect can be a most prominent factor to be considered by the marketers. Based on the findings of the current study, Chinese ethnic

are more influenced by the American popular culture than other ethnic groups. Therefore, the marketers can focus their attention to Chinese communities compared to other ethnic groups. The possible reason of not being influenced by American popular culture may lie on the different cultural values, family background and level of religiosity value among ethnic groups. Furthermore, the present study also recommended the family income level factor as another aspect for segmentation. The family income level analysis concludes that those who earned “RM5,000 to RM6,999” were more influenced by American popular culture than other income categories. The marketers are advised to put more effort into adolescents with a higher family income level due to their higher purchasing power.

The third implication is related to the effect of American popular culture on five selected aspects of consumer behaviour. For instance, the study found that American popular culture has a direct effect on conspicuous consumption. As such, retailers of clothing, jewellery, shoes, and accessories should ensure that their products or services portray the values that adolescents wish to show off to society or the peer group that they wish to be with. As found in the study, adolescent consumers who are highly influenced by American popular culture are prone to conspicuous consumption. Thus, retailers should highlight the conspicuousness value in their products or services to attract their target customers. For example, if the retailer is targeting their products for adolescents who are highly influenced by American popular culture, the retailer should portray that their products or services may enhance adolescents sense of self, to present an image of what they are like, to represent what they feel and think, and to bring about the types of social relationships they wish to have.

The study also found that adolescent consumers who are highly influenced by American popular culture have a high price sensitivity level. The changes in price in the market for the product or services that attract their attention may have any impact on their intention to buy. Thus, retailers should manipulate their pricing strategy in the market. Perhaps, with the right pricing strategy, adolescent consumers will be attracted to the products or services offered and persuade their parents to increase their allowance or pocket money. American popular culture is also found to have a direct effect on brand sensitivity. This implies that the study found that the adolescent consumers who are highly influenced by American popular culture tend to be brand sensitive. They tend to be selective in choosing the brand for particular products or services. As such, retailers who wish to capture the adolescent group should take the opportunity to use branding strategy in marketing their products or services. In addition, retailers should use segmentation in promoting their products or services in the market. For example, retailers may use American popular culture as segmentation where clothing, jewellery, caps, hairstyle and etc. are among the products or services that are very closely related to American popular culture.

Another finding found that American popular culture has a direct effect on fashion consciousness. In other words, adolescents who are highly influenced by American popular culture tend to have a higher value of fashion consciousness. Thus, these findings imply that retailers (e.g., shoes, caps, t-shirt, jeans, clothing and etc.) should ensure that their products or services portray the values of being in-trend among their peer group. As such, retailers should manipulate the advantage they have by creating a latest trend marketed by a suitable role model, e.g., famous entertainer. Based on past literature, the influence of famous role models (American popular culture dimension) is one of the contributors of popular culture (specifically American popular culture)

communicates fashion symbols that provide an identity to adolescents who are trying to establish their personalities. Therefore, we believe that a higher influence from the role model (American popular culture dimension) will lead to a higher tendency for fashion consciousness. However, the retailer must be very sensitive in promoting a new image or style being portrayed by the suitable icon. This will help the retailer to minimise the possibility of rejection from Eastern society as parents are very concerned regarding the influence of western culture.

In terms of direct effect, American popular culture also was found to have a direct effect on American music television exposure. In this study, adolescent consumers who are highly influenced by American popular culture are also highly exposed to American music television. Thus, these findings imply that retailers (e.g., shoes, caps, t-shirt, jeans, clothing and etc.) should try to advertise their products or services in between the music television programmes. By doing so, retailers may reach the targeted audiences at the right time.

Thus, the last implication of the study is related to the moderating effect of religiosity, gender, ethnicity, family income level and primary education stream towards the direct relationship discussed above. These findings will be most useful for retailers targeting their merchandises to a specific age, gender, ethnicity, family income level and primary education stream as moderators to the relationship of American popular culture and five selected aspects of consumer behaviour. In addition, retailers might also be interested in focusing and manipulating the variables that moderate the relationships.

## **5.4 Limitations of the Study and Suggestion for Future Research**

In this sub section, the researcher will divide the limitation of study in two categories namely theoretical and methodological.

### **5.4.1 Theoretical Limitation of the Study**

These theoretical limitations suggest areas for improvement in future research. Firstly, the study restricts itself to five selected aspects of consumer behaviour, namely conspicuous consumption, price sensitivity, brand sensitivity, fashion consciousness and American music television exposure. Thus, the findings of the study contribute to the effect of American popular culture on only five selected aspects of consumer behaviour.

Secondly, the fact that this study only focused on five selected aspects of consumer behaviour, and five selected moderating variables, namely, religiosity, gender, ethnicity, family income level and primary education stream. Lastly, the study on takes into consideration only the moderating effects. Thus, the findings of the study concentrated on only on the moderating effects.

### **5.4.2 Theoretical Suggestion of the Study**

Based on the theoretical limitation, there are a few theoretical suggestions pertaining to present study. Firstly, more research is needed to focus on other aspects of consumer behaviour. It will be academically interesting to extend the research framework developed in this study by incorporating other variables such as fixated consumption. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2004), fixated consumption is in the realm of

normal and socially acceptable behaviour. Fixated consumers do not keep their objects or purchases of interest a secret; rather, they frequently display them, and their involvement is openly shared with others who have a similar interest. The linkages to the above mentioned variable have to be explored further as it is similar to the conspicuous consumption construct in the present study.

Secondly, future study needs to investigate other possible moderating effects such as location. Location can be divided into two categories – urban and suburban. Besides the existing moderating variables (i.e., religiosity, gender, ethnicity and family income level) other moderators should be considered for future investigation. Such research has important implications for retailers who are interested in exploring what other demographic aspects affect the influences of American popular culture and consumer behaviour aspects.

Lastly, the future researcher should take the challenge to find other mediating effects (e.g., satisfaction or quality of life) between American popular culture and five selected areas in consumer behaviours. This will contribute to the body of knowledge in terms of American popular culture and consumer behaviour context.

#### **5.4.3 Methodological Limitation of the Study**

Although the research results are important and interesting, some of the results of the study are exploratory and have several methodological limitations. These methodological limitations suggest areas for improvement in future research. First, an inherent limitation of this study pertains to its research design as the study was confined to consumers in Peninsular Malaysia only, and, therefore, it may not be representative

of the whole country. Differences in American Popular Culture influences among other Malaysian adolescents' ethnic groups in Sabah and Sarawak (East Malaysia) cannot be identified. Although the study results generally support the proposed model, the results are necessarily limited to the context of the research design.

Secondly, the measurement for American popular culture is focusing at pop singers/music bands. As such, there is a limitation in this study as American popular culture has wider scopes. The influences of American popular culture also may come from sports personalities (e.g., Serena Jameka Williams), television personalities (e.g., Oprah Winfrey), advertisements (e.g., Coca-cola), consumption of specific food (e.g., McDonald) and etc. Thus, the results of this study are limited to the influences that come from pop singers/music bands.

Lastly, at present cross-culture research is gaining popularity. In terms of research design, the findings of this study cannot be generalized statistically to populations other than in Malaysia. Besides having differences in culture and background, other environmental factors such as demographic profiles, lifestyles and economic well being will vary among countries. It will certainly have an impact on the acceptance of American Popular Culture among adolescents as a foreign culture influence.

#### **5.4.4 Methodological Suggestion of the Study**

Based on the methodological limitation, a few methodological suggestions will be highlighted in this section. Firstly, future research in Malaysia should include people in Sabah and Sarawak as respondents in the sample. In addition, the generalization of the research findings to the whole population of Malaysia is strongly suggested. Better

generalization from the study may yield the opportunity to offer better recommendations to marketers to formulate accurate marketing strategies.

Secondly, the measurement for American popular culture is focusing at pop singers/music bands. Therefore, there is an opportunity for future researcher to embark themselves to these opportunities in expanding the research findings. Lastly, future research should continue to embark on cross-culture research. Comparison between adolescents in Malaysia with other ASEAN countries such as Singapore, Brunei, Thailand and Indonesia, which also have diverse ethnic backgrounds, will definitely enrich the knowledge on consumer behaviour. The impact of American Popular Culture may be different between Malaysia and other regions depending upon cultural factors together with demographic profile, lifestyle and economic well being of consumers. The most important difference is the economic factor, which will determine the buying power of consumers.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The complexities of consumer decision processes make it very difficult to construct a theory that can adequately explain or predict adolescents' consumption behaviour with the presence of American Popular Culture influences. However, the results of the study reported in this research lend some support to the hypothesis that for American Popular Culture and five selected consumer behaviour aspects, namely, conspicuous consumption, price sensitivity, brand sensitivity, fashion consciousness and American music television exposure.

This research has also reported the demographics as moderating effects in addition to the effect of religiosity on every relationship of the variables mentioned earlier. Overall, the study reveals that Malaysian adolescents do not have any major resistance in blending American Popular Culture with their existing culture.

Theoretical limitations of previous research studies were addressed in this study. Previous literature showed diverse types of subculture. However, at least to the knowledge of the researcher, American Popular Culture was not properly addressed in past literature. Several attempts have been taken by past qualitative researchers to understand several specific activities done by adolescents between the ages of 11 and 18 years old such as surf boarding activities, movie goers etc. Unlike past studies, the present researcher has developed American Popular Culture as one general measurement.

Continuous efforts must be taken to conduct further research related to the American Popular Culture effects throughout the world. Marketers from various industries will continue to survive and contribute to economic growth. As the manufacturer of products and the search for new markets for adolescents increases globally, understanding adolescents' consumption decisions becomes increasingly important. Some argue that adolescents are at the forefront of globalization (Dasen, 2000; Schlegal, 2001). Success in the changing global market place will require firms to more 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 aimed at adolescents must be prepared to meet the challenges posed by a change in the

preferences of adolescents. Marketers need to study the changing needs of adolescents in the modern and more affluent Malaysian societies.

In the current era, researchers further found that the borderless information phenomena have further changed today's young generation. Arnett (2002) proposed that many adolescents in today's world of globalization develop a "local identity" based on their indigenous tradition, as well as a "global identity" based on their exposure to a global (often Western) culture conveyed through the media. Therefore, youth popular culture has aspects that cross racial, ethnic and geographical boundaries and while all 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 an American youth popular culture.