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## Funktastic Plastic: Factors that Influence the Purchase of Funko Pops Among Malaysian Toy Collectors

Adi Bunyamin Zamzamin<sup>a\*</sup>, Loh Ngiik Hoon<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a,b</sup>Universiti Sarawak Malaysia, Faculty of Applied & Creative Arts, Kota Semarahan, 94300, Sarawak, Malaysia

<sup>a</sup>Email: [adibunyamin@gmail.com](mailto:adibunyamin@gmail.com), <sup>b</sup>Email: [nhloh@unimas.my](mailto:nhloh@unimas.my)

### Abstract

Toys that we as adults are normally accustomed to such as action figures, robots and dolls are always usually associated as a kid's toys. However, recent studies show that it is not unheard of for adults also known as 'kidults' whom buys toys specifically for themselves. This, importantly is a stress reliever for many working 'kidults' that is mostly represented by the millennials generation and the act of collecting toys shows their intimate passion with pop culture while reminiscing nostalgic childhood experience. As a result, toy sales have increased exponentially that bring about billions of dollars creating a great impact on an economy most definitely thanks to parents buying toys for themselves as well as their children. The article will highlight the recent rise of a toy collectibles which has become very popular among Malaysian toy collectors, called the *Funko Pop*. The *Funko Pops* popularity has garnered many local collectors purchasing them as it shows their eager support for their favourite pop culture franchise. It is also a great substitute for the ever rising extreme costs of premium collectibles due to the drop and unstableness of the Malaysian Ringgit. The purpose of the study was to find what are the main factors contributing to the popularity of *Funko Pops* among local collectors using factor analysis and also to tests hypothesis regarding design and nostalgia. These findings will help understand the purchase intentions among the local toy collectors especially when buying collectibles such as *Funko Pops*. Local toy creators can also further understand what factors should be focused on as importance when developing their own toys which in the future can have a financial impact on the Malaysian economy through sales of locally made toys like many developed countries such as the United States where *Funko Pops* were born.

**Keywords:** Funko Pop; Kidults; Malaysia Toy Collectors; Pop Culture; Toy Collectibles.

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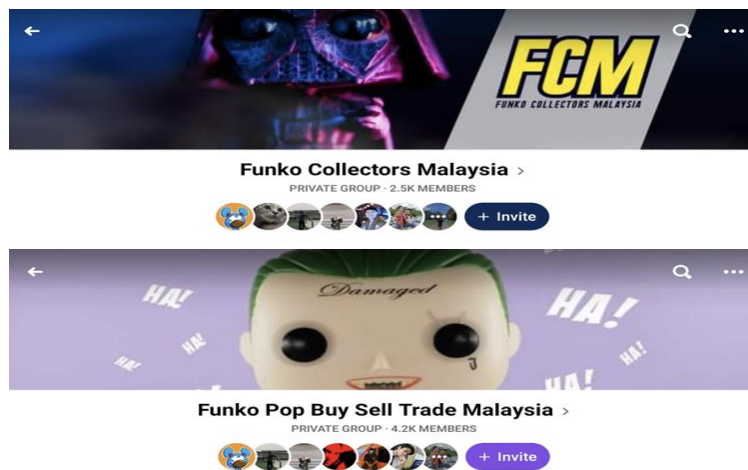
\* Corresponding author.

## **1. Introduction**

The Toys business is a multimillion dollar industry that continues to grow year by year. With ease of connectivity through technology and infinite logistics solutions, everyone, globally, albeit children or adults can get their toy 'fix'. When it comes to 'buying toys', this usually refers to buying toys for children and for them to play with but over the years that stigma has changed and slowly and globally acceptable is that adults not only buy toys for their children but mostly for themselves. So what toys makes the adults and global toy market go round? At the forefront of that revenue belongs to the increasingly popular toy collectibles segment which is also the fastest growing segment in the toy market. In the United States alone in 2018, the toy collectibles segment garnered 11% at USD\$3.08 billion from the total revenue of the toy market at USD\$28 billion and is predicted to continuously rise as researched by [1].

Malaysians are no different when it comes to spending on toys. E-commerce websites in Malaysia has shown a significant increase on sales of toys with the country's population of about 30 million and 80 percent of the total population uses the internet actively on their phones spending on e-commerce platforms such as Shopee and Reference [2]. Another report done by Datareportal has mentioned that in Malaysia, toys, diy and hobbies category has 33 percent growth right behind food and personal care which is at the top [3]. With growing digital technology infrastructures in Malaysia, toys are much accessible without having to leave the house and with a click of a button, the product will arrive right at the doorstep. But It may not be as simple as it seems. Due to financial constraints many Malaysian collectors many not be able to buy toys that reflects their passion towards pop culture. Collecting toys usually means a connection to something and that many collectors has different personal things in what connection they have with their toys. In Malaysia, collecting premium toys can be considered a financial commitment as a typical six-inch figure prices can go from RM100 to RM600 and higher end toys like twelve-inch figures and other premium statues which are limited can fetch more than rm2000 [4]. Many Malaysian millennials whom does not earn much money during their studies especially when they are not working, would not spend much money on toys unless they were worth it [5]. Also the stagnant growth of wages and low entry level salaries in Malaysia does not help either. Between 2010 and 2018 there is a decline in salary wages due to economic down turn and many other factors like surmountable foreign workers with lower income [6]. Toy collectors from Malaysia that was interviewed by [4] had said that due to the depreciation of the Malaysian Ringgit collectors are inclined to buy cheaper collectibles even long time collectors are looking for better option in terms of price and these are government officials and working-class locals. Also there is almost to zero data and reports on locally made toys by toy designers that can support Malaysian collectors pop culture enthusiasm. Hence, the researchers believe that Funko pops are currently one of these popular toy collectibles in Malaysia as there are evidence and reports that suggests this. There are a few Facebook Funko community and each groups have at least thousands of members. The Funko Collectors Malaysia started the group in 2015 and the Funko pop Buy Sell Trade Malaysia began in 2016. This is one notion to show how a big deal Funko is among local collectors as shown in Figure 1. And there is also report by Buyandship a local forwarding company that specializes in helping locals to buy directly from overseas for instance toys like Funko [7]. According to Buyandship Malaysia data, every month they ship around 300 plus Funko pop figures to Malaysia and are one of their top products to be shipped back to Malaysia [7]. It is also mentioned that many collect Funko pops due to its reasonable price which can go as low as USD\$10 or RM55 to RM65 [8] in retails

all over Malaysia and over time it can be quite valuable as seen on eBay a rare Pop listing can reach up to USD\$2000. This also helps identify how Funko pop is something that Malaysian collectors look for and it is definitely a great option to the more premium collectibles. There is something about Funko pop that attracts many kinds of collectors. May it be toy collectors, memorabilia collectors or even just fans of pop culture, any of these collectors would pick one up for their collection. Purchasing intentions is also an important occurrence when it comes to buying and understanding what consumer wants. Studies on purchasing intent are used by companies to understand and assess how and what makes the consumers buy their products. There are various factors that affect purchasing intent as mentioned in a study that relates to this research such as product design [9]. Basing on this, the researchers believes that the design of the Pops itself is visually engaging. There are many aspects of design but because visually these pops look adorable, first thought, then how close it resembles whatever character it is supposed to envision itself as, for instance Batman, Han Solo and so on makes collectors relate to it. The other factor is nostalgia. Companies would use the feelings of nostalgia of their customers which the intent will connect the products fondly to the consumers [10]. Funko releases many figures on shows from the 1980s and 1990s where many company nowadays don't make anymore. These shows relate to many nostalgic memories for most millennials and thus creates a satisfaction for them to finally have a toy version of their favorite characters appreciating the good times and memories they had when they were younger.



**Figure 1:** Screenshot of Funko Collectors Community in Malaysia

## 2. Hypotheses Formulation

**H1:** Design contributes to *Funko pop*'s popularity among Malaysian collectors.

**H2:** Nostalgia contributes to *Funko pop*'s popularity among Malaysian collectors.

The significance of this study will yield data and understanding towards factors that influences and purchasing intent of local Malaysian toy collectors when it comes to buying toys especially *Funko pops* and this outcome can bring a better understanding and knowledge for local toy designers and sellers when developing their own locally made toys.

### **3. Literature Review**

#### **3.1. Toy Collectibles**

The increase of toy collectors in Malaysia over the years has popularized the hobby to the extent where collectors are interviewed for their massive collection in local newspapers, radio stations and even local television show called Trendsetters (2020) where they showcase toy collectors and other extreme hobbyist like sneaker heads and such. But what is a collectible? [11] from Investopedia explained that:

“A collectible refers to an item that is worth far more than it was originally sold for because of its rarity and/or popularity. The price for a particular collectible usually depends on how many of the same item are available as well as its overall condition. Common categories of collectibles include antiques, toys, coins, comic book, and stamps. People who amass collectibles take a lot of time to collect them, and usually store them in locations where they will not be ruined.”

As [11] puts it, toys are a common category in collectibles and there are many types of collectible toys that their values can go significantly. He also mentioned that collectibles are not such as a great investment as it is made believed. Even so, collectors many collectors buy toys for its value to rise and there also many that buys toys because they are passionate about pop culture. An interview [12] mentioned that adequate number of people are pulled to an item nostalgically after over a period of time, that item will become valuable and a collectible. For instance, after two decades when children grown up are looking back for the toys they played with to remind them of their childhood. The toy's industry growth and sales has a huge impact on the global economy especially in the United States as the largest world toy market. Edward Desmond from the Toy Association mentioned that toy revenues have a substantial influence on the U.S.'s economy through jobs, revenues and taxes [13].

#### **3.2. Toy Collectors**

Toys gives toy collectors some sort of belonging, nostalgia and also helps in modern day stress, with toys like Funko, they would be able to ascertain all that. But whom are these collectors that makes companies like Funko successful? Kidults are an ever-growing phenomenon that has been increasing since a few years back. Kidults is essentially the words combination of “Kids” and “Adults” and a term referring to a group of 18-34 years old adults who enjoys participating in youth activities and well invested in pop culture [14]. Kidults are explained as adults whom with social status and work jobs but are invested in children cartoons, merchandises and toys [15]. Over the last few years there is a sudden rise in adult toy collectible sales booming exponentially garnering around \$30 million in revenue, almost growing three times faster than the children's toy market [16]. A recent research done by [13], a retail analyst found that the adult collectable toy sales has risen two thirds and in the UK itself sales of collectables surged 156 percent over three years with 29 percent in the first eight months of 2018 alone. The biggest drive and contribution in the success comes from unboxing, exclusivity and social media sharing [17]. Millennials make up 68% of these adult collectors ages 18-34, Generation-X's 28% ages 35-50's and the rest consists of late baby boomers ages 50 and above. Many of these Millennials are young parents buying for their children but most of the collectors are genuinely fans of pop culture and expresses their

fandoms by buying collectibles and toys [18].

The rise to this kidults may have resulted from many things for instance the stability and progress of society that enables prolonged education and adulthood [19] also the rise in technology and being plugged in constantly gives many reasons to find new ways to relieve stress [20]. Many studies show that it relates to the increase of pressure in modern living. Juggling professional and personal responsibilities day in and day out, taking up long hours during the day [14]. This stressed out groups of individuals buys toys and collectibles to liberate themselves of these pressure and lets them escape the hardships of adult life [16]. For some, its gives a much needed break and gives a sense of achievement and many with a good financial capacity buys the toys because it lets them relive their happy childhood memories and connects to these characters and pop culture [18].

With the increase in revenues for the kidult market, there are growths in business designing products that could attract potential collectors. Also with the continuation of franchises and these companies continue to reinvent their shows like Star Wars and Transformers that has been running since the 70's and 80's gives that kind of nostalgia for the kidults hence more product can be made [18]. Like most collectables, collectors are usually not in for the money but mostly due to their passion and interest on the art. There's also the thrill of hunting toys when on the look for the desired item [21].

### ***3.3. Purchase Intentions***

When buying a product, there are many steps or process that goes into a buyer's mind especially if there are many different models associating with different brands. This purchasing process or behaviour is known as purchasing intent. A group of researchers that had studied purchasing intentions [9], mentioned those various factors that can affect a customers buying process. The factors include, the knowledge of products, when is the intended time of buying the product, packaging or design of the product, pricing of the product, quality, celebrity endorsement and family relations in using said product. There are still limited to almost non-existent study regarding purchase intention of adults buying collectibles.

A research was also done showing that many consumers opts to watch their favourite shows or listening to music they enjoy from back in the day. This shows the normality that people look for especially when they revisit their fondest memories. Researchers [10] is positive that people constantly are longing for nostalgia especially the great times the had in the past. Companies would use these nostalgic customers feelings in order to connect their product with consumers. By recalling positive memories of the products or experience the consumers have with said product is particularly loved by consumers especially again if it reminds them of the good times. The feelings of pleasure and even sometimes a little sadness when remembering the past defines the word nostalgia [10]. Nostalgia brings unforgettable memories and reminds consumers of their fondest times, back to time when it was much simpler especially when it is triggered by a product that the consumer had fond memories off in the past while using or experiencing it.

### ***3.4. Designer Toys***

Designer toys have come a long way over the years. Many collectibles nowadays became popular through the

emergence of vinyl toys or designer toys like that of from figure 2. In 2016 alone, collectibles have garnered over \$432 million dollars in revenue making it the top contributor towards the toy industry dollar [13]. And Funko is very much influenced by the designer toy movement and [22] confirms this:

“Vinyl toys are effectively synonymous with so-called “designer toys,” although such toys can be made from resin or other materials as well. *Funko* represents a strong American entrant in the market, which was dominated by Japanese toy designers for many years. Not surprisingly, Pops bear some aesthetic similarity to the Chibi style of Japanese toys popular in the 1980s.”



**Figure 2:** Designer Toys by Superplastic Called “Janky”

Designer toys, essentially an art toy movement that started in the late 1990 which main traits lies in customizing. These designer toys are usually made of materials like vinyls, wood and even resin and comes in different size such as pocketed or oversize. Because most of these urban artist has pop cultural roots, entertainment industry is big on creative license to produce these art toys to promote films, games and TV series. But what leads to its popularity and the fandom are the original designs by these urban artists [23]. Larger and oversized figures are highly valuable and sought after to collectors as these toys are in produced in limited runs. The smaller figures are usually sold in blind bags to create thrills of mystery which excite fans and this started a trend of unboxing videos showcasing collectors opening boxes anticipating rare figures that turns into a frenzy on youtube. The art toy or designer toy movement started out in the east. The origin of designer toys made claimed to be from Hong Kong credited to Michael Lau in 1997-98. The Hong Kong artist started to customize 12 inch G.I. Joe figures and turn it into his own characters the “Gardeners” with original backstory and depicts the lifestyle of Hong Kong Hip-hop and street culture. By giving their own spin on these customized 12 inch figures dressed in contemporary clothing with tattoos, skateboards and other accessories became an embodiment to the designer toys defining aspect which is a singular object that comes from their own personal design styles rather than conforming to merchandising related to television, movies and games [24,25]. Another prolific player in the designer toys movement came from Japan by an artist named Hikaru Iwanaga whom created Bounty Hunter selling vintage kaiju’s (Japanese monsters) toys at his shop at the Harajuku District of Tokyo which helped created the demand in designer toys during the mid-90’s. Later upon discovering designer toys, Paul Budnitz

started Kidrobot whom brought back designer toys to the United States and the art toy expanded globally from there which became more widely popular as it is today [23].

### 3.5. Funko

Funko is a company that was started by Mike Becker with his friends in 1998 and they celebrated nostalgic memorabilia. It began with them creating and designing their own bobble-heads. After creating their own original character, Funko got license to make and sell Big Boy restaurant's own mascot Big Boy. The Big Boy bobble head was a success and from then on Funko managed to get more license to create new bobble-heads such as Betty Boob, Hanna-Barbera characters, Austin Powers and etc [26]. Mike Becker sold the company to Brian Mariotti whom was a personal friend and avid Funko collector. Brian in the helm had brought Funko to where it is now with their most successful line, Funko pops. But before the Funko pops (Pops which it will be referred as by the researcher) were produced, there were many vinyl toys that came out of Funko's factory, though well received but still wasn't a huge hit.



**Figure 3:** Funko pop Freddy Funko (Mascot)

Funko's growth and success is quite significant to the toy industry and the U.S. economy. There was a net sales increase of 15.9% which amounted to \$795.1 million by the end of 2019. And in the United States alone there was an increase of 12.4% to \$523.9 million in that same year and an increase of 23.3% to \$271.2 million for the international market. It clearly shows how influential or substantial pop culture is to many people and collectors. The company [27] believes that pop culture is more widely accepted culturally with social media one of the driving force for fans to show their affinity or love for the shows and be passionately open about them. Funko pops have their very own distinctive feature. Figure 3 clearly shows the visual features of these figures which measures from toe to head estimated 3 3/4 inches that is 9.525 centimeters in height. It has a childlike proportion with a big head, round eyes attached to an upper torso and legs. According to [28] description of Funko pops, they have large black vacant eyes, a very disproportionate small sized body and a square-ish head. It was also described by [29] that the Funko pop as vinyl figures with neutral pose that is 3.75centimeters in height. The main head is almost squared-shaped with curved edges also with black button eyes. They usually have a small nose and most of the time without any mouths. He also mentioned that adorability is its main importance [29].

## **4. Related Works**

### **4.1. Dunny**

Dunny's are Kidrobot's very first and original pieces that were designed and created by Paul Budnitz and Tristan Eaton circa 2004. The base design of Dunny's are a representation of a rabbit and a mashup of a devil with tube ears and big rounded heads. The body is relatively smaller or similar proportion to the head. It has limited articulation that only exists on the head and arms. It has a very stable design, standing on its own without any help shown in figure 4. The Dunny's were created as a blank canvas in order for artists all over the world to give their take or interpretation of this art form [30]. There have been hundreds of iterations of Dunny's done to date. This can be said that Dunny was a precursor to many popular collectibles and [23] reiterates that many companies such as Medicom, Funko, Tokidoki and even Disney that produced the Vinylmation series using the basic form of Mickey Mouse had used the Dunny concept.



**Figure 4:** Dunny Vinyl Figure by Kidrobot

There is definitely much similarity in the way the toys were designed. As mentioned earlier, many toys had followed the concept of Dunny and Pops are the same. Pops follows the same idea of creating a template to use for all the figures that come out. Dunnys produced are based on different artists' interpretations whether it is customized or uses the basic form with designs on them and as for Pops they are based on different characters from different media such as movies, games, animation even real sportsmen or celebrities but in the end it all comes down to the same template used for each product that comes out. This will create uniformity and thus creates mainstays or household branding which is easily identifiable even though they are iterations of many different characters. Both figures exude cuteness due to deformity of their proportions. The larger head to smaller or similar size body ratio. Both the Pops and Dunnys are highly sought after in the aftermarket. But here is where they might be different, Kidrobot calls these toy collectibles as art, whereas Funko the leading brand in the toy collectibles category, calls it toys [23]. But let's not dismiss Pops as an art collectible, Funko Pops can still be considered an art form.

### **4.2. L.O.L. Surprise! Dolls**

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for all the figures that comes out. Dunnys produced are based of different artist's interpretation whether it is customized or uses the basic form with designs on them and as for Pops they are based of different characters from different. Another popular toy collectible like the *Funko pops*, where their success came post designer toys was none other than L.O.L. Surprise!. *L.O.L. Surprise!* As in figure 5, are cute dolls that resembles child or toddlers wearing glamorous fashion and accessories. They were created by MGA Entertainment the same company that brought in Bratz Dolls and headed by Isaac Larian. LOL Dolls thrives on the trend of unboxing and collectibles but it was essentially considered bizarre or unheard of formulating a toy based on unboxing videos. But it was a phenomenon that had catapulted MGA Entertainment to the top and raking billions of revenue being the number one collectible toys for consecutive years. Reference [31] had interviewed Rachel Barr director of the Early Learning Project from Georgetown University had said that children around four to five years' old likes watching videos that has an element of anticipation and also to look forward to things to come. Barr continued that kids do not like being frightened so they like watching videos that has no scary surprises hence unboxing videos and toy surprises lets kids enjoy the anticipation without being too afraid as they know what will roughly be inside the packaging. It is apparent that MGA Entertainment had done their research properly and manages to rise in their popularity from unboxing videos that is full of surprises. On YouTube, one popular unboxing video that has more than three hundred and twenty-one million view is a boy unwrapping a giant egg that has candy and toys in them. And according to [31] unboxing videos allows kids to experience toys that they might not be able to get due to family circumstances. It also lets them connect and hang out in some ways with other kids especially if they aren't allowed to go out because its dangerous outside or they live in an area where there aren't many kids in their neighborhood. And parents don't mind as long as it keeps their children out of trouble even though they watch videos of other kids playing toys. LOL! Surprise dolls are a three inches' doll figures that are covered in layers of wrappings and paper. The figures are not sold typically in boxes with windows but are sold in many different packaging. The most common is the ball shaped package and in order to get to the figure, the ball must be opened and layers of paper unwrapped. There are many accessories or even extra smaller characters like a baby sister to be found and other surprises such as stickers to be used with the dolls. All the dolls are randomly packed which creates the mystery that children and adults crave. Reference [31] interviewed an eight-year-old whom thought that getting a less common or an ultra-rare figure would be felt as "cool".



**Figure 5:** L.O.L. Surprise! Dolls by MGA Entertainment

## 5. Methodology

A sixteen question survey was developed and a pilot test was conducted to ensure the validity of the

questionnaires. Upon validation and the necessary adjustments, the final instruments were shared online to the Funko Malaysia Community group on Facebook. There were a total of 98 respondents whom were willing to answer the survey.

The data gathered from the questionnaires are tabulated into SPSS a statistical software that would then be used to analyzed said data. SPSS (or known as Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is a statistical software designed to analyze and conduct different statistical testing. Factor analysis was used as it is a multivariate approach used by researchers from different disciplines to reduce a large set of observed variables into a small set of underlying variables or factors. The model used was Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). EFA is also used when a theory or model needs to be generated by exploring the main dimensions from a large set of latent constructs that represents usually by variables in a set [32]. It is also usually when there are no expectations from the variables nature or number by investigators, hence it is exploratory in nature. Because of this EFA, was the selected choice as the technique used for this study.

The data needs to be determined to ensure that it is suitable for factor analysis. By using the correlation matrix, we could determine the relationship pattern between individual variables when conducting EFA. A suggestion by [33] that any correlation coefficient of lower than .30 needs to be discarded as it is an indication in the lack of a relationship. Also recommended [34] the correlation matrix or factorability of R to be not less than .30 for suitability of factor analysis and if none are found then the use of factor analysis should be reconsidered. Furthermore, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity can also be used as the p-value should be lower than the chosen significance level which is usually .05 in order for the data to be suitable for factor analysis. Lastly, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy can quantify the level of interrelationship among the variables and the value should be .08 and above considered meritorious while .05 is considered adequate for the data to be suitable factor analysis [35].

## **6. Data Analysis**

### **6.1. Descriptive Analysis**

Based on the two Tables of 1 and 2, the descriptive analysis shows that out of the total 98 respondents, majority of them are male at 76.5 percent of which is 75. And female respondents are at 23.5 percent which amounts to 23 respondents of the total 98. The total age group of the respondents was divided in to 5 different categories. The highest respondent age group was between 26-35 years of age with a frequency of 43 and a percentage of 43.9 percent. The next category was between 16-25 years of age which has the second highest frequency of 35 and a percentage of 36.7 percent. The other categories which belongs to 36-45 years of age and 46 and above has the frequency of 15 and 4 with both percentages at 15.3 and 4.1 percent respectively. However, the lowest frequency for an age group was 15 and below with only 1 respondent and at 1.0 percent. Majority of the respondents are Funko pop collectors with the highest frequency of 95 and at 96.9 percent. Only 3 out of the 98 respondent said they did not collect Funko pop with a percentage of 3.1. And none of them are about to start as most in the group are already Funko pop collectors new and old.

**Table 1: Gender Results**

		Frequency	Percentages (%)
Valid	Male	75	76.5
	Female	23	23.5
	Total	98	100

**Table 2: Age Group Results**

		Frequency	Percentages (%)
Valid	15 and below	1	1.0
	16-25 years of age	35	36.7
	26-35 years of age	43	43.9
	36-45 years of age	15	15.3
	46 and above	4	4.1
	Total	98	100

**6.2. Factor Analysis**

First examination of the correlation matrix, that 13 of the 15 items loaded above .30 which indicates that they at least have a correlation with one other item. Next the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy shows .616 which is slightly above the recommended value of .6. The Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant as it was  $p < 0.5$  and acceptable for further research. The communalities of all items shows well above .30 (see Table 3) which indicates that each variable has a common variance among each other variables.

Principle component analysis was conducted continuously with different solutions using a varimax and oblimin rotation to achieve the best possible matrix loadings, as the final goals is to find the simplest structure on the rotated matrix.

A four factor solution was derived and preferred after a) items were deleted as it did not load acceptably after rotations b) the leveling off eigenvalue on the screeplot suggests a four factor solution and c) the difficulty on interpreting the factor loadings using five and six solutions.

The final stage of the factor analysis, a principal component analysis was conducted on the remaining 12 items using a varimax rotation and yielded a four factor solution explaining 65% of the variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy shows a slight increase of .632 while the Bartlett’s test of sphericity remains significant and an increase in Determinant of .067. All the items loaded cleanly on one of the four factors as intended and all loadings was well above .5. A total of four factors was identified and renamed a) Designed, b) Need to Complete, c) Nostalgia and d) Valuable exclusive.

**Table 3:** Factor Analysis Results

Factor	Variables	Reloaded Matrix	Communality	Cronbach's Alpha	Variance (%)
Design	The cuteness of the pop design influences you to purchase <i>Funko Pops</i> ?	.617	.610	.683	19.401
	Is the Stylized design of the Funko pop influences your purchase?	.641	.522		
	The uniform design of the Funko pop influences the collection of more Pops?	.558	.459		
	The low prices of basic Funko pop as a collectible influence you to collect them?	.696	.491		
	Does the Pop's box uniform size make it easy to collect and store influences you to get more Funko pops?	.679	.608		
Need to Complete	Funko releases Pops in a series of sets from shows, others (Star Wars, Harry Potter), does the need to have a complete set influence you to continue to buy more Pops?	.850	.754	.726	15.664
Table 3: Continued	Funko releases many versions of one character for example Batman, Iron Man and etc, does the need to have a complete set of that character influence you to continue to buy more Pops?	.866	.801		
Nostalgia	Would a character from your childhood that you like influence you to buy a Funko pop "if" it is made?	.863	.782	.722	15.398
	How influential would it be for you to collect Funko pops knowing a character or show or movie that you like from your childhood existed or will be released as a Funk pop?	.833	.788		
Valuable Exclusive	Does knowing some	.853	.745	.600	14.692

Funko pop figures may increase in its value over time, influences you to collect Funko pop?		
Funko release many exclusives and limited edition Funko pops, does this influence you to buy Funko pops?	.738	.587
<b>Total</b>		<b>65.155</b>

### 6.3. Multiple Regression Analysis

To test the hypotheses a Multiple Regression Analysis had to be conducted. The mean of the factor scores were used to do a Multiple Regression Analysis which aim is to determine the prediction of a single dependent variable from a group of independent variable. The dependent variable here is the mean score of the combined item which measures the popularity of Pop (DV). The independent variables are Design (IV1) and Nostalgia (IV2). Further examination shows, that the collinearity Tolerance values are more than 0.10 at .856 for both predictors and they scored less than 10 on the variance inflation factor (VIF) at 1.168. These findings show that there are no multicollinearity among the variables. The results also show that there is no autocorrelation in the residuals as the values of the Durbin-Watson is 1.941, which is in the range of 1.5 to 2.5. The R Square value is .741 which explains 74.1 percent of the variation in the popularity of Funko pop model that is accounted for by the variables, when multiple regression analysis is used. The independent variable that score the highest regression coefficient is Design with .538. This means that for every one percent increase in Design, the dependent variable Popularity of Pops will increase by 5.38 percent. This also shows that Design is the biggest positive influence on the Popularity of Pops with statistical significance of .000 followed by Nostalgia which has the same positive influence with a regression coefficient score is .231 with a statistical significance of .000. And the multiple regression equation is as follows:

$$DV = 0.788 + 0.538(IV1) + 0.231(IV2) \quad (1)$$

From the standardized Beta ( $\beta$ ) shows that both independent variables have a strong relationship with the dependent variable with Design the strongest at .661 with p-value less than .05. Table 4 also reports Nostalgia has a score of .356 with p-value less than .05 as well.

**Table 4: Hypotheses**

Hypotheses	Beta Value	Significance Level	Claim
H1: <i>Design contributes to Funko pop's popularity among Malaysian collectors.</i>	.661	.000	Accepted
H2: <i>Nostalgia contributes to Funko pop's popularity among Malaysian collectors.</i>	.356	.000	Accepted

## 7. Findings

The final results have shown that Design is one of the most important influencer for Malaysian toy collectors when buying *Funko pops*. It can be seen clearly in table 3 itself after the factor analysis, all the variables loaded at an average of .638 and communality higher than .3 shows that they are relatable. Although the Cronbach's Alpha has the lowest score among the four factors identified, Design still loads the highest a Variance of 19%. Here the design for Pops incorporate many things such as the adorability of the Pops, the licensed characters, the packaging and the visual representation as a whole. The stylistic approach of simplicity and cuteness made *Funko* successful. This is very important to understand, even though the abundance of licensing caters to many different demographic of collectors but in the end it is noteworthy to say that how *Funko* assimilate their Pop design with distinct characteristics of well-known characters has gotten many collectors buying Funko. With the hypothesis accepted by using the multiple regression analysis with the highest regression coefficient of .538, has helped strengthen the findings and discussion. Whenever the design aspects of Funko Pop increases the popularity of pop will increase but of course there are still other factors that influence collectors buying *Funko pops* in Malaysia as well.

Many collectors based on the demographic age of respondents (see Table 2) are considered millennials that grew up in 1980's and early 1990's. Millennials are a generation born between the years 1980 until 1995 [36]. Most of millennials growing up spends their childhood almost the old fashioned way by outdoors, played with tabletops and such while transitioning and experiencing technology boom during adolescent years have made them more susceptible to nostalgic trends as it taps into the feel good moments explained by [37]. It was also added that nostalgia is very connected to millennials as the trend is embedded in today's culture which they subconsciously are ingrained unto millennials [37]. Based on table 3, nostalgia loaded with two variables at an average of .848 with a very high communality score. Although with a high and accepted Cronbach's Alpha of .722 the variance was the third highest. When the multiple regression analysis were done nostalgia shows the second highest score that gives a positive influence to the popularity of pop with a regression coefficient score of .231. This shows significant truth, *Funko pops* decision to produce many 1980's and 1990's characters have

made to a much wider fans and collectors. Getting license such as He-Man Masters of the Universe, Power Rangers and even Pokemon have made these millennials feeling very nostalgic and thus influence more collectors to collect them. Again there are still other factors that influence collectors buying *Funko pops* in Malaysia.

### **7.1. Implications of Study**

The implication of this study helps to uncover key factors that determines a collector's influence of buying toys as there is a huge research gap. The way a toy is designed and how it visually looks is very important to many collectors in Malaysia. For instance, in terms of *Funko pop*, the articulation is almost nonexistent but yet the final look, the way the figure is posed and although it is adorable the detail is immersive and really reflects that of the licensed character. The data that was analyzed from this research are targeted towards local toy designers as well. It is hoped that they can have a better understanding into what they are creating for the masses and how to be better successful. The final look of their toy should be taken account first. Before even progressing into making the toy and manufacturing it, the designer would have a better perspective by sharing the initial drawings to the targeted buyers. This is so that to reduce the cost of manufacturing that might not even sell and having lower risks of unsold items. The researchers believe that there is some lack of communication with the targeted buyers or the designer themselves just design something that they like but not what their consumer likes.

Nostalgia has been a trend recently, Jeremy Gutsche mentioned that anything that could be tapped into a person's past and experience will act as a catalyst and it something many millennials feels about anything from their childhood (Trend Hunter, 2017). This is something local toy designers or in fact many designers from different backgrounds as well as manufacturers should take note. Yes, paying for licensing could be expensive and not affordable for smaller studios or companies but that does not mean they cannot tap into the past. Referencing from these eras into their design will definitely help push the nostalgia factors for many collectors. Even though it may not look exactly for instance a character from the 1980's but certain characteristics that could easily be referenced or redesign to suit the designers style but yet still catch many collector's attentions may it be locally or overseas. There are still definitely other factors that can influence the purchase of *Funko pops* by Malaysian toy collectors but design is clearly one that has the biggest influence.

### **7.2. Limitations of Study**

First of all, there is a very big research gap regarding this field. There is not much information regarding toys and collectibles academically. There were limited research and articles related to this studies only topic of toys for children or toys in terms of play for adults. The second thing that the researchers hoped for was more respondents as the more response for the questionnaire the better the data and reliable it is as a whole population. The research only manages to get 98 respondents from the said sampling also due to time constraints to ensure that the study finishes at a timely manner. But it would have been more beneficial to have at least 150 to 200 respondents. The third is that the researchers believe there is more factors in the study that was not factored in. Especially also the many different aspects of design. But this wouldn't be clear unless this current

study was not initiated first. The fourth, the questionnaire was revised twice to come up with the final instrument as time were of essence. Also questions regarding how much people are willing to spend was not asked. As much as the respondents are Pop collectors it would have been great to know how much they were willing to spend on these figures. Lastly, with the looming Covid-19 and tight movement control has made it difficult to meet toy collectors for better understanding of the topic and interviewing them in their natural toy convention or toy market in Malaysia.

## 8. Conclusions

Toy collection and toys collected by adults are not the usual topics being studied hence the huge research gap. The researchers believe that understanding better this topic can help in many ways and can lead to an increase revenue for a country's economy like the United States especially for Malaysia. Everyone will be able to use this study to help further their knowledge on what Malaysia collectors look for as well as for other academicians to further and gather more knowledge in this field. As clearly shown the United States had benefitted from the toy industry able to create job prospects and revenue to help their economy. Toy collectibles as well is the current craze for collectors whether it'd be *Funko pops* or action figures and mystery toys, this current trend will be staying for quite a long time in the future as predicted by many global reports. From this study Design and nostalgia is shown to play a big role in the influence of toy collectors in Malaysia but even though licensing is a big deal but did not came out as a factor hence the hypotheses for it is nulled. Maybe design and nostalgia is already factoring the licensing aspect in this study. There are many limitations to this study as well that in the future could be looked into to ensure the study is done properly. Hopefully this research can be a stepping stone for more research to come and that it could help the many aspiring toy designers in Malaysia as well as for the general toy collectors to understand and deepen their meaning towards the passion of the toys they love to buy.

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