



# IDEALOGY

JOURNAL



# IDEALOGY JOURNAL

Volume 6, Issue 2, 2021  
Published: 1 September 2021

Published by:  
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e-ISSN 2550-214X

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Biannual Frequency: Two (2) issues per year (April and September)

### e-ISSN

2550-214X

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# Metamorphosis

Muhammad Khalik Mustafa  
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak Branch, Seri Iskandar Campus,  
32610 Seri Iskandar, Perak, MALAYSIA  
Email: muham473@uitm.edu.my

Received: 1 January 2021, Accepted: 22 March 2021, Published: 1 September 2021

## ABSTRACT

The word metamorphosis representing the meaning the process of transformation, alteration, change and rebirth. Metamorphosis is an idea inspired from the adaptation of traditional Malay male attire which is transformed into a more casual and fashionable attire as well as wearable for any occasions. This contemporary design of traditional Malay male attire provides a phenomenon as it goes together with the current fashion development in the world of globalization. The main aim of this study is to explore, examine and analyze the nature of Malay clothes. This study also describes the existence of type of dresses, the way they are used and sensitivity to clothes received as a heritage of Malay culture. As stated by Siti Zainon Ismail (2004) since the 15th century AD, there is the concept of clothing, "wearing the Malay way" recorded in old Malay literary texts in "Hikayat Hang Tuah". The writing is viewed as a cultural record of clothing, how it is used and elements of traditional values and norms in the Malay culture. Objective for this product is to transform the traditional style of Malay male attire to a "new look" by following the current fashion trend. Every piece of the design plays with the characters and the uniqueness of this traditional attire which is persistently inscribed in the Malay history books such as kekek, pesak, cekak musang, tulang belut and many more. The wearing of traditional Malay male attire can be seen nowadays only in certain events and occasions. Among the attire studied here are baju Kurung teluk belanga, baju sikap, baju kehormatan Barat, baju takwa, and baju kurung cekak musang. These original designs are given a new twist or in other word, new fashion trends. The usage of stripes and checker patterns gives life and reminisce the memory the once loved age-old patterns. The softer denim fabric is used to give it a trendier effect instead of the usually used fabrics. It can be concluded that what modernization have done on this traditional attire to be as a casual wear for Malaysian men is acceptable.

**Keywords:** Traditional Malay Male Attire; transform; fashion trend; casual wear.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The history of clothing can be considered as in connection with the beginning of the history of human civilization. Originally, clothing can be defined as something that is wrapped around the body to protect humans from various elements including weather factors, insects, comfort and personal safety of human beings. From time to time, human beings go through wisdom and ingenuity in exploiting the natural resources found around them to become something that can envelop the body. From the beginning by using foliage and bark as basic materials in application. Then, turn to animal skins and animal fur to wrap the human body. This is clear in the visuals and western studies in human civilization. Technology and transformation inspire human beings to be more advanced in the process and innovation in changing the way humans dress, that is, from natural raw materials that are shredded and woven from banana stalks, hemp stems, jute, flax and pineapple leaves, resulting in textiles used by humans so today.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Baju Kurung is an ancient garment designed to cover the entire body. It is quoted in the book "Busana Melayu" which is said to have similarities with Arabic clothes. However, there are those who note that this Baju Kurung has existed in the state of Johor approximately 200 years ago (Zubaidah Sual, 1994). In fact, this dress is very popular in the state of Johor since the reign of Sultan Abu Bakar in Teluk Belanga, Singapore and Baju kurung is also the official dress of the people of Johor until now.

In 1866 Sultan Abu Bakar inspired the design of Baju Kurung Teluk Belanga and the name given was Teluk Belanga itself was the center of government of Johor before moving to Johor Bahru. Transformation Baju Kurung suffered some changes, in the book "Busana Melayu" said Sultan Abu Bakar wearing Baju Kurung trailing up to the knees, berpesak, berkekek, handkerchiefs and clothes with no pockets. The sleeves are large and long and the details on the Baju Kurung are more like stitching on the neck of the shirt, that is, with hand embroidery stitches "mata kia" or "tulang perangi". This is different from the time of Sultan Ibrahim (1873-1959) when the Menteri Besar of Johor, Dato 'Jaafar Bin Muhammad has changed by raising the original hem which was previously knee length to hips level and added 3 pockets on the body of the Baju Kurung.

Apart from baju Kurung Teluk Belanga there is another name which is Baju Kurung Cekak Musang and was first introduced in 1930 -1940. In the book "Pakai Patut Melayu" by Major Dato 'Haji Mohd Said bin Haji Sulaiman, explained regarding Baju Kurung Cekak Musang. The difference is in the design of the neck of this baju kurung which is the design of the neck is high. Baju Kurung Cekak Musang is also known as Baju Wan which means cousin to the Sultan at that time. This is related to Tuan Busu and the title Tuan is an abbreviation for "Wan". Its history when Tuan Busu was present in a ceremony by wearing the dress. Baju Kurung cekak Musang is also known as Baju Teluk Belanga Leher Benea and there is a pocket on the left side of the shirt. While in Serawak Baju Kurung was introduces as Baju Melayu Berkerang Benang or Berkerawang. Still retains the original features of the baju kurung berkekek, berpesak but without any pockets.



Picture 1: The research of Baju Kurung from the old's picture



## 2.1 Fashion and Historical

“It was interesting to explore historical clothes and to think about those texture, those embroideries, those materials and then to interpret them for a woman today, not as costume, but as wardrobe”

Nicolas Ghesquiere at Balenciaga

Historical adaptation in clothing design is also an interesting study that can cover all parts. As stated by Nicolas Ghesquiere a French designer who once served with the international brand Balenciaga and he is now a Designer for the Louis Vuitton brand. The thinking process in terms of history inspire can be studied in various fields it includes texture, embroidery and there are also designers who inspire from their design of historical and cultural such as historical buildings, costume, traditional games and more directly or indirectly in the process of designing a garment. There is also inspiration from international designers to make history or culture as a source of inspiration in their fashion collection. Historical influences may be found in any design discipline from any culture. For example, tiles on the Islamic walls of the mosque shown that arabesque pattern, as well as the greatness of art in previous era such as Egypt for the amazing civilization, Japanese design on clothing as well as detail in various aspects of the samurai warrior.

## 2.2 Artist References



**Picture 2:** Cristian Dior Haute Couture by John Galliano 2007 Collection

John Charles Galliano or better known by the commercial name as John Galliano is a British fashion designer. Born in November 1960 and educated in Central Saint Martins, John Galliano worked with fashion designer who was the head designer one of French fashion company brands such as Givenchy in 1995 and in 1996 switched to the famous Haute Couture Fashion House Christian Dior. Galliano now serves as creative director for fashion house Maison Margiela. Galliano achievements has been named awarded the British Fashion Designer of The Year four times. In a 2004 British Broadcasting cooperation (BBC), he was named the fifth most influential person in British culture.

While Galliano served at Christian Dior, various of ideas and preparations in each of his designs line were characterized by culture. Asian is also one of Galliano’s choices in his artwork, there is inspiration that sees Chinese and Japanese culture. In 2007 Christian Dior unveiled a collection of haute couture for spring 2007. Through excerpts from the Vouge Runway blog by Sarah Mower, she was attracted the inspiration in fashion runway by the models in Dior Spring 2007 Haute Couture collection. The inspiration idea from Pinkertons’ Cio-Cio San, Madame Butterfly. Each collection of clothing on display emphasizes Galliano's talent in the development of ideas in every design that evokes beauty, sensitivity, narrative and emotion in every detail of clothing and even the atmosphere of the fashion show. Inspiration from Kimono, obis and geisha turned into a subtle translation of New Look peplum dress and also not denied also aspects around Japan such as plants and geography are also one of the inspirations translated. Folding origami and geometry are also adapted in designs such as flowers and

even birds made from origami. Each design on display has its own character and even the details of paintings from Japanese painters are also drawn and detailed with embroidery and also Japanese handicrafts such as straw hay are also applied in the design of Christian Dior Spring 2007.



**Picture 3:** Gucci Collection Spring Summer Collection 2005

The designer John Ray originally from Scotland, worked with Katharine Hamnett, and with Gucci for a decade and now as creative director at Dunhill. Educated in men's clothing at Central Saint Martins before pursuing a master's degree at the Royal College of Art. The name of John Ray was said in fashion industries when his career in replacing Tom Ford at Gucci as the creative director of men's fashion. John Ray, the creative director of Gucci menswear has produced a collection 2005 inspired by Hippies cultural in that era. The Gucci Spring Summer 2005 men's clothing collection focuses more on the hippies' style in a new breath by John Ray with more luxurious details, rich-hippie look, but Ray added a moneyed and also aristocratic edge in men's design collection. Apart from that, the print technique is also produced with a butterfly pattern design and heavily embroidered tops that opened the show were bedecked with beads and coins, so on to further strengthen the design haute bohemians produced. There is also a djellbas design made from chiffon fabric and brocades amplified that theme to produce from the culture of hippies John Ray emphasized the clothing pieces of the time. To complete the look of each design, complete with shoes and also a beautiful Gucci croc loafers and totes.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

Fashion design is a process of investigating, researching and constantly questioning on what the design process doing and why. Successful design is about thinking and commutating the thoughts, on paper, or wherever and realizing them through prototyping, solving any problem along the way. There will never be substitute for good ideas and these must be the focus of problem solving. John Galiano a creative director of Dior was said that "Creative research is the secret or trick which underlines all original design" (Research and Design, 2007). Research is vital to any design process; it is initial trawl and collection of design idea. It's should be experimental process, an investigation to support or find out about particular subject. Research is an essential tool in the creative process and will provided inspiration, information and creative direction, as well as a narrative to a collection.

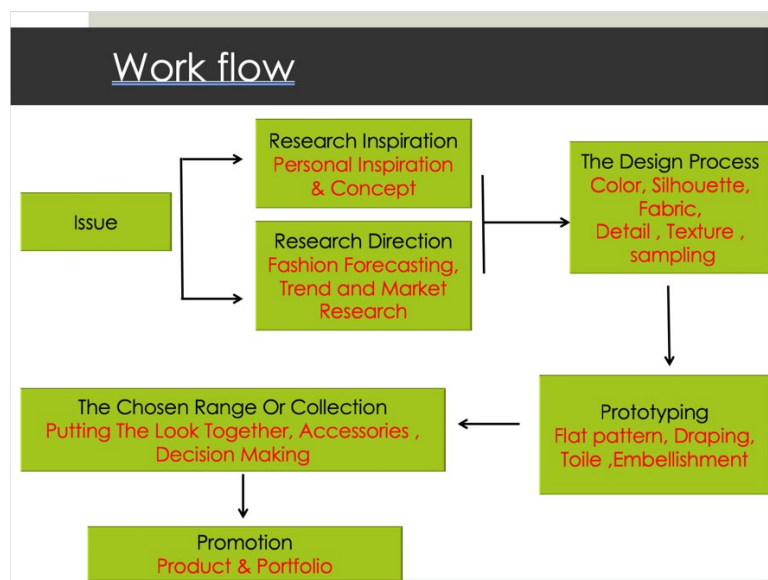
#### 3.1 Research and Inspiration

"Research is what I'm doing when I don't know what I'm doing"

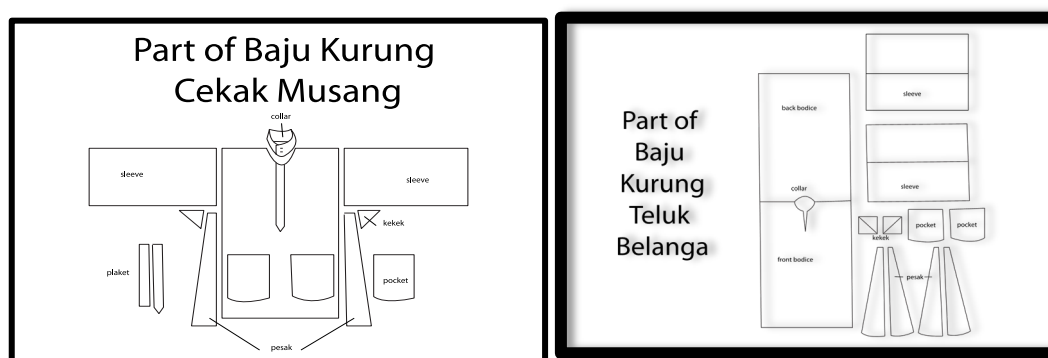
(Wernher Von Braun, aerospace engineer and space architect)

Research is about creative investigation; it is about recording information for use now or in the future. As state by Simon Seivewright (2007), Designer are constantly looking for new ideas, fashion by its very nature is always changing and reinventing itself. Research is vital to any design process, it

is the initial trawl and collection of ideas prior to design. It should be an experimental process, an investigation to support or find out about a particular subject (Seivewright, 2007). From the statement research is an essential tool in the creative process and will provide inspiration, information and creative direction, as well as a narrative to a collection. According to book *Research and Design* the meaning of research is about a journey that can often take weeks or even months to collate and process (Seivewright, 2007).



**Picture 4:** Workflow of design process.



**Picture 5:** Technical drawing and part of Baju Kurung

According to Zubaidah Sual (1994), the design and cutting of 'Baju kurung telok Belanga' are the same for men and women. Both dresses consist of body, arm, kekek and the pesak. The only difference is the length of the dress where length of the ladies is much long than the men. For the female, the length is up to the knee whereas for men, it is below the hip. The bottom lines of the dress are cutting straight but curved little bit towards the center. Formerly, Baju Kurung Telok Belanga has no pocket, but for the wearer's convenience, one pocket can be pasted either on the left side of the dress just above the waistline or at the left 'pesak' of the dress. The use of the pocket is one of the influences from Indian community that migrated to Malaya. The cutting of the neck is circular (shape of a full moon) with a slit about 12 centimeters or 5 inches long.

Baju Kurung Cekak Musang has the same cut as Baju Kurung Telok Belanga. The difference is only a high collar and plaket placed in front of the shirt. The collar at the top has two button items while in the chest, three button details. This shirt has three pockets in the body shirt by application "*Berdagang*

*Luar*". In 1960 this shirt changed when the collar has influence from the Chinese dress with mandarin collar. At the end of 1950, this shirt started appealing to the Malay community, but Baju Kurung Telok Belanga is still a choice of Malay men at that time (Azah Aziz, 2004).

### 3.2 Artist Statement



**Picture 6:** A Collection Metamorphosis

Metamorphosis symbolizes the new birth of new design inspired by traditional Malay attire for men and garments. The research and idea are focusing more on the design of Baju Kurung Teluk Belanga and Baju Kurung Cekak Musang. The special features of this attire are in the form of a dress that has a pesak, kekek, neck shape and a rectangular shirt cut. The features of this attire are retained in every design. There are traditional ways of how this Baju Kurung for men attire dresses up such as on certain occasions, Hari Raya Festivals, to the mosque including Friday prayer, weddings and formal occasions. However, Metamorphosis in this attire is designed to be a suitable outfit for everyday wear. Based on prior history, traditional Malay male attire specifically made for formal attire and daily attire for the Malay population in Malay Archipelago. A complete attire comprises of wearing it with sampang, sarong and also head decorations such as tengkolok, destar and more. The attire is also completed with accessories such as keris, dokoh and so on. For the new look of metamorphosis, it is more casual and urban suitable for young generation who loves fashion and style.

In this new idea of designing, experimentation on the fabric as one of the research studies was done to explore with functional and market trend in a new look of traditional Malay male attire. If in ancient times, the types of fabrics that are often used are calico, songket, brocade, synthetic fabric and even cotton. With Malaysian weather being hot and humid all year round, the selection of synthetic fabric, a type of fabric that does not absorb sweat compared to cotton fabric, which makes it less suitable. It is clearly visible in the way of fashion and style today, fashion category for casual wear clothes is focused on cotton material with the usage of cotton knitted material that are often worn by the Malaysian community. The design idea for this collection is highlighted using cotton drill such as the fabric used in prototype is an option for experimentation. This material was chosen because cotton drill or jeans emphasize the urban and trendy fashion features. In the history of clothing, it is also seen that Levi's brand is the beginning for workers' work attire in the mines sector but now it is a trendy when every society today has a jeans pants and is used as daily clothing and no longer for workers in the mine sector

only. The collection of this attire also chooses a denim fabric that is suitable to be worn on the body which is using a thin and soft cotton drill fabric.

The color theme for this design collection is dark blue and light blue, which are the colours of denim material. The colours stand out more for casual looks and they are so relaxing and urban for fashion forecast. The details highlighted in each design are focused on the stitching on the design attire. By using jeans thread as a detailing, the sample applied for this design are top stitch, double top stitch and felt seam methods. These details give this design a more masculine look as design touch up and hemming. This idea is still retaining the characteristics of traditional Malay men's attire that is by maintaining the details on the design of the neckline of the shirt. The source of inspiration from the Cekak Musang collar is similar to placket collar on the neckline and also the collar stand was designed and applied in each design. And also, the design still maintains Decorated with five or seven buttons but using a more casual button. Some of ejection to the design to be more acceptable for this design are western elements such as the sleeves of the shirt that have a cuff to more wearable looks and that shown similar a men shirt.

## CONCLUSION

This transformation is one of the efforts for a new generation to accept or approach more on the wearing of traditional clothing. Not immersed in the era with clothing designs influenced from the outside. Do not disagreement with international brands such as H&M, Zara, Uniqlo, Cotton On and others who rush to produce designs to world fashion lovers. In fact, there are some of traditional clothes from other countries that are still worn or accepted by modernization from a design point of view. Examples such as kimonos that are designed in various designs and acceptable by all communities and even the world wear them with news transformation of designing. The other example, like the traditional African shirt who's the Muse is Bob Marley with a design transition in the hippie's era and is still worn by certain groups. The Malay traditional men attire should not design just for a Malay man, but it must also give some transformation and innovation in terms of designing for other race or culture to accept this attire. On the other hand, from traditional look to a modern look that is important to consumer to feel more comfortable to wear. Because through our clothes we can reflect the identity of the nation and country, namely Malaysia.

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