

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**THE EVOLUTION OF MALAY  
MEN'S FESTIVAL COSTUMES IN  
FASHION TREND THROUGH  
SOCIAL CHANGE IN MALAYSIA  
1930-2017**

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## ABSTRACT

More than half of the population in Malaysia is of Malay ethnicity and Islamic religion. The most important Islamic festivals celebrated in Malaysia are Hari Raya Aidil Fitri and Hari Raya Aidil Adha. Through the years, the Malay men's festival costumes fashion trend has developed. The evolution of concepts and styles that transitioned from the traditional to the contemporary has somehow reformed its concept due to some social change among Malay men in Malaysia. The comprehensive documentation about Malay men's costumes in Malaysia is still limited and gives less attention to the evolution of their clothing. Nowadays, the modernisation process is very extensive. Although the fashion trend for festival costumes is increasingly focused on how to dress in accordance with the teachings of Islam, some designers are still underestimating the fashion culture in our country until it loses its identity. The objectives of this research firstly to identify the changes in silhouettes, types and style, and complementary accessories of Malay men's festival costumes in Malaysia from 1930 to 2017, secondly to investigate the factors that influenced the design of Malay men's festival costumes, and thirdly to conclude the impact of external influences on the values of Malay festival costumes in Malaysia. The study had been conducted using a qualitative research approach. Through the visual views that were evaluated from the critical analysis, nineteen types of Malay men's festival costumes were outlined. It is discovered that the Malay men's festival costumes have evolved and undergone fascinating stylistic changes, not only in terms of their appearance but also in terms of how they reflect various facets of modern human life, including those related to politics and administration, society, the economy, culture, and lifestyle. The costumes were collected from various sources and separated into four eras: before independence, early independence, modern era, and modern contemporary era. This research will hopefully fill in the gap in information about Malay men's costumes and provide a vital source for future references to transmitting intangible knowledge to cultural heritage resources.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Research

The purpose of this research is to define the evolution of Malay men's festival costumes in fashion trends through social changes in Malaysia from 1930 to 2017. This research was implemented by looking at a process involved in the evolution of men's festival costumes. This research lays out the silhouette, styles and trends, accessories, embellishment, influence, fabrication, colour, and motifs that developed the garment throughout the chronological time. It involves the history of Malay costume, which originated in the Malacca Sultanate era in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century and continued to develop until today.

In this research, the Malay men's festival costume was observed and documented to ascertain its types, style, influences, and feature character in a period from 1930 to 2017 as a cultural object. This study also evaluates the aesthetics of Malay festival costumes from the perspective and ethics of *Etika Berpakaian Melayu* (Tenas Effendy, 1998) and the principles of *Pakaian Cara Melayu* (Siti Zainon Ismail, 2006). As well as the related theory of social change to ascertain the evolution of the festival costume. Because the social significance of the Malay festival costume is considered a reflection of Malay culture,

The evolution of fashion cannot be avoided because the fashion cycle is something that changes from time to time. In the Malay community, clothing continued to grow throughout the 6th century, when *Kadaram* (Kedah) became a centre of trade (Mohd Zahir Zainuddin, 2017). Residents in Kedah practise wearing sarongs in a shirtless way. As the Malay kingdom of Malacca developed, the design of Malay clothing consisted of three important forms, namely sarongs, shirts, and head accessories (Zubaidah Shawal, 1994). The Malay kingdom of Malacca became the turning point for Malay clothing and its further evolution. Traditional dress symbolises the civilisation of a nation, including the Malay community, which considers traditional dress to play an important role that is very valuable and highly praised.

Tradition and modernity are two important concepts that have become the main direction of this research. Generally, the tradition is that social custom information is