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ISLAMIC MOTIFS: THE RECOGNITION OF MALAY MEN'S FESTIVAL COSTUMES IN MALAYSIA

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Abstrak:

Trend fesyen lelaki Melayu di Malaysia telah berkembang pesat sejak awal 1990-an. Trend bermula dengan gaya yang mempunyai perincian perayaan yang dicetak motif pada Baju Melayu ketika itu. Lama kelamaan, trend fesyen muslimah di Malaysia kemudiannya bertukar menjadi gaya mewah, ia lebih menyerlahkan perincian garis keratan atau motif pada fabrik. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti motif fesyen dan reka bentuk Islam pada pakaian perayaan lelaki Melayu di Malaysia. Statistik penyelidikan termasuk daripada koleksi Baju Melayu, Jubah dan Kurta. Sampel kajian adalah pakaian dan pakaian lelaki Melayu Islam di Malaysia. Reka bentuk kajian adalah visual-analitik. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui kaedah kualitatif dengan menggunakan rujukan jenama fesyen dalam talian. Sementara itu, data sekunder dikumpul melalui rujukan karya akademik seperti buku, jurnal dan majalah tentang nilai Islam dan pakaian Melayu. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan bahawa motif Islam, dikenal pasti antara reka bentuk yang berkaitan dengan fesyen Islam.

Kata Kunci:

Trend Fesyen, Pakaian Perayaan, Motif Islamik, Lelaki Melayu, Malaysia

Abstract:

The Malay men's fashion trend in Malaysia has been developing rapidly since the early 1990s. The trend started with the style that has festive details printed motifs on the Baju Melayu at that time. As time goes by, the Muslim fashion trend in Malaysia then turned into a luxury style, it more accentuates on the detail of cutting line or motifs on the fabric. The purpose of this study was to recognize the Islamic motifs of fashion and design on the Malay men's festival costumes in Malaysia. The research statistical garments included from Baju Melayu, Jubah and Kurta collections. The research sample was the Islamic Malay men's clothing and attire in Malaysia. The research design was visual-analytical. Data collection was done through qualitative methods by using online fashion brand references. Meanwhile, secondary data were gathered through referencing academic works like books, journals, and magazines on Islamic values and Malay garments. The results of data analysis showed that Islamic motifs, were identified among the designs related to Islamic fashion.

Keywords:

Fashion Trend, Festival Costumes, Islamic Motis, Malay Men's, Malaysia

Introduction

Islamic patterns, often referred to as Islamic geometric patterns or Arabesque patterns, are elaborate and symmetrical motifs that are frequently encountered in the realm of Islamic art and architecture (Ettinghausen, Grabar, and Jenkins, 2003). The aforementioned patterns exhibit distinct characteristics through the utilization of geometric forms, including circles, squares, and polygons, alongside their consistent recurrence and symmetrical arrangements.

Meanwhile, according to Hanash (2017), Islamic patterns possess a substantial historical background that may be traced back to the Islamic Golden Age, an era that extended from the 7th through the 13th century. The aforementioned patterns are frequently linked to Islamic architecture, encompassing structures such as mosques, madrasas (educational institutions of religious nature), and palaces. Additionally, these motifs can be observed throughout a wide range of ornamental arts, including ceramics, textiles, and manuscripts.

Background of Study

The prevalence of Islamic influences in Malaysia's culture, art, architecture, and daily life can be attributed to the country's primarily Muslim population (Latif & Alam, 2013). The infusion of Islamic influences into numerous parts of Malaysian culture can be attributed to the country's rich historical background, diversified ethnic composition, and profound religious traditions. Here are some ways Islamic motifs are presents in Malaysia like Islamic architecture, Islamic calligraphy, batik and textiles, Islamic arts, decorative arts and crafts, Islamic festivals and celebrations and many more. For this research, its only focus on the Islamic festivals and celebration. Islamic festivals, such as Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr, are widely celebrated in Malaysia. During these times, Islamic motifs can be seen in various decorations, traditional clothing, and festive items.

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this study is to conduct exploratory visual analysis research to study the Islamic Motifs on the Malay Men's Festival Costumes in Malaysia. To meet this purpose, the

objective of this research is to identify the shape of Islamic motifs pattern found on the Malay men's festival costumes. Next is to investigate the Islamic motifs composition applied on the Malay men's festival costumes.

Literature Review

There are 3 main points will be discussing in Literature Review which is Motifs, Islamic Motifs and Malay men's festival costumes in Malaysia.

Motifs

A motif is a recurrent element, topic, or pattern that manifests in diverse manifestations within a piece of literature, art, music, or any other kind of creative expression. An important element that adds to the overall structure and meaning of a piece can take the form of a single picture, idea, symbol, word, phrase, or even a musical or visual aspect (Smith, 2021).

In the realm of literature, motifs serve as a valuable tool for conveying profound significances, evoking emotions, or expressing ideas by establishing interconnections among various elements within a narrative or across multiple literary works. Within the realm of visual arts, motifs encompass recurring designs or symbols that has both symbolic and aesthetic significance (Ehran , nd).

Islamic Motifs

Islamic motifs refer to ornamental components and patterns that are frequently observed in the realm of Islamic art and construction. The motifs possess profound cultural and theological implications and are frequently employed to embellish diverse surfaces, encompassing structures, fabrics, pottery, and written works (Jowers, Prats, Eissa & J. Lee, 2010). Islamic art is renowned for its elaborate and geometric patterns, as well as its adherence to religious tenets that prohibit the representation of live entities (Djibril and Thami, 2008). The following discourse presents a selection of notable Islamic motifs.

Islamic art is widely recognized for its elaborate geometric patterns, which are frequently generated by the utilization of compasses and rulers (Broug, 2013). The observed patterns exhibit a spectrum of complexity, encompassing elementary geometric forms like squares and circles, as well as intricate interwoven configurations, such as stars and polygons. Geometric patterns are representative of the inherent order and harmony that permeate the universe, serving as visual manifestations of Islamic principles concerning the divine organization of existence (Aljamali, 2009).

Arabesque patterns are characterized by intricate and fluid lines, commonly arranged in floral or vegetable motifs (Castera, 1996). The aforementioned patterns underscore the intrinsic relationship between the natural world and spirituality. Geometric patterns are commonly observed in several domains such as architecture, textiles, and manuscripts. Notably, they are often employed as decorative elements for embellishing mihrabs (prayer niches) and minarets.

Malay Men's Festival Costumes

Malaysia has a remarkable level of diversity, both in terms of its cultural heritage and the ethnic groups residing within its borders. This diversity is manifested through the presence of distinct traditional costumes, which are done by various ethnic groups for specific festivals and occasions. The cultural identity of the Malay community is deeply intertwined with the prominent role played by traditional Malay clothing (Alias & Nawawi, 2003). The costumes

exhibit variability contingent upon the event, geographical location, and distinct cultural customs. Presented below are several illustrations of customary festival attires for males, originating from diverse ethnic communities within Malaysia:

Baju Melayu

The Baju Melayu is a customary attire worn by men of Malay descent. The traditional attire often comprises of a generously sized shirt, referred to as baju, which is worn in conjunction with trousers, known as seluar. This ensemble is commonly complemented by the addition of a songkok, traditional headgear, and a samping, a folded fabric that is wrapped around the waist. The traditional attire known as Baju Melayu is commonly donned on the occasion of Hari Raya Aidilfitri, a significant Muslim celebration commemorating the conclusion of the holy month of Ramadan.

Malay Kurta

The phrase Malay kurta represents an amalgamation of ethnic and clothing components. The kurta is a customary garment that is commonly worn in various South Asian nations, such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. The garment in consideration is a generously proportioned, elongated tunic that commonly extends to the knees or beyond, featuring a linear silhouette. The designs of Kurtas exhibit significant variation, ranging from modest and informal to intricate and ceremonial styles.

By amalgamating these two notions, the term Malay kurta may denote a variant of the traditional kurta that has undergone modifications to include characteristics derived from Malay culture. The incorporation of design elements, patterns, colors, and materials that draw inspiration from Malay traditions and aesthetics is a potential avenue for exploration. It is imperative to acknowledge that the development of traditional attire undergoes a gradual transformation, which is shaped by a multitude of elements such as cultural exchanges, globalization, and individual inclinations. Hence, the term Malay kurta lacks a precise and universally agreed-upon meaning, and its manifestation might vary based on the specific setting and subjective perception.

Jubah

The name of jubah is commonly employed in Muslim-majority nations to refer to a form of customary Islamic attire, frequently donned by individuals of both genders. The garment in consideration is a robe or gown that is characterized by its loose fit and ankle-length. It is commonly worn over regular clothing as a means of modest wear. The term jubah has variations in both meaning and style across diverse cultural and regional contexts.

The term Malay jubah is typically used to indicate the specific fashion of jubah that is commonly observed in Malaysia. The Malay jubah is a culturally significant attire that has undergone modifications to align with regional norms and contemporary fashion trends. The garment is recognized for its relaxed and comfy structure, making it well-suited for the tropical temperature prevalent in the area. In general, the Malay jubah serves as both a garment and a symbol of cultural and religious affiliation. The phenomenon observed might be characterized as the amalgamation of Islamic precepts with indigenous customs and sensibilities (Saravanan, 2015).

Methodology

The research employed a visual analysis study, and the data collection methods involved field study and observation. The research started with obtaining information about the types of Malay men's festival costumes in Malaysia. From there, all the Malay men's festival costumes consist Islamic motifs were then selected for the case study. These selected Malay men's festival costumes were analysed based on four criteria: motif form, decoration, composition, and layout. Finally, the selected data collections were examined, observed, analyzed, and documented.

Analysis and Finding

In the evolution of fashion trends and clothing designs, motifs became the primary visual element in the artwork, and the motif is also an image created to glamorise the product. In Malay traditional society, the production of a motif is usually related to the environment. For men's Baju Melayu, less takes on prints or textures, especially before independence and after independence, especially before the 1990s. Most Malay men around the year prefer to wear a plain, striped, or songket Baju Melayu which they prefer to wear fabric that has minimum texture and contrast (Sidek, 2018).

Additionally, clothes without motifs will look lifeless or tasteless (Fatema, M. and Islam, M.A. 2014). However, after modern globalisation, there are various motifs commonly used as pattern ornaments in the trend of male festive apparel in Malaysia from the 1990s to the 2017s. From the early 1990s, the production of the male garments of Baju Melayu started using printed motifs and bright colours in their textiles. The beauty of composition and motif processing in the development of clothing trends illustrates the progress and creativity of designers in producing their artistic outcomes. Pattern designs and motifs are classified as visual arts because of the contents found on them in terms of objects, motifs, compositions, or arrangements, where they can get a reaction in terms of aesthetics.



Figure 1: Islamic Motif on Baju Melayu

Source: Bernard Chandran (2017)

Motif decorations	Contemporary Islamic motif (Numerical Method)
Motif forms	Full Islamic motifs are made repeatedly.
Motif compositions	The beginning of the motif in various directions, from the edge, middle, bottom, and end of the fabric.
Motif layouts	Using Islamic motif arranged repeatedly and vertically up to the neck. The motif is also placed on the hand and up to the trousers.

The figure and table description above show the motif decorations on modern Baju Melayu for men in 2017 came up with the Islamic motifs using numerical method in repetitive and full forms on the set of this festive attire. According to research carried out by Salman in Amer Shaker (2004), the numerical data is extracted using CAD data capture features. A simple horizontal and vertical translation produces the end result. Meanwhile, in terms of motif compositions, there are various directions: from the top, side, middle, and bottom of the shirt. The layouts of motifs used Islamic motifs arranged repeatedly and vertically up to the neck. The motif is also placed on the hand and up to the trousers.



Figure 2: Islamic Motif on Kurta.

Source: Binqareem, (2015)

Motif decorations	Contemporary Islamic motif (Geometric)
Motif forms	The shape of Islamic motifs is made repeatedly.
Motif compositions	The beginning of the motif is organised from the chest to the neck of the shirt.
Motif layouts	Uses Islamic motifs to be structured precisely and static at the chest part of the shirt.

The figure and table description above show the motif decorations on modern Kurta for men in 2015 came up with the Islamic motifs from geometric. The geometric method used based on sub grids of polygons variously called touch polygons. The motif use is rosette motifs, and the shape of motif was designed repeatedly. Meanwhile, in terms of motif compositions, the beginning of the motif is organised from the chest to the neck of the shirt. The layouts of motifs on the modern Kurta used rosette motifs structured precisely and static at the chest area of the shirt.

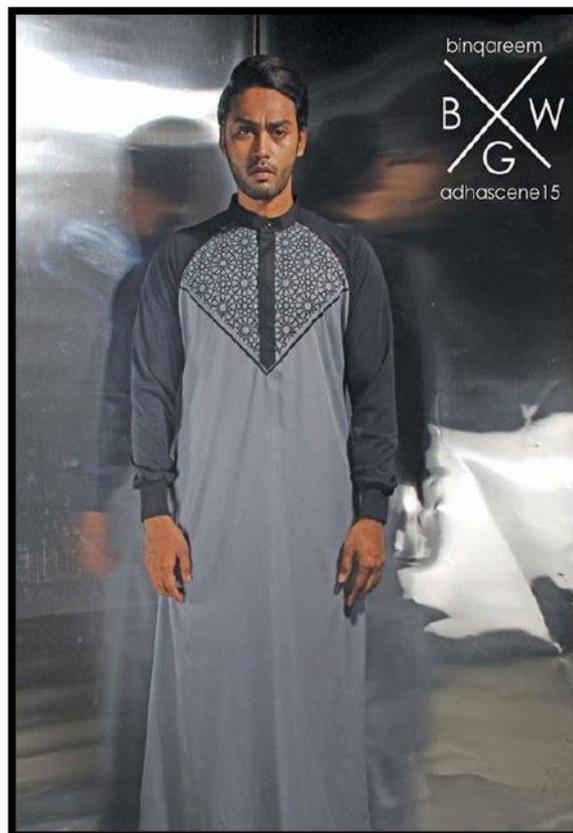


Figure 3: Islamic Motif on Jubah

Source: Binqareem, (2015)

Motif decorations	Contemporary Islamic motif (Geometric)
Motif forms	The shape of Islamic motifs that are made repeatedly
Motif compositions	The beginning of the motif is organised from the chest to the neck of the shirt
Motif layouts	Uses Islamic motifs to be structured precisely and static at the chest part of the shirt

The figure and table description above show the motif decorations on modern Jubah for men in 2015 came up with the Islamic motifs also from geometric. The shape of Islamic motif from rosette motif was designed repeatedly. Meanwhile, in terms of motif compositions, the beginning of the motif is organised from the chest to the neck of the shirt. The layouts of motifs used rosette motifs to be structured precisely and static at the chest area of the shirt.

Conclusion

This research highlights the motifs applied on the Malay men's festival costumes in Malaysia inspired from Islamic motifs. Based on the data, researcher found that the application of motifs in Malay men's festival costumes is from the modern types of attire, which is from modern contemporary design of Baju Melayu, Malay Kurta and Jubah. From the visual analysis, the motifs come up from numerical and geometric motifs. All of the motif's form apply on Malay men's festival costumes is repeatedly. For the motif composition come up from various direction or organised only to the specific part like on chest only. The motif layout arranged repeatedly and vertically to the full attire and some motifs only structured precisely and static to the specific part like chest and sleeve. However, what the research presented here proves that the function of motifs to the festival attire create contemporary wearable fashion adds an aesthetic value to the outfits in terms of shape, texture, and other visual and functional factors.

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