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A Study of Woodcarving Motifs on Traditional Malay Houses in Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan

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ABSTRACT

Malay woodcarving contains a rich history derivative of the cultural identity, beliefs, customs, and traditions of the Malay people. It is deemed as an important and integral part of vernacular architecture in Peninsular Malaysia. Traditional Malay houses are representative of the ancient aptitudes of the workmanship with opulent ornamentations as they reflect the socio-cultural identity of the Malay world. Previous research on woodcarving motifs immensely centred on the east coast of Malaysia, requiring more investigations of woodcarvings motifs on the southwest coast. The objective of this study is to identify the woodcarving motifs on traditional Malay houses in Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan by using a qualitative method such as primary data involving photography. The results indicated different categories of motifs such as fauna, flora, geometry, still life and combination motifs. On this basis, it is hoped that this study could serve as a reference concerning the cultural heritage of woodcarving motifs and Malay traditional houses in Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan and it is recommended that further exploration should be carried out more concerning woodcarving motifs and traditional Malay houses on the southwest coast.

Keywords: *Motifs, Traditional Malay Houses, Woodcarving,*

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is rich with its exceptional cultural diversity and endlessly wide and unique variety of traditional heritages. The art of woodcarving and vernacular architecture is a balanced unification as they have been venerated by Malays over the centuries. Traditional Malay woodcarving has been recognized as one of the oldest, sophisticated, and complex forms of art in Malay heritage. The art of Malay woodcarving is an amalgamation of artistry and wisdom. For many years, it has been closely associated with the cultural identity of the Malays; hence it is one of the many symbols denoting Malay art. Woodcarving is anthropologically known to be a form of visual language that is potent with storytelling through the intricate

and intrinsic detailed carvings. Furthermore, it is a tradition that has been passed down from one generation to another. Chiefly, through apprenticeship. A motif is perceived as a symbolic icon, image, or object most frequently seen in artworks. Suhaimi Tohid et al. (2015) asserted traditional woodcarving as profound ornamental art (p. 55). Ornamental art is deemed as art that entails embellishing with ornamentations on architecture and objects. Much of the woodcarving creations were largely influenced by religious, ethical, and moral values of the carvers, which were eventually cultivated by their submissions to the great Allah SWT (Suhaimi Tohid et al., 2015, p. 55). Due to its minute details to produce a composite and rhythmic whole, inherently linked with the woodcarvers' and carpenters' spiritual evocation towards the carvings, it is now considered a rarity of a skill to possess for today's younger generation as such craftsmanship is only being held informed by only a handful of masters and experts of traditional woodcarving. Nasir (1987) was able to recognize the influence of cultural elements infused into the design and philosophy of woodcarving. Moreover, woodcarving is a representative symbol of Malay arts, acting as an identifier to the society and nation (Sumardiashah Silah et al., 2013, p. 823).

The traditional Malay house (TMH) is characterized as a structural timber house built on stilts, and it is made with lintel and a post structure with bamboo or wooden walls (Kamal et al., 2004, p. 175). With TMH being laid in an expansive compound, they were assembled not only to demonstrate the appealing innovation of the Malays but also to enable them to coalesce with their environmental, socio-economic, and cultural needs (Kamal et al., 2004, p. 175). The methods in the construction of a TMH were established with a basic design to allow considerable flexibility in such a manner that the extensions to the house could be carried whenever it is deemed required (Nasir, 1985). The research was aimed to study the woodcarving motifs of traditional Malay houses with the objective to identify the woodcarving motifs of traditional Malay houses in Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan. The importance of this study is set out to determine the woodcarving motifs that can be found on traditional Malay houses in Negeri Sembilan since there seems to be a scarcity pertain to the symbols and meanings of motifs on the southwest coast. Hence, this research will expand more on the documentation of woodcarving motifs in Negeri Sembilan.

Furthermore, this study only focused on specific areas in the district of Kuala Pilah. The scope of this study is appropriated based on the research objective; hence, this research narrows its aim towards woodcarving motifs on traditional Malay houses in the district of Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan. Kuala Pilah is recognized as one of the oldest districts that still preserve the structure of vernacular architecture and woodcarving motifs. Furthermore, there are over 250 traditional houses in Kuala Pilah. Therefore, the researcher will emphasize only four selected houses that were chosen as samples for this study that still preserve woodcarving motifs. There is an inadequacy of studies on woodcarving motifs in Negeri Sembilan due to the lack of interest regarding the field of study. There are four selected houses that were obtained for samplings of this study due to certain restrictions such as Movement Control Order (MCO). There were several houses where the researcher was permitted to enter for observation reasons. In contrast, other houses were not permissible for the security and safety of the house owners, mainly due to Covid-19. Hence, most of the motifs that were ascertained for this study were mainly on the exterior of the houses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview History of Woodcarving

Past researchers have acknowledged that the traditional art of woodcarvings originated during the arrival of the Langkasuka Empire, bringing together the cultivation that further changed the cultural evolution for the Malays (Farish and Eddin, 2003; Suhaimi et al., 2015; Nurdiyana et al., 2017). Historically, Hinduism played a significant stimulus in the advancement of Malay civilisation. As a result, the Malay world was encompassed with Hinduism's socio-cultural impact, for instance, literature, religion, and even beliefs (Haziyah Hussin et al., 2012). Driven by its discerning influence, it prolonged a lasting effect on the development of the Malay kingdom. Due to this, the people during the period of the Langkasuka empire placed their belief in the concept of spirits dwelling in all parts of nature and livings

things. The natives during that era were accounted as animists (Shaffee & Said, 2008). Ergo, nature was their harbinger of worship. In conjunction with this, the entire infrastructure was behest to conforming to the socio-cultural influence of Hindu-Buddhism. It was during this time that the creation of Malay woodcarvings began to emerge as their motifs were heavily predisposed with Hinduism facets, which were predominantly shaped with figurative depictions (Haziyah Hussin et al., 2012). Significantly, the era of animism and deities were substantial benefactors, resultantly swayed the cultural anthropology, arts, and humanities. Before the advent of Islam reached the Malayan shores, the patterns of motifs were mainly embellished with figurative and animal representations. Based on historical facts, pieces of evidence show that Islam was brought over by the Arabs, Persians, and Indians (Nasir, 1986). It is believed that the Malay woodcarvings became significantly evolved in vernacular architecture from as early as the 14th century, specifically in the northern part of the Peninsular and Southern Thailand (Said, 2002).

Woodcarving is an art and aesthetic form used to chisel on any wooden surfaces, from small objects to furniture, architecture, boats, and utensils (Nurdiyana et al., 2017, p. 385). The primary categories of woodcarving can be divided into five: flora, fauna, geometry, cosmos, and calligraphy (Said & Saifuddin, 2001). Malay woodcarving is known to be a traditional art in Malaysia, and it is also the pride and glory of wood craftsmanship. However, only a handful of carvers have acquired such distinguished wisdom and knowledge; especially with the alarming rise of modern urbanisation continuing to this day, wooden carvings are slowly declining in numbers. Woodcarving is pondered to be an art form of storytelling by carpenters, a reflection of their experiences and influences from external factors. In other words, their storytelling is redirected into the woodcarving motifs (Nurdiyana et al., 2012).

Traditional Malay Houses in Negeri Sembilan

Malay communities have been continuously enriching their lives with traditions and arts. Vernacular architecture of traditional Malay houses included. What is inimitable about these traditional houses is they were exclusively made with durable and resilient woods such as *cengal*, *merbau*, *kempas*, *penak*, and *bacang hutan*, which are endemic to Malaysia and can only be found locally (Nasir, 1986, p. 17). Each structure of the house was designed to seamlessly assimilate into the environment and the local climate. What remains of the old traditional houses in Negeri Sembilan today have detectable Minangkabau attributes, emphasising Malay Archipelago's traditional and architectural heritage (Mohd Haizra et al., 2018). Nasir (1985) emphasised elements of culture such as custom, belief, and hereditary origin are factors that influenced the designs of traditional houses. Due to the *Adat Perpatih* system structure, each room of the TMH in Negeri Sembilan has its designated functions and purposes.

The concept of gender segregation is espoused in *Adat Perpatih* as it correlates with the teachings of Islam. Therefore, this design element of the house is essential as the segregated spaces allow female members to acquire their privacy and comfort (Radzuan & Sukri, 2019). The TMH in Negeri Sembilan is comprised of three main rooms, which are the *serambi* (porch), *rumah ibu* (main room) and *dapur* (kitchen), attached to the *rumah ibu*. The function of the *serambi* quarters is a place for social gatherings such as *merisik*; where the man and the family pay a visit to the potential bride's family house to ask for her hand in marriage. Official ceremonies such as *adat berkadim*; a prevalent tradition practised by the locals that enable an individual to leave his clan (*suku*) to move to a new tribe, and a room to educate proper etiquette as the locals stress the concept of good manners and being courteous with one another (Siti Fatimah & Kamarul, 2018). While the *rumah ibu* and the kitchen are designated for the comfortability and privacy of the women of the house (Othman & Raja Shahminan, 2016).

The TMH in Negeri Sembilan were essentially built on stilts supported by high flooring, walls, and roof with a flight of staircase (Masri, 2012). It was also stated by Othman and Raja Shahminan (2016) that the structure of a building in the Old Malay community must be built on stilts, and it had become an obligation since historical times, it grew to become part of an identity. In the early days, the houses in Negeri Sembilan were recognized as Minangkabau houses but according to Raja Shahminan (2007), traditional houses in Negeri Sembilan are now more widely known as *Rumah Bumbung Panjang Negeri*

Sembilan. This goes to show that even though the people of Negeri Sembilan have origins of Minangkabau roots, they have established their own significant Malay identity over time. Negeri Sembilan's traditional houses are inclined to their unique architectural vocabulary, and this is what differentiates their identity compared to other traditional houses in other states in Malaysia. Monir (2007) remarked the design of TMH is influenced by the owners' surrounding environment with elevated flooring.

Definition of Motif

A motif is defined as repetitive ornamentations that form a certain pattern (Mohd Yatim, 2000). He added that there are underlying philosophical connotations to these carved motifs, which he posited,

“Motif in woodcarving means a decoration carved into two or three dimensions, then arranged or composed into a certain pattern.” – (Mohd Yatim, 2000, p.7)

Nasir's (1987) statement coincides with the aforementioned by adding the ornamentation requires a detailed process of forming a specific composition, following a set of rules inherited by specific Malay ethnic groups pertaining to customs and techniques. The motif appears to be the key component in the woodcarving patterns. Malay carvers observed three common characteristics of woodcarving: 1) employing four basic principles of design forms, 2) extrapolating motifs from elements in the domain area, notably flora and fauna, and 3) expressing the natural beauty as an act of devotion for the Creator as well as a gift to fellowmen (Osman, 1997).

These aspects portray a role in illuminating the aesthetic repetitions within the ornamentations. There are various basic types of motifs found in Malay woodcarving. These motifs are divided into five types: flora, fauna, Arabic calligraphy, cosmos, and geometry (Said & Abdullah, 2001). Malay carvers displayed highly notable prowess from their *air-tangan* to express the level of physical beauty (Said, 2019). Moreover, the natural surrounding contributes an essential element in guiding carvers to create motifs, as it acts as abstract analyses and nature's impressions of human life (Nurdiyana et al., 2014).

From Norhaiza's greater perspective (2005), he informed that to coordinate a specific unit of motifs, acquired skills in organisation principles and appreciation for beauty are considered necessary to produce woodcarving motifs. Not only are the motifs revered as aesthetic splendour, but they serve another greater purpose as well – for pragmatic functions such as safety and air ventilation reasons. At the same time, the motifs act as a source of light to penetrate through.

Influences of Woodcarving Motifs

As far as past studies are concerned, traces of influences on traditional woodcarvings can be detected from the history of houses and original artisans of the architectural carvings. As Zumahiran and Said (2010) claimed, the influences of woodcarvings in Malaysia are comparably linked to neighbourhood countries such as Indonesia, Cambodia, and Thailand (p. 6). Othman (2005) affirms religion to be one of the strongest influences, and the dawn of animism reached its crowning moment in between the 14th and 15th centuries. The Malay woodcarving motifs contained early influences of Hindu-Buddhism, Malay Langkasuka, and the enlightenment of Islam. Before the arrival of Islam during the 14th century, Hinduism was the central religion practised by the people, and it facilitated depicting the woodcarving of Hindu motifs (Said & Abdullah, 2001).

Over time, the motifs began their gradual transformation after the advent of Islam. As intended, the principles of Islam completely prohibit the usage of figurative and animal depictions in motifs. Representations of humans and animals are strictly forbidden as they serve no functional, meaning, or value purposes whatsoever (Muhammad Faiz Sabri et al., 2019, p. 359). Synonymously, figurative depictions in the form of idols and icons were objectionable as they might lead Muslims astray to the path of idolatry.

This is why the Malay motifs are now only inhibited from the creations of nature, geometry, cosmos, and calligraphy. Islam, being the religion that is whole and perfect, emphasises that it never forbids its followers from creating artworks or carvings in the form of woodcarving calligraphy (Ramli et al., 2014, p. 188). It is permissible as long as Muslims are not producing an exact mimicry of such perfection of the Islam religion, merely representations to display the Islam religion itself.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative was the most suitable method to approach this research because it provides a richness to understand better people's beliefs, behaviour, attitudes, experiences, and interactions (Pathak et al., 2013). The qualitative method is an essential and integral part of the research as it permits participants to articulate and open their eyes to new aspects of a particular phenomenon. The visual research presents data collected through observation such as photography which were taken from four different angles of the traditional Malay houses. For observation, two selected traditional Malay houses in Kuala Pilah belonging to Kahar Siak Bakhi and Dato' Mohamad Dahalan were collected for necessary visual findings regarding a traditional Malay house's architectural structure and woodcarving motifs found on the external parts of the houses. The instrument that played an imperative role was a camera that photographed the woodcarving motifs and different angles of the houses from an architectural aspect to capture the primary observation data. Sutton and Austin (2015) shared their views on qualitative methodology as a work that necessitates reflection, both before and during the research, to present a form of perspective context and knowledge for readers.

FINDINGS

The houses that were selected for this research were based in the area of Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan. These houses comprised of woodcarving motifs and still maintained the structural integrity of a traditional Malay house were purposely selected for data collection. They align with the objective of this research, which is to identify the woodcarving motifs on traditional Malay houses Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan. The motifs found on the selected houses were mainly encompassed flora, fauna, geometry, still life, and combination motifs. The combination motif category is a mixture of different motifs coalesced into one uniform unit.

Table 1. Selected houses

No.	Houseowner
1.	Kahar Siak Bakhi (Tukang Kahar)
2.	Dato' Mohamad Dahalan (Dato' Bangsa Balang)

1. Rumah Tukang Kahar, Kampung Tanjung Beringin



Figure 1. House No 1
(Source: Author's personal collection)



A: motif *bunga kiambang* & geometry (circle)



D: motif *bunga kiambang*



B: motif *four broken flowers* & geometry (square)



C: motif *bayam*

Figure 2. Motifs on House No 1(a)
(Source: Author's personal collection)

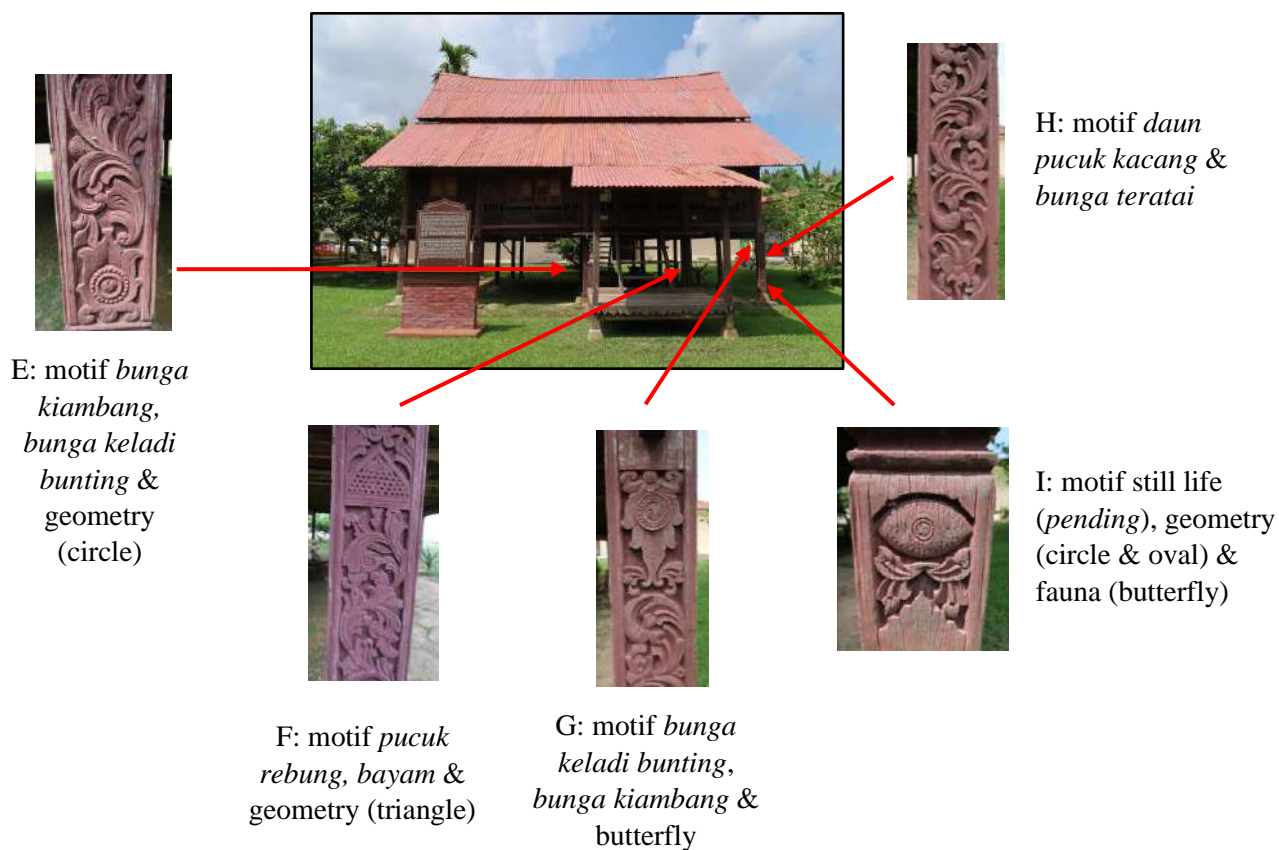


Figure 3. Motifs on House No 1(b)
(Source: Author's personal collection)



Figure 4. Motifs on House No 1(c)
(Source: Author's personal collection)

2. Rumah Dato' Bangsa Balang, Kampung Tanah Datar



Figure 5. Motifs on House No 2
(Source: Author's personal collection)



Figure 6. Motifs on House No 2
(Source: Author's personal collection)

The categorisation of the motifs found on the selected houses consisted of flora, fauna, geometry, still life, and combination motifs. They do not only serve as mere aesthetics but also provide specific functional uses for the house owners. Rumah Tukang Kahar showed detailed motifs on the stilts and stairs as he was deemed as the *Tukang raja* (king's craftsman) due to his social standing. At the same time, Rumah Dato' Bangsa Balang displayed simpler floral motifs on the gable, barge board, and fascia board. The findings also revealed floral motifs to be the most prominent element in the art of woodcarving. Subsequently, in Malay woodcarving, the stimulus of the motifs was predominantly from the natural beauty of the surroundings, mainly from the local plants found in the near vicinity, such as *Bunga kiambang*, *daun sirih* and *Bunga keladi bunting*. Nature is one of the main determinants that has capacitated fellow craftsmen to manifest their imagination into visual narratives.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the selected houses presented different motifs categories, consisting of flora, fauna, geometry, still life, and combination. Malay woodcarving has been ingrained as an important element in Malay architecture. The history of woodcarvings provides us with the context of the evolution of woodcarving. Woodcarvings began erstwhile from animism to Hindu Buddhism until the arrival of Islam. The transition of the motifs has gone through multiple stages of paradigm shifts, eventually influencing the Malay people's current beliefs and virtues. As a result, woodcarvings and traditional Malay houses have implicitly shaped the minds of the Malay community. It is recommended that more in-depth woodcarving studies should be further explored in the area of the southwest coast in order to preserve the tangible cultural heritage of woodcarving motifs and traditional Malay houses in Negeri Sembilan.

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A Study of Form and Content of Bracelets from The Textile Museum Collections

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ABSTRACT

Bracelets have been important items of adornment among Malaysians, especially for women. From the time of the Melaka Sultanate and many centuries before that, bracelets have become one of the essential pieces of jewelry to be worn. There are many types of bracelets with a variety of names. The focus of this study is on bracelets. There were 7 bracelets used as a study material collected from the Textile Museum. The lack of resources and collections available in the museums was the main problem of the study. The main objective is to identify and categorize the motifs of the bracelets. A qualitative method was used. The primary data was obtained through observation and interviews while the secondary data included photographs and writing materials. The results indicated different categories of motifs. The collection of the data was analyzed according to motifs and subject matters. The motifs of the bracelets were from flora, fauna, geometric, organic, and nature. Most of the bracelets were decorated with numerous repeated motifs. This study can be continued by pursuing more in-depth on the bracelets from the aspect of their motifs and their relationship with the meaning of the motif.

Keywords: *Bracelets, Influence, Jewelry, Meaning, Motif*

INTRODUCTION

The tradition of decorating the body began in the early days of human civilization, especially hand jewelry accessories that are so synonymous with women. In Malaya, aboriginal people began to decorate themselves by using natural resources around them such as palm leaves. Peninsular Malaysia was known as 'Semenanjung Emas' by the traders since metal was mined in Malaya, jewellery became one of the most important accessories to be worn especially when attending events or specific activities. According to Ali (1997), the tradition of ornamenting the human body goes back to the early stages of human society. In Peninsular Malaysia, the Orang Asli (aborigines) wore truly little

clothing until recent times. The same was true among the primitive people of other parts of the world and among the neighboring aborigines of Australia.

This study led to the study of hand accessories. A bracelet is a piece of jewelry that is worn around the wrist and enhances the beauty of one's slender hand. The word bracelet is taken from the Latin word 'brachium', which means 'of the arm'. Bracelets give an exotic look and there is no woman who would not want to show off this ornament dangling from her wrist. Bracelets have been worn for a long time. Our ancestors wore bracelets made of wood, beads, stones, bone strips, etc.

The focus of this study is on bracelets. Bracelets are divided into several types, namely bangles, chain bracelets, armbands, tennis bracelets, cuff bracelets, designer bracelets, charm bracelets, beaded bracelets, friendship bracelets, pearl bracelets, slider bracelets, hololith bracelets, wooden bracelets, and affirmation bracelets. The study of these bracelets is based on the collections found in the Textile Museum. There were 7 bracelets used as a study material. The study focused on the objective namely, to identify and categorize the motifs of the bracelets. Among the limitations in this study was the small number of bracelet collections from the design museums. This study will also help students and lecturers in carrying out their research about the motif and of the bracelets from the museums in the future and individuals who are interested in bracelets, especially related to the motif, the influence of its manufacture, and the meaning behind each motif.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bracelets

According to Massey (2019), in 2008, archaeologists excavated the Denisova Cave in Siberia and discovered an entire collection of jewelry, including bracelets. The polished green stones were found made by prehistoric ancestors, Denisovans. The excavations explain that bracelets have been sought after for years. Massey also added that various types of bracelets have also been found in the area of Egypt since the early 5000 BC. Egyptian bracelets are mainly made of copper and gold, sometimes combined with stones and gems. Some of the bracelets worn by the Egyptians were purely for decorative purposes, it is said that the bracelets were also worn for spiritual and religious purposes.

Ali (2008) cited that the craft of making jewelry began in Malaysia with the work commissioned by the Malay royal families, whose grand lifestyles included the use of such precious objects. Skilled royal goldsmiths deviated all their time and effort to meet the needs of the palace, producing beautiful creations displaying both individuality and brilliant workmanship.

The Chinese and Malay goldsmiths were experts in using a variety of techniques to decorate their jewelry and produced many pieces of great aesthetic value. (National Museum, 1988).

Ali (2008), claims that some of the bracelets used many types of Malay names and refer to the pattern or style used gold as a material. For example, split rattan bangles '*Gelang belah rotan*', snake bangles, '*Gelang ular*', twisted rope bangles, '*Gelang pintal tali*', chains, '*Rantai tangan*', and wrist clasp, '*Cekak tangan*' (p.83). Ali (2008) also added that many of the bracelet's design was engraved or embossed with foliated or floral patterns. The sugar cane motif was the most popular design among the Nyonya of Malacca.

Khalid (1997) cited that most jewelry of the past derived from nature or from the world of reality. Man lies both in the world of nature as well as in the world of culture. Nature comprises many shapes and forms with unique and varied characters, whereas culture consists of customs, habits, institutions, languages, literature, architecture, artifacts, art objects, and latest technology (p.19).

The evidence that supports the statement was from the National Museum (1988) stated that bracelets are usually made in pairs and with a fastener. There are also bracelets that are made without a fastener so that they can be adjusted based on the size of the wearer's hand. The motif on a bracelet worn by the Malay community is like geometric patterns and foliage, while sugar cane and bamboo motifs are popular among the Nyonya community.

Habib (2020) claims that traditional Malay jewelry is often featured with floral motifs inspired by nature. The *Bunga Tanjung*, a common local flower, was a popular jewelry design amongst the women of yesteryear. These feminine floral patterns were incorporated into various types of jewelry, such as rings, earrings, necklaces, and brooches, and were often made into gold pieces embedded with colored gemstones or diamonds. Motifs of birds, insects, and other animals, along with stars and crescents were also common in Malay jewelry designs. The use of gold was a fashionable yet practical choice as it was a form of investment and could also be converted to cash when needed.

According to Hamat and Yusoff (2020), the flora motif is usually associated with creeping plants and flower plants. The nature of such plants has a soft tendril, and it is easily modified according to the taste of the sculptor. In context flora motifs, such as trees, flowers, leaves, tendrils, shoots, and fruit will be the craftsman's choice to use as a motif.

Hamat and Yusoff (2020) also stated that the first criterion that the sculptor chooses is the existing uniqueness factor on the flora. The uniqueness comes from the shape, color, smell, durability, and function of the flowering plants. This uniqueness provides a source of inspiration to sculptors to apply those unique features to their artwork. The diversity of forms of flora, whether in the form of leaves, flowers, and trees, becomes an inspiration to the craftsmen to process the element into an interesting motif. Attractive flower shapes such as jasmine, cape, Guri crab, star anise, magnolia (Cempaka), cloves, and often the choices of the artisans to be the main motifs in their carvings.

Ali (2008) stated that Chinese and Indian jewelers were talented in designing and creating beautiful bracelets. Some bangles were made of two separate pieces which were hinged and joined with screws, and sometimes they were open-ended so that the size could be adjusted to fit the arm of the wearer. Many of them were engraved or embossed with foliated or floral patterns or custom-made to suit the wearer. According to Ali (2008), he found that the sugar-cane motif was the most popular among the Nyonya community in Melaka (p.15).

According to Khalid (1997), the motif of the bracelet may appear unusual to some people because of the shapes and forms in which the works are being expressed. It not only involves functional needs, but also human feelings to organize material into a relationship that is aesthetically satisfactory, dramatic, expressively meaningful, and visually comprehensible. As an example, rings should be functional and be comfortably worn upon the finger just as earrings should be light enough to be worn upon the ears, and bracelets around the arm, but within that limitation, the main problem is the aesthetic and the effective design of formal visual element which must work with maximum effectiveness (p.19).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of this study used a qualitative approach. The data was collected through observation, interviews, video recordings, visual photos during fieldwork sessions, and photographs provided by the museums. A video recording was used to record the motifs and forms of the bracelets. The answers to the questions were compared based on similarities and differences of opinions as for validity to this research. A total of four people were interviewed. Two of them are fashion jewelry consultants and the other two are academicians.

The researcher used a qualitative method to obtain data in this study. The data collection was divided into two parts, the primary data, and the secondary data. The primary data was collected through interviews and observing the collection of bracelets. On the other hand, the secondary data was obtained from different sources, information collected through books, journals, websites, photographs, and articles.

This study used a thematic analysis method to analyze qualitative data. It is usually applied to a set of texts, such as interview transcripts. The researcher examined the data to identify whether the motifs, influences, meanings on the motifs found on the bracelets had similarities or differences of opinions between the informants.

FINDINGS

The results of the study are reported and presented in the form of tables. In addition, the findings are discussed to explore the answers to the research questions. The primary data is from the collection of the 7 bracelets from the Textile Museums. The research objective, which is to identify and categorize the motifs of the bracelets, was answered. The data was collected from both primary and secondary data namely from interviews, observations, the Internet, and printed materials such as books, articles, and journals. Below shows a list of informants related to this study.

Table 1 List of Informants

No.	Name	Gender	Position	Contribution
1	Interviewee 1	Male	Jewellery expert	Identify the motif
2	Interviewee 2	Female	Jewellery expert	Identify the motif and influence of the motif
3	Interviewee 3	Female	Academician	Identify the motif and influence of the motif
4	Interviewee 4	Female	Academician	Identify the motif

Figure 1 until Figure 7 describe the collection of bracelets from the Textile Museum.


Bracelet	Description
	<p>Object: Bangle Weight: Unknown Dimension: 17.5cm (perimeter), 7.5cm x 2.2cm Design: A gold bangle with pierced design and diamonds mounted in a box setting.</p>

Figure 1. Bangle (National Textile Museum, 2010)


Bracelet	Description
	<p>Object: Bracelet Weight: Unknown Dimension: 17.5cm (perimeter), 7.5cm x 2.2cm Design: Gold bracelets with pierced design and diamonds mounted in a box setting.</p>

Figure 2. Bracelet 1 (National Textile Museum, 2010)

Bracelet	Description
	<p>Object: Bangle Weight: Unknown Dimension: 6cm – 7.5cm Design: A gold bangle with pierced design and diamonds mounted in a box setting.</p>

Figure 3. Bangle 2 (National Textile Museum, 2010)

Bracelet	Description
	<p>Object: Bangle Weight: Unknown Dimension: 6cm – 7.5cm (estimated size) Design: A gold bangle with pierced designs and diamonds mounted in a box setting.</p>

Figure 4. Bangle 3 (National Textile Museum, 2010)


Bracelet	Description
	<p>Object: Bracelet Weight: Unknown Dimension: 6cm – 7.5cm Design: Gold bracelets with pierced designs and diamonds mounted in a box setting.</p>

Figure 5. Bracelet 2 (National Textile Museum, 2010)

Bracelet	Description
	<p>Object: Bangle Weight: Unknown Dimension: 6cm – 7.5cm Design: A gold bangle with designs and green stones.</p>

Figure 6. Bangle 4 (National Textile Museum, 2010)


Bracelet	Description
	<p>Object: Beaded Bracelet Weight: Unknown Dimension: Unknown Design: A gold bracelet that has been redefined. The original bracelet was decorated with golden beads and crystal stones. An additional piece of gold was decorated with beads and two mountains. A strip of fine beads of various colours is used as a string to tie the bracelet along with a black cotton thread and a metal hook.</p>

Figure 7. Beaded Bracelet 1 (National Textile Museum, 2010)

Table 2 until Table 8 describe the motif and subject matters of the bracelets.

Table 2. Bangle 1

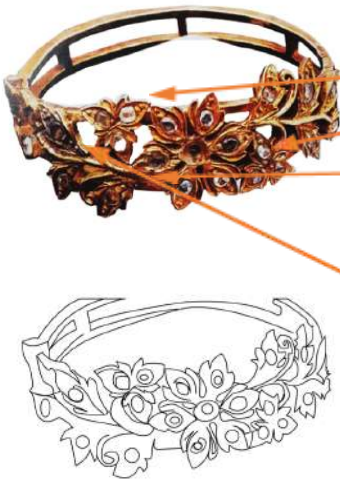
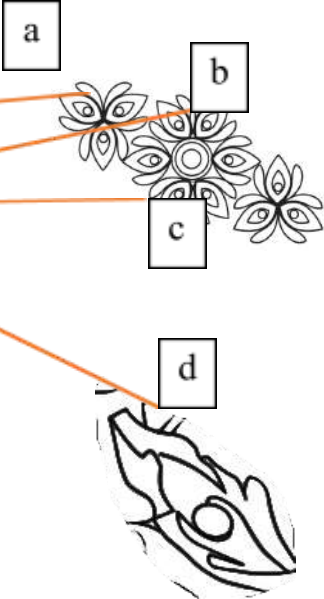




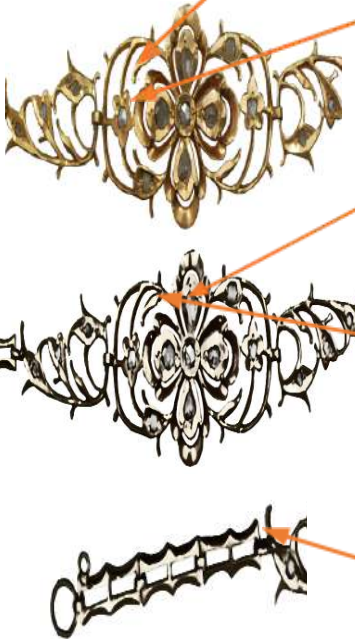
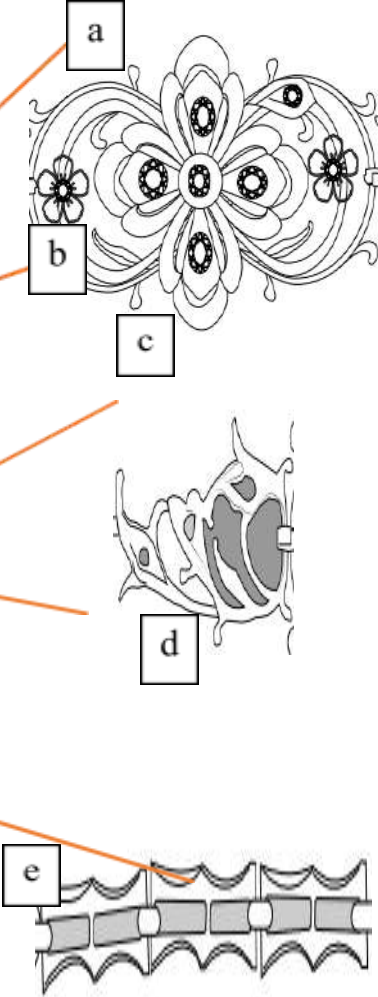





Bracelet	Motifs	Subject Matters
		 <p>a: Bougainvillea</p>  <p>b: Star anise</p>  <p>c: Diamond</p>  <p>d: Leaves (Ketamguri)</p>

Table 3. Bangle 2

Bracelet	Motifs	Subject Matters
		 <p>a: Jasmine</p>  <p>b: Ixora/ Four petals flower</p>  <p>c: Diamond</p>  <p>d: Foliage</p>  <p>e: Bamboo</p>


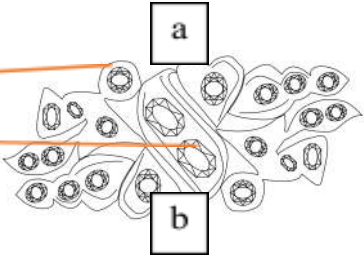


Bracelet	Motifs	Subject Matters
		 <p>a: Diamond</p>  <p>b: Chinese Phoenix</p>

Table 4. Bangle 2


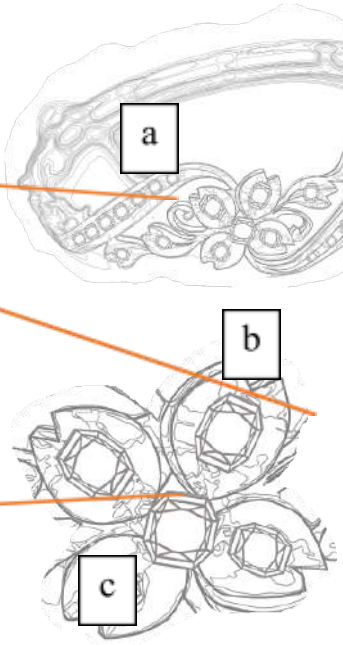



Bracelet	Motifs	Subject Matters
		 <p>a: Broad bean</p>  <p>b: Diamond</p>  <p>c: Star anise</p>

Table 5. Bangle 3


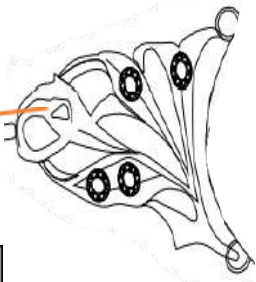


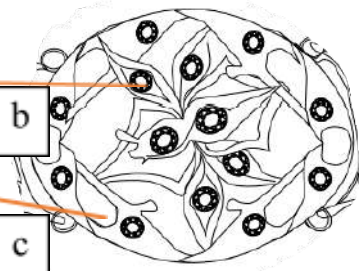


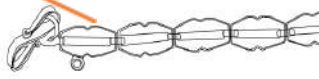

Bracelet	Motifs	Subject Matters
	 <p data-bbox="624 595 679 663">a</p>	 <p data-bbox="1023 528 1230 562">a and b: Butterfly</p>
	 <p data-bbox="616 831 671 898">b</p> <p data-bbox="616 954 671 1021">c</p>	 <p data-bbox="1023 763 1158 797">c: Diamond</p>
	 <p data-bbox="616 1357 671 1424">d</p>	 <p data-bbox="1023 1245 1190 1279">d: Sugar canes</p>

Table 6. Bracelet 2

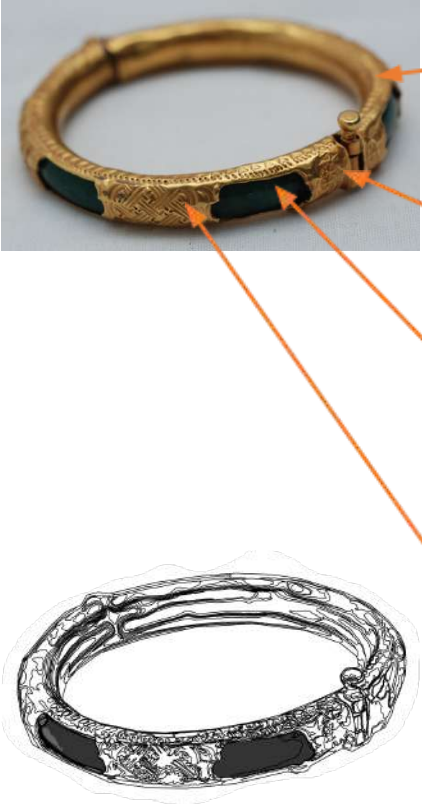

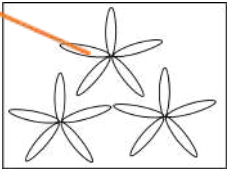

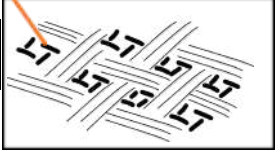



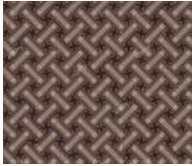
Bracelet	Motifs	Subject Matters
	<p>a </p> <p>b </p> <p>c </p> <p>d </p>	 <p>a: Gable end/ <i>Tebar layar</i> (Sun)</p>  <p>b: Star</p>  <p>c: Green stone (emerald)</p>  <p>d: <i>Banji</i> shape</p>

Table 7. Bangle 4

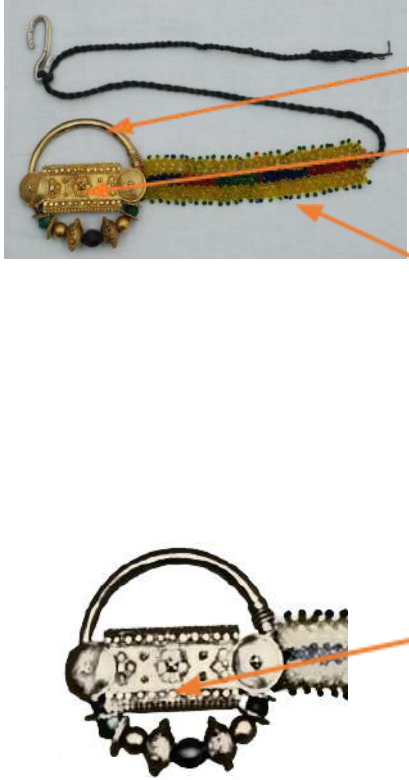
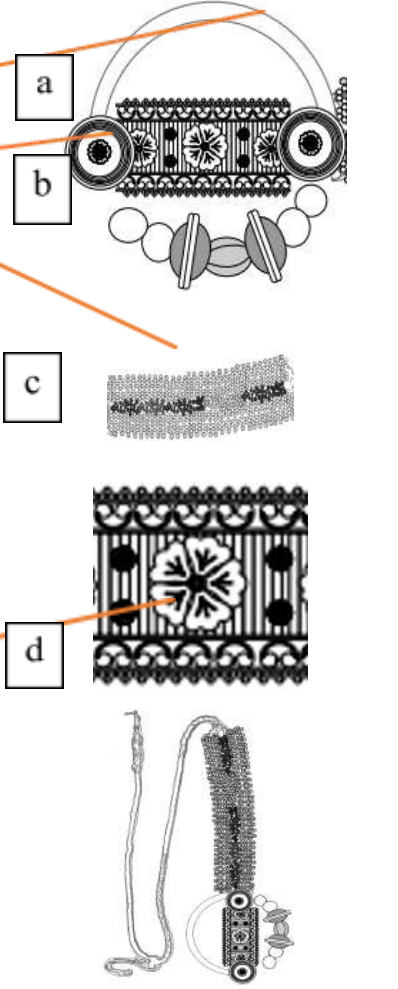
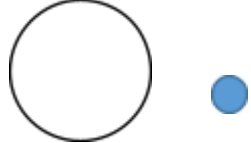



Bracelet	Motifs	Subject Matters
		 <p>a: Geometric shape (circle)</p>  <p>b: Mountains</p>  <p>c: Beads (red, yellow, and green)</p>  <p>d: Jasmine</p>

Table 8. Motifs and Categorisation of the bracelet motif

No	BRACELETS	MOTIFS AND CATEGORISES						
		FLORA	FAUNA	GEOMETRY	ORGANIC	KOSMOS	STILL LIFE	NATURE
1	TEXTILE MUSEUM							
	Table 2: Bangle	a. Bougenville as-1 b. Star anise- 1 d. Ketamguri leaves- 1	-	-	-	-	c. Diamond-1	-
	TOTAL	3	-	-	-	-	1	-
	Table 3: Bracelet	a. Jasmine-1 b. Ixora/ Four petals flower - 1 e. Bamboo-1	-	-	d. Foliage- 1	-	c. Diamond-1	-
	TOTAL	3			1	-	1	-
	Table 4: Bangle	-	b. Chinese Phoenix- 1	-	-	-	c. Diamond-1	-
	TOTAL	-	1	-	-	-	1	-
	Table 5: Bangle	a. Broad bean- 1 c. Star anise- 1	-	-	-	-	b. Diamond-1	-
	TOTAL	2	-	-	-	-	1	-
	Table 6: Bracelet	d.Sugar canes- 1	a & b. Butterfly- 1	-	-	-	c. Diamond-1	-
	TOTAL	1	1	-	-	-	1	-
	Table 7: Bangle	-	-	-	-	b. Star- 1	a.Gable end/ Tebar layar- 1 d.Banji shape- 1 c.Emerald- 1	-
	TOTAL	-	-	-	-	1	3	-
	Table 8: Beaded Bracelet	d. Jasmine-1	-	a.Circle- 1	-	-	c. Beads- 1	b.Mountain- 1
	TOTAL	1	-	1	-	-	1	1

The motifs are divided into flora, fauna, geometry, organic, cosmos, still life and nature. Following are the findings obtained in this study:

Table 9. Categories of motifs

Motifs	Subject Matters
Flora	Flower- Ixora, <i>bunga pecah empat</i> , bougainvillea, jasmine, Leaves- ketamguri leaves Stem- sugar cane, bamboo Spices- star anise, Beans- broad bean
Fauna	Chinese phoenix, butterfly
Geometric	circle
Organic	Foliage
Cosmos	Star
Still Life	diamond, emerald, gable end, banji shape, beads
Nature	Mountain

CONCLUSION

To sum up, all the four informants claimed the motifs on the bracelets were largely influenced by the surroundings, especially flora to be precise. It is concluded that there are seven motifs found on the bracelets which were from the museums. A combination of different types of motifs and patterns is used to create a bracelet and have symbolic meaning behind the motifs. This study can be continued by pursuing more in-depth on the bracelets from the aspect of their motifs and their relationship with the meaning of the motif, especially in the collection that exists throughout Malaysia.

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Drypoint Printmaking: Alternative Material and Technique for Open and Distance Learning (ODL)

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ABSTRACT

Drypoint refers to an intaglio sub-section printmaking technique (non-acid technique) of which a rough needle is used to make scratches across the plate (metal or copper plate) surfaces. Since March 2020, the education system is one of the sectors which has been affected by the pandemic and the process of teaching and learning was determined to be delivered through Open Distance Learning (ODL). Since drypoint printmaking is a part of the Fine Art education syllabus, this research aims to explore an alternative in drypoint printmaking, especially in the exploration of material and techniques without compromising the aesthetic and rules in drypoint. The method that will be used in this research is qualitative research through exploratory action research approach. This method is significant in terms of exploring other alternatives in substituting the role of equipment such as etching press and other possible materials. In this research, the comparative method from the aspect of material and technique will be used since it involves comparing circumstances, classes, cultures, or anything that are similar and yet different in comprehensible ways. The outcome from this study will produce the result of whether the alternative method and technique can achieve the same kind of quality as the common practice of the drypoint printmaking technique. Based on the findings, the researcher will develop a

formal guideline for educators and art practitioners to expand this alternative technique as an approach in achieving the best quality of drypoint printmaking artworks without having to worry about lack of experience in an art studio environment or complete equipment. In the future, there should be more exploration, especially on the alternative material and technique in Drypoint printmaking.

Keywords: *Alternative Process, Drypoint Printmaking, Fine Art Education, Open and Distance Learning, Teaching and Learning.*

INTRODUCTION

Generally, the education sector has been growing rapidly, and it evolves to adapt to continuous changes as time progresses. Education is important for an individual to always be prepared as it provides the best approach to any problem given (Idrisa et al., 2011). According to the Sinar Harian website, The World Economic Forum has recognised Malaysia as one of the best countries in the education sector as Malaysia was ranked among 141 best education countries around the world in 2018. Based on its latest report, Malaysia ranks 19th which is higher than the United Kingdom (UK) which was ranked 20th, France (26), and Japan (31) (Sualman, 2019). In the Malaysian education sector, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) is one of the best universities in Malaysia. According to Mysumber, the latest list of the best universities 2020/2021 indicated that UiTM is ranked 12th in Malaysia, 108th place in Asia, and 657-700th place in the world's university ranking (Senarai Terkini Universiti UA Terbaik Malaysia 2020-2021 Top Ranking, n.d.). Since its establishment in 1956, UiTM has embarked on the journey of providing the best education services as the Malaysian education sector undergoes rapid development. Moreover, the university has expanded its wings nationwide by establishing 12 state campuses (7 of which are autonomous), 6 campuses in Shah Alam, 11 campuses, and 21 associate colleges. With a workforce of approximately 17,770 people in a large community, the university offers more than 500 academic programs in a safe, comfortable, and conducive atmosphere (Official, n.d.). It is also the second home for more than 175,200 students. From 500 academic programs which are offered to students, the Art and Design program is one of the courses that have potential in terms of marketability. Other than creating job opportunities, the Art and Design program is also one of the big industries which play an important role as the main contributor to the Malaysian economy. The Faculty of Art and Design was established in 1967 and since then, it is represented by the Department of Fine Arts, Department of Graphic and Digital Media, Department of Ceramic Design, Department of Fashion Design, department of Photography and Creative Imaging, Department of Fine Metal Design, Department of Industrial Design, Department of Printing Design, And Department of Textile Design (Official, n.d.).

Fine Art is known as one of the art categories that emphasizes the understanding of art, the principles and elements of art and design. Through Fine Art education, students experience learning processes that include paintings, sculptures, drawings, and printmaking. The process of printmaking exists when the artist draws on metal, wood, or other material to create certain images to develop prints. This plate can be defined as the matrix, or block with the image on top of it. Then the matrix is inked, and the image is transferred onto paper or fabrics (Son, 2012) To make multiple copies out of an original image or prototype, printmaking uses a transfer technique. The different images are reproduced in an edition, with the artist signing and numbering each print unit (Lumen, n.d.). The basic style in printmaking is called Relief Print, and this technique requires the printing surfaces to be carved according to the design so that at the end of the process, only the design will be embossed out and ready to be printed (Barcodes, n.d.). The printmaking teaching and learning process in the UiTM Perak branch has focused on technique and material being used besides emphasizing the understanding of shape, space, and forms. This studio-based subject has practiced several conventional printing disciplines which are relief printing, intaglio, and silkscreen printing.

Intaglio Print, on the other hand, is the opposite of Relief Print. The design which is placed on a metal surface will be carved and the mark created by the carving process will hold the ink and be printed as it is on surfaces such as paper (Barcodes, n.d.). The history of Printmaking could be traced back to centuries ago and Intaglio is one of the earliest printmaking techniques in art-making. Different from other printmaking techniques, an intaglio print is produced when the ink is pressed on a metal matrix into the incised surface. The incised surface of the plate will be rubbed clean leaving the ink in the grooves. The plate is laid and dampened on a flat etching press table and will be imposed on top of wet paper. The wet paper allows the removal of the ink from the recesses of the cover. Pressing the metal plate with the ink incised into the surface will dampen the wet paper and extend the pressure into the paper. It results in slightly blurry lines and corners, which creates images referring to the drawing in the earlier process. Intaglio is a type of printing where the ink sits on top of the paper which yields sharp, smooth edges (Son, 2012). One of the categories in Intaglio Prints includes Non-Acid Platemaking Intaglio Print that refers to the process of printing which does not use acid to incise the engraved metal surface (Morrison, n.d.). The author added that the Intaglio Printing technique which falls under Non-Acid Platemaking includes Drypoint, Mezzotint, and Engraving.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction of Drypoint in Intaglio prints

Drypoint is part of the intaglio techniques in which a rough needle is used to make scratches around the plate surface. This scratching action produces a burr (metal bits that fold back from the scratch edge). The scratch or incised metal plays an important role to hold the ink and let the image be transferred successfully on the paper. Lines from the drypoint technique can easily be recognised since drypoint will create softer and furry lines due to the clear control of engraved lines (McCallum, 2007). The line which is created by using the drypoint technique also tends to give the printed line a velvety image since the ink that has been applied to the plate is wiped off (Drypoint, n.d.).

Conventional Technique and Process

The drypoint technique is usually used to produce limited quantities of prints. This is because the production of the drypoint prints will be discontinued depending on the strength of the intaglio press before the burr (on the plate) is crushed (Drypoint, n.d.) Based on this notion, it is obvious that drypoint is not a very suitable technique in terms of producing many images, since the fragile burr wears away so quickly that only a small number of prints can be produced from the plate itself (Thompson, 2008). Historically, the Drypoint is the simplest type of intaglio where it is prepared by using a metal plate as a surface, but it can also be applied on an acrylic sheet, plastic, or plexiglass plate (Meng, 2012). In the drypoint technique, lines or tones on a metal plate will be scratched by using a sharp needle which is called ‘Scribes/Drypoint needles’ and the scratches will hold the ink until the line is transferred onto paper (Art, n.d.).

In Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak Campus, drypoint printmaking is one of the techniques which has been taught to the third-semester students of the Fine Art program. Usually, this technique is taught to students through the face-to-face method of teaching and learning. To deliver this subject, the university has provided a complete facility for printmaking equipment in the workshops and the students can use these facilities according to the syllabus needs and subjects’ schedules. In addition, students will not have any issues regarding the material and equipment in completing the drypoint project.

Problem Faced in Pandemic Covid-19 Situation: Drypoint Printmaking

Having Drypoint Printmaking in a learning environment that goes in line with technological innovations and transformations, March 2020 marked the beginning of the largest disruption in education system history as the world was gripped by the Covid 19 pandemic, which does not only affect the education sector, but it also shakes the world's economy, health sector and transforms people's way of life by forcing them to embrace the new norm. Today, in more than 190 countries on all continents, this pandemic affects about 1.6 billion students. The closing of schools and other educational institutions has affected 94 percent of the student population in the world, up to 99 percent in countries with low incomes (Nation, n.d.). Locally, Malaysian universities are not spared from the restrictions caused by the pandemic. Since the COVID-19 viruses are still active in the communities, the Malaysian government by the guidance of The Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has announced that academicians from higher learning institutions in both private and public education sectors will be conducting their classes online for the sake of students and educators' health and welfare.

Due to this situation, educators have been facing challenges in terms of delivering studio-based syllabi via the Open Distance Learning (ODL) method. In the printmaking subject, for the drypoint project, students have no access to the studio facility and have been unable to find most of the materials needed in this subject due to the Movement Control Order (MCO). Using this gap, in this academic writing, the researcher will develop an alternative material and process for drypoint technique so that the students will be able to produce printmaking artwork and achieve the outcome of the subject's syllabus.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the research objective is to understand the basic procedure of the drypoint technique in Printmaking and to explore an alternative method that suits the environment of Open and Distance Learning (ODL). This is important so that in the future, this research will not only be treated as an important reference, but it can also enable educators to teach printmaking subjects without many obstacles even in a pandemic situation.

The method that will be used in this research is qualitative research through exploratory action research approach. Action research is one of the methods that is made for practitioners to understand the participants' interpretations on issues or problems in their practices. It also aims to include participants in the process at any stage to address a practical issue to strengthen their practice (Stringer, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Action research uses a solution-oriented approach to classify the problem, systematically collect data, analyze data, act based on data, review and focus on the effects of those actions and, if necessary, redefine the problem (Sousa, 2011). The efficiency of action research is assured because a researcher such as an educator, who is also the primary user of the results, decides the objective of each research project. The idea that action research allows educators to be more successful in what they care about most, their teaching, and the growth of their students, is maybe even more significant (Sagor, n.d.).

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), Action Research consists of four main principles. First, it should start with focusing on issues or problematic situations in practice. In this research, the researcher faces difficulties in conducting drypoint techniques in printmaking subjects under the approach of ODL. According to the existing syllabus, the drypoint technique in Printmaking is supposed to be conducted in-studio environment due to the use of machines and studio equipment. Based on this requirement, the researcher needs to find an alternative solution to ensure students can apply the drypoint technique from home.

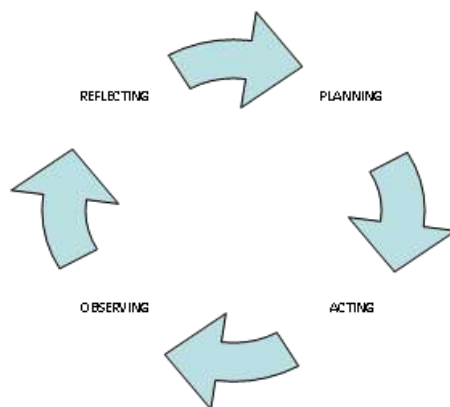


Figure 1. Action Research Circle of Process According to Kuhne and Quigley 1977

The second principle explains how the researcher and participants need to be engaged to improve the practice. Referring to Figure 1, the study should go through a cycle of processes that consists of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kuhne & Quigley, 1997; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). After identifying the issues, the researcher conducts a specific plan such as collecting the data needed for the actual process of drypoint and suggesting substitute material and alternative techniques in performing the drypoint process. Once all the data are collected, the researcher will explore the possible alternative process with the participants. The results from the suggested alternative material and technique will be observed and discussed for further action. There will be a critical discussion among the researcher and participants to reflect the whole procedure of the alternative process so that enhancements can be made for future art education's improvement.

The third principle is all about engaging the participants as co-investigators since action research is not carried out on participants but with the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Based on this understanding, the research will be conducted with the students being co-researchers to actively participate in the development of alternative material and processes in drypoint printmaking.

The fourth principle explains how the one who oversees the research, be it an insider or an outsider to the group studies, must be considered in every action research study (Herr & Anderson, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In short, the action research should be conducted with students focusing on their subject to improve educators' aspects of teaching (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this research, every step in developing an alternative method in drypoint printmaking will be developed while considering the students' environment of study and their ability to participate in this research.

Lastly, in the fifth principle, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) emphasized that collecting and analyzing multiple forms of data should be done by the researcher and co-investigator by using a systematic way as the research process evolves (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, this alternative approach will be tested first by the researcher and co-investigator before it can be treated as a confirmed alternative method since this research will focus on alternative techniques and the potential material as a substitute in a Drypoint print. This alternative method should not only be user-friendly, but it must be easy to be prepared and handled throughout the process of printing.

Conventional and Alternative Materials of Drypoint Printmaking

As mentioned earlier, this research will explore the alternative material and process of the drypoint printmaking technique. This is important since the conventional practices of drypoint prints involve big scale

studio equipment which creates an inconvenient situation for art practitioners to produce artworks. In the conventional method, the pressure of the printing press squeezes the remaining ink, and the image is transferred to the paper – this involves immense pressure through etching the printing press which cannot be applied by hand (Illustrators, n.d.). Hence, this action research study will suggest an alternative material and technique of drypoint prints as an alternative to a conventional process which produces the same result. Below are the lists of potential alternative materials which have the same characteristic or functionality as the conventional material in the drypoint printmaking technique.

Table 1,2,3, and 4. The List of Conventional and Suggested Alternative equipment for Drypoint Printmaking process.

Plate for Drypoint



Figure 2. Copperplate and Zinc plate for conventional Drypoint printmaking technique
(Source: Researcher)



Figure 6. Off-set Ink (Slow-dry) is used in the conventional process of a Drypoint print.
(Source: Researcher)

Needle for Drypoint



Figure 4. Scribe or Drypoint Needle for conventional Drypoint printmaking technique
(Source: Researcher)



Figure 5. Alternative Needle
(Source: Researcher)

Ink for Drypoint



Figure 6. Off-set Ink (Slow-dry) is used in the conventional process of a Drypoint print.
(Source: Researcher)



Figure 7. Oil Paint as Alternative Ink
(Source: Researcher)



Figure 8. Shoe Polish as Alternative Ink
(Source: Researcher)

Printing Process



Figure 9. Etching Press Machine used in the conventional process of a Drypoint print.
 (Source: Researcher)








Figure 10. Wooden Spoon.
 (Source: Researcher)





Drypoint Printmaking: An Alternative Printing Process for Home-Based Learning.





After listing potential materials as the alternative in performing drypoint printmaking, both the researcher and the co-investigator developed the process of drypoint printmaking following the guideline used in conventional printmaking and documented the result accordingly.

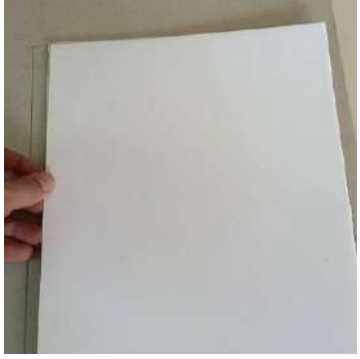

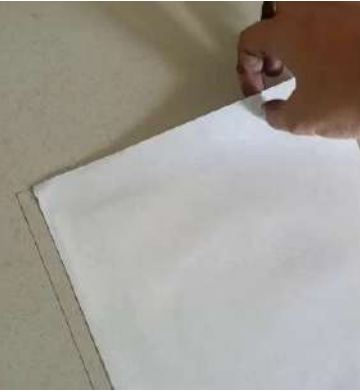
Table 5. Steps in performing Alternative Drypoint in Printmaking which has been conducted by the researcher during Movement Control Order (MCO) 2020.


Step	Description	Images
Step 1	Produce a drawing of any single object.	 Figure 11

Step 2	Place Plexiglass on top of the drawing.	 <p>Figure 12</p>
Step 3	Trace the drawing onto plexiglass by using needlepoint.	 <p>Figure 13</p>
Step 4	Make sure the lines are traced accordingly.	 <p>Figure 14</p>
Step 5	Make a registration board using used cardboard.	 <p>Figure 15</p>

<p>Step 6</p>	<p>Insert ink on the plate's surface.</p>	 <p>Figure 16</p>
<p>Step 7</p>	<p>Wipe the ink using newspaper or wasted paper.</p>	 <p>Figure 17</p>
<p>Step 8</p>	<p>Wipe until the surface is clean.</p>	 <p>Figure 18</p>
<p>Step 9</p>	<p>Placed the plexiglass plate on the registration board.</p>	 <p>Figure 19</p>

<p>Step 10</p>	<p>Take a drawing paper and soak it for a while in the water</p>	 <p>Figure 20</p>
<p>Step 11</p>	<p>Overlap it with newspaper or wasted paper to keep it damp.</p>	 <p>Figure 21</p>  <p>Figure 22</p>
<p>Step 12</p>	<p>Take the damp drawing paper and place it on the plexiglass surface</p>	 <p>Figure 23</p>

		 <p>Figure 24</p>
Step 13	Rub the drawing paper with a spoon.	 <p>Figure 25</p>
Step 14	After the drawing paper's surface has been rubbed evenly, pull the paper slowly.	 <p>Figure 26</p>

<p>Step 15</p>	<p>The results of Drypoint prints. This process will be repeated until the form of subject matter is completed. Once the form of subject matter has been perfected, the artist will proceed to the edition process of prints.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 27</p>
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FINDINGS

Based on the suggested material and technique, it shows that the perfection of the printing results depends on several factors. Below is the list of advantages and disadvantages in performing alternative drypoint printmaking techniques.

Table 6. Analysis on Alternative material in Drypoint Printmaking

Alternative Material	Advantages	Disadvantages
Drypoint Tools (Needle)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very Delicate Line • Easy to develop subject matter's form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more burr on plexiglass surface than usual
Plexiglas Acrylic Sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User-friendly • Easy to get. • Low cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily break if there is a strong pressure
Shoe Polish Oil Paint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to handle. • Easy to get. • Low cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comes in a limited amount of ink. • Not suitable in massive printing quantity
Wooden spoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to handle. • Easy to get. • Low cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not suitable for massive printing quantity

Table 7. Analysis on Alternative process in Drypoint Printmaking

Alternative Process	Advantages	Disadvantages
Drawing onto plexiglass by using needlepoint.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image from actual drawing is transferred easily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much burr develops too much dust
Rub the drawing paper with a spoon as a substitute for using an etching press machine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to handle. • The development of form can be monitored from time to time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uneven form/image transfer since the quality of form depends on the pressure of the wooden spoon (Refer to figure 6.1).



Figure 28. The sample of uneven form/image transferred was on paper. This Test Proof of Alternative Drypoint Printmaking was produced by Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak branch student, Nurul Ain Shuhada Binti Mohamad as one of the co-investigators in this research

(Source: Copyright permitted by the student)

Based on the analysis conducted, findings from this research found that this alternative process in drypoint printmaking surely could contribute to the development of subject matter's form just like the conventional method. There are a lot of flaws in this alternative process that should be taken into consideration seriously by the researcher and co-investigator. After these alternative processes were practiced several times by the researcher and co-investigator, some improvements were made especially in terms of controlling the pressure of printing by using a wooden spoon.



Figure 29. The improvement of Alternative Drypoint Printmaking produced by Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak branch student, Nur Sarah Syafiqah Binti Abu Bakar for FET 264 Printmaking Media and Technique-Form subject (Copyright permitted by the student).

(Source: Copyright permitted by the student)



Figure 30. The improvement of Alternative Drypoint Printmaking produced by Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak branch student, Nurul Ain Shuhada binti Mohamad Raffi for FET 264 Printmaking Media

(Source: Copyright permitted by the student)

Based on the evidence given, it is obvious that even though this alternative process was conducted without the actual studio/workshop environment, the understanding of drypoint printmaking could be attained along with such facility lack. This alternative process needs to be improved from time to time to sustain the printmaking education during this pandemic Coronavirus Disease (COVID19).

To verify this alternative method as part of the drypoint printmaking process, the result of drypoint printmaking from this alternative method was presented in the Marks Validation meeting session Mac-July 2020 and has been accepted by the committee of Printmaking subject, Fine Arts Department, Faculty of Art and Design, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak Campus. It has been verified that this alternative material and technique in performing drypoint printmaking is indeed able to produce the same result as the conventional technique. However, there is still room for improvement referring to the minor technical issues that need to be resolved and the need for materials exploration as well.

CONCLUSION

Referring to the objectives of this study, which are first, to understand the basic procedure of drypoint technique in printmaking and second, to explore an alternative method which suits the execution of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) there are some parts of the conventional process that can be replaced in terms of developing the formalistic aspect through drypoint technique. It may have flaws that need to be improved from time to time, especially on the choices of alternative materials. Overall, this research proves that there is a big potential in transforming this alternative method into a different perspective of the printmaking education module. Hence, this study will be proposed to be registered under the Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia (MyIPO) since it is part of the intellectual property in teaching and learning which will permanently be referred to in the education sector.

Due to the current challenging situation, most of the studio subjects need to be explored so that they are relevant to the students even though they are not able to be in a conducted studio or workshop. This research will be a stepping stone to inspire other Fine Art subjects in terms of material, technique, and process exploration

In conclusion, the most important thing in developing this alternative process for drypoint printmaking is to understand the definition of Intaglio Print and the characteristic of the drypoint printmaking technique under Intaglio Print. If the researcher and students can understand the roots of conventional drypoint technique and process, half of the battle is won in terms of handling the material and at the same time, developing an alternative process in artform development.

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The Effectiveness of Instagram as a Marketing Tool for Naelofar Hijab

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ABSTRACT

According to a survey conducted by the Malaysia eCommerce Industry, the hijab industry in Malaysia is a very profitable business that is expected to generate US \$5.9 billion by 2024, according to the survey. Because of this, the study investigates the effective marketing strategy of the Naelofar Hijab brand as depicted on the Instagram platform to engage with the target audience. As a successful brand, this is even more important than other aspects of the Instagram marketing strategy. The AIDA model was used to analyze the ten most successful Naelofar Hijab Brand campaigns promoted on the Instagram social media platform. Naelofar Hijab was the most successful Brand that used Instagram as a marketing strategy tool to promote their products and grow their customer base and brand awareness. According to preliminary findings, Naelofar Hijab's marketing communication research is primarily defined as a strategy on Instagram focused on viral marketing techniques to draw the audience's attention to the Brand itself rather than the product itself. Other competitors in the fashion hijab category are also taking advantage of the Instagram platform to market their products. Despite this, the marketing techniques employed by the Naelofar Hijab brand are more distinctive in fostering loyalty, trust, inspiration, and motivation in the Brand, as demonstrated by the Brand's founder, Noor Neelofa on her Instagram account. As a result of the AIDA model approach, the findings of this study will benefit the community by increasing knowledge and strengthening entrepreneurial skills in them, allowing them to develop a successful marketing strategy.

Keywords: *AIDA Model, Instagram, Marketing Tools, Naelofar Hijab*

INTRODUCTION

Naelofar Hijab is a well-known hijab brand in Malaysia, where it competes with several other well-known brands. As Malaysia's Muslim population increases to 61.3 percent of the population, preliminary statistics indicate that demand for the fashionable hijab business is increasing (Amanda, 2020). Following the 2018 report (Atiqah, Hijab Brands in Malaysia, 2019), it has been estimated that the accumulated profit is at least RM 1 billion, which is approximately USD 245 million. With the rise in demand and desire among Muslim women who wear hijab, the fashion industry is seeing an increase in business due to this. Naelofar Hijab, one of the most successful marketing brands in a marketing campaign that builds audience interaction and brand engagement, employs Instagram as one of its marketing strategy tactics to direct audience traffic towards brands and products using a social media approach. Additionally, communication between Naelofar Hijab marketers is being investigated, as this is associated with the spread of viral marketing through the Instagram platform. According to (Beckmann & Bell, May 2001), this is the related research discussed in how Naelofar Hijab communication marketing succeeds through the Instagram platform (Mersid & Merve, 2018), Naelofar Hijab also used a viral marketing platform as a strategy tool to deliver quick information to their target audience, according to the findings of the initial research for this study. The rumors that spread about the founder of the Naelofar Brand, Noor Neelofa, have impacted the Brand. Naelofar Hijab, which recently launched its newest product at the Zouk Club in Kuala Lumpur, was the subject of the previous investigation. It harmed the Brand because it did not correspond to the situation, but the fallout from the rumor had a positive impact on the Brand (Bazlin, Teh, & Gan, 2019).

The Naelofar Hijab brand does not rely solely on traditional mainstream mass media for its consumer advertising; instead, it uses direct channel marketing to reach consumers. This marketing strategy shifts the focus to a new platform, Instagram, to generate online marketing tools for businesses. By developing a marketing strategy for a brand that can provide incredible value. It will be able to significantly increase its ability to expand promotional activities on the Instagram platform, thereby increasing audience interest in the Naelofar Hijab brand and increasing sales (Rafiq & Fulford, 2005) (Victoria & Helen, 2013). It has been suggested by (Goldsmith & Clark, 2008) (Luis, Carlos, & Sergio, Be creative, my friend! Engaging users on Instagram by promoting positive emotion, 2020) the Instagram platform can target businesses more broadly exposed to new target audiences and build brand engagement by promoting positive emotion. In addition, competitors in the hijab fashion industry have chosen the Instagram platform to promote their respective brands. (Socialbakers, 2019) (Luis, Carlos, & Sergio, Be creative, my friend! Engaging users on Instagram by promoting positive emotion, 2020), The promotion of positive emotion on Instagram has proven effective in increasing engagement and revenue for fashion brands in 2020. public (Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2017b). That is because advertising campaigns that engage target audiences and attract new followers to Instagram accounts rely on creativity and originality to be successful. Instagram is a powerful tool in the fashion industry, helping to increase brand publishing and campaign promotion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

New media is likely to focus on the hijab fashion industry's marketing strategy. That new media type has more to do with the media, such as social media platforms, than ever before. The Hijab fashion industry relies heavily on social media to connect with its consumers and followers in Malaysia. That is because social media is a strategic and practical platform for promoting a society in an easy, low-cost, free advertising, fast-medium, and widely spreading manner. The Hijab fashion industry relied heavily on Instagram to distribute free advertising online. When it comes to attracting new consumers, social media

has features that can help a business become more advanced in its marketing efforts. IGTV, IG Live, Share Stories, Repost, Shop, Video, and Visual are just some ways that Instagram gives users the freedom to experiment with the various tools at their disposal (Fournier, 1998; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Ana & Natascha, 2016).

Instagram as a Marketing Communication

Since Instagram users and followers are more likely to engage with a brand or product when using the app, it is at the center of the marketing communication strategy used to promote it. Online marketing relies on Instagram as the primary social media platform for interacting with consumers. Instagram was built with interactivity features in mind to get more out of their time on the service. By achieving their goals, users utilize Instagram's platform as a digital marketing tool. There are many reasons why Instagram is the ideal platform for businesses to collaborate with their marketing communications to ensure that their interactions with their consumers are effective. (Dahan & Hauser, 2002; Ana & Natascha, 2016), this platform makes it simple and easy for brands to engage with their consumers more meaningfully. This is because online marketing can facilitate the promotion of a brand through the visual posting of the product, which attracts potential consumers' attention. In December 2016, Instagram had more than 600 million active users, most of whom used the app to access the service (Statista, 2017; Washington, 2014; Nathaniel, Jay, & Hyoyeun, 2017). This is the most dynamic platform for an influencer to promote their product or brand among other users.

I. Price Strategy in Visual

When marketing a product's value to consumers, price is critical for a successful strategy. Placement of price is one of the strategies used because it influences the consumers' decision to purchase goods or products. Product prices can be visually quoted on Instagram by describing unique product characteristics in an ad design. The price points for the items have been set following industry standards while also considering the item's unique characteristics, such as its material or design. The product itself, which has characteristics that distinguish it from other business products, can significantly impact sales because of the low prices it offers to buyers. Higher prices are also associated with products with a premium value in terms of quality and uniqueness and high-quality products. When determining the value of a product, the price should be given particular consideration because it affects the profit and adds value to the item being evaluated. Therefore, prices should be displayed visually to convey information without causing consumers to doubt or wonder about what they are purchasing (Išoraitė, 2016; Muhammad, 2019). Additionally, it can provide customers with a sense of fulfillment when they purchase products at a reasonable price (Muhammad, 2019).

II. Promotion Strategy in Visual

Promoting a product or service is the next step in the marketing mix, and it includes a variety of elements such as public relations, advertising, social media marketing, video advertising on various platforms, and more (Muhammad, 2019). Medium strategy is used to attract consumers to a business's marketing of a product or service offered for sale. It is one of the methods that can attract the attention of many consumers by offering various promotions on products such as discounts, purchasing items that are purchased on a free one-time basis, or giving away free items. Every promotion must go through an exciting process for the product or service's marketing strategy to run smoothly and attract more

consumers to the market compared to competing businesses. As a part of the process of brand promotion, it can also assist a company in introducing new products or services to the market (Muchiri, 2016; Muhammad, 2019).

The visuals displayed have the potential to capture the attention of Instagram users, primarily since the promotion is carried out by using numbers as a factor in attracting users' attention. An advertising strategy that involves placing the amount, number, and value of a product in a business stake to attract customers and a new target audience is called direct marketing. According to (Muhammad, 2019), a marketing strategy can be broken down into several categories. These categories include mass media advertising, sales promotion (coupons, lotteries, and discount vouchers), public relations (media introduction or PR event), personal selling, direct marketing, and digital marketing, which includes social media platforms. Businesses require information about their consumers or target markets, which is done to gather information about their requirements and preferences.

III. Platform Strategy to Market

Naelofar Hijab Brand began in September 2014. Observations show that Instagram Naelofar Hijab Brand conducts marketing strategies via an internet connection. It promoted the product and the brand on various social media platforms, which resulted in a significant increase in sales. Consumers prefer to spend their time on social media platforms like Instagram. In the marketing of trendy brands, social media is an important platform, according to (Nurfatin, Shantiny, & Komathy, 2018). Trendy products and brands are the most sought-after by social media users. This is the case because of the ease, speed, and wide reach that social media platforms provide for product and brand promotion.

In addition, new features such as Reels and an IG shop have been added to the Instagram platform, making it easier for users to make purchases directly from the social media platform. According to (Dahan & Hauser, 2002; Ana & Natascha, 2016), the Instagram platform is a practical and usable medium for collaborating with marketing communication to make its interaction onward the business and the consumer more effectively efficient. Improving brand interaction with customers is effortless and seamless when using this platform.

Influencers as Brand Icons

Individuals who can persuade potential consumers of the merits of a particular product or service by promoting or endorsing the brand product on social media platforms are known as influencers in marketing communication. Influencers play a crucial role in marketing by establishing credibility by encouraging social media users or consumers to promote branded products. Influencer marketing, particularly on social media platforms such as Instagram, is one of the communication marketing strategies that involve the support of celebrities as an endorsement of a brand's product (Freberg, Graham, McGauhey, & Freberg, 2010; Aziz, et al., 2019; Tahirah, et al., 2020). Partnerships with social media influencers or celebrities with a large following are being used by businesses to reach over 100 million followers to endorse their brand (Hanson, 2018; Hashim, et al., 2020; Tahirah, et al., 2020). A brand's marketing can benefit from the engagement and follower traffic that influencers generate because their followers are more likely to engage with its product.

For marketing strategy tools to be successful, influencers or brand ambassadors play a crucial role. As the brand's founder, Noor Neelofa uses her name to sway other people, especially fans of the brand. Various multinational corporations attempt to control her brand as she is a celebrity and an ambassador for them. Consequently, she takes the brand with her wherever she goes to expand the market for business. Artist Noor Neelofa is constantly creating new hijab designs that can satisfy any woman's desires and a variety of distinctive but appealing and straightforward styles. Her work is recognized worldwide as women's fashion (Nurfatin, Shantiny, & Komathy, 2018). Naelofar Hijab's publicity strategy is to draw an audience by using Noor Neelofa as an influential style icon because the look she sports can inspire and motivate other women. Noor Neelofa uses the brand to extend her persona while also promoting it in every TV commercial she has appeared in.

(Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), argue that this will increase the legitimacy of the brand's connection with Instagram users, who regard Instagram as a source of information (Daniel, Marta, & Sergio, 2019). It guided the audience to a higher level of trustworthiness based on this performance. Because of her influence in generating interest, the influencer can direct traffic from followers to the brand. Influences are critical when influencing an audience because they serve as icons or idols, projecting a positive image, aura, and motivation to the audience. The vast majority of influencers are celebrities and well-known individuals who can promote a business, brand, or product to a target audience through their social media platforms. This is because they have a loyal following and supporters. As a result, influencers used their Instagram accounts to publish or evaluate the product and brand to their followers, increasing the audience. The traffic audience and the new target audience will grow significantly due to the engagement generated by the influencers' postings or reviews due to the implementation of this strategy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Through the use of the Instagram platform, this aims to demonstrate a technique for monitoring the phenomenological study on the interaction of marketing communication on the Naelofar Hijab Brand. This processing method is likely to result in a better understanding of Hijab brand marketing communication research through Instagram, as well as the development of a new process for developing a model from marketing strategy data that will assist companies in the long run in moving in a more strategic and practical direction, according to the authors. The research plan is an essential component of this chapter, and it includes the current literature on the topic of relevant study, technique, procedure, the process of models, analytical method, and ethical considerations, among other things.

Observation on the Naelofar Hijab marketing strategy tool assessed campaigns on the Instagram platform using the modern-day AIDA model. The AIDA methodology was used to analyze ten successful Naelofar Hijab campaigns that utilized Instagram, a social media platform included in the brand's marketing strategy. The purpose of this study is to ascertain the most effective Naelofar Hijab campaign procedure in marketing and to foster relationships and loyalty between the audience and brands. Interviews were used to conduct empirical research to elicit reliable and valid data for data analysis using the AIDA model. The researcher established objectives for determining, exploring, identifying, and developing level strategies to ensure the success of marketing campaigns based on the data.



Figure 1. AIDA model

FINDINGS

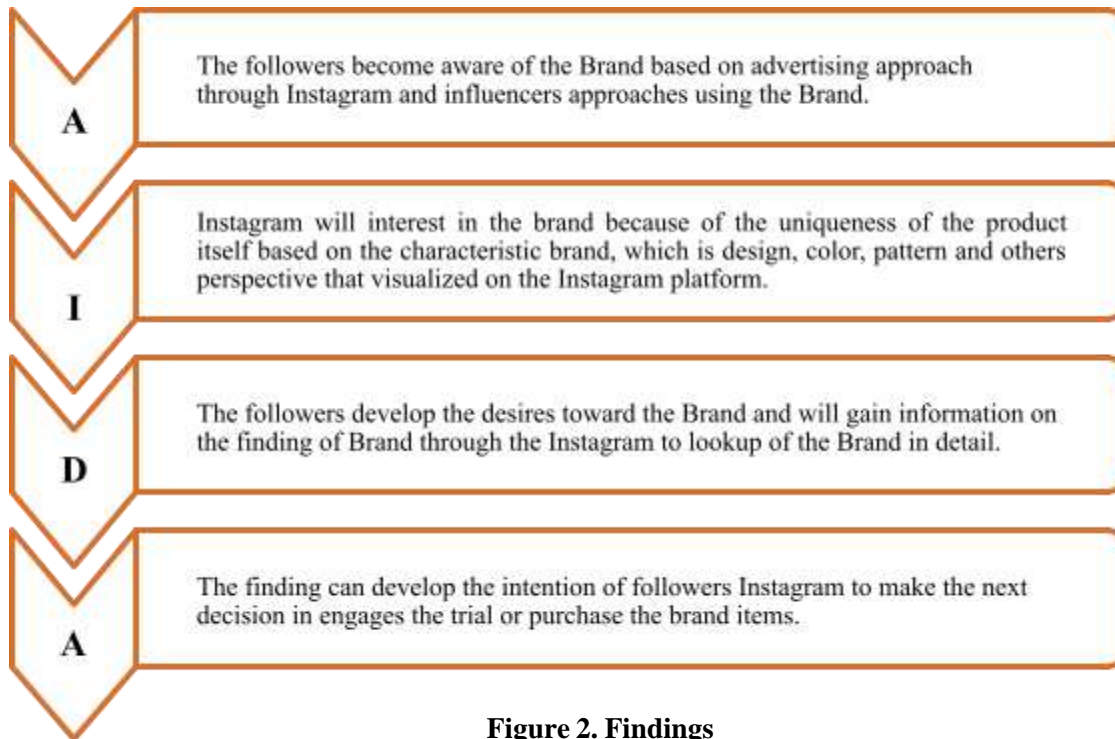


Figure 2. Findings

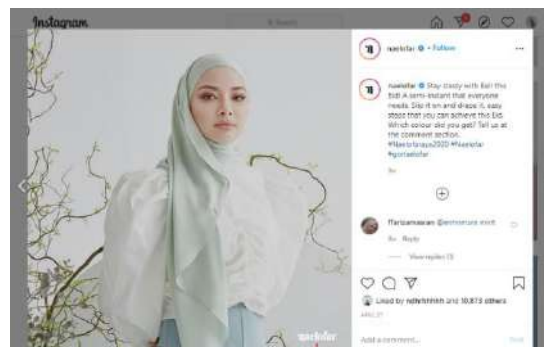


Figure 3. Creative Visual Posting on Naelofar Hijab Brand Instagram

(Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/B_d-IDJwPO/)



Figure 4. Creative Advertising Post by Naelofar Hijab Brand
(Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/B_d-IDIJwPO/)

Brand advertisements on Instagram Naelofar Hijab are evaluated using the AIDA model. This strategy is applied to the Naelofar Hijab Brand to examine ten successful campaigns utilizing an Instagram marketing tool to drive audience traffic to the brand effectively. The AIDA Model, which is hierarchical, explains how Instagram followers are directed toward making purchases related to the Brand's interest. The AIDA model, which is order-based, depicts how Instagram followers make purchases from a business. As a result, the process increases followers' contact with the Brand and elicits emotions, resulting in a more fulfilling and enjoyable brand experience. The experience may result in creating a new target audience based on feedback.

I. Awareness

Figure 4 shows the Naelofar Hijab Instagram visual posting. This is shown in the graphics used to inform consumers about the Brand release. The visible Instagram posting expresses concepts and inspiration for the audience and hijab-style women. Each new Naelofar Hijab product will have a new graphic release to appeal to consumers, and this campaign will also raise awareness among hijabista.

II. Interest

The theory reaction is a user's or customer's emotional reaction to anything they see. The show's visual content will interact with mirrored sentiments and emotions, and it does so by communicating with users or customers to communicate their intentions through feelings and sensations. Involving users or clients in the Instagram post will elicit emotions and feelings. The goal of users or consumers is reflected in their likes, feedback, or comments (Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2017a; Luis, Carlos, & Sergio, Be creative, my friend! Engaging users on Instagram by promoting positive emotions, 2021).

III. Desires

This can lead to building desire while meeting commitments. Marketing communication relies on a commitment to understanding needs and wishes. Commitment is a necessary function in long-term relationships.

IV. Action

This visual marketing campaign will encourage campaign recipients to take action and learn more about the Brand. This occurs when a consumer wants to learn more about a brand before purchasing it or leaving the items related to placing an ad.

CONCLUSION

To summarize the findings of this study, the researchers discovered a wealth of new knowledge and information about the marketing communication strategy instruments that are currently in use in the business world. By increasing knowledge and strengthening entrepreneurial abilities, the findings of this case study can be used as a practical guide for businesses and the community in developing marketing strategies by increasing knowledge and strengthening entrepreneurial abilities. This study demonstrates how businesses can better understand marketing strategy tools to generate effective campaigns by attracting traffic to the Instagram platform through a game-like strategy. The following procedure may result in developing a marketing strategy process that can assist the company to move in a more strategic and practical direction. In addition, the AIDA Model approach is employed in this case.

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An Analysis of Fabric Recycling Campaign Kloth Cares Mask Product Poster

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ABSTRACT

In this globalized world, women also play an essential role in improving the economy. However, not everyone is lucky. Therefore, various initiatives are underway to bridge the economic gap for underprivileged women. The objective of this study is to analyze the element of visuals that had been applied in the Woman Up recycling campaign poster and to find what elements of the design represent women and fabric recycling in the poster campaign. There is much awareness of posters on recycling however, posters on recycling fabric waste and empowering women are tough to find. The contribution of this study will help the graphic designer to design artwork comprehensively by using these findings as a reference and impact the visual to capture more awareness for the audience besides supporting the campaign Women Up by Kloth Cares by a commitment to improving the livelihood of women from the vulnerable community. By using a visual approach, therefore three posters were taken and evaluated through Feldman Theory to propose visual arts criticism including Description, Analysis, Interpretation, and Judgment.

Keywords: *Face mask, Kloth Care, Recycling Campaign, Women Empowerment*

INTRODUCTION

The clothing sector is a sector that contributes to the world economy. The fabrics and garment industries can be seen as a global market of multiple distinct activities. Starting from raw material, designing work, and production until the clothing is on the market. Every stage to produce the clothing has its station to be located and involves cost, quality, delivery reliability, and transportation and transaction costs are all critical factors to be considered. In 1995 and 2002, China was the world's top major producer of clothing

(Nordås, 2004). Seeing the fashion show may make assumptions that fashion isn't a serious business, but humans connect with it because all humans wear clothes. Malaysia is also a country that adopts a recycling attitude among the community. Various initiatives are taken to foster recycling awareness to reduce waste piles. All districts are involved in both urban and rural areas.

A woman has contributed to the economy even from vulnerable communities in the new global. In July 2020, Woman Up launched the Kloth Cares campaign that helps women from the vulnerable community. The majority are single mothers who have to go through many challenges to keep moving in life by giving them job opportunities. The group of b40 women is located in Puchong and Kajang and at least 20 ladies have been in the Women Up community. Kloth Cares is an organization managing fabric recycling to benefit others with a Kloth Cares approach to managing waste fabric and textile wastes by staying true to the 5R principles of Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle. In line with Sustainable Developments Goals (SGDs), which are sustainable cities and communities, Kloth Cares also focuses on the environment, economy, and society towards women in textile and clothing circular. The Woman Up campaign has come out with a few sewn item items that have been sewn from recycled fabric and turned into something such as a money pouch, phone holder, luggage tag, and face mask. Women play an essential role in the Woman Up drive, and these programs provide training in the art of creature sewing. Kloth Cares allows sewing premium masks because a mask is essential due to Covid-19 still in the environment, and the face mask is reusable and washable up to 20 times. It should be discarded just like a used disposable single mask. It accumulates one mask instead of 20 masks, which is a sustainable practice and contributes to the circular economy and textile. As of October 2021, the payment made to Woman Up ladies is RM90 000, resulting in 16,000 face masks and other fabric recycling products. Kloth Cares collaborates with a few big brands such as Coca-Cola, L'Oreal, MBSB Bank, Allianz Malaysia, Maybank Investment Bank, AVEVA Asia Pacific, Recron Malaysia, Greentech Malaysia, and BASF-Petronas to continue the objective of the campaign.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

There are many poster designs about recycling, and most studies have only focused on general recycling. Therefore, the analysis will help deepen the diversity of campaign posters that involve women's empowerment and provide awareness of face masks. An example article gives more vital insight into the trash, recycling, and how recycling information should be designed and presented to make recycling more appealing/convenient (Oke, 2016). The article concludes that there are claims that clear information raises scheme awareness while also allowing planners to build more successful strategies that may be more appealing in terms of increasing participation (Oke, 2016).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the element of visuals had were applied in the Woman Up poster campaign
2. To analyze design elements that represent women and fabric recycling in the poster campaign

LITERATURE REVIEW

Edmund Feldman's theory

Edmund Burke Feldman is an Alumni Foundation Distinguished Professor of Art at the University of Georgia (1994), Art critique criticism is oral or in writing "speaking" about art. Feldman's criticism system uses inductive reasoning to get a decision based on observed artwork in four stages (Alashari,

2021). There are four processes for interpreting a work of art: description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment. Identifying and characterizing the work's facts or literal elements. Edmund Burke Feldman in his *Varieties of Visual Experience*. Criticism is a systematic and sequential process comprising four stages: description, formal analysis, interpretation, and judgment, where "judging a piece of art involves assigning it a rank in relation to other works of its sort." (Carney, 1994, p.13).

Researcher Mina Hidayat listed Edmunds Feldman's theory in her book. The book's goal is to study art conceptualization, art criticism, and art education in order to provide effective practice. In the book, Feldman stated that art can indeed be discussed. Moreover, Feldman considered that the objective of art critique is to understand, which he linked to meaning, with pleasure or delight as a secondary goal (Mina, 2014).

A study entitled *An Intrinsic Analysis of Malay Cultural Symbols in Selected Modern Painting Artworks of Jalaini Abu Hassan and Fatimah Chik* has been done which employed Feldman Theory as a method of analysis. The study has been observing two pieces of art *Pohon Beringin* by Fatimah Chik in 2002 and the work *Tales of the heroes* produced by Jalaini Abu Hassan in 2010. The findings on cultural and local values are among the continuous and current ideas that are still recognized in the creation of artworks by Malaysian creators. Each of the pieces has cultural characteristics from the Malay community (Abdullah, 2021). By using Feldman's Theory value in both artworks can be identified.

Covid- 19

The use of face masks is mandatory for residents in Malaysia. According to a COVID-19 Outbreak: An Overview, a pneumonia outbreak of unknown cause was reported in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019. The Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market was linked to the majority of these cases. The isolation of a novel coronavirus was achieved by inoculating Bronchoalveolar lavage fluid from individuals with pneumonia of unknown origin into human airway epithelial cells and Vero E6 and Huh7 cell lines (Ciott, 2019). The SARS-CoV-2 virus, which produces Covid-19, is still active in the community; According to Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin's talk to New Straits Times, the mask mandate will remain (Arumugam, 2022).

Women Empowerment

This indicates that any country's neglect to include women in its development process is a waste of human resources. It will be a disservice to any country's development efforts if it ignores its female population (Balasundaram, 2010). Their organizations' excellent revenue and innovation performances motivate them to compete in today's market situation and make them feel empowered to do any duties (Mantok, 2016). Besides, in Kuala Teriang Langkawi Kedah there is an organization named Kumpulan Ekonomi Wanita (KEW) and they help develop the family economy, learn new skills, and eventually grow in their careers. KEW is an excellent method for empowering rural women while also strengthening the country's rural economy (Nur Hafizah, 2012).

Color

Color may assist designers in engaging the viewer's attention and conveying information in a visual environment. Color also helps the viewer make the correct impression or make a suitable response to a product brand or service (Sherin, 2012). Blue has been identified as calm, relaxed, and positive (Bellizzi, 1992). Research by the University of Hawaii at Hilo found that red brings the objective impression of passion and excitement (Meola, n.d.).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework of this analysis is adopted from Feldman's Theory, a four-step structure of criticism consisting of four main components: Description, Analysis, Interpretation, and Judgment. Art to evaluate any artwork based on fundamental principles and elements of art and design The Feldman method considers the judgment step to be the most straightforward way of assessing an artwork, as it is based on visual elements, making it objective. This approach is to study the visual of the poster on Woman Up by Kloth Cares masks. Using Feldman Theory becomes a tool to analyze the graphic elements and composition on three customized posters: Coca-Cola, MBSB Bank, and L'ORÉAL to interpret the visual with the meaningful fabric recycling context. Below is how the Feldman Theory will be implemented to analyze the poster.

Table 1. Feldman Theory

Description	List all the elements of design elements seen in the poster
Analysis	Explore relationships of the elements
Interpretation	Interpret what the visual means
Judgment	Judgment on the visual either objective of the art either it's successful or vice versa

SCOPE OF STUDY

The study is focused on the three posters of the Kloth Cares for Women Up campaign, which includes Coca-Cola, MBSB Bank, and L'ORÉAL. The Woman Up poster and details were obtained from the correspondent Nik Suzila Hassan cum Co-founder of Kloth Cares Sdn Bhd. As a representative of Kloth Cares, she clarifies that the poster has been used as a product card and social media post to give awareness and promote the face mask.

FINDINGS

A. Kloth Cares for Women Up campaign in collaboration with Coca-Cola

Coca-Cola was founded in 1886 in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. John Stith Pemberton, a pharmacist, and chemist founded it. Sales are now estimated to be approximately 1.9 billion and soda drinks are marketed in over 200 nations and territories (Raben, n.d.). Figure 1 shows a poster of the collaboration between Coca-Cola and Woman Up by demonstrating the commitment to the empowerment of women through entrepreneurship. Marginalized communities sewed the mask, and the fabric type was made of 100% polyester.

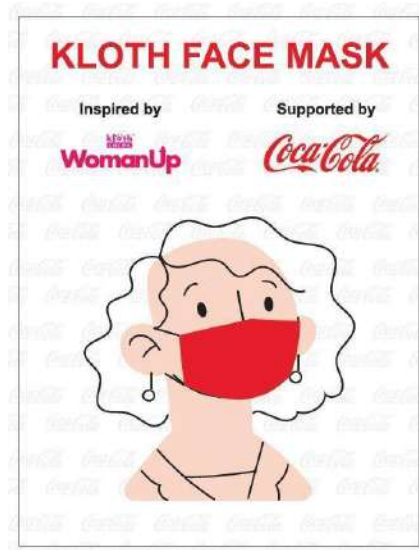


Figure 1. Kloth Face Mask in collaboration with Coca-Cola
(Source: Kloth Malaysia Sdn. Bhd.)

Description: The main element seen in this poster is the line forming a woman's face shape. The shape of the earing hanging and the form of women's hair is more clarity of feminism. The red face mask gives another vital element to this poster. Two logos were placed parallels at the top of the visual, and the typography of KLOTH FACE MASK has the most prominent font among all visuals. The background of this poster places a minimal optical clarity of the Coca-Cola on top of the white space.

Analysis: Subject matter that can be identified in the contrast of women figures to highlight the campaign is the fight for women's empowerment, and the face mask represents the brand participation. The face mask also indirectly protects against Covid-19, which is still contagious in the country. The line of women's figures can be classified as the poster providing minimalism to contrast the mask color and Coca Cola. They also have the element of rhythm on the women's hair.

Interpretation: The expressive language can describe the poster as an enforcer poster. Even though the red face mask becomes an eye-grabber, the pastel color of the women's figures' white background makes the poster look more casualty. Coca-cola's branding color already has a solid corporate brand identity color, and because of that, the poster only put the minimal contribution of Coca Cola brand element. The poster emphasized the three prominent elements: the face mask, the woman figure, and the red color. A relationship can be identified as and union between the products, brand, and women's empowerment.

Judgment: The poster visual successfully creates intention and creates a powerful message. Even though the collaboration with Coca-Cola, the most well-known beverage globally, Kloth Cares has encouraged its brand and promotes its campaign to parallel Coca-Cola.

B. Kloth Cares for Women Up campaign collaboration with MBSB

According to Ummi Maisarah a Product Developer & Creative Marketing Assistant of Kloth Cares, the MBSB Bank collaboration started in quarter 3 of 2020, and the poster wanted to portray it as a sharia-compliant financial institution. MBSB stands for Malaysia Building Society Berhad. Bank Negara Malaysia has awarded MBSB Bank Berhad a license to conduct Islamic banking business. Bank Negara Malaysia regulates and supervises MBSB Bank in accordance with the Islamic Financial Services Act, 2013. (MBSB Bank Berhad, n.d.)

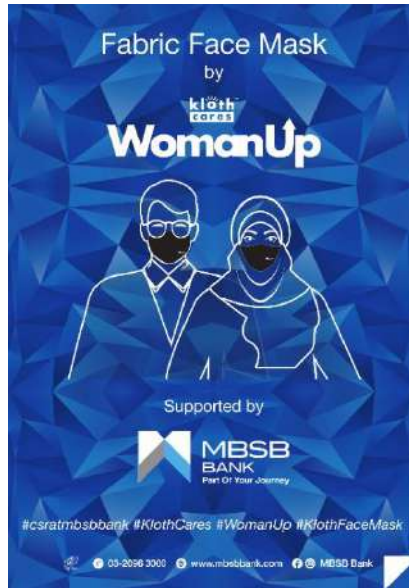


Figure 2. Kloth Face Mask in collaboration with MBSB Bank
(Source: Kloth Malaysia Sdn. Bhd.)

Description: The visual poster uses a blue low poly background. White lines form two human figures at the center of the poster, one man with a blazer wearing specs and a woman wearing a hijab; both figures are wearing a black mask. The placement of MBSB Bank logo is at the bottom and center of the white line human figure. The poster has put a few hashtags including #csr@mbsbbank; #KlothCares; #WomanUp; and #KlothFacemask. At the bottom of the poster of MBSB Bank was placed a website address, social media, and phone number of MBSB Bank, and a logo of Perbankan Islam in one parallel line.

Analysis: The elements of art that line with two human figures are the value of simplicity. The blue low poly background distinguishes between the MBSB Bank logo and the poster's color scheme. Another element can be a coherent form whole. The poster typography is balanced even with various font sizes, but it used sans serif to make its unity and rhythm. Every font's size has its message emphasis and impacts on the viewer and hashtags receive increasing attention from a specific audience.

Interpretation: The poster delivers an informative corporate poster interpretation. It is intended to promote awareness about the CSR program with Kloth Cares. Corporate look attire represents the employee, and the mask's shape makes the sign have a message about the Covid-19; also, mask utilization is necessary to protect from the virus. The target audience is adults and office workers. The hashtag will give visibility to the campaign and gain awareness to the social media audience. The poster shows a woman in a hijab. The significance of the hijab can be defined in relationship with the logo of Perbankan Islam at the down left corner of the poster, which means MBSB Bank is subject to Islamic banking. Women in hijab are placed in front of men, which interprets women's empowerment and involvement in this campaign.

Judgment: The visual poster is an excellent example of a CSR poster. The information on the brands, such as social media, phone numbers, and website links makes the poster look promising. Formalism in the poster is successful with minimal use of white lines and blue as a based color. Accordingly, they are reviewed by board-certified physicians and mental healthcare professionals. Listed hashtags help conduct an immediate search for information on a campaign and the blue color brings the physiological color of feelings of calmness or serenity (Cherry, 2021).

C. Kloth Cares for Women Up campaign collaboration with L’Oreal

The collaboration poster with L’ORÉAL is a template poster used for other partnerships, such as AVEVA Asia Pacific BASF- Petronas and the Woman Up team will change the logo according to the brand participation.



Figure 3. Kloth Face Mask in collaboration with L’ORÉAL
(Source: Kloth Malaysia Sdn. Bhd.)

Description: The visual poster uses soft pink as background and low transparency Woman Up logo typography. There is a triangle pattern in pink and blue on the outside of the thick, darker pink borderline. The poster has put a few hashtags namely #WomanUP; #KlothFacemask; and #SafeTogether. There are three logos on the poster, which is of L’OREAL Malaysia is placed at the low center of the portrait poster. The Woman Up logo is the prominent logo among all. Kloth Cares logo is the smallest on top of the Woman.

Analysis: The eye-catching focal element on the poster is the arrow in the center with a black mask. The arrow circulation represents the element of art, which is a movement of the indicator to the right, its symmetrical balance of margin area. Also, the arrow feeling that everything in the poster working together looks like it fits. The repetition of the triangle creates a visual effect, and the thick line forms a border to differentiate the focal area. Even though typography is in various sizes, all the visuals used only sans serif types to make it unity. The hashtag helps the social media user to find information about the program.

Interpretation: The poster delivers a mood of femininity and positivity interpretation. The poster wanted to convey awareness about the recycling of mask fabrics within the program with Kloth Cares and L’OREAL Malaysia. The poster layout used the color of calmness except for the mask and logo of L’OREAL, which proposed both elements because the poster wanted to emphasize the subject matter of the campaign. The triangle pattern on the left and right of the poster enhances the visual look. At the top of the arrow circulation element, there are five principles of the holistic approach which educate people on how the mask fabric is a product that succeeded in the recycling system. The purpose of the hashtag is to let the audience get more information about the program.

Judgment: The poster visually expresses and sends a clear message about the circulation of the recycling system in a straightforward visual. The arrow element of recycling has become synonymous with the term "recycling." As these elements and art principles are expressed in this poster, it is impactful. The addition of the hashtag will add more value to social media users to use the hashtag and make it an awareness attraction influencing the variety of detail presented straight to social media users.

CONCLUSION

The study shows the effectiveness of the elements and principles of art and how it can help campaign posters involving women and masks as subjects. The analytical similarity between Coca-Cola and MBSB Bank posters is the line of formation of human figures in artistic principles, which will help make a significant impact. One of the more notable findings of this study is that using different colors with essential elements can produce a successful visual. In this sense, graphic designers are advised to use this analysis to aid them in creating masterpieces based on the poster's design aspects.

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The Four Series of Malaysian Banknotes:A Visual Analysis of Ringgit Symbol

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ABSTRACT

The currency symbol depicts a country's currency name since the 19th century. The currency symbol is found as part of the design elements of a banknote identity, which also reflects the country's ethos. The ringgit has a long history beginning. However, this progress revealed the inconsistency of the ringgit symbol in each banknote series. This paper aims to analyze the evolution of the ringgit symbol circulated in the series of Malaysian banknotes and the changes it has gone through since it was first issued on Malaysian banknotes right up to the fourth series. Using visual analysis of the ringgit symbol in all four banknotes series issued by Bank Negara Malaysia, this study found that the currency symbol used for the ringgit had different characteristics, mainly in banknotes issued in the second series, which disrupted the ringgit identity. The ringgit would become remarkable if attention were given to developing and introducing the RM symbol. An in-depth study to introduce an ideal form of the ringgit symbol design could help innovate Malaysia's monetary identity.

Keywords: *Ringgit Malaysia, Currency Symbol, Monetary Identity*

INTRODUCTION

Currency symbols are a valuable and quick way to express the names of specific currencies in textual form. It is a convenient way, substituting a graphic symbol for the words. The earliest currency symbol in the world was the pound sterling, printed on its banknotes in the early 19th century. It is among the established and prominent currency symbols alongside the dollar, the yen, and the euro. Countries like India, Turkey, and Russia have started forming their currency symbols by replacing their abbreviations. Malaysia is among the countries globally that use abbreviations to represent the ringgit, as announced in December 1992 by Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM). It was made public that the RM is an official currency symbol for the ringgit, replacing the M\$ symbol used since 1967. This historical transition is mooted because the RM is simply an abbreviation of the words Ringgit Malaysia and does not reflect any identity of both currency and the country it represents (Mohammad Aaris Amirza & Mohamed Razeef Abdul Razak 2021). Although many other elements contribute to a currency design, the currency symbol is at the top hierarchy of currency design (Heij, 2012). It has a significant role in representing a country's identity (Granhenat & Ain Nadzimah Abdullah, 2017).

In addition, this study focuses only on the currency symbol applied for the ringgit from the first until the fourth series of Malaysian banknotes. This study analyses the evolution of the ringgit symbol circulated in the series of Malaysian banknotes and identifies its consistency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Currency Symbol

Currency symbol is applied to every single banknote in the world. This symbol indicates a unique currency name to almost every country and is used commonly on banknotes and other economic-related platforms. It is well acknowledged that the currency symbols of the dollar, yen, and euro are among the prominent currency symbols in the world and have a prominent verbal identity (Heij, 2012). Although the dollar and yen were not formed with any intention of becoming part of the national identity of the country (Mohammad Aaris Amirza & Mohamed Razeef Abdul Razak, 2021), their establishment has made the countries of these two currency symbols known and is also being applied by other countries as their currency symbol. Being part of the design elements of a banknote, the currency symbol belongs to the highest hierarchy in the banknote design process (Heij, 2012) as a sign of identity not only to the banknote but also to the country it comes from. This is aligned with Bhatt (2015), who stated that currency symbol is a medium that has a decisive role in promoting both the currency and country, although currency symbol is seen as insignificant by the general public.

Helleiner (1998) highlights that the banknote of a country constructs a national identity based on these five pillars where a currency acts as a mutual means of association. Administration liberation is reflected upon through currency notes. However, only certain countries succeeded in this with their citizens. National currency emphasizes domestic unification as the public participates in a mutual fiscal experience implementation is part of these five pillars simultaneously, resulting in the public having a mutual experience, and the currency gains trustworthiness in its citizens. The fifth upholder is the semiotics used in the banknotes which are engaging and significant to its people as they are inspired by the same monetary involvement thus evidence that a banknote and its element are part of national identity.

Ringgit Malaysia Symbol

The currency of Malaysia has officially used the ringgit as its current name since 1975 under the gazette of the Malaysian Currency (Ringgit) Act by Bank Negara Malaysia, which discontinues using the Malayan dollar. Historically the word *ringgit* was used as early as the 17th Century AD in the Portuguese colonial era. It is practiced by the natives to describe the silver Spanish dollars at that time in the Malay Archipelago, where the edges of these coins have serrations around them which in the Malay language is named *Ringgit* or *Gerigi* (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, n.d.). The ringgit was also used to describe the Spanish Cob and Mexican silver dollars circulated in 1764 as *Ringgit Tua* (Old Ringgit). In 1870, the Meiji Yen silver coins were referred to as *Ringgit Muda* (Young Ringgit), mainly by the locals in Terengganu. The word ringgit was first engraved on the British Trade Dollar on 2 February 1895, when this coin was made valid and well-known in the Straits Settlement and the Malay States (The British Trade Dollar, 2005).

In December 1992, the Malaysian government announced a new currency symbol of RM to replace the double strokes dollar sign, used in circulation since 1967. This new currency symbol is a short abbreviation of the currency name Ringgit Malaysia, and its application is for both the Bahasa Malaysia and English language (News Straits Times, n.d.). After four years of its official announcement, the new RM symbol was printed on the third MYR currency note. In this series, the RM2 currency note was first introduced with such denomination and designed with the theme of Vision 2020, which intended to promote Malaysia's aspirations (Mohamed Razeef Abdul Razak, 2015). The fourth series of Malaysian

banknotes saw a new design, and, in this series, the color of the banknotes was made vibrant, which was considered the most noticeable innovation of its kind (Guise, 2016).

Despite the advancement of introducing a new currency symbol for the ringgit, this innovation was not deliberately executed. It can be seen as there was no particular characteristic of a currency symbol in the RM symbol. It does not feature any unique character that reflects the ringgit's identity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study approaches the history of Malaysian currency using the qualitative method where visual analysis was applied to each currency symbol that was used in the ringgit banknotes and focuses on the form only. This analysis was conducted to identify the evolution of the ringgit symbol in each series and the year the banknotes were issued. Visual analysis of these ringgit symbols was categorized in five sections which consist of the symbol, year and series it was issued, key characteristics, and denomination of the symbol was applied (see Table 1). These categories were essential in obtaining the vital data not only to observe the evolution of the ringgit symbol during its four series issued but also to identify the coherency of the currency symbol.

FINDINGS

Generally, a currency symbol features two vital elements that signify it as a symbol for a currency. These fundamental elements are letters representing either the country's name, where the currency belongs or the country's currency name. Although it is deemed a simple symbol by many, developing a currency symbol is vital in a banknote design. The two currency symbol elements are usually a Roman letter and line strokes that could either be in vertical or horizontal form. As these design elements are explained, it ratifies that the RM lacks any of these critical elements, which somehow validates that the RM is just an abbreviation. It would be a good move if Bank Negara Malaysia initiated designing a proper ringgit symbol before the circulation of the third series of banknotes in 1996.

Evolution of the Ringgit Symbol in Malaysian Banknotes Series

The inconsistent ringgit symbol appeared in every banknote series Bank Negara Malaysia had released. In the first series, the \$ sign on both the 1-ringgit and 10-ringgit denominations were utterly different, although it was released under the same series. Disparities of the ringgit symbol declined in the second series of banknotes. This series was issued on September 1, 1982, with the denominations of \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$100, and \$500. It is alarming as each of these denominations has its own dollar sign. Although this banknote series was designed to reflect Malaysian culture, the paradox of the symbol in each denomination somehow disrupted the banknote's identity in this series.







After fourteen years, the first application of the newly announced ringgit symbol was issued in 1996, wherein the third series, the RM2 denomination, was introduced. However, inconsistency of the ringgit symbol can still be detected in this new banknote series. What was evident is that the different form of RM abbreviation on both obverses and reverse in the RM100 notes was noticeable.




The year 2012 marks the fourth design in the Malaysian banknote series. In this series, the respective banknotes were designed with the theme of 'Distinctively Malaysia', which highlights the traditional arts and craft expressions, natural wonders, flora, and fauna, economy, and tradition are all included (Mohamed Razeef Abdul Razak, 2015). What makes this fourth series unique is the introduction

of another improved RM abbreviation. This action was taken perhaps to fit with the new and improved design theme. In this series, the RM abbreviation was improved by making the symbol appear bolder than in the previous series issued in 1996. The form of the ringgit symbol in this series appeared consistently identical in every denomination issued on both seemed and reversed the banknotes.

Further studies on the formation history of the RM abbreviation find no unique meaning implemented that would reflect Malaysia's identity or ethos. Information on the improved RM symbol in the fourth series of banknotes was also not available. As stated in the early stage of this study, the RM abbreviation only carries the meaning of Ringgit Malaysia.

Table 1. Visual Analysis of Ringgit Symbol in Four Malaysian Ringgit Banknote Series

Symbol	Year	Series Issued	Key Features	Denomination
	1967	First	• Dollar sign Double vertical strokes	\$1, \$5, \$50, \$100, \$1000
	1982	Second	• Dollar sign	\$1
	1982	Second	• Dollar sign	\$5
	1982	Second	• Dollar sign	\$10
	1982	Second	• Dollar sign	\$20
	1982	Second	• Dollar sign	\$100

	1982	Second	• Dollar sign	\$500
	1996	Third	Letter R and M	RM1, RM2, RM5, RM10, RM50, RM100
	2012	Fourth	Bold letter R and M	RM1, RM5, RM10, RM20, RM50, RM100

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings it can be concluded that the ringgit had gone through a series of evolution not only for its banknotes but also the ringgit symbol. Currency symbol has been identified as a vital element in banknote identity. However, this study finds that the identity of the ringgit through its symbol is inconsistent in every series of banknotes. The transition from using the dollar sign to the RM symbol does not strengthen the monetary identity of the ringgit. Although these growths were significant to align with the technological advancement, modernization, and the country's achievements, these advancements could be more remarkable for Malaysia if detailed attention were given to maintaining the form of the RM symbol in future banknote series. Further study in introducing an ideal form of the ringgit symbol design could help uplift Malaysia's monetary identity.

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Personal Competency and Behaviour Effect on Design Judgement Among Designers in Furniture Manufacturing

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia furniture manufacturing is a lucrative industry with the majority are Small and Medium Enterprises (SME). Moving the SMEs from Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) to Original Design Manufacturer (ODM) is encouraged by the government in pursuit of global competitiveness. One aspect of transformation is hiring design personnel into the manufacturing organisation especially among the Bumiputra SMEs who are lagging behind the other manufacturers. The purpose of this study is to identify the qualities of designers who could improve design judgement for New Product Development (NPD) of furniture in their current operating context. This article is part of a series of studies in improving Bumiputra SMEs global competitiveness. This study in particular looks into aspects of the designer's competencies and behaviour that will affect design judgement. A survey was conducted on 33 designers who are employed from among 106 manufacturers registered with the Bumiputera furniture manufacturer organisation of Malaysia. Statistical analyses including factor analysis, descriptive analysis, t-test, were employed to test relationships between dependent and independent variables. The study found personal skill, knowledge, ability, and experience representing designer's personal competencies; and value, attitude, and trait representing designer's personal behaviour are critical in making appropriate design judgement. The results are expected to contribute to the development of a Designer Personal Competency Model for the furniture NPD process to help Bumiputra furniture SME manufacturers transform their OEM practice to ODM. This study is significant in supporting Malaysia economic growth specifically among Bumiputra SME manufacturers.

Keywords: *Design Competency, Original Design Manufacturer, New Product Development, Furniture Industry, Bumiputra SME*

INTRODUCTION

As the furniture industry is a highly competitive business, the Malaysian furniture industry has transformed into a technologically advanced multi-billion-ringgit industry from traditional, domestic-based production at the beginning of the 1980s (Nor H Mansor et al., 2015). Malaysia External

Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) reported that the furniture industry is generating RM 4.14 billion business in 2019. Malaysia is recognized for high-quality furniture, with the emergence of rubberwood furniture and strategized towards premium design. In addition, Osman et al. (2018) highlights there is also a high growth from Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) to premium original design manufacturer (ODM). Despite the impressive growth, 62.1% of the SMEs employed workers with insufficient knowledge and skills (SME Malaysia, 2018) which may direct the study to agree with Osman et al., 2018 why participation by Malaysia Bumiputera furniture manufacturers is still low and less competitive in the export market.

The study found that the furniture business is highly competitive and low-cost basis (Bumgardner & Nicholls, 2020) with its inherent nature of having a short life cycle (Balaram & Chennakeshava, 2018). It is often perceived as labour intensive, dominated by suppliers and retailers, and with low-wage professions, unskilled workers, and uncomfortable working conditions (Ng & K., 2012). Osman et al. (2018) highlighted design expertise as one of the key elements still lacking among Bumiputera SME businesses. This study agrees with the author which may explain the limitations for exporting among the Bumiputera companies. Hence, the purpose of this study is to identify the qualities of designers who could improve design judgement for New Product Development (NPD) of furniture in their current operating context. This study tested selected hypotheses in relations to the influence of Design Judgment in SME furniture manufacturing. This study is limited to Bumiputra SME furniture manufacturers and is significant in supporting Malaysia economic growth specifically among furniture producers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In an attempt to elevate the performance of Bumiputera SME furniture manufacturer, the aim of this study is to explain the benefits of hiring qualified designers by focusing on the distinct effects of designers' competency and behavioural characteristics on design judgement during new furniture product development. The locally-owned furniture manufacturers SMEs are dominating the market which is a similar strategy applied in Italy, Taiwan, and Denmark. However, the involvement of Bumiputera in this industry is still small (Ratnasingam, 2017). A study by Roper et al. (2016) indicates that the designer's role shall embed in the organisational process as the design is recognized as a functional specialism in the perspective of collaboration between designer with functional teams. Therefore, a good designer is able to think in new terms, challenge assumptions, and also accelerate innovation (Minder & Lassen, 2018). It is important to understand that competent designers should be able to see problems and evaluate potential solutions. This section introduces the notion that competencies can be evaluated in tangible ways instead of articulating the technical skills. The study also found gaps in the industry where the incompetent and lack of experience designers serve the Bumiputera SME furniture manufacturers.

Designer Personal Competencies (DPC)

Skill

When defining the concept, designers apply all their experience and skills based on the available knowledge and information concerning design and manufacture (Ward & Clarkson, 2004). Then, following a systematic design process helps to develop strategy and finish deliverables based on customers' requirements. Like other SMEs, furniture manufacturers have limited resources and the designers cum owner apply design thinking that is best suited for open-ended problems and epitomises the company with skills needed. The reason is Malaysian furniture manufacturing business is still trapped under the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) phase without much effort to move towards Original Design Manufacturer (ODM) (Ratnasingam et al., 2018). The reason identified in this matter is the lack of skill enhancement and creativity even though Malaysia is resource-rich. What Malaysian designers may need to strive for is to be involved from product development until the marketing and delivering stage. Hence, the author agreed with Cash (2018) that design skills and manufacturing skills (Thomas et al.,

2016) build on each other which assists to speed up time to market, therefore, helping to remain resilient and sustainable in a more complex environment.

Knowledge

The furniture business is a design-intensive industry, thus, relevant knowledge is experience-based which is very dynamic, distributed, and heavily tacit and gained from everyday work in the industry (Ng, 2011). The designer will make a better decision when important information is easily available (Matthews & Wrigley, 2017) ; however, lack of data and knowledge creates Knowledge Loss (K-Loss), Ibrahim (2006). This is a large and growing concern that many furniture Bumiputera SMEs fail to address. Knowledge with high tacitness is likely to be distinctive. This situation tends to create problems in companies that are highly dependent on workers with high tacit knowledge as it does not flow well in the organisation and tends to stick (Ibrahim et al., 2008) which occurs in the furniture industry.

Ability

Even though design ability is poorly understood, according to (Cross, 1990) design ability has to do with intelligence with an ability to resolve conflicts and problems. Nobre & Walker (2011) identifies ability as the representation of development, coordination, and deployment of operational capabilities as well as willingness to learn, change and adapt in the complex environment. For designers, the visual ability is a non-verbal intelligence where one can process information about visual information and the appearance of an object with other pictorial properties and as cognitive (Nazidizaji et al., 2015).

Experience

Lattorff & Moritz (2013) have shown that individual experience can also affect the dynamics of task specialisation which also can speed up the project progress (Grierson, 2013). In this study, the extent of designer experience, competencies, and practice within the company is expected to influence the designer's judgement during the new product development cycle. It is unfortunate that some designers are unable to produce original designs due to various constraints and limit function to design (Kamarudin et al., 2016). Hence, in this study, it is the individual's knowledge, experience, capabilities, and skills as a form of competencies for the company to develop its business (Tragel & Shemilina, 2015) in Bumiputera SME furniture manufacturers need to highlight.

Designer Personal Behaviour (DPB)

The emphasis on behaviour during design is a contribution to design knowledge that may affect forms and functions. Design activities involve cognitive activities including thinking, visualising, and decision- making (Hu et al., 2019). In addition to technical competencies, Parks-leduc et al. (2015) suggested that personality traits be included in the integrative model of understanding a person. Personality is a person's situation, self-chosen and manipulated by a situation (Matthews & Wrigley, 2017). It influences judgement (Gamliel et al., 2014) and those who can collaborate with others tend to be considerate, friendly, generous, helpful, and add value to others. Many personality studies focus on emotional impact as highlighted by Górník-durose & Pilch (2016); and Gamliel et al. (2014).

Design Judgement (DJ)

Among the conclusions suggested by Rizzuti & De Napoli (2016) is that designers use decision-making value theory to synthesise design and judgement in making quality products. Judgement in design is similar to other judgments made in other disciplines. However, the distinct difference is designers have to judge based on things that are not yet built. Designers in a way have to deal with highly real-life complex, multi-

dimensional and interactive design problems. Schiin (1988); D. A. Schon (1984), D. A. Schon & Wiggins (1992) and Vickers (1983) develop an appreciative theory that views human activities as a system. An appreciation in judgement can be best understood in the context of knowledge and built around expertise and experience. Some judgments are based on criticism by others. Therefore, the study proposes that designers explore concrete integration of knowledge, behaviour, and product with a more pragmatic approach and more human-centred practice rather than focused on science or mathematics.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Based on the above literature review, this study hypothesised the relationship of Designer Personal Competencies and Design Judgement as below:

- H_{1.0}: Designer with more design competencies will make better design judgement in producing new products

Many scholars agree that proficiency can be developed through training and experience. There is an indication that novices are not proficient in presenting design problems and they are not aware of why certain decisions are made (Verstegen et al., 2009). Based on this, a person who is poor at one process will be poor at all tasks that require it, but not necessarily poor at tasks that do not require it Kavakli et al. (2002).

- H_{2.0}: Designers with a more professional attitude can make better design judgement in producing new products

In many start-up companies, designers are both lone designers and owners (Mohd et al., 2016). Decision- making was found heavily relying on tacit knowledge. Like other SMEs, the Bumiputera furniture manufacturing companies have limited resources, and the designers cum owner needs to deal with open- ended problems. Thus, any behavioural and emotional response has a consequences effect on the developed products (Kumar & Noble, 2015). Chai et al. (2015) identified that special knowledge affects behaviour for reasoning with a combination of tasks. Hence, constant application of designers' behaviour in product development over time will result in a certain level of performance and expertise. The lack of competence results in designers having difficulty in making design judgments hence may slow product development thus Product Development Life Cycle (PLC) may end prematurely.

- H_{3.0}: Designer Personal Competencies and Designer Personal Behaviour have significant impact effect on Design Judgement

It is challenging to know what specific knowledge is required for designers and its differences from other practitioners. Osman et al. (2019) identified that many Malaysia Bumiputera furniture designers lack knowledge and access to information. Therefore, it is important during the design stage to understand the behaviour and constraints of the users, especially implicit life cycle issues that can be detailed out during the detailed design. Prahalad et al. (1990) posits that companies that fail to invest in core competencies fail to invest in an emerging market.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study conducted a survey to test the above hypotheses influencing Design Judgment in SME Bumiputera Manufacturers. A similar study has been conducted by (Baraldi & Bocconcelli, 2001) in the furniture industry on how quantitative research is being conducted in qualitative phenomena. The author suggested that furniture-based research involved theoretical frame, methodology, and model to be used for the study of the chosen phenomenon. Inferential statistical methods, including a correlation test, factor analysis was used in testing the main hypotheses. The significant relationship among these variables was

studied with a 0.05 confidence level was considered. Later the strength of each variable was tested using multiple regression since several independent variables were involved. A structured questionnaire was used as primary data collected to investigate designer's competencies and behavior towards design judgment and to identify the most influential variable. Finally, a model was established to illustrate the relationship of each variable.

Population and Sampling

The targeted population is 1,284 SME Bumiputera Furniture Manufacturers operating in Peninsular Malaysia obtained from MATRADE. From that list, the Bumiputra furniture manufacturers were crosschecked against the data available at the Malaysian Timber Industry Board which returned 106 companies who were members of the Persatuan Pengusaha Kayu-Kayan & Industri Perabot Bumiputera (PEKA), a Bumiputera association recognized in the timber and furniture industry and has representatives in Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB). On ground verification was conducted by visiting the companies at the registered address and telephone confirmation for employment of designers eventually ended with 33 Bumiputra SME furniture manufacturing companies. From the samples, 23 had designers with qualifications and 10 had designers without formal design qualification.

The samples were collected based on and categorized as two groups namely Qualified Designer (QD) denotes designers who possess formal higher design education from higher institutions and Non-Qualified Designer (NQD) identified as self-learning designers or practice design without acquiring formal design education. The survey used in this study was conducted by adopting purposive sample representative, as recommended by Berends, Reymen, Stultiëns, & Peutz (2011); and Etikan (2016). In addition, Rizzuti & De Napoli (2016) posit that purposive sampling is the recommended technique to study domains relating to expertise and experience. To avoid sample bias, the respondents were contacted and an appointment was administered to answer the questionnaire. From the survey, differences between QD and NQD categories according to DPC, DPB and DJ were tested using t-tests at ($p < 0.05$).

DATA COLLECTION

Instruments Survey

Survey design is appropriate in gathering information as recommended by Owens (2007) who used surveys in collecting small sample data from SMEs. The instrument used in this study was a set of questionnaires as proposed by Rowley (2014). The author posited questionnaires are mostly used when the researchers want to profile the sample in terms of numbers with regards to opinion, attitude, experiences, processes, and behaviour. There are 31 questions in the questionnaire that were issued to 33 designers who are fully employed by the Bumiputera furniture manufacturers. The answers were rated on scales from 0 to 5. The components were taken on competencies, knowledge, skill, ability, behaviour, information, and design judgement. In the beginning, they were asked about the personal and tertiary background, working experience, numbers of employed and domain activities. The designers participated in the survey by telephone. This is to increase the rate of response compared to other methods.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

In order to test the fitness to measure (Khalid et al., 2012) and indicates internal consistencies of the measurement instruments.

Validity

Validity and reliability are established in an instrument to provide valid and reliable data.

Content Validity: A Pilot test was performed after taking into account all the suggestions from the discussion with the expert which helps to design a reliable questionnaire as recommended by Umar et al. (2017) for small sample size; 20 questionnaires were distributed to designers which are not part of the actual respondents. The potential respondents were considered the appropriate informants in view of their familiarity with issues related to design. Validated and actual questionnaires then were distributed to 33 designers.

Factor Analysis

In this study, in order to reduce dimension of datasets, the factor analysis has been employed to identify underlying factors hidden in a complex system. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was chosen to identify the factor loading of the variables and has been considered as one of the reliable tool to test the relationship between the observed variables and their underlying constructs (Maskey et al., 2018). The samples and analysis were carried into two variables i.e. Designer Personal Competencies and Designer Personal Behavior. For EFA, principal component analysis Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser was performed. The following is the EFA results conducted in this study.

From the results, the EFA output in Table 1 shows that all factors loading values are all positive which are less than 0.7. Any values above this number are considered important to further discuss as suggested by Guimarães et al. (2016).

As, the researcher will not have to deal with any cross-loading items less than 0.5 as suggested by Zulkepli et al. (2017); it has resulted in single factor loading in each of the two variables; Designer Personal Competencies and Designer Personal Behaviour that covers 78.703 % of the variance. The results also explained the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of 0.3 which is below 0.5 which shows that 33 manufacturers' sample data is small for factoring as suggested by Maccallum & Widaman (1999) as the minimum desirable N is 250. In addition, samples of less than 100 cases are often classified as untenable by Kelcey (2018).

Table 1. Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Section	Sub-Construct	Item	Factors
A	Designer Personal Competencies	Skill	0.316
		Knowledge	0.475
		Ability	0.275
		Experience	0.234
B	Designer Personal Behavior	Attitude	0.553
		Values	0.380
		Traits	0.350

p<0.05

As Factor Analysis is being conducted within the context of Structure Equation Modelling (SEM); hence, both variables fit for model setup in order to understand the pattern of relationship between two variables towards Design Judgment (Zulkepli et al., 2017).

Reliability

In this study, a reliability analysis to assess internal consistency uses Cronbach Alpha to test and scale for each variable as suggested by Tavakol & Dennick (2011). Before performing the analysis, the suitability of the data was assessed through two tests; Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. Generally, 0.70 or higher is considered to be an agreed value for Cronbach's Alpha reliability (Hair et al., 2011). The results are as Table 2 below:

Table 2 - Results of Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Cronbach's alpha N = 20 (Pilot Test)	Cronbach's alpha N = 33 (Actual Survey)
1. Designer Personal Competencies	.798	.757
2. Designer Personal Behaviour	.780	.754
3. Design Judgement	.826	.744

The above Cronbach's Alpha values show that all variables correlate around 0.7. The results show that all three scales were above the value of 0.7 which indicated good internal consistency among the variables. All items appeared to be acceptable and worthy for retention. The removal of any items in the variables would not increase the value of alpha. Therefore, Cronbach's alpha coefficient has provided evidence for the measurement model for the two variables affecting Design Judgement for Bumiputera SME furniture manufacturers. Comparatively, there is not much difference between the pilot and actual results. Thus, the questionnaires were accepted and used for the data collection.

t-test

In the first step, an independent t-test was conducted to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of Qualified and Non-Qualified designers. Qualified designers are skilful designers (Osman et al., 2018) with design certification and Non-Qualified are designers without design certification

The results found that there was a non-significant difference in the scores for Designer Personal Competencies QD (M=3.39, SD=0.32) and NQD (M=3.44, SD=0.22). For Designer Personal Behaviour for QD (M=3.28, SD=0.32) and NQD (M=3.17, SD=0.24). For Professional Designer QD (M=3.33, SD=0.27) and NQD (M=3.30, SD=0.20) conditions; $t(,903), p < 0.05$.

There is a very minimal difference between QD and NQD which shows there are no significant impact results from these two groups. As the results are not inclusive, further tests were conducted in order to test the hypothesis.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

As this study focuses on the designer as the *N*, univariate analysis profile using one variable at a time by understanding their attitude towards behaviour or products, descriptive analysis is suggested by Rowley (2014) is the suitable approach.

The results from the survey of 33 designers employed by Bumiputra SME furniture manufacturers are **Designer Personal Competencies** (mean =3.43; SD=0.33) having combined operational variables including *skill* (mean=3.51; SD=0.51), *knowledge* (mean=3.18; SD=0.63), *ability* (mean=3.45; SD=0.62), and *experience* (mean=3.64; SD=0.49). The Designer Personal Competencies and its four operational variables are significant. From the same survey, results indicate that **Designer Personal Behavior** (mean=3.36; SD=0.32) includes *attitude* (mean=3.33; SD=0.59), *value* (mean=3.15; SD=0.56), *traits* (mean=3.57; SD=0.50). The above-mentioned results are significant at 2-tailed 95 percentile confidence intervals.

The results show strong evidence Designer Personal Competencies and Designer Personal Behavior are positively influence the Design Judgment (mean=3.15; SD=0.62). The scores of variables above mid-point of 3.0 and range between 3.1 and 3.4. The mean values show not much difference and significant impact between the two variables at (p<0.05). This may not be surprising as many Bumiputera manufacturers are heavily relying on pre-design order and contract manufacturing (Osman et al., 2016). The standard deviations reflected a fairly narrow spread of scores, with a range of 0.2 to 0.3 which is close to average which shows that most designers are fairly competent and behave as what was expected by the company.

FINDINGS

Hypothesis Results

The first step is the theorised causal relationship between variables of Designer Personal Competencies, Designer Personal Behavior with Design Judgment. The results of null hypothesis significance testing, the study has yielded a statistically significant result likewise the hypotheses are truly nonnull and corresponds to the test's positive predictive value. Overall, the results from 33 designers (N=33) indicate that there is a strong relationship between each variable. Results are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. The Hypotheses Results

Hypotheses	Results
H1.o: Designer with more design competencies will make better design judgement in producing new products	(r=0.828, p-Value = 0.000). Since the average score is p<0.01, hypothesis 1 is accepted.
H2.o: Designers with more professional attitude can make better design judgement in producing new products	(r=0.842, p-Value = 0.000). Since the average score is p<0.01, hypothesis 1 is accepted.
H3.o: Designer Personal Competencies and Designer Personal Behaviour has significant impact affect to Design Judgement	(r=0.970, p-Value = 0.000). Since the average score is p<0.01, hypothesis 1 is accepted.

The results of the survey reveal that designers with more design competencies can make better design judgments in producing new products. The degree of a sample representative of the population was addressed by significant testing of the p-value of the hypothesis at 0.05. The p values of these variables, all below 0.05, show that all alternative hypotheses were accepted. Overall, the results indicate that there is a strong relationship between each variable. This means that Designer Personal Competencies contribute 82.8 percent of the variance in design judgement. Designer Personal Behaviour has 84.2 percent of variance to design judgement. The combination of both resulted in 97 percent of variance to design judgement. Hence, the data are significant and valid with satisfactory levels of reliability ranging from 0.685 – 0.940.

DISCUSSIONS

The study looked into the classification, contributions, and efforts of furniture SMEs to the Malaysian economy. It was found that initially, Malaysia's furniture industry was wood-based and low-tech; however, the industry has evolved into production from diverse materials with high-value-added manufacturing. There is a need for value-added improvement in Malaysia and it was found that improving designers' competencies is one way to bridge the design gaps and move from OEM to ODM. Employers need to identify designers who fit to change (Leclerc & Horan, 2018) based on consumers' behaviour (Lee et al., 2020). It is important to recognize the path and characteristics of the ODM company. In the case of Malaysia, Bumiputera SME furniture manufacturers need to pay close attention to various aspects like designer personal competencies, personal behaviour as core elements for operational improvement.

The development of expertise is required across disciplines and work processes. Designers use their abilities and competencies for personal growth with the support of learning and training. Years of practice enable experts to have a core understanding of their respective areas which enables them to design for the future and have the authority to discuss with the less experienced. There is a need for value-added improvement in Malaysia and it was found that improving designers' competencies is one way to bridge the design gaps. From the study, it is essential that this critical relationship between design competencies and behaviour be sustained by allowing designers the flexibility to be creative, original, and honest while they test new ideas throughout the design process. Such freedom in design while upholding certain behavioural values, traits, and attitudes would enable individual designers to be perceived as professionals who can make good design judgments. Such professionalism would sustain the Bumiputera SME furniture business which then could expect repeat customers or good referrals for businesses. Furniture making has been identified as the new growth area, with the Malaysian government emphasising the competencies to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and competitiveness. As it is recognized as a rapidly expanding industry with a low entry barrier, the industry needs to be equipped with the appropriate skill sets. Maximising designer's capabilities together with operating practices give advantages to manufacturing companies (Raduan Che Rose, Naresh Kumar & Graduate, 2008).

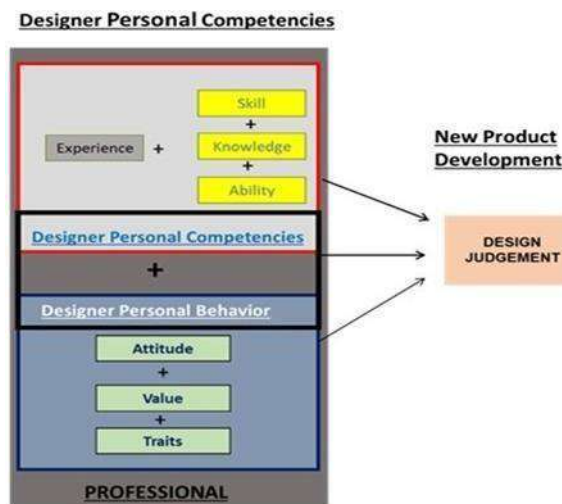


Figure 1: Designer Personal Competencies Model for Sustainable New Product Development

Based on the results of the study, the Bumiputera Furniture Manufacturers require designers with experience, skills, knowledge and ability plus also possess professional behaviour with right attitude, value and traits. The study hence developed a Designer Personal Competencies Model (see Figure 1) as an integrated model in collaborative environments between novice expert designers. Hence, Designer Personal

Competencies Model is recommended to serve the importance of designer competencies and professional behaviour which will ultimately become the driver for sustainable innovation in the furniture making industry. As such, the impact of the study gives benefits to the Bumiputera SME furniture manufacturers and the relevant industries.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results show strong evidence Designer Personal Competencies and Designer Personal Behaviour are positively influencing the Design Judgement (mean=3.15; SD=0.62). The study's results affirm key furniture designers' core design competencies (such as Experience, Skill, Knowledge and Ability) and Designer Personal Behaviour (such as Attitude, Value and Traits) are paramount in order to make effective decision-making during the New Product Development process. The study is significant in leading towards the development of a Designer Personal Competencies Model for Sustainable New Product Development where Designer Competencies and Designer Personal Behaviour are influential. Future studies are recommended to extend this study to cover non-Bumiputra furniture companies.

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University Museum: Its Relevance as an Enhanced Learning Ecosystem for Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The most interesting museum exhibitions are fun exhibitions, and when visitors start to feel that there are many things to explore and benefit from their tours. Like other countries, Malaysia has a wide variety of museums, one of which is the university museum that serves as a learning and research centre. With the establishment of MyMuse (Museums and Galleries of Malaysian Public Universities), efforts are made to meet academic needs. However, the role of university museums and galleries in this contemporary era is constantly changing over time. The 21st-century university museums should now try to improve relations with the university and local communities and provide extraordinary exhibits and collections to be accepted internationally. The objectives of this study are to explicate to what extent the university museums and galleries are still relevant in benefiting the surrounding community and to identify the methods used in the process of skill development, learning experiences, and exploration of ideas at Malaysian university museums. A qualitative approach was employed through interviews involving 19 museum personnel from 13 university museums and galleries throughout Malaysia. From the study, it is observed that the university museums and galleries strive to achieve the objectives set by the management in ensuring that they remain relevant, playing their roles, providing students with information, and enabling them to conduct research. These institutions can now produce dynamic exhibitions although some may have barriers in terms of expertise and expenditure. Nonetheless, these museums are still trying to expand the methods of operation in more economical ways and benefit many.

Keywords: *University Museum, Relevance, Learning Ecosystem, Learning Skills, Higher Education*

INTRODUCTION

The main feature of the most interesting museums and museum exhibitions is being able to create excitement. Besides that, a visit to the museum will be more meaningful for visitors when they feel that there are many things to be explored and gain new benefits and knowledge through their visits. Many museum lovers are aware of the existence of various types of museums worldwide. Like other countries, Malaysia also owns museums of multiple categories. One of them is a university museum serving as a learning and research centre.

In recent years, various changes and contributions have been made by university museums to achieve the academic mission of higher learning institutions in the country. The impressive record also shows broader public engagement. With the establishment of MyMuse (Museums and Galleries of Malaysian Public Universities), discussions and efforts have been planned and implemented to fulfil the university's academic mission. Objects and artefacts of various kinds that are the country's pride have been preserved and conserved by museums and galleries under the auspices of twenty public universities in the country.

According to one of the members of MyMuse, Zolkurnian Hassan (personal communication, March 3, 2020), the number of museums and galleries established under the auspices of Malaysian public universities has reached almost 70 by 2020, and this figure is expected to increase from time to time. This increasing trend of figures shows that Malaysia, especially the Ministry of Higher Education, is committed to expanding the role of Malaysian public university museums and galleries in line with other developed countries. Wahiza Abdul Wahid (2021) stated that there are 20 public universities in the country. Of the 20, it is understood that 67 museums and galleries are listed. However, the existing museums and galleries are under the auspices of 16 public universities. This means that four others, namely Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia, and Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia do not have their universities or galleries.

It is important to note, that it is quite unfair to compare the achievements of this country with other modern countries that established their university museums more than a century ago as a knowledge centre for scholars. Nevertheless, the country's public universities have strived hard to turn museums and galleries into interesting places to visit although, undoubtedly, many were unaware that Malaysia had a university museum before independence. The museum that is understood to have existed before the time of independence is the Asian Art Museum under the auspices of the University of Malaya. Originally, the museum was built in 1955, located in Singapore and its first curator was Michael Sullivan, a British citizen. The establishment of this museum was two years before Malaysia gained independence from the British on August 31, 1957 (Farivar, 2013). The museum was then relocated to the Malaysian campus in Kuala Lumpur and officially opened to the public in 1980 (Edzan, 2012). This is proof that the Asian Art Museum is the oldest university museum in Malaysia and Michael Sullivan was the first curator of the Malaysian university museum. Through the passage of time, a period of continuous investment and development has put university museums and galleries at the helm of the national museum community, experimenting with innovative approaches and technologies. University museums and galleries are now trying to provide 'real world' skills, not only to students but also to researchers and the surrounding community. Not only do they work efficiently, they also engage with the local and international communities.

This study highlights the relevance of Malaysian public university museums and galleries to the contemporary community and the benefits given to investments as well as academics and contemporary society. The collections in these museums and galleries inspire new research, and cross-discipline, stimulate new areas of investigation and provide research impact. Through the provision of access to in-depth learning collections and offers by developing transferable skills while providing more opportunities and work experience, university museums and galleries also support research communities around the world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Exhibitions and Collections by University Museums and Galleries

Similar to other countries, museums and galleries of Malaysian public universities provide exceptionally prestigious resources for education, the museum sector, the public, locally and at the international level. They do not only focus on students of higher institutions, but all levels of education. This is acknowledged by the curator of INOS Research Gallery, Institute of Oceanography and Environment, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Azwarina Mohd Azmi Ramasamy (personal communication, February 10, 2020). She stressed that the role of university museums and galleries is important as a bridge that connects the knowledge and results of university researchers so that it can be conveyed to the public in a more convenient and remarkable visualisation. This knowledge transfer plays an important role in delivering the latest information to the community and can help improve their quality of life.

University museums and galleries are now racing to hold dynamic exhibitions. They hold countless histories and national culture (Abu Talib Ahmad, 2015). In addition, more learning spaces as well as skilled staff with public relations are provided. Museums of this century must abandon the outdated prototype, to improve relations with the university's residents and the local community. Inevitably, university museums and galleries now act as vital interfaces between the university and the wider public. University museums and galleries in Malaysia provide amazing exhibitions and collections internationally. Apart from the exhibits audiences usually view on display at show cases, interactive exhibition is an exhibition that highlights an easy way to learn something new, where the knowledge exchange process is more effective, easier to understand and straightforward. This shows that interactive exhibitions are practised in most university museums in Malaysia despite using different approaches and methods.

Currently more researchers and visitors from around the world often visit these university museums and galleries for further information on their studies. University museums and galleries are also among the landmarks that can have a huge impact on the number of visitors in Malaysia. Among the famous university museums in this country, and also well known in the Southeast Asia region are MGTG (USM), Asian Art Museum (UM) and Aquarium & Marine Museum (UMS), Museum of Academic Heritage (UMK) and International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (UIA). The collections exhibited in most Malaysian university museums are spectacular and have high historical significance.



Figure 1. 'Gamelan' musical instrument collection at Asian Art Museum, Universiti Malaya
(Source: Author's personal collection)

The Asian Art Museum is the first university museum in Malaysia to offer services for students and the public regardless of race and religion where artefacts can be accessed for learning purposes (Wiessala, 2017). This prestigious university is also the only one in Malaysia that has a museum that exhibits artefacts consisting of three main civilizations of the World-Malay/Islamic society, China and India on display (Insight Guides, 2017). On the other hand, in Penang, Tuanku Fauziah Museum & Gallery (MGTF-USM) is the only museum in the region that combines both science- technology and art-culture under one roof (Tan Li-Jen, 2012). The visiting experience at MGTF- USM provides holistic and stimulating principles of teaching and learning. Various programmes involving the interaction between visitors and the museum staff, as well as the hands-on experience are very helpful to better understand the collections available at the museum.



Figure 2. 'Batik' demonstration at MGTF-USM
(Source: Author's personal collection)

Currently, both museums in the Universiti Malaya and Universiti Sains Malaysia are the most prominent, not only in the country, but also in Asia and other countries around the world. Almost every university museum and gallery in Malaysia plays a role as a centre for the collection, preservation, conservation, research, documentation, and exhibition of the country's cultural and scientific heritage. Besides that, most of the university museums and galleries in this country also offer great collections in an interesting and comfortable setting for the public to visit. For example, the Malay Heritage Museum (UPM) has several interesting collections including manuscripts, textiles, Malay weapons and many more. According to its curator, Nur Layla Witra Mat Arop (personal interview, April 5, 2020) visitors to this museum can also view and appreciate the 100- year-old traditional Malay houses representing various states in Malaysia.



Figure 3. Collection of artefacts at the Aquarium and Marine Museum, Universiti Malaysia Sabah
(Source: Author's personal collection)

UMS Aquarium & Marine Museum has long been responsible for managing Research and Development (R&D) and appropriate learning priorities for academics and professionals with the necessary knowledge and experience to support every research study (Siti Raehanah Muhamad Shaleh, personal communication, May 11, 2020). This proves that Malaysian university museums and galleries have long conducted scientific studies based on their collections that have high historical and unusual values to ensure that the data they obtain remains relevant.

Inspiring students and Improving Learning Across Disciplines

The role of university museums and galleries in this contemporary era is constantly changing. University museums and galleries in Malaysia offer students from different levels with diverse opportunities. This is to improve one's learning to a more perfect level. The museums are always busy holding interesting activities and exhibitions for visitors and are putting efforts on holding interesting activities and exhibitions for visitors. The university museum provides abundant and prestigious resources for higher education, the museum sector and the wider public, both nationally and internationally (UMG & UMIS, 2013). On top of this, it also offers a diverse learning environment compared to schools that usually rely on chalk and talk. Besides that, these museums and galleries are also concerned with the visitors' development program as well as offering an experience enriched by science knowledge and appreciation of cultural arts and heritage in interactive, interesting edutainment features.



Figure 4. Visitors witnessing and observing a partial solar eclipse at MGTF, Universiti Sains Malaysia
(Source: Author's personal collection)

Apart from visitors experiencing activities as in Figure 3 at MGTf, there are also ‘Night at the Museum’, an annual event often held by university museums, which is during the International Museum Day. This is an activity and effort by the museum to educate and instil the love for museums to the younger generations so that they can be well-informed and evoke the spirit of patriotism towards the country's heritage. With such modules or programs, university museums can foster closer ties with the community, especially schoolchildren and encourage the culture of visiting museums among the younger generation, regardless of educational background. In addition, this can also foster a strong understanding, a spirit of unity among the people and inculcate the community's mindset on the benefits of a museum university to all groups.

In this era of technological advancement, people from various levels of education use the collections of university museums with new methods and through various disciplines such as seminar halls, workshops, facilities provided and many more, for example, academic reference materials and free internet based. On top of this, these museums often deliver lessons in various styles as well as providing new experiences and knowledge for their visitors. Most of the university museums’ collections, which include artefacts, fine arts, textiles and many more, are very important as they can all help in providing information and becoming research materials for several undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Students from related fields need assistance from university museums’ staff to carry out their research tasks (Muhammad Zu Shimalain Azizul, personal communication, April 20, 2021). The university museums and galleries also complement the requirements and enhance the role of the museum in providing facilities, research, education and management and administrative centres through its collections which facilitate the acquisition of new information and knowledge by its visitors in various disciplines.

Learning Experience, skills development, and exploration of ideas

All museums have a responsibility and opportunity to foster an understanding of the relevance of the problems we face, both environmental and social (Hawken et al., 2000). Likewise other types of museums, university museums and galleries are places that can benefit students from various levels of education. Most university museums in Malaysia provide knowledge dissemination services through various types of exhibitions, workshops, and visits to exhibition spaces where the information transfer process can be done in various ways (Abd Rahim Nor Mohammad, personal communication, August 31, 2020).

Different and constructive experiences can be gained daily for the purposes of teaching and learning. Firdaus Khairuddin (personal communication, February 28, 2020) a curator of Museum & Gallery of Tuanku Fauziah, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang revealed that the Anatomy Museum (USM) in Kubang Kerian is used by all students of various education levels. In addition, lecturers and physicists also use the university museum to organise their learning or medical methods for their students.



Figure 5. Learning experience by visitors at the Aquarium and Marine Museum, Universiti Malaysia Sabah
(Source: Author's personal collection)

When students visit the museum or bring some artefacts to the classroom for field work, the typical educational environments are instantly changing. This allows teachers and students to have the ability to engage in different settings with art objects.



Figure 6. Activities for the development of skills by children at the Asian Art Museum, UM
(Source: Author's personal collection)

The services offered at university museums in Malaysia are usually free or sometimes charged a low fee. This is to encourage more visitors, especially among the students to visit the museum. Most of the university museums in Malaysia remain with the primary purpose of non-profit institutions and organisations where collections of historical items are collected and preserved as superlative as possible. These museums and galleries are significant because their essence can represent our heritage and culture for the public's gaze without concerning the benefits and emphasis on educating the public (Mohd Zaimuddin Mohd Zain, personal communication, February 16, 2020). By realising the full potential of museum exhibits and artefacts, students will discover more practical ways of learning experiences. These museums see students as users and friends in learning interactions and hope that they will also become regular returners.

The university museum is a substantial component of developing a deeper understanding and appreciation of history, art, and culture (Muhammad Pauzi Abd Latif, personal communication, February 15, 2020). Hackett et al. (2020) agreed that the university museum is a momentous national heart for the nation. They are actively conducting vital experimental research and experimenting with various new methods involving some emerging technologies and encouraging some insightful ideas that may be inferred in the local cultural field.

Apart from developing skills, university museums in Malaysia play a role in enhancing one's skills and developing new concepts that can be implicit in life. Students are encouraged to experiment with their ideologies and understandings by applying critical, innovative and able-to-form critical out-of-the-box thinking. Therefore, these museums have their own distinctive characteristics, which provide audiences with a variety of informal learning opportunities. Several university museums are not open to the public due to several factors. Nevertheless, these museums still receive many visitors every month and get excellent feedback from students who agree that they have learned new things after visiting these museums (Museos, 2018).



Figure 7. A brief briefing session on the exhibition at the Academic Heritage Museum, UKM by the staff to stimulate the minds of the visitors
(Source: Author's personal collection)

Thus, with a wide variety of exhibits and artefacts in the university museum, audiences can obtain new experiences and make their own meanings where varieties of insightful ideas and perspectives can be created if perfect accompaniment and innovative thinking are applied to the participants. When the university museums are involved in a social welfare program using educational materials linking to museums, each student will be able to develop innovative and creative thinking skills and relate to real-world abilities. Public projects and exhibitions are of great benefit to students in enhancing their skills, knowledge and acquiring new experiences related to specific interests such as culture, visual arts, professional sector and many more.



Figure 8. Unique services and activities provided at the Malay Heritage Museum, UPM
(Source: Author's personal collection)

These programs will open a wide range of opportunities for students to highlight their hidden talents as well as to produce dedicated leaders in engaging a large working group, especially in scientific studies. In conclusion, through several interesting large-scale activities, students will find opportunities to engage in various organised programs. In short, almost all programs coordinated by university museums provide a lot of information in learning either in or outside the classrooms.

Relationship Between the University, Museums and Community

The role of university museums in Malaysia for the development of society is undeniable. University

museums in the country always offer a variety of development programs from grassroots to international level involving museums, communities, or outside communities. Therefore, it is not surprising that this museum is the one of the best locations to gather the local community. In a way, besides being able to become a place where knowledge is transferred, the university museums and galleries are ideal places for edutainment or leisure activities. This is because university museums in Malaysia provide various facilities to accommodate visitors, not only from educational groups, but also those who come as families and groups of friends. They interact with one another, sharing experiences and likely to start making their own meanings from what they observe in the museums. Visitors can acquire more knowledge about the heritage and museum industry through the information transfer process. An interactive exhibition is a method used by several university museums. It is a display that creates easy learning to something new-fangled, where the process of exchanging knowledge is more effective and entertaining, easier to comprehend and more pleasing (Rauterberg, 2020).

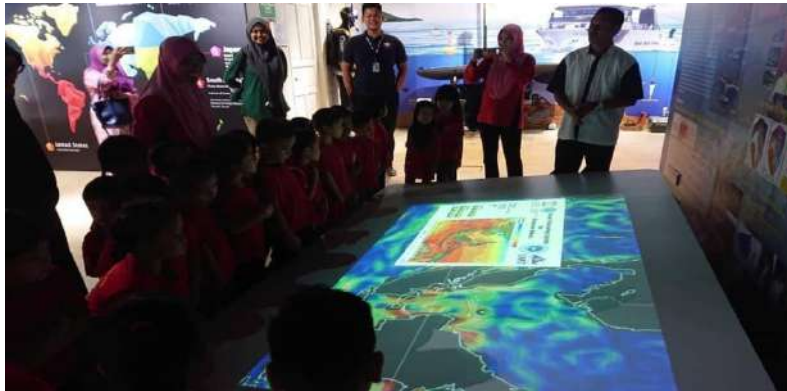


Figure 9. School trips at INOS gallery (Universiti Malaysia Terengganu)
(Source: Author's personal collection)

The decent relationship between universities and society are important as various successes can turn into reality if this bond is intact and always provides respectable cooperation. In this contemporary era, more and more university museums in Malaysia are in their own class and remain relevant by making lots of contributions and impacting society and the nation, as well as providing a consistent lifelong learning process. More mega or large-scale exhibitions are now organised to attract more visitors from all age groups and levels to take advantage of every activity and event conducted by these museums. In the last two years, despite Covid-19 outbreak which has hit the world and had a huge impact on almost all sectors, there are still many activities or events that have been organised online. Thanks to the members of MyMuse who have always worked together to ensure that the museum sector in the country remains relevant.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The general aim for this study is to discuss the relevance of university museums in Malaysia with an enhanced ecosystem for higher education level. This study was conducted through the employment and collection of primary data, such as observations and interviews at several university museums and staff who have long been on service at the museums. As a support to solidify the topic, preliminary research and readings for the purpose of literature review from articles, newspapers, bulletins and several other materials had been performed. Observation method is employed to meet the first objective, which is to explicate the extent to which university museums and galleries are still relevant in benefiting the surrounding community. For the interview sessions carried out face-to-face, 19 museum personnel from different public universities had been involved. Among the interviewees, four (4) are the directors of the museum or galleries, eleven (11) curators and four (4) museum assistants. The output of these interview sessions was to fulfil the second

objective, which is to identify the methods used in the process of skill development, learning experiences and exploration of ideas at the university museums in Malaysia.

Brief communications and random conversations with visitors and participants from all ranges of ages and groups were carried out to see how well they understand the benefits that can be obtained and new knowledge they could experience and gain following the visits and program they participate in. Apart from observation, participation and conversations with museum staff and personnel and audiences, the relevant photographs were also recorded in the vicinity of the museums visited. Secondary data collections are collected to assist and strengthen the study of the literature for this study. The results from the findings are based on a blending of both primary and secondary data that focuses on issues and questions about the relevance of today's university museums.

FINDINGS

Through careful observation, random conversations with visitors and discussions with staff, most of those who visit these museums and public university galleries are women, rather than men. This is an undeniable fact because on average, most visitors in the world's most prestigious museums are among females.

Understanding different groups audiences

Malaysia is a developing Islamic country and is considered one of the successful Islamic countries from various aspects, for instance, the cultural background in its region that can still maintain harmony despite being multi-ethnic. Apart from the Malays, Chinese and Indians, there are also other ethnic groups in Sabah, Sarawak, and Labuan. Undeniably, every group of all races and ethnicities in this country must have visited museums, even once. With most of the Muslim community in Malaysia, most of the museums in Malaysia, including university museums, provide visitor-friendly facilities, including space for worship especially for the Muslims. In comparison, visitors to the university museums of this century are different from the visitors when the university museum first opened. Visitors to university museums at the time were mostly aristocratic, well- educated, but now all the community can visit museums to see the collections on display.

Looking into how relevant the university museums are, numerous studies have been conducted to identify regular visitors who are returners to these museums. Through short conversations at random, most of the visitors admitted that they came to visit on the recommendation of lecturers, teachers, friends, and social media platforms available. From close observations and brief discussions with the museum staff, it can be identified that most of the visitors to the university museums are among those who are pursuing higher education from several local public and private universities and colleges locally and abroad. Therefore, the management of the university museums always offers interesting collections and exhibitions to educate them and help to contribute and complete the study by providing various necessary facilities including space, facilities, Wi-Fi, easy access directly to the collections and more.

Digital Ecosystem for the new museum environment

In this rapidly developing technology era, communities around the world have been provided with various facilities and services that make it easier for people to live their daily lives. Cultural institutions such as museums are no exception from this temptation with the rapid advancement of technology. Many museums and galleries in Malaysia now have their own websites and develop digital ecosystems that makes it easier for their users to learn about the collections and follow the exhibits taking place in their respective museums.

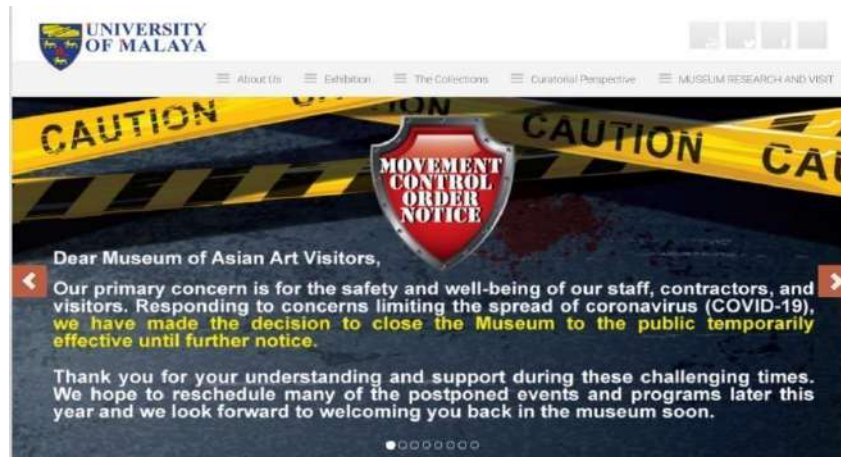


Figure 10. Official website of Asian Art Museum, Universiti Malaya
(Source: Screenshot of Universiti Malaya Webpage)

With the spread of Covid-19 over the past two years and the closure of several museums and university galleries due to safety factors to prevent the spread of the pandemic, a dramatic increase is now visible in the online community cultural visit to the museum's website. Many prominent museums around the world have adopted the digital ecosystem to introduce their respective museums. Malaysia is also no exception, although the number of museums that practice this is still in small numbers. This is due to the lack of expertise in this field, in addition to the need for considerable expenditure to implement it.

Through analysis from observations for this study, the Asian Art Museum (UM) has a strong and good digital ecosystem site compared to other university museums. This is not surprising as the museum is one of the leading university-owned museums in Malaysia and is also used as a reference centre by many scholars from all over the world. To further strengthen, the museum needs expertise in IT, documentation, and graphics to successfully create an attractive and comprehensive website. In any case, most of the existing museums certainly encourage visitors to physically visit the museum rather than surfing the internet. This is because every museum, especially the university museums, will be more focused on offering an exceptional experience through hands-on and not just providing information online. In other words, seeing is believing. Logically, observing and having the opportunity to touch an object by hands-on will be more convincing to researchers. Furthermore, when it comes to a good digital business and ecosystem, it requires a complete and accurate collection record.

There is no denying that there are still several collections owned by university museums in the country that still lack detailed records due to several factors, one of which is the lack of research expertise. Therefore, it is believed that museums in Malaysia are doing their best to resolve this issue and provide their clients with sophisticated and more accessible forums.

Based on the findings of this research, the university museums and galleries are still significant in benefiting the surrounding community especially for researchers, students and those who would have the need to expose and utilise the museums and galleries' collections and facilities.

Looking at the methods of the university museums and galleries on how they attempt to expand their operations in a less cost-effective ways in order to benefit greater number of people for the skills development, learning experiences, and exploration of ideas, it is exposed that there are a number of museums and galleries which introduced digital ecosystem for their users, but there were also limitation for others museum to practice these more accessible approach due to the challenges in terms of expertise and expenditure.

However, at this point, all museums are still encouraging the users to maintain the physical tour and visit the museums rather than looking through them online. This will be able to create more unique and remarkable experiences for the users through hands-on activities.

CONCLUSION

University museums and galleries in Malaysia will continue to play their part in enhancing performance for the arts and culture industry. As the arts and culture sector transforms for better performance; museums, structures, and processes should also reflect these changes to restructure their role in society. Beyond the economic perspective, by reforming the role of university museums to a higher level of integrity, at least in theory, it is also related to the development of knowledge (research) and the application of knowledge (innovation) in a knowledge-based, democratised society improving the country's economy. Under other conditions, the implementation of advanced digital technology and interesting interactive exhibitions by the university museums will create a new perspective for the community. In other ways, this effort will also provide an insight into how visitors can communicate and interact with university museums in a simple way and provide the necessary beneficial experiences and knowledge. With the movement control order in place after Covid-19 hit, online communication between the university museums and the community has increased the interest and persistence of visitors in connecting with the museum during the MCO.

The original role of the museums and university galleries in Malaysia is to always pay attention in ensuring that the true purpose of its establishment is achieved with some of the objectives set by the management. The university museums will continue to maintain the national cultural heritage institutions that serve all and have become historical and cultural awareness through its unique functions and position. In conclusion, the museums and galleries in Malaysia have a good bond with the millennial generation and remain relevant as an enhanced learning ecosystem for higher education. This will certainly create awareness for the younger generation to appreciate the culture and history of the country and thus will truly understand the purpose and roles of university museums.

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The Influence of Cultural Values Towards Creativity Enhancement: The Case of Malaysian Fashion Designers

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ABSTRACT

Malaysian fashion designers face difficulties and challenges in competing in the fashion industry due to the emerging international brands that exist in the market. Cultural values have influenced fashion designers in the process of design concept and use of textiles over time. This paper attempts to analyse the influence of cultural values on Malaysian fashion designer creativity and the elements that provide for creativity enhancement. The scope of this study was based on fashion designers located around the Klang Valley area. A qualitative approach is adopted using semi structured questions in an in-depth interview to gain an understanding of participants' cultural values, the design flow process, and product identity during their creative process. Using purposive sampling and snowballing technique, a sample of eight Malaysian fashion designers with a minimum of two years of design experience were interviewed. Participants were asked about the development experience, design process, creativity process, inspiration, experience of flow and product identity. The data was analysed using a constant comparison process. The findings suggest that cultural values and work environment have an indirect influence towards Malaysian fashion designers' creative design process. This study indicates that fashion designers' experiences serve as sources of inspiration that could be linked to creative design ideas and creativity. During the development process, solutions to the problems faced by the designer tend to emerge and as a result of the workflow, creativity is enhanced. The findings of this study provide insight on the relationship between Malaysian fashion designers' cultural values and experiences towards creative enhancement and in creative flow development which can assist them to be better prepared to compete in the local and global fashion industry. This study, however, finds a lack of focus on brand identity building amongst Malaysian fashion designers thus making them unnoticeable in the market.

Keywords: *Cultural Values, Inspiration, Creativity, Development Process, Malaysian Fashion Designers*

INTRODUCTION

Cultural values have influenced fashion in the process of design concept and use of textiles over time. Cultural value in fashion represents an expression of culture of a designer embedded with the industry's culture and influenced by the social and design environment (Cho, 2009) architecture, fine arts, music, or anything surrounding the designer (Lawson, 1997). With the apparent global orientation in economics and

politics affecting businesses, including the fashion industry creates the need to study how cultural values influence designers' ideas with regards to their design work. Of importance, the fashion industry requires skilled human resources such as creative designers to act as cultural interpreters when designing products (Jin, 2004).

As for Malaysia which consists of multicultural and multi-ethnicity backgrounds and beliefs, we can assume that designers of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds bring out their own signature and oriental elements in the creative design. To understand how fashion designers integrate cultural values into their design practices, an investigation on the relationship between designer's cultural identity and elements behind the product design are important and timely. Fashion designer's creativity may be affected by cultural factors such as events, organisations, and groups (Fiore et al., 1996), whilst the characteristic of cultural value contributes significantly to the meaning of cultural design process (Westwood & Low, 2003).

Earlier studies mostly focused on how cultural values influence fashion designers whereas responding to the problem with an appropriate design process is considered as the most integral part in design (Lawson, 1997) which is why this study intends to seek. There is an indication that cultural values affect both on how learners perceive the information from the style and how to translate them into new output. Since cultural values tend to influence the designs, it could be beneficial to explore the relationship between cultural identity and the use of cultural elements, such as philosophy and environment that enable Malaysian designers to use creative design process to achieve their end designed product. Hence, investigating fashion designers' creative process, in particular as affected by the designers' cultural and personal experiences is justified to study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The section introduces cultural values and ideological aspects of Malaysia's culture and society. The idea is to better understand how Malaysian fashion designers work in the perspective of culture, industry and in understanding the values for creativity. The mixed background and cultural heritage of Malaysians contribute to a shared knowledge in values and beliefs. The review proceeds with some background on market demand for fashion, the growth of Malaysian fashion in the industry, as well as factors that influence the nature of design and their creativity. The flow theory in the design process linking to product identity is briefly reviewed.

Malaysian Culture, Fashion and Industry Competitiveness.

Cultural influence has affected people growing up within a particular culture such as on how individuals interact with each other. Since consumerism in fashion is part of lifestyle in any culture, it is important to understand the nature of the fashion business in Malaysia. Consumer taste and lifestyle amongst Malaysians are becoming more of an "East meet West" phenomenon, where the expectation is to have high quality products and a variety of choices (Chang et al., 2004). Brand names are increasingly important for Malaysian consumers when purchasing apparel because of the various cultural influences including how society assesses one's appearances. Chang et al. (2004) indicates that an individual's need and want may not be internally driven or self-reflected but through external elements. For the Malaysian consumer, brand name may be used as a symbol to demonstrate togetherness with a reference group. Thus, consumers from high end culture groups are more likely to spend more money on luxury fashion merchandise which among others represent wealth (Hwang, 2013). However, studies have shown that Bumiputera Small Medium Enterprise (SMEs) do not have a strong corporate brand and are thus left behind when competing in the market (Ragayah & Zulkifli, 1997). Lack of brand identity is linked to weak creative processes. This study hopes to uncover the influence of a strong creative process on positive brand identity.

Malaysian fashion designers face tough market competition from international brands partly because they lack competitive advantage in the fashion industry. Success in fashion designing requires creativity and originality to be translated in the communication of ideas and expression of designer's aesthetics in meeting consumer's needs. It has been shown that cultural values may have influenced fashion designer's creative and innovative process (Westwood & Low, 2003), capable of creating the appearance, use and meaning while claiming that designers are not just an artist but creators who use their imagination (Cho, 2009). In developing the design concept, fashion designers need to employ the design skills (Lau, 2007) to produce creativity and originality which would determine success. Of importance is the need for the study to establish the influence of cultural values towards the design creative process.

Cultural Values, Design and Creativity

Culture as defined by Khoza and Workman (2009) is learned and shared behaviour of members of society that allows individuals to understand the surrounding by providing a frame of references or perspectives. Values are standards that lead individuals to take positions on issues, ideologies, and self-worth and it influences how individuals evaluate, judge, and make comparisons. It is what is accepted by individuals and society based on certain ideas and beliefs or actions to preserve self-image, Erez and Earley (1993). As fashion designers' output is the product of their cultural experience, the creativity in the designs is influenced by their values regarding clothes, trends, aesthetic style, philosophy, and beliefs. The output of fashion designer's ideas is a translation of their understanding of factors that is built from their cultural values.

There seems to be a rapid expansion in the Malaysian luxury market because of the distinct consumption habits of Malaysians. Malaysia has become one of the most important markets for luxury fashion brands in industrialised countries. To Malaysians, fashion merchandise is considered as fulfilling their needs while differentiating themselves from others through perceived values. Global luxury brands available in the market represent high-end brands that most consumers find difficult to purchase which is determined by their socio-economic status. In addition, consumers who patronise luxury brand goods tend to be more concerned about their outlook rather than their ability to get recognition from others (Park, 2008). Consumer response towards fashion products would indicate identity and their behaviours are influenced by cultural and psychological factors, personalities, social aspects and possibly environment.

In meeting customers' needs which are interrelated with design problems and solutions (Sinha, 2002), fashion designers need to understand social, cultural, and economic elements. Designers are sets of individuals who are distinct from people within the occupation (Owen, 1998) are like artists while achieving their design skills throughout their practice rather than based on one off ideas (Yee, 2007). They are seen as being imaginative, unpredictable, and spontaneous (Lawson, 1997). As such, output of fashion designs depends on the designer's personal experience, as well on the garments that they produce (Stecker, 1996). Fortunately, more influential designers have been adopting a more conceptually progressive approach to share their creative concept by expressing and embedding their personal philosophies on their approach thus focusing on the relation of body, movement, and fabric (Bugg, 2009). This study therefore attempts to identify new ways for fashion designers to present their fashion designs and to communicate it through concept and context, instead of basing it entirely on market trends and commercial value.

The Flow Concept, Creative Process and Cultural Values

The link between creative process and cultural values is provided by a flow theory based on a person's psychological or philosophical perspective when the person is doing something of interest and enjoyable (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). The concept of flow primarily creates a product whereby independent designers see clothing design as a process similar to an artist creating art pieces (Engel-Enright, 2007).

The optimal experience of flow involved during the design creative process exhibits characteristics such as uniqueness, innovation, and variation as well as producing inner satisfaction of creating and designing (Engel-Enright, 2007). Since designing involves a creative process in which designs can be both creative and elusive (Regan et al., 1997), fashion designers might have increasingly adopted a conceptual approach to sharing their creative concept whereby designers transform conceptual ideas into reality. Thus, studying the creative process amongst Malaysian fashion designers and how culture adds value to creativity enhancement is warranted.

Self-Concept, Identity and Role in Fashion Designing

Self-concept represents self-image and specifies the manner an individual consumer chooses products and brands. It refers to the perception others have of themselves as objects (Solomon, 1996). Thus, designers and marketers need to understand consumers' self-concept because it can influence their purchasing behaviour and action. It has been shown that an individual's self-concept interacts with the way people communicate, words or objects and the external environment to produce a stable feeling of the self which may influence how consumers view the advertisements and brand image (Onkvisit & Shaw, 1987). It is therefore important for fashion designers to tap into consumer's direction of action once they perceive positivity towards designing.

Whereas for identity, Leung and Chiu (2010) observe that bicultural identity development anchors on cultural background, length of exposure to social and lifestyle in a multicultural setting which is engaged in group creativity. The link between identity and creativity comes about from the psychological impact of different experiences on diversity. As such, creativity resulting from multiple identities occurs when individuals have more than two identities that are different from one to the other. To be creative, people in practice such as designers are suggested to have two identities at any one time (Crisp & Hewstone, 2007).

The role of fashion designers has been explored together with other topics such as design, knowledge, and tools (Cross, 2006; Chun et al., 2017; Dorst, 2011; Kimbel, 2012; and Lawson, 2005) in which a few studies acknowledge the connection of roles with fashion design (Adam et al., 2011; Lawson, 2005; and Tonkinwise, 2011). These studies examine the diverse scope of professional fashion designers with elements of style and aesthetic in fashion design. This paper attempts to link professional roles in fashion designing using a designer approach which is considered critical during the design planning phase. In this phase, designers are expected to create a theme and construct their conceptual idea by utilising in-depth knowledge and artistic work experience (McRobbie, 2015) enabling creativity to flow freely.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach is adopted using semi structured questions in an in-depth interview to gain an understanding of participants' cultural values, the design flow process, and product identity during their creative process. The targeted population is limited to fashion designer entrepreneurs who run their own fashion business in Klang Valley which houses many of the designer's boutiques and showrooms. The researcher started with market observation on a suitable sample population before using random sampling techniques to select the appropriate respondents who must be Malaysian fashion designers in the industry. Using purposive sampling and snowballing technique, a sample of eight ($n=8$) Malaysian fashion designers with a minimum of two years of design experience were recruited. Based on the literature reviews, the initial survey questionnaire from Hwang (2013) was adopted.

Background information collected includes education and related experience that led them into the fashion industry, summary of fashion collections, how these become collections of the designer and their market response were asked at the start of the interview. Each designer respondents were asked to share their creative output such as sketches, fashion illustration, design work in progress, and their most

successful designs in order to understand their work. They were also asked to rank in order of importance the skills they apply when designing. In particular, the skills are market research, target market, customer demand, design concept, communication with team, sketch process, material (fabrication or textile), pattern making and final fitting.

Multiple data collection methods such as observations and informed conversation were integrated to enrich the findings, as noted, and conducted by Flick (2002). The recorded interview is transcribed verbatim into Microsoft Word documents for analysis. A constant comparative method is used to code and analyse categories, concepts and ideas. The coding is structured and systematic to achieve relationship validation among the data in order to generate theory (Kolb, 2012). In addition, selective coding sampling was used throughout the duration of the study to gain additional insights from deep probing during in depth interviews. To increase trustworthiness of the data, the recordings and transcripts were reviewed several times. Data were finalised and carefully checked to ensure the objectives of the study are met.

FINDINGS

Among the eight designer respondents, six (75%) were female and two were male, (25%) with the age range from 25 to 51 years. In terms of tertiary education, five designers (62.5%) earned bachelor's degree, two (25%) had diploma and one (12.5%) had master's degree. Six fashion designers (75%) received their degrees in Malaysia, one (12.5%) earned from Australia while another (12.5%) received the degree from the United States of America. In terms of designing experience, those within the age of 25-30 years achieved 8 years, whereas those between 31 to 40 years in age seemed to have 5 years and the ones within 46 years and above had 30 years of experience. Their average work is approximately 30 – 40 hours per week, spending about 8 hours a day in designing. Interestingly, six females with an age range between 25 to 40 years old worked more hours (30-40 hours). Whereas for males, one with an age of 25-30 worked between 0–10-hour weeks compared to another male with an age 46 years and above, spent 50 hours and more in designing. The older designer seemed to work a lot more hours in designing compared to the younger ones.

When asked to rank in order of importance the skills they apply when designing, market research was named as most important followed by customer demand, design research, communication with teammates, target market, design concept, sketches process, material, patternmaking, and lastly final fitting. Fashion designers with less than four years' experience emphasised on the inspiration as well as the market research, however, for those with more than 5 years of design experience indicated that inspiration in relation to the design concept, garment construction, fabrication in addition to understanding target market.

From the in-depth interview six (6) themes emerged that affect the designer's cultural values on creativity. These are professional roles in creativity; creative design flow process; sources of inspiration based on experience; role of designer and brand identity; fashion as means of communication; and role of market research and brand identity. The findings from the in-depth interview are discussed below.

Professional Role in Creativity Development

During the interview, participants were asked, "*How do you define yourself as an apparel designer or fashion designer? And why?*" The response from designer participants on the roles anchors towards believing that fashion designers create garments based on the values, trends, style, and cultural adaption and most of them believe that fashion designer's production depends on their cultural inspiration. As reported by one of the participants that her apparel collection is a way to display her fashion as well as an expression of creative inspiration, projection of identity and design ideas:

"I am more of a creative director. I never studied designing before. Basically, my task is to come up with the concept and the brand. To work with the team and with ideas up to design stage", (Participant G).

Another participant believed that the role of fashion designer is about fitting in client's needs creatively.

"I think someone who rather consults. I really love to create a vision and imagination on what my client would be in it. So basically, that is my task as a fashion designer", (Participant H).

The second category from the data, the creative fashion design process can be grouped as (a) development process, which can create the product or collection, (b) creativity process with respect to the fashion designer's creation, and (c) the flow specifying the phases of the fashion designer's process up to design solution. The questions asked included, *"Could you please describe your current collection and your design process? How does your design move from sketches to the product?"*. The development process is linked to creativity in many aspects, especially on communication, sketching, design style or cut, material selection, preparing prototype and mass production. From the interview, the creative design and process was reported by fashion designers to occur simultaneously. This is testified in the following statement carrying three differing views:

"My current collection is about suits and classics since 2002. The first ever "songket" in Paris, partly the "pride to be there as heritage". My suit is mine "best and signature". My process is basically, understand what my client wants and get to know them. More communication and start developing the ideas for them. Routine normally sources of the fabrication. Then work with the prototype and study competitors' brands. As for me, it is like a game. It is a part of the process. Men wear very straight forward. More on the textile and material Men wear is all about the material. Basically, the design is very clean but plays roles in cutting and bold". (Participant B).

Here, understanding the clients and forming initial ideas until prototype while studying the competitors are part of the process to produce the targeted design.

"We are currently working on the Raya collection 2020. Our collection is more on modern twist of traditional interpretation. We will do our research, on the touch of "Kebaya Nyonya and Kurung Pahang" in those days. Basically, we want to bring back the traditional detailing and the styling, in the modern design. Normally we decide on the correct fabrication and enhance the fabric into the design. Again, enhance the detailing and the styling before we start on the production. We will sketch and look for the fabrication. Take the measurement and send for the production for the cutting and pattern making", (Participant D).

This considers the designer is inspired to research on traditional style and interpretation and the process starts with research on style and interpretation while choosing the correct fabric to enhance the design.

"Our best seller collection, which was at the Kuala Lumpur Fashion Week 2019 (KLFW), called "Sahara Desert". This collection is a mixture of the traditional with modern twist. Inspired from the cities of Abu Dhabi architecture and the culture. The ideas basically from the woman over there, the elegant and the architecture full of enhancement surrounding the cities. It is a bit challenging. KLFW means for Ready to wear (RTW)- a show of anticipate of wearing. From there we look for selling point. We try to plan 6 months early. As we get closer to the dates, sometimes we must tweet away from our competitors. So sometimes the quality is a bit different, need to encounter it. To do the sample to understand the process. Selling in Fashion Valet platform, we need to show them the prototype sample. Then the Fashion Valet will choose the design what suit for it to be sell online", (Participant G).

Inspired from different city's architecture and culture, the designing can be a process of mixing and incorporating local and international style with design elegance.

Creative Design Flow Process

Creative design process consists of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Yee, 2007) all of which contribute towards superior design solutions. Fashion designers need to analyse and exploit various ideas to be able to create alternative solutions to the problem which may involve numerous draft sketching whereas in synthesis, they need to create multiple solutions and choose only the best option. However, in evaluation, fashion designers should be doing the prototype and improving it at every stage of the process. Questions asked during the interview included:

- What process do you use to solve problems?
- What creative skills do you use when you design?
- Do you have a team that is involved in the design process? If so, what do they do?

From the interview, the designer indicated that while analysing the situation, they might change the process according to the situation or the nature of the problem. Some began by looking at the problems and trying to solve using alternative designs. The following interview verbatim *synthesises* the design process by identifying problems and opportunities:

“Usually, our problem no 1 is the measurement. Slightly run a few inches. Normally we will tailor. Sometimes the fabric gets defects and shrinks. We will do the quality control (QC) to overcome the problem. To do the alteration to play safe. We normally will have 1st and the last fitting. You must be creative and imagine the style. Meaning, we will advise on what silhouette will suit the client based on the body. I have 2 designers that will help me enhance the input. And the other one will do the sketches and ideas and advise me on the silhouette. Before proceeding to the pattern cutter and production side”, (Participant D).

To create a successful collection, synthesis and evaluation should be employed and these are emphasised below by one of the designer participants:

“Back to the sampling, usually will have a simple photoshoot. To see if suitable or not before posting in the social media. Sometimes the colours are different from the actual product. We source our material from overseas. Sometime when it arrives, is different. So, need to do quality control (QC) to check and it takes time. Sometimes, we must source from Malaysia to make it like it or do less work. And sometime different tailor. Therefore, the cutter is different. The main cutter plays the biggest problem. That why we must plan 6 months. We are in small team. Need to work together as a team. Our team is all about the brand and the image portraits us. In design, must play along and tweet the design. Basically, need to make it work. We have fashion designer in house and marketing crew. We communicate and get the same ideas and through. Mainly is to set a goal in selling to our customer. We always need to be different from others. Sometimes we do take custom made order too. Not all we mass produce. For mass produce, we do same design and play in with different colours based on the demands in RTW”, (Participant G).

To understand fashion designer’s feelings such as joy, frustration, anxiety, and opportunities during the design process, the flow concept has been conceptualised to examine the fashion designer’s creation and the process leading to design solution. Based on the questions including, *“Do you enjoy working as a fashion designer and why?”*; asked during the in-depth interview, participants acknowledged what kept them going to solve the problem is their passion and joy for creating the product while all of them felt motivated to be a creative person because of the challenge in problem solving. Participant G emphasises the extent competition and obstacle help her to be creative in solving the problem:

“Yes, I do. Never learn in business and fashion. Malaysia itself is very competitive. To get to know the industry and people. But it is hard to enter the area, as myself is not a socialising person. But it kept me motivated in design. Clothing kept changing and learns more and expands it. It makes the brand grow and bring the identity to me”.

However, other participants felt the job of a designer is physically strained due to tight schedule and working conditions. On the positive side, Participant D feels the pressure from seasonal demand actually

enhances her creativity thoughts and the design flow process and this is supported by Participant A who feels that her passion for her work had also enhanced her creativity.

“I actually do. Actually, the motivation will be the money during festival and the bridal season. Other than that, proud to see the creation to be alive in the reality”, (Participant D).

“I do enjoy with my work right now as a fashion designer because it is what I am passion for. I really enjoy with what I am doing right now because I also assume myself and as an artist that express my arts in clothing form”, (Participant A).

Unfortunately, barriers to the creative flow could happen when designers worry about failure, problems, and lack of time management as stated by some participants when they felt that the job of designer is physically strained due to tight time schedules or working conditions in which case, their creativity enhancement process might be suppressed. When asked during the interview, *“Have you ever gotten lost direction during your work designing process?”*, these designers perceive that the common barrier to full engagement in the flow of the creative process is fear of failure (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). Not getting adequate resources and support when they face difficulties may affect their creative activities as explained by participants G and B and how they could not achieve what they had planned:

“Yes, so many times. Sometimes we start with one direction. Then when there is a problem in production and staffing, sometimes you think it is nice. But yeah, lost for a while. But need to overcome it”, (Participant G).

“Yes. Many times. Not lost, being blurring. With the spirit Sometimes frustrated. I always take it as a challenge. Lost is nothing. With lost can take it as I like to replace. Not alter. The old product can be ready to wear”, (Participant B).

On the other hand, the flow concept can also provide fashion designers joy when creating something new since they are happy to do the work that they enjoy. As stated by Csikszentmihalyi (2008), experience is oriented towards a goal with rewards as a result of being involved with enjoyable activities. During the creative fashion design process, fashion designers would feel the joy of designing since they are involved in fashion activities which allow them to look for new ideas creatively while solving the problem. To the question, *“Can you tell me more about your favourite collection or design and why?”* Asked during the interview, they reported being happy when their collections receive recognitions and feedback from customers as indicated by one participant who felt satisfied with her traditional and vintage cultural designs:

“I would say on “sulam goyang”, our signature design. Sulam goyang is a type of technique in those days like to wear. Something very luxurious and none of the designer had done it before in these days. It gets more traditional and vintage style”, (Participant D).

Feeling of satisfaction and happiness can be contributed by buyers and members of the press. Participant E who worked with traditional batik motif and design is sharing her design inspiration which she received from international designers:

“My favourite will be the one during KLFW 2019. The batik that designs by me inspired from the African women motifs. A design that mainly emphasises colours and materials. A collection that combines the elements of “berkemban” traditional touch. Using type of silhouette that flow down naturally using drapes technique”, (Participant E).

Thus, we can assume that designers are like artists who work with abstract style yet inspired by elements or environments that exude some forms of challenges and new ways of looking at things or objects leaving them feeling happy and satisfied. Next is the analysis on how professional roles can help enhance designers' creativity.

Source of Inspiration and Designer's Experience

Fashion designers like any other individuals use daily experiences and surroundings to search for their own identity to produce new designs. They search for inspiration through modern and technology edged communication to bring connections between creative ideas and output. Participant C stated the role of inspiration as follows:

"I normally will look from books and Instagram to get more ideas. I like to play with the design, silhouette, and fabrication".

Sources of designer experience acquired from travelling, shopping, visiting art exhibitions and museums may influence their creative design process which is used to develop designer's inspiration. Participant A indicated the sources that inspired her could come from people and the surroundings including material elements such as books, art, phrase of words, music, architecture or even history besides from personal beliefs, values, and experiences as indicated by Participant E:

"My artwork is from my imaginary things and life. Which I take as a cartoonist character. But it is basically about people and my observation throughout everyday life. Therefore, I love to visit art gallery because it makes me inspired to do more things. For me I find myself unique and stay true with my authentic value".

"I am inspired from a singer called "Kerli Koiv". An Estonian singer and born as a songwriter. I like her character, wild and daring. She like to go all out, and the video make me kept the spirit and more ideas to play along. Most of my design are basically inspired from the music video. I like to go some places like the abandon hospital and buildings, to explore something new. Something very rare and daring to go with", (Participant E).

Although most of these participants had multiple sources of inspirations, Participant D however has a consistent source of inspiration for her identity refer to it as:

"I want to bring back the traditional era whereby everyone wants to go "vava voom" to modern twist. To being timeless. I like to see my grandma old photos. Those were classic and vintage style look. I like the colours, silhouette, and the details. But of course, I also use online such as Pinterest to get more ideas. I like to play along with the Malay ethnic culture".

Thus, sources of inspiration for designers could be influenced by cultural factors.

Role of Designer and Brand Identity

With the current economic, socio-political environment, at national or international level, Malaysian fashion designers need to play multiple roles within the fashion industry. Besides producing and marketing creative design output, the designers need to also plan the production process and market their brand. In other words, the designers are expected to be a researcher, entrepreneur, and problem solver. Assuming the role of a researcher, the designer will have to study the market and sales trends, know who the competitors are and how do they become successful and inspired. The participants in this study affirmed that it is necessary to research especially during the design development and production process in response to an open ended question, "How is the fashion system in Malaysia different from other fashion systems in Asia and international market?" which intends to connect designers to the role of a researcher. The need to engage in research role is indicated by the following statement:

"As someone very little and small, I don't have much experience in industry. But I observe in social media, I can guess the appreciation here in Malaysia are very little. If you are famous, then people care. But in international, they take every piece, and they appreciate it. Malaysia basically, if they see your creation is va-va-boom, they will use that design to go for these little designers to

duplicate the design. This is what I see in the current market and the demand but within their budget range”, (Participant H).

It is to be cautioned that this research role may differ at large international designing companies who could engage external consultants to research for them. As designers and entrepreneurs, their roles are multiple such as planning the design, marketing and managing the business which require them to identify pricing, prepare marketing plans and acquire capital. Participant B explained the dynamics of being a fashion designer engaging in running a business while relating his perception of being an entrepreneur in response to the interview question, “*Have you attempted to market your collection outside of Malaysia? If so, have you ever had any difficulties entering market?*”

“The trend now is pricing and of course, I still remember in 2006 in Milan Fashion show. Designer Dolce and Gabbana is like “mamamia” ... They were surprised seeing “songket”. It is something exotic and unique. But we as Malaysian, we are proud of our heritage”.

One of the participants who worked in formal men’s and women’s wear for the past 30 years shared being responsible in designing the garments, managing issues related to drawings and doing marketing for the business:

“We have our multi-racial. I take among the region, and I am proud of it. We have a lot of resources and have yet to explore like “songket”, and “tenun”. Songket is our elements and trade the Malaysian heritage. My famous signature collection is the creation and showcasing of songket in Milan and Paris fashion show back in 2006. To do something that people never done”. (Participant B)

For participant G, her work involves communication with supplies and customer demands:

“We had collaboration with Singapore. However, the new Asian market in Orchard Road, we as Malaysian to enter in it is hard. It took come conveniently. As our market is for the modest. But for Dubai are something similarity with Singapore. As we are modernism and modest. They we are loud and more daring. While for Dubai they prefer the traditional which is the “abaya style”. To supply it to them, we need to quality control before market it to them”.

To warrant success in the business, the designer entrepreneur must multitask and target for international market.

Fashion as Means of Communication

For fashion designers, the garments they produce are to communicate their creativity in terms of ideas, design philosophy and values to the customers (Barnard, 2002). Furthermore, fashion and communication represent aesthetic and designer intention. Thus, in this study, it is crucial to examine how communication in designing contributes to creativity enhancement and whether culture adds value to the design creative process. When designing a garment, visual elements exude aesthetic elements which can represent comfort as well as customers individual’s characteristic and outlook.

To the question asked during the interview, “*Do you have a philosophy when it comes to design?*” Participant F stated that she focused on aesthetic as the primary factor in her design process:

“Design must meet the form. It depends on the design. But mostly is the fabric, although it will be limited edition”, while Participant B quoted the following on how he communicates his ideas of beauty through design: “simplicity, bold and clean cut”.

Role of Market Research in Fashion Designing for Brand Identity

In fashion designing, brand identity is about the visibility and marketability of the garments in the market for the designer to maintain their business. The intention here is to stress the need to understand customer's needs, market research and brand's identity and how these elements relate to a designer's creative design process and ultimately creativity enhancement. For the purpose of our study, we will discuss market research and brand identity in relations to creative designing and creativity enhancement. Market research is the process of collecting background information relating to current design, and future trends in the fashion industry. It is partly to understand fashion concepts in the fashion industry, competing brands and customer needs which is important to gain a competitive edge over competitors and become successful in business. To the questions asked during the interview, "*Have you made any market survey to identify what your competitors or methods in performing their business?*", one participant (Participant F) used internal data on customer demands and request as part of market research while participant G uses external resources such as market survey to collect market information:

"No, I don't. We are among friends. So, I just focus on my collection and normally I can say is, we just do based on our data customer demands and request. We just improve and play along with the design, colours, and the style"., (Participant F). "We had done something like mentee. A platform that does market survey for us. They put us where we are and what the data, we have verse with our competitors. But I personally feel it really helps. So, we know what we need to be improve on", (Participant G).

Thus, for some Malaysian designers whose marketing are mainly for local customers, no formal market research is being done.

As for the brand identity, the questions asked during the interview were: "*Do you think that brand identity is important for enhancing business performance?*" And "*Do you think that brand identity can assist you in building resilient quality in your brand in the market?*" These questions seek to find out how brand entities add value to designing and how does the market functions to enhance creativity among designers.

Firstly, customers' perception of brand image and identity in the fashion industry are regarded as important by the designers. The importance of brand identity on garment designs and production is supported by Participant G who stated that brand identity indicates customer preferences which would provide recognition to the fashion designers. However, Participant G also believed her customers made a purchase based on design and style.

"Yes, it is important. At the end of the day, need to know your market. Basically, to know to whom you want to see too. Finding the right buyers. Personally, people shop with us is not because of the brand. They shop with us because of the design and style that they like", (Participant G).

Participant F believed that brand identity in garment collection is important to the business since the design provides for the brand image rather than portraying aspects of design and style. The following is the excerpt about the brand identity and image by Participant F:

"Yes, I do have my own style and brand. Meaning basically, it reflects my own self. Of course, I want it to grow. We had joined fashion show in the past. For the upcoming fashion show, we are inviting our customers to come, and be appreciated to them", (Participant F).

To summarise, the eight ($n=8$) fashion designer participants comprised six females and two males, with the age range between 25-51 years old, working an average of 30-40 hours weekly, eight hours a day in designing. Their designing experience varied with those within the age of 25-30 years achieved 8 years, whereas those between 31 to 40 years in age had 5 years and the one within 46 years and above age had 30 years of experience. They ranked market research as most important followed by customer demand, design research, fashion as means of communication, target market, design concept, sketches, material, patternmaking, and lastly final fitting. Participants' ranking showed that their target market is based on research and customer needs are their top priority.

The finding from qualitative analysis focused on discussing the six (6) themes that emerged and affected the designer's cultural values on creativity. These are professional roles in creativity; creative design flow process; sources of inspiration based on experience; role of designer and brand identity; fashion as means of communication; and role of market research and brand identity. The development process is linked to creativity in many aspects, especially on communication, sketching, design style or cut, material selection, preparing prototype and mass production while the creative design and process tend to occur simultaneously. They search for inspiration through modern and technology edged communication to bring connections between creative ideas and output. Sources of designer experience which can contribute to the creative process were acquired from participating and showcasing in art exhibitions and museums, academic and non-academic seminars nationally and at international level may influence their creative design process and inspiration. Understanding customer's needs was linked to market research and was ranked as most important to build on a brand's identity. Designer participants used internal and external resources to understand market dynamism in designing but also acknowledged that customers perceived brand identity as culturally influenced. Designers seemed to play multiple roles such as planning the design, managing the business, preparing marketing plans and acquiring capital. They are not just a fashion designer but a researcher, entrepreneur, and problem solver.

CONCLUSION

From the qualitative analysis, there is an indication that Malaysian designers' cultural values influence the fashion design process and creativity enhancement. Professional development roles seemed to have an impact on the creative process flow and creative success. However, the role of market research and brand identity towards creative output did not have much evidence which may create disadvantage to designers to reach a wider regional and international market. However, their rank on market research as most important followed by customer demand seemed to suggest their competitiveness in the design industry to reach international level. The influence of cultural values in the creativity design process is demonstrated by the design development process involving creative ideas for sketching, style, cut and material. In designing, they were involved with analysing the creative design, synthesising to find the best option and evaluating to produce the prototype and testing it. All these stages are part of the flow process influencing the creative process of fashion designers leaving designers feeling happy and joyous especially after getting recognition on their design output (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). As suggested by Westwood and Low (2003) culture affects analysis of creativity and the innovation process that generates creative product ideas. During the creative design process, fashion designers acknowledge that their designs are influenced by their customers, thus the traditional and current culture, taste, trends, colour preference and silhouette are embedded in the product. Designers acknowledge communication is important for the creative process to succeed while their role is to translate their own cultural ideas with that of consumers into concepts. As problem solvers, they looked for alternatives when faced with difficulties and as designer entrepreneurs, Malaysian fashion designers were motivated to achieve success which is driven by passion to create and produce. Although the designers considered themselves operating with a small brand name, this study observed that they were capable of multitasking starting with the design process to manufacture and to marketing of their collection. These designers are inspired from material culture such as art, books, and Instagrams or from audio such as songs while focusing on using local traditional designs, styles, or materials as testified by designers who have gone international. Among sources of inspiration, they sometimes sought for design philosophy, such as using simple, bold, and clean cut or another prefer to emphasise on heritage and look at Malay ethnic culture for ideas which will be translated into creative design and output. Mete (2006) noted that inspiration plays an important role in the fashion design process and these ideas may come from everywhere and everything. From the interview, fashion designers prefer to create their own brand identity suggesting they used creative process and experience as designer researcher, entrepreneur, and problem solver by focusing on self-identity or signature collections while some focus on their own style based on demand for Malay traditional style, colour, and stitching. To reach the wider market, all the designers agree that market research is important to build brand image and identity, however some did not do so because they focus only on a small customer segment. Thus, Malaysian designers as discussed above seemed to be culturally aligned and adaptive in meeting

customers' demands and needs. This is probably attributed by their inclination to play multiple roles as designer researcher, entrepreneur, and problem solver all of which are embedded in a flow concept using experience in the development process and creative designing.

For future research, the study could employ larger samples in which a comparison may be made on the design flow process by different customer types in terms of taste and preference due to socio economic factors. To gain better insight on cultural influence, design flow process and the brand identity, comparisons should be made between designers that work only within the local market and those that have made it globally. Lastly, incorporate a mix mode of data collection (quantitative and qualitative) method on designer national population from diverse ethnicity and gender so as would be more generalisable and capable of understanding in-depth the perception, beliefs, attitudes and practices as supported by qualitative methodology.

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The Use of Stainless Steel to Create Contemporary Artistic Arabic Calligraphy Sculptures

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the use of stainless steel in creating contemporary Arabic calligraphy sculptures. It discusses artworks' unique, innovative, and non-imitation stainless steel Arabic calligraphy. This study sheds light on this new field of modern Arabic calligraphy. The artworks of four famous artists were analysed in terms of how these works were created, the scripts or letters and alphabets used, and the type of calligraphy used. The type of contemporary art of Arabic calligraphy used includes verses from the Qur'an, poetry, famous sayings, and non-Arabic poems translated into Arabic letters. The interaction between sculptural Arabic calligraphy, stainless steel, and the environment or surrounding factors led to a contradictory three-way interaction, which increased the sculptural artistic act and creativity. The data were analysed using the descriptive analysis method and observation method. The samples analysed consist of fifteen sculptures. The finding revealed that these stainless steel carvings include intertwined Arabic scripts and letters. Arabic calligraphy employed varied between leafy Kufic, Moroccan Kufic, Diwani, thuluth, Naskh, and even contemporary Arabic calligraphy. The sculptures' contents or phrases also varied between Quranic verses, poetry, novel, sayings, words, and sentences from the artist himself. As for the style, there is free Arabic calligraphy, new modern classic Arabic calligraphy, and modern classic Arabic calligraphy.

Keywords: *Contemporary, Arabic, Calligraphy, Sculpture, Stainless steel*

INTRODUCTION

Since the discovery of the aesthetic value of Arabic calligraphy and its use in Islamic decoration of many materials and shapes, it became one of the three main elements of Islamic art, along with floral and geometric motifs. Arabic calligraphy is an art in its own right. It can be used without the need for other Islamic art elements. Therefore, Muslim artists developed Arabic calligraphy and associated arts by using it in many things such as tiles, carpets, walls, and others. The artists may use wood, plaster, porcelain, and various metals. They employed appropriate letters, words, and sentences from verses, hadiths, words of

wisdom, and poems. Several techniques have been developed for using Arabic calligraphy in Islamic art, including pouring it into previously prepared models, whether letters or words, to form the intended results.

Arabic calligraphy is one of the main features of Islamic art. It has been applied in many materials such as tiles, carpets, and murals, in addition to the use of metals in creating various Arabic calligraphy works. Therefore, Arabic calligraphy is an endless source of creativity, inspiration, and innovation (Al-Qahtani & Megahed 2015).

In modern art, Arabic calligraphy has been incorporated into all kinds of plastic art, including paintings and sculptural works. It is nearly impossible to include all Arabic fonts in plastic art. However, the artist or calligrapher can turn it to fruition with their experience, skill, foresight, and passion for their craft. He can also combine several lines and form a new linear composition. Furthermore, several materials are used to create unique and innovative Arabic calligraphy sculptures, including stainless steel, which is the focus of the study. The calligrapher and artist's ability to install Arabic letters carved from stainless steel, to form the required words and sentences takes advantage of the characteristics of Arabic calligraphy.

The most crucial issue is the selection of sentences or verses that accept composition in their letters and carving (Arabic calligraphy, 2020). The artist translates non-Arabic poems in Arabic language to compose the sculptural work. Why did the artist use steel to create his Arabic calligraphy sculptures? Were the carved sentences polished after they were complete, or were the letters polished before being formed and installed? What is the artistic value of this type of art?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although many writers wrote about Arabic calligraphy, its aesthetics, and philosophy. Emphasis was placed on the fine oil paintings that artists drew and created, but the issue of research in aspects and other creations of artists in the field of sculpture remained very few. They were just references in books, research, and articles. Therefore, the focus here is on showing this type of art for Arabic calligraphy and showing the creativity of artists in creating sculptures of Arabic calligraphy from stainless steel.

Traditional Steel Work

This paper focuses on the use of stainless steel in the creation of Arabic calligraphy sculptures. The use of this material in creating Arabic calligraphic sculptures is not considered a product of the modern era, preceded by works of Arab art and calligraphy made of other metals such as gold, copper, and steel. The methods of engraving, hammering, pressing, punching, unloading, and piercing were used to create artworks, as well as the process of casting metal into prepared models (Ettinghausen, et al., 2017).

Since the Iranian Safavid era, steel artworks have been very precise and ingenious as a continuation of the metal artworks of the previous Islamic periods. During that time, calligraphic steel artworks, also known as increase panels, were employed as war flags, tombstones, and on the doors of Iranian sanctuaries (Ettinghausen, et al., 2017).

Stainless steel has long been employed in creative works because of its long-term strength and durability, ease of manufacture, resilience to various weather elements, and dazzling look, which reflects movement, and lighting. Moreover, it can be colored and dyed in any colour, making it easy to clean.

Contemporary Arabic Calligraphy

It is impossible to form all traditional fonts and use them in plastic art, whether paintings or sculptures, because of their strict rules and laws. However, with the calligraphers' experience, artistic imagination, and passion for their work, they can choose the font type in their art or combine several lines to create new linear sculptures. Several Arabic fonts appeared in addition to traditional ones, such as free Arabic calligraphy and expressive Arabic calligraphy among others. Arabic calligraphy is a living art that constantly evolves, innovates, and creates new shapes, patterns, and designs to make it more appealing and relevant, whether on paintings, sculptures, or other works of art (Arabic Calligraphy, 2020).

The artist employed both traditional and modern techniques to create Arabic calligraphy sculptures such as collage, laser, steel casting, and shaping the desired figure. In the art of Arabic calligraphic steel sculpture, the letters are carved individually and then gathered, or carved with the appropriate phrases and then collected, to eventually form the required words and sentences by interlacing or stretching them along the needed area.

Sculptural Arabic calligraphy works appeared in three-dimensional shapes, which gives the artwork an additional benefit of being able to see it with limitless formations as the point of view varies. All calligraphers and plastic artists (oil and applied paintings) agreed to consider Arabic calligraphy as one of the most beautiful, attractive, and realistic arts in the modern world. This is because it keeps pace with all technical developments, techniques, and contemporary updates, and it uses them on all kinds of different materials and raw materials. Arabic calligraphy is an art subject to renewal, development, adaptation, creativity, and innovation (The most significant aspect of Islamic art is calligraphy and this art has developed into a traditional and a contemporary form. Also, Arabic calligraphy is considered the finest of all kinds of Islamic art. Calligraphy is the art of elegant handwriting. Islamic calligraphers have displayed many styles of Arabic calligraphy that contain intricate lines and rich colours, calligraphers have been using the form of letters and words as a visual pictorial and it focuses on the spiritual aspect and it has a certain aesthetic value (Alashari et al., 2019. p2). It used traditional calligraphy, neoclassical, modern, free form, rudimentary, abstract, legible script, call graffiti, magical, and gestural calligraphy (Nor Azlin, 2012) and created new artistic fonts such as free and expressive fonts. Artists adapted traditional and innovative calligraphy, using ancient and modern techniques to create three-dimensional Arabic calligraphy sculptures.

This study aims to explain the new addition to the Arabic calligraphy art in applied plastic art or engraving with steel. These sculptures are decorated inside and outside the buildings. Four artists became famous for these creative works, and their works were shown in many local and international museums and exhibitions. A new feature has been introduced to the use of non-Arabic poems translated into Arabic to produce Arabic calligraphy sculptures, in addition to the usage of Quranic verses and Arabic poetry.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers employed the descriptive-analytical method, observation method, and Nor Azlin's theory on Islamic calligraphy artworks contemporary. This study seeks to define some of the characteristics and values of visual Arabic calligraphy in order for it to survive, grow, and evolve in parallel with the techniques of applied plastic art or sculpture. Arabic calligraphy is executed using stainless steel in three-dimensional sculptural work for artists such as Naja Al-Mahdoui, El Seed, Sabah Arbilli, and Mattar Bin Lahij.

ANALYSIS

The plates have been stainless steel carvings including intertwined Arabic scripts and letters. Arabic calligraphy varied between leafy Kufic, Moroccan Kufic, Diwani, thuluth, Naskh, and even modern Arabic calligraphy. The sculptures' contents also varied between the Holy Qur'an, poetry, novel, and

sayings, as well as words and sentences from the artist himself. As for the style, it is also numerous. There is free Arabic calligraphy, new modern classic Arabic calligraphy, and modern classic Arabic calligraphy. The aspects of sculpture are analysed in order to understand its underlying meaning.

Analysis of Nja Al-Mahdaoui's Works

Nja Al-Mahdaoui is a famous Tunisian calligrapher and plastic artist who used Arabic calligraphy in exquisite plastic works in a new innovative way. He also used several materials, including stainless steel, to carve Arabic letters. With his unique style, the Arabic letters have gained a new aesthetic dimension, art, and beauty inspired by the Arabic letter.



Figure 1. *Noor* (Nja Al-Mahdaoui, n.d.)

(Source: <http://www.nja-mahdaoui.com/artwork-category/sculpture/>)

Figure 1 shows an artwork entitled *Noor* (Nja Al-Mahdaoui, n.d.) which is a stainless steel sculpture in Arabic calligraphy. The artwork appears in its bright colour with simple gold colours. It is clear that the type of Kufic calligraphy is leafy, and the text is not clear whether it is poetry or other. The steel is melted and then moulded in this form.



Figure 2. *Beya* (Nja Al-Mahdaoui, n.d.)

(Source: <http://www.nja-mahdaoui.com/artwork-category/sculpture/>)

Figure 2 shows a sculptural artwork in Arabic calligraphy entitled *Beya* (Nja Al-Mahdaoui, n.d.) which is made from stainless steel, with steel colouring. It is a Kufic type of calligraphy. It is not clear whether the text is poetry or something else. The steel is melted and then moulded in this form.

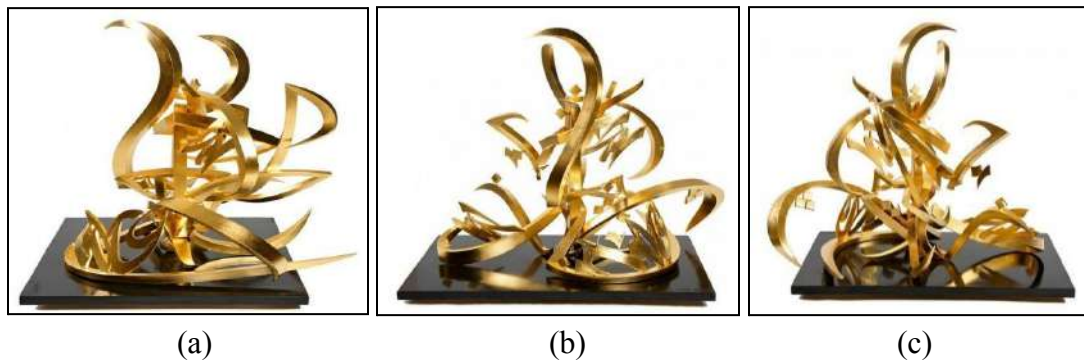


Figure 3 (a,b & c). *Maqam Essafa* (Nja Al-Mahdaoui, n.d.)
(Source: <http://www.nja-mahdaoui.com/artwork-category/sculpture/>)

Figure 3 shows the three curves of the same artwork entitled *Maqam Essafa* (Nja Al-Mahdaoui, n.d.) that consist of stainless steel plated with gold. It appears that the type of font is Diwani. Watching this 3D artwork from three angles, the artwork appears endlessly. The meaning of the text is unclear, with separate letters formed, installed, and interwoven to make the desired phrase.

Analysis of El Seed's Work

El Seed is a Tunisian-French artist. At the age of 18, he learned the Arabic language and calligraphy without the traditional rules. He invented the art of 'calligraffiti,' which combines Arabic calligraphy and street art. Elseed does not depend on a specific type of Arabic font but rather on a free Arabic font. The advantage of the art of Arabic calligraphy sculpture is the establishment of steel Arabic calligraphic sculptural designs with non-Arabic poems and poetry translated into Arabic.



Figure 4 (a-b). *The Bridge* (El Seed, 2017)
(Source: <https://elseed-art.com/projects/the-bridge-korea/>)

The plate of the sculpture entitled *The Bridge* (El Seed, 2017) includes several parts. In November 2017, the South Korean government placed this laser-cut steel artwork on the inter-Korean border in the demilitarised zone attached to the fence on the border between the two countries. The goal is to advocate peace, unity, and mutual respect. The statue, which is more than 20 metres horizontally, represents the words of the North Korean poet Kim Saul, who died before the two countries were divided. The artwork will remain unfinished until the rest of the statue is installed in the North Korean part. The words are in the non-Arabic language, and the text has been translated into Arabic script in order to create the Arabic stainless steel calligraphy sculpture. The surrounding weather affected the sculpture, increasing its beauty and splendours. The carved words of *The Bridge* are:

“You may remember, unable to forget: yet live a lifetime, remember or forget, for you will have a day whereon will come to forget. You may remember, unable to forget: Let your years flow by, remember or forget, For once in a while, you will forget. On the other hand, it may be:’ How could you forget What you can never forget”

In contrast to the weather variables and the surrounding environment, the steel retained its original colour, which fit the setting surrounding the artwork and added another artistic dimension to it.

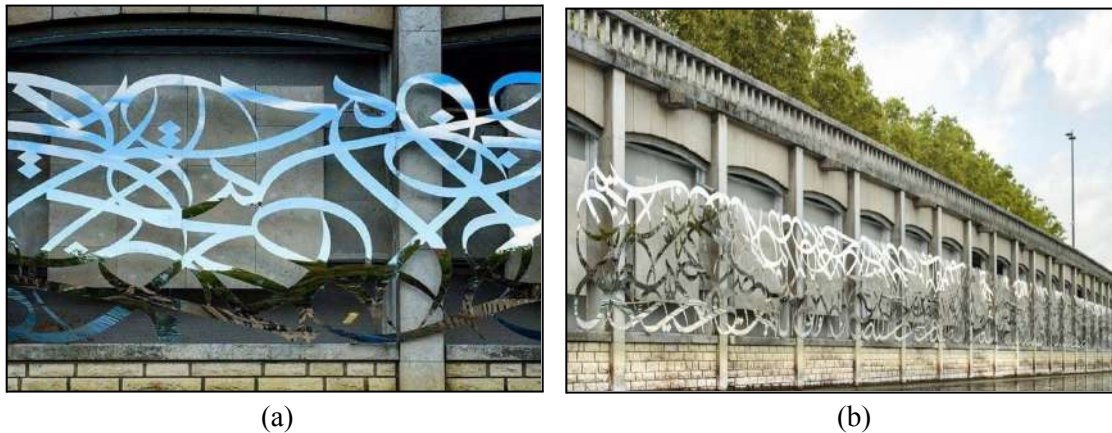
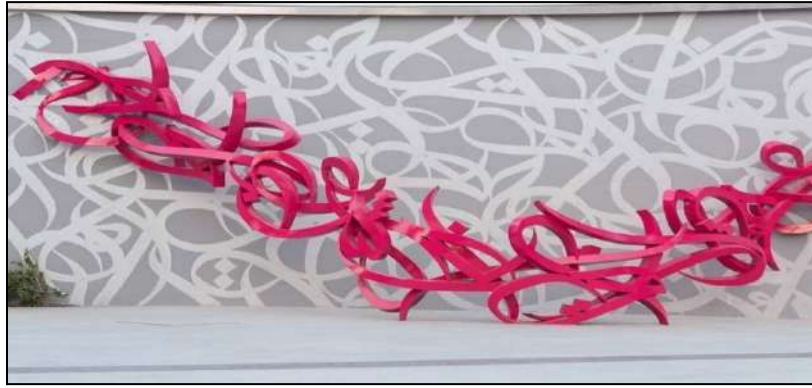


Figure 5 (a-b). Myrelingues-la-Brumeuse (El Seed, 2018).
(Source: <https://elseed-art.com/myrelingues-la-brumeuse-lyon/>)

Figure 5 shows the *Myrelingues La Brumeuse* (El Seed, 2017) sculptures inspired from a novel by Claude Le Marguet. The carved French novel in Arabic calligraphy was translated into Arabic. Artist El Seed used a laser to cut the 120-metre long sculpture and suspended it between two bridges along the banks of the La Saone River in Lyon city, France. The artwork consists of 81 panels. The river, the steel, and the line created a mutual interaction between them. The fate of Lyon is no simpler than that of the river. Any city, undoubtedly, is a complicated being, Lyon more than another, which strikes the historian by its richness, its abrupt transformations, its originalities, and even its oddities. It is not the same from one century to the next century and is more constrained than going of its own accord. It goes endlessly from one originality to another).

Arabic calligraphy with its beauty and creativity, stainless steel with its lustre and reflection of movement light, the river with the flow of water and its reflection on the sculpture created a tripartite interaction between the line, the steel, and the river in the 3D sculpture. His works generate contrast and interaction with the surrounding environment.



(a)



(b)

Figure 6 (a-b). Declaration (El Seed, 2018)
(Source: <https://elseed-art.com/opera-dubai/>)

The three-dimensional steel Arabic calligraphy sculpture (Figure 6), entitled *Declaration* (El Seed, 2018) covered in bright pink, was placed on the Dubai Opera front, measuring 30 metres long and weighing three and a half tons of stainless steel. The words of the sculpture were said by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum:

“Art in all its colours and types reflects the culture, history, and civilization of nations.”

It is noticed that the artwork has made its letters by casting and then forming the letters. Put the letters together to be the required saying. Interlacing, overlapping, and fitting are ways to collect Arabic letters to create an artistic sculpture.

Analysis of Sabah Arbilli's Work

Sabah Arbilli is a British Iraqi artist. He has been an artist and passionate about calligraphy and arts since his childhood. He obtained a Master's Degree in Visual Arts from the Visual Institute of Traditional Arts in London. He has many works of art displayed in many international museums. His works included carving Arabic letters and re-forming them into fine paintings and beautiful sculptures, adding Arabic calligraphy to another aesthetic dimension. Sabah Arbilli employs Naskh script in his paintings and sculptures in an innovative and unconventional aesthetic.



Figure 7. Calligraphic sculpture (Sabah Arbilli, 2016)
(Source: http://islamicartsmagazine.com/magazine/view/the_calligraphy_sculpture_by_sabah_arbilli_unveiled_in_qatar/)

This *Calligraphic sculpture* (Sabah Arbilli, 2016) is in the form of individual letters and then assembled to be the poem of Sheikh Jassim Bin Muhammad Al Thani (Ruler of Qatar). The Naskh line is 7.5 metres high and 7.62 metres long. The carved words are:

“And amongst the sultans stood out, As a lanneret floating over mountain peaks.”

The sculpture was made for the National Day of the State of Qatar and was placed on the Doha Corniche.



Figure 8 (a-b). Decision makers (Sabah Arbilli, 2016)
(Source: http://islamicartsmagazine.com/magazine/view/calligraphic_exhibition_decisions_by_sabah_arbilli/)

This sculpture was created by Sabah and was named the *Decision Makers* (Sabah Arbilli, 2016), made for the Dar Al Funoon Art House, Kuwait. It is clear that the artist used the method of pushing, punching, and laser cutting to implement the artwork. The artist added colours to stainless steel to look more beautiful, wonderful, and new in the sculptural artistic medium.

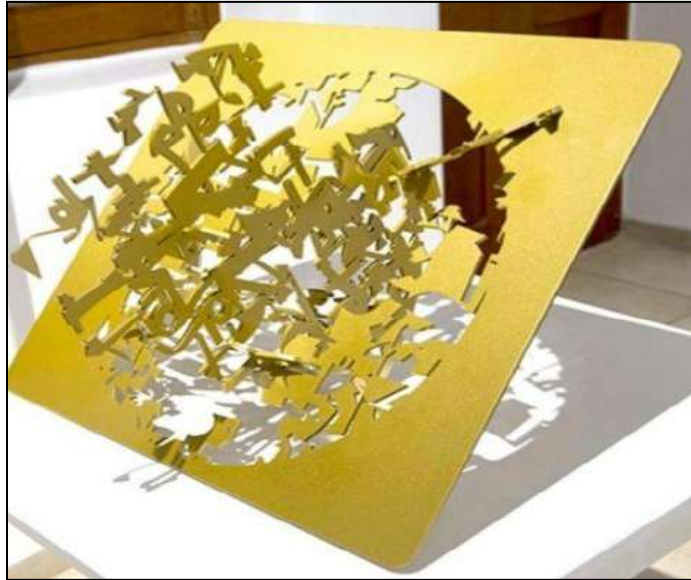


Figure 9. *Migration* (Sabah Arbilli, 2016)

(Source: http://islamicartsmagazine.com/magazine/view/calligraphic_exhibition_decisions_by_sabah_arbilli/)

This sculpture is named *Migration* (Sabah Arbilli, 2016) and was exhibited at the Kuwait Exhibition for Arabic Calligraphy 2016. It seems that the artist used a laser to cut, shape and install the Arabic letters for the sculpture.

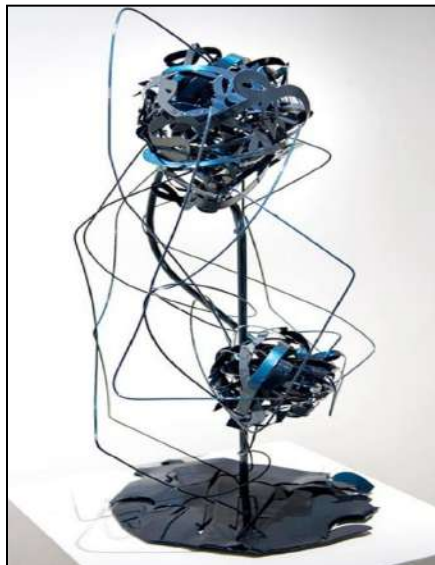


Figure 10. *Inner Control* (Sabah Arbilli, 2016)

(Source: http://islamicartsmagazine.com/magazine/view/calligraphic_exhibition_decisions_by_sabah_arbilli/)

This sculpture is named *Inner Control* (Sabah Arbilli, 2016) or decision between the brain and heart. The interweaving of the Arabic letters, their overlapping, and their installation in stainless steel

improved the sculpture's beauty with the change of the colour of the steel to this beautiful colour, adding another feature to the three-dimensional Arabic calligraphy sculpture. Sabah's works are unique, innovative, and original in terms of design and creativity. He has new ideas in expressing his art using stainless steel.

Analysis of Mattar bin Lahej's Work

Mattar bin Lahej is a young Emirati artist who adopts the Thuluth script in his oil and stainless steel artworks. He has many works consisting of Arabic calligraphy using steel. He was also called "the Man of Steel." He made small and giant steel sculptures with his passion for calligraphy and steel.



Figure 11 (a-b). *Aya* (Mattar bin Lahej, 2018)

(Source: <https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts-culture/art/eight-metre-tall-mattar-bin-lahej-sculpture-unveiled-at-city-walk-1.778740>)

This is a sculpted verse entitled *Aya* (Mattar bin Lahej, 2018). It is a sculpture by the artist Mattar Lahej in 2018. It is a verse from Surah Muhammad. It was placed in front of City Walk in Dubai, near the mosque. It weighs four tons of stainless steel. It is sculpted in the traditional hollowed-out thuluth script, made of gilded stainless steel on a 3D black background. The sculpture improved creativity and beauty by utilising current Arabic calligraphy and stainless steel methods. In the Arabic calligraphy sculpture, the artist corrugated its letters, placed them in a pool of water, and added movement to it. Its unique shape created a state of balance between the eye of the beholder and its surroundings, in addition to the influence of weather factors on it.

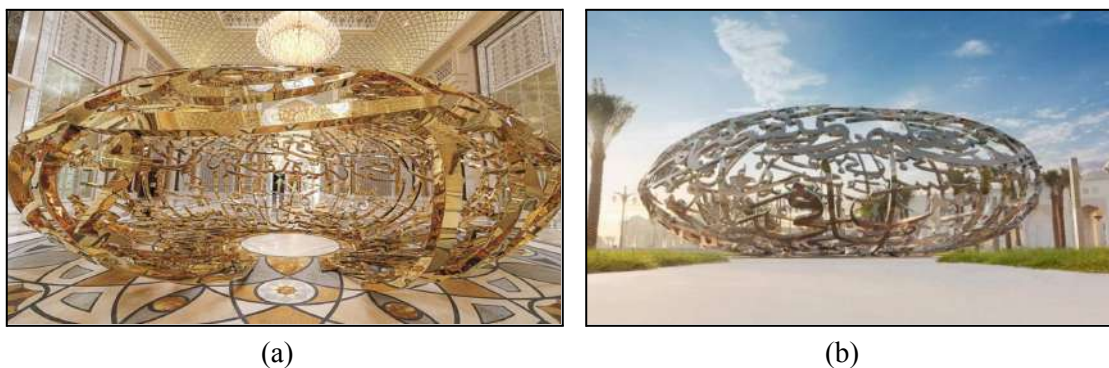


Figure 12 (a-b). *Speech Energy* (Mattar bin Lahej, 2018)

(Source: <https://www.emaratyouth.com/life/culture/2020-02-27-1.1312896>)

Pictured above is a gold-plated stainless steel sculpture depicting *Speech Energy* (Mattar bin Lahej, 2013) at Castle Al Watan in Abu Dhabi. Mattar had made three large sculptures. The carvings reflect the aesthetics of Arabic thuluth calligraphy, with its beautiful letters and large curves. The carved letters are hollowed out from the inside, very precise and balanced. The sculpture is hollow inside, allowing the audience to enter and explore its artistic dimensions from a different perspective. These sculptures represent sayings from Sheikh Zayed bin Al Nahyan. The main sculpture phrase:

“Real wealth is the wealth of men, not money and oil, and money is of no use if it is not harnessed to serve the people.”

Other sculptures:

“Science and history go hand in hand. With knowledge, anyone can write their history and preserve it for generations. So that they can look at it and know what grandparents and fathers did? Education and culturing people in it is a great wealth that we cherish. Science is wealth. We are building the future on a scientific”.



Figure 13. *Moons of Forgiveness* (Mattar bin Lahej, 2018)
(Source: <http://www.danderma.co/?p=29112>)

Moons of Forgiveness (Mattar bin Lahej, 2013) is a steel sculpture representing the flow and aesthetics of Arabic letters. It is located next to a waterfall, measuring 12 square metres with a height of two metres. Circular rings linked together with Arabic letters, seem to flow out of the water stream in a continuous dynamic. In addition, the reflection of water movement on the stainless steel generates additional movement. Each episode is a part of Surat Al-Ikhlās. The crescent is formed to become a full moon. The lustre of steel and the reflection of light and water added additional beauty to the sculpture.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis summary

No	Artworks and their Artist	Scripts or letters	Type of calligraphy	Style
1	<i>Noor</i> (Nja Al-Mahdaoui, n.d).	ن، ح، ف، ت	Leafy Kufic	Free calligraphy
2	<i>Beya</i> (Nja Al-Mahdaoui, n.d).	م، ت، ب	Moroccan Kufic	Free calligraphy
3	<i>Maqam Esafa</i> (Nja Al-Mahdaoui, n.d).	ع، ث، خ، ح	Diwani	Free calligraphy
4	<i>The Bridge</i> (El Seed, 2017)	A poem by a Korean poet, Kim Saul. The poem was in the Korean language and translated into Arabic by the artist.	Free calligraphy	Free calligraphy
5	<i>Myrelingues La Brumeuse</i> (El Seed, 2017)	The text of a historical novel about the city of Lyon. Translated from the original French language to the Arabic language.	Free calligraphy	Free calligraphy
6	<i>Declaration</i> (El Seed, 2018)	A saying by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, ruler of the United Arab Emirates.	Free calligraphy	Free calligraphy
7	<i>Calligraphic sculpture</i> (Sabah Arbilli, 2016.)	A poem by H. E. Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani	Free calligraphy	Free calligraphy
8	<i>Inner Control</i> (Sabah Arbilli, 2016.)	A saying by Sheikh Jassim Al Thani, ruler of the State of Qatar.	Naskh	Modern Classical Calligraphy
9	<i>Migration</i> (Sabah Arbilli, 2016)	هجرة, hijrah, migration, reputation	Naskh	Modern classical
10	<i>Decision makers</i> (Sabah Arbilli, n.d.)	العقل والقلب, Mind and Heart	Naskh	Modern classical
11	<i>Aya</i> (Mattar Bin Lahej, 2018)	The Aya 40 of the Surah Al Ahzab, the Holy Qur'an.	Thuluth	Neo-modern classical
12	<i>Speech Energy</i> (Mattar Bin Lahej, 2013)	The three sculptures are sayings of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Al Nahyan.	Thuluth	Free calligraphy
13	<i>Moons of Forgiveness</i> (Mattar Bin Lahej, 2013)	Surah Al-Ikhlās, the Holy Qur'an.	Thuluth	Free calligraphy

CONCLUSION

Arabic calligraphy is a source of inspiration for many calligraphers to create their own unique art. Arabic calligraphy continues to be compatible with both classical and modern ideas. The current study combines traditional and contemporary Arabic calligraphy using stainless steel in creating artistic and stunning sculptures using modern technologies. The Arabic steel calligraphy carvings appeared very accurate and beautiful in endless forms whenever the angle of view changed. Non-Arabic poetry and narration were added, which were subsequently translated into Arabic. Stainless steel was a prominent element in the sculptures, which increased the beauty of the sculpture as well as reflected the weather and its

surrounding factors. These factors gave the sculptures a sense of movement, dynamism, and life. Furthermore, the addition of colours to stainless steel was another aesthetic element that increased the beauty of the Arabic calligraphy sculpture. Finally, Arabic calligraphy of its various types requires the calligrapher and the Arabic calligraphists to be creative and innovative, rather than just copying other artists' artworks. These samples are the works by four artists who used stainless steel to create Arabic calligraphy sculptures. Further research could include an analysis of other artists' works that have used the same material to create new creative sculptures in their own styles to get a broader and more comprehensive view of this type of art.

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